

PHILADELPHIA TRAIL PLAN

2021 UPDATE



MLK Drive Trail



Schuylkill River Swing Bridge Rendering | SRDC

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Schuylkill River Trail - Swing Bridge Construction | SRDC

1. THE YEAR IN TRAILS

2021 TRAIL PLAN UPDATE PURPOSE

The Philadelphia Trail Master Plan is a recommendation of Philadelphia2035, the City's Comprehensive Plan. This recommendation is listed in the Renew section under Goal 6.1 Watershed Parks and Trails: Complete, expand, and connect watershed parks and trails in the City and the region. The Trail Master Plan process began in the spring of 2011 as a joint effort of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), in collaboration with the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (OTIS).

The 2021 Philadelphia Trail Plan Update builds on the Philadelphia Trail Master Plan adopted by the PCPC in 2013 and its subsequent annual updates in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. While 2020 was an extremely difficult year for advancement of infrastructure due to COVID-19, trails were critical for access to open space and social distancing. This report features the progress by the Philadelphia Trail Committee and non-profit development partners towards expanding the Philadelphia trail network, including the secured funding, project advancement, and next steps.

The 2021 Update contains a revised priority ranking for proposed trail projects citywide. All of these elements are intended to promote the advancement of the Philadelphia trail network as it relates to the Philadelphia2035: Citywide Vision.

Due to limited funding for trail and park projects, the City recognized the need for prioritizing proposed trail projects to serve Philadelphians citywide and to best use available planning, design, and construction funding.

The Trail Master Plan outlines four overarching goals of the Philadelphia trail network: connectivity, safety, encouragement of physical activity, and open space. The purpose of the City trail planning process is to ensure that proposed trail development projects in Philadelphia meet these goals. As the status of the trail network is constantly changing, the annual update offers the opportunity to document and reevaluate these priorities from year to year in order to provide Philadelphians with a connected and comprehensive system of trails.

Philadelphia Trail Committee

The Philadelphia Trail Committee is the implementing body of the Trail Master Plan. The Committee includes City agencies with direct roles in trail implementation, including design, construction, permitting, and project review. The Committee meets biannually and makes decisions on funding priorities for each major trail funding program with the goal of presenting one voice on trail priorities within the City of Philadelphia.

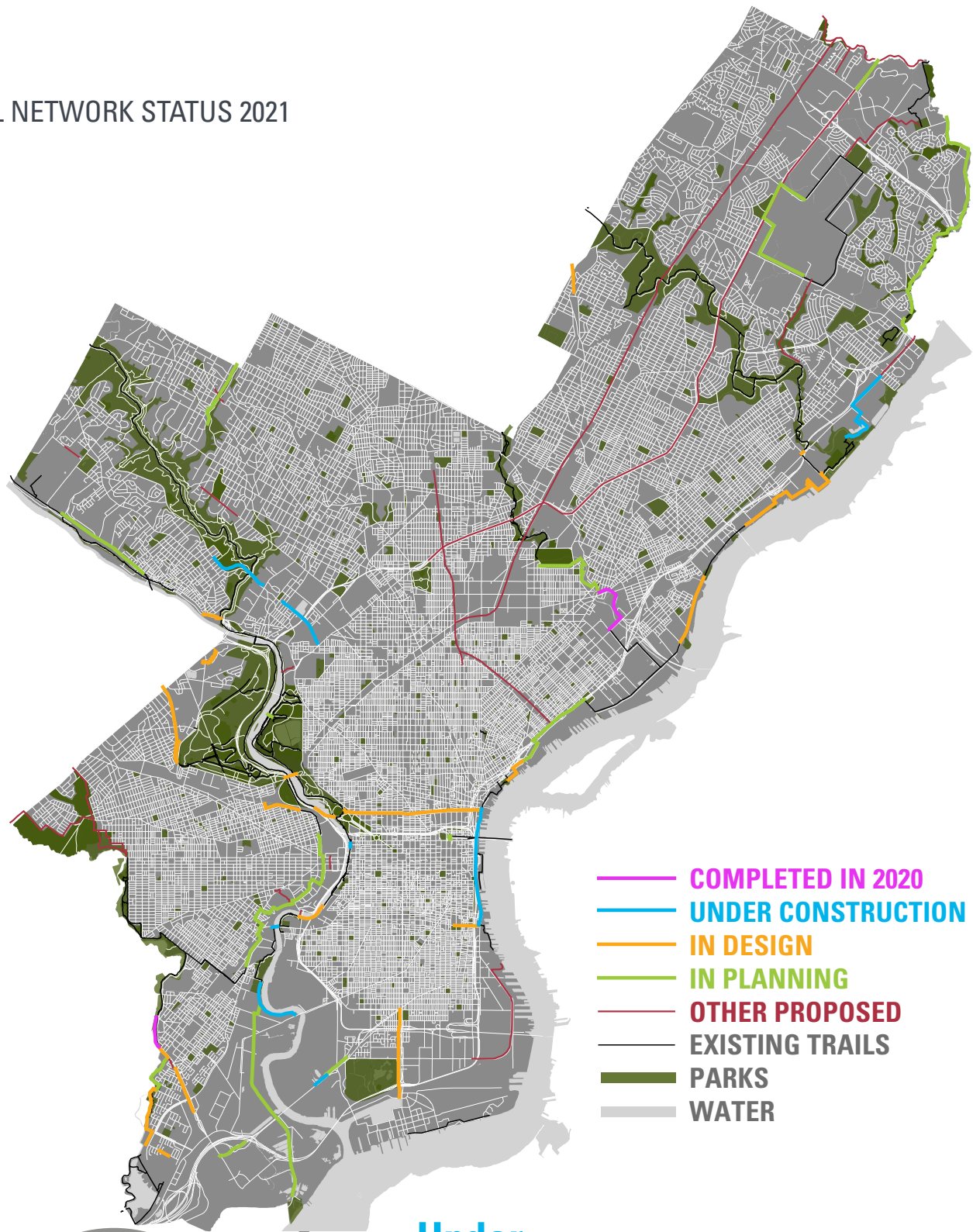


Frankford Creek Greenway, Phase 2 | PennDOT



Cobbs Creek Connector Trail, Segment A | PPR

TRAIL NETWORK STATUS 2021



2011-2020
Completed
30.7
miles

1.5
miles

Completed in 2020

**Under
Construction**

6.8
miles

**In
Design**
14.3
miles

**In
Planning**
21.8
miles

TRAIL NETWORK PROGRESS IN 2020

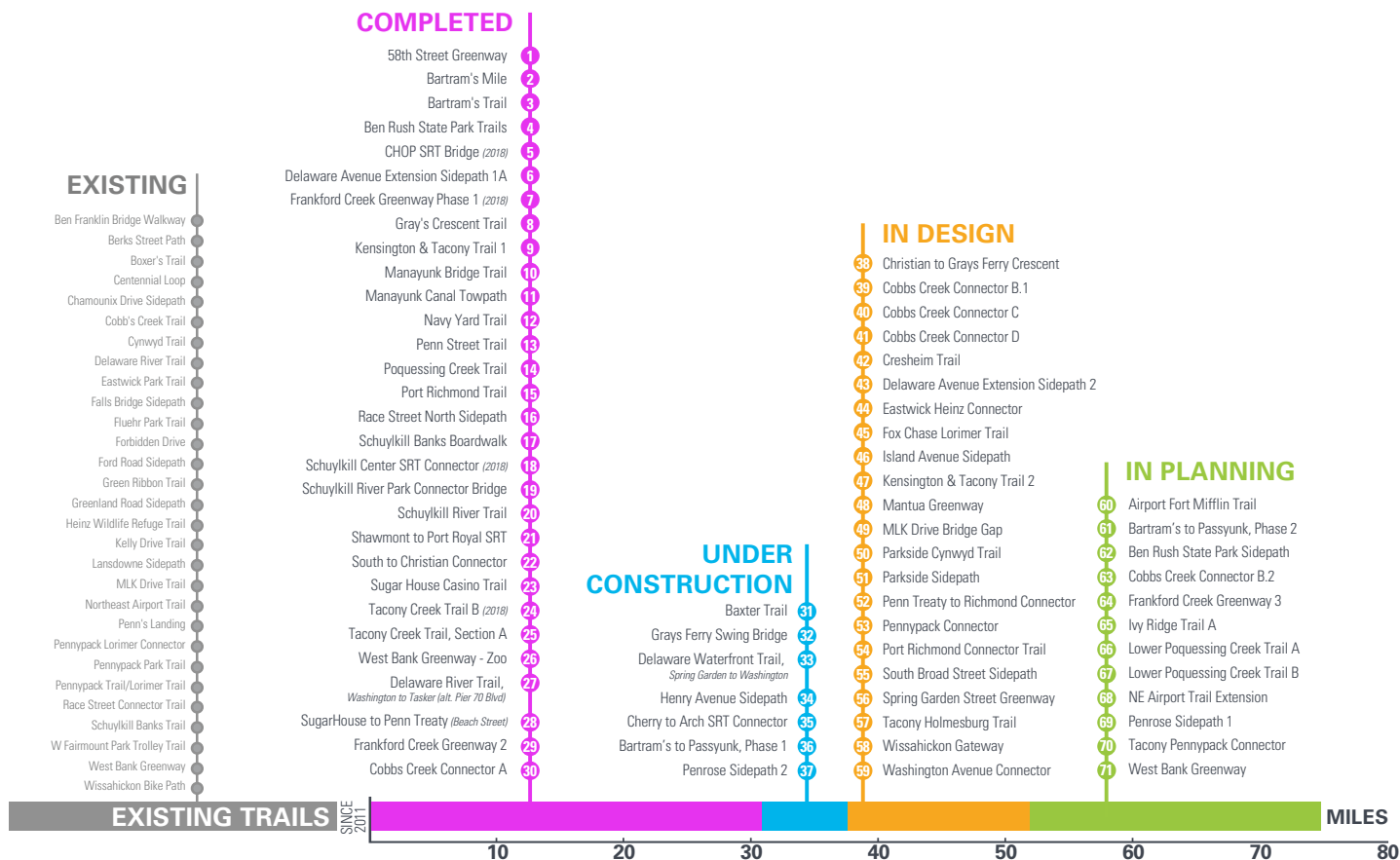
This section reflects the updated status of Philadelphia trails as of December 31, 2020. The map details the status of trail projects citywide, including several projects that are now complete. These segments are no longer included in the priority analysis, since they have reached completion.

In 2020, one trail segment changed names: Passyunk Point Trail was split into two segments and renamed Bartram's to Passyunk, Phase 1 and Bartram's to Passyunk, Phase 2.

There were more than 30 miles of trail completed between the beginning of the planning process in 2011 and the end of 2020. After many years of planning and design, construction on two watershed trail segments were completed in 2020, including the Cobbs Creek Connector Trail A and Frankford Creek Trail, Phase 2, a project associated with the PennDOT I-95 Adams Avenue Connector project.

There are nearly 7 miles of trail currently under construction, including a major link along the North Delaware Trail, known as the Baxter Trail, which will connect from Pennypack on the Delaware to Pleasant Hill Park. Additionally, construction activities took place in 2020 on the Delaware River Trail from Washington Avenue to Spring Garden Street, the Henry Avenue Sidepath, as well as three segments that are associated with the Schuylkill River Trail: the Grays Ferry Swing Bridge, Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 1, and a trail connection from Cherry to Arch Streets. Lighting amenities are in construction on the Manayunk Bridge Trail and will allow this trail, which connects to Lower Merion, to be accessible at all hours.

Over 14 miles of trail are in preliminary or final design, including the Mantua Greenway, K & T Trail Phase 2, Fox Chase Lorimer Trail, Washington Avenue Connector, and the Spring Garden Street Greenway. An additional 22 miles of trail remain in the planning phase.



FUNDING SECURED IN 2020

The City of Philadelphia and trail development partners secured over \$12 million in federal, state, and local funding for construction, design, and planning studies for trail projects in 2020.

Sources include Pennsylvania Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR), Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI), and Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). The City of Philadelphia Capital Budget Funds continued to support construction of new trails in FY2021. Many of the trail funding programs that support trail development in Philadelphia delayed announcements of awards during 2020 due to the pandemic.

2020 Philadelphia Trail Funding Sources & Awards

City of Philadelphia Capital Budget (FY2021)
Schuylkill River Trail

PA DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships
Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 1
Delaware River Trail, Battery Trail

PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program
Schuylkill River Trail - Christian to Crescent

DVRPC
Transportation & Community Dev. Initiative
Philadelphia Trail & Sidepath Maintenance Study



Bartram's to Passyunk, Phase 1 | SRDC



Cable Bridge Rendering for Schuylkill River Trail | SRDC

PROJECT ADVANCEMENT

During 2020, the City of Philadelphia continued its efforts to study and design trail alignments previously identified in the Trail Master Plan.

The City of Philadelphia initiated a feasibility study for the Lower Poquessing Creek Trail, which is located in Northeast Philadelphia along the Bucks County Line. This study will identify opportunities for a trail alignment to connect Benjamin Rush State Park to Glen Foerd on the Delaware and the East Coast Greenway.

Efforts by the Streets Departments continued to advance the Spring Garden Street Greenway. During 2020, the City solicited input from the public using virtual engagement activities that led to 2,100 comments on the project design. More design efforts will continue in 2021 and information on this project can be found at the project website: springgardenstreetimprovements.com

Even during such a difficult year, advancement continued on the Christian to Crescent segment of the Schuylkill River Trail. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, a public meeting took place to go over the project's design considerations. Design was completed in 2020 and construction will commence in 2021.

Sections of the Schuylkill River Trail and Cobbs Creek Trail are along the alignment of the September 11th National Memorial Trail, which will increase access and visibility of Philadelphia's trail network.



Spring Garden Street Improvement Project



The Spring Garden Street Improvement Project is a City of Philadelphia Streets Department project that will make Spring Garden Street - between Pennsylvania Avenue and Columbus Boulevard - **safer, greener, and better for everyone.** Planned improvements include:

- Streetscape improvements
- Stormwater management improvements
- Traffic signal upgrades
- Bicycle lane improvements
- Median treatments
- Street lighting improvements
- Pavement striping and signage

The ALLways River to River project is an equitable bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly investment in Philadelphia's Spring Garden Street that will provide a safer, sustainable, and stronger multimodal link connecting the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers.

The City solicited input from the public on the proposed improvements in November and December 2020. This initial round of public outreach connected with residents, businesses, property owners, employees, commuters, and recreational users to locate safety issues along the corridor, choose a location for bicycle lane upgrades, and identify other multimodal improvements.

Robust outreach was critical to moving the project from the conceptual phase, which had been led by a local non-profit in previous years, to a City-led project that is entering the engineering and design phase. The City's use of a variety of online tools - a virtual open house, live question and answer sessions, one-on-one stakeholder meetings, thousands of postcards, a survey, an interactive mapping tool - and commitment to engaging a diversity of

1



Spring Garden Street Greenway Rendering | City of Philadelphia

2. PRIORITY STATUS UPDATE

UPDATED PRIORITY RANKING

As part of the 2021 update, the Trail Committee updated the priority scoring for each project. The scoring and priority rank changed for many projects due to additional funding, change in property ownership, new partnership opportunities, updated Census data, and other factors. The scoring of many projects was amended and completed projects were removed from the analysis, resulting in the updated priority list.

The updated priorities by project type are shown on the following page. The proposed projects are organized into the following project types:

- **Watershed Park**
- **Delaware River Trail**
- **Schuylkill River Trail**
- **Sidepath/Roadway Adjacent**
- **Miscellaneous**

Several major projects have progressed to a higher priority rank due to additional project funding, advancement in trail studies or design, property acquisition, and other factors.

EXISTING TRAIL REHABILITATION PRIORITIZATION

As we have worked to expand Philadelphia's trail network, it is important to ensure that the existing trails are well preserved and remain accessible for all users. In the 2017 update, existing trails older than ten years old were evaluated in order to create a prioritization for trail rehabilitation. While regular maintenance can increase the longevity of a trail, older trails will eventually require more intensive rehabilitation.

Significant work has taken place in the past year towards rehabilitation of existing trails. Most prominently, the four-mile MLK Drive Trail was fully rehabilitated for the first time in over fifty years. Two construction projects took place: structural repairs to the retaining wall of the Schuylkill Banks Trail concurrent with the Chestnut Street Bridge reconstruction and Parks & Recreation initiated the rehabilitation of four bridges along the Wissahickon Bike Path. Design by the Streets Department for rehabilitations of MLK Drive and Falls Bridges include improved connections to the adjacent trails. Lastly, planning for the rehabilitation of the Kelly Drive Trail has begun.

The table below shows the priority listing by tiers for the rehabilitation of existing trails.

Trail Name (Rehabilitation Project)	Category	2020 Tier
Ben Franklin Bridge Walkway	Sidepaths	1
Kelly Drive Trail	Schuylkill River Trail	1
Pennypack Park Trail	Watershed Parks	1
Schuylkill Banks Trail	Schuylkill River Trail	1
Cobbs Creek Trail	Watershed Parks	1
Falls Bridge Sidepath	Sidepaths	2
Forbidden Drive	Watershed Parks	2
Lansdowne Sidepath	Sidepaths	2
Tacony Creek Trail (upper)	Watershed Parks	2
Wissahickon Bike Path	Watershed Parks	2
Chamounix Drive Sidepath	Sidepaths	3
Delaware River Trail	Delaware River Trail	3
Fluehr Park Trail	Misc.	3
Ford Road Sidepath	Sidepaths	3
Greenland Drive Sidepath	Sidepaths	3
Northeast Airport Trail	Misc.	3



PROPOSED TRAIL PRIORITY STATUS – ANNUAL UPDATE

Tier 1 Projects
Tier 2 Projects
Tier 3 Projects
New projects in 2021

See Methodology Paper in 2013 Trail Plan Appendix for Criteria and Scoring of Tiers

Note: Rank is within Location Category only, not overall

Watershed Parks		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2021	RANK 2020
Cobbs Creek Connector D	1	4
Cobbs Creek Connector B.1	2	2
Frankford Creek Greenway, Phase 3	3	5
Cobbs Creek Connector B.2	4	7
Cobbs Creek Connector C	5	6
Poquessing A	6	9
Cobbs Creek Morris Park Connector B	7	8
Cobbs Creek Morris Park Connector A	8	10
Lower Poquessing Creek Trail A	9	11
Lower Poquessing Creek Trail B	10	12
Poquessing B	11	14
Randolph Creek Trail	12	13

Schuylkill River Trail		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2021	RANK 2020
Christian to Grays Crescent	1	1
Grays Ferry Swing Bridge	2	2
Wissahickon Gateway	3	3
Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 1	4	
Cherry to Arch SRT Connector	5	6
Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 2	6	
Airport Fort Mifflin Trail	7	5

Delaware River Trail		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2021	RANK 2020
Delaware Waterfront Trail, Washington to Spring Garden	1	1
Baxter Trail	2	4
Kensington & Tacony Trail 2	3	2
Delaware Avenue Extension	4	3
Penn Treaty Richmond Connector	5	5
Port Richmond Connector Trail	6	6
Tacony Holmesburg Trail	7	7
Delaware River Trail Port Extension	8	8

Sidepaths		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2021	RANK 2020
MLK Drive Bridge Gap	1	1
Pennypack Connector	2	2
Mantua Greenway	3	4
Spring Garden Street Greenway	4	3
Henry Ave Sidepath	5	13
South Broad Street Sidepath	6	5
Washington Ave Connector	7	6
Island Avenue Sidepath	8	7
Penrose Avenue Sidepath 2	9	9
Parkside Sidepath	10	10
Girard Ave Bridge Sidepath	11	8
Benjamin Franklin Bridge Entrance	12	11
West Bank Greenway	13	12
Presidential Boulevard Sidepath	14	14
State Road Sidepath	15	15
Roosevelt Blvd Sidepath	16	16
34th Street Bridge Sidepath	17	17
Hunting Park Sidepath	18	18
Wissahickon Avenue Sidepath	19	19
NE Airport Trail Extension	20	20
Germantown Ave Sidepath	21	21
Ben Rush State Park Sidepath	22	22
Penrose Avenue Sidepath 1	23	23
31st Street Sidepath	24	24
Hagys Mill Sidepath	25	25

Miscellaneous Locations		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2021	RANK 2020
Fox Chase Lorimer Trail Connector	1	1
Eastwick Heinz Connector	2	2
Parkside Cynwyd Trail	3	3
Cresheim Trail	4	4
Ivy Ridge Trail A	5	6
Lehigh Viaduct Trail	6	5
Tacony Pennypack Connector	7	7
Woodlands Cemetery Bikeway	8	8
Pennypack Poquessing Connector	9	9
Pennypack Airport Connector	10	10
Fern Rock American Trail	11	11
Poquessing Southampton Trail	12	13
Tacony Sedgely Trail	13	14
Ivy Ridge Trail B	14	12
Airport Poquessing Connector	15	15

3. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Philadelphia began in March 2020. Stay-at-home orders from the City and State gave guidance for social distancing which led Philadelphians to seek open spaces for biking and walking opportunities. Emphasis was placed on safe connections to the Fairmount Park system and this resulted in higher use and expanded visibility of trails throughout the City.

Three trail segments in Philadelphia had continuous counts throughout both 2019 and 2020: Schuylkill Banks, Port Richmond Trail, and the Wissahickon Trail. These counters allowed PCPC to compare pedestrian and bicycle activity on the trails from 2019 to 2020. At the onset of the pandemic, weekday activities immediately increased with more than 50,000 additional trips counted in March 2020 compared to 2019. Higher trail use continued during the warmest months of the 2020 with a 12% increase during weekends and a 10% increase during weekdays.

In an effort to provide additional areas for pedestrians and bicyclists to get exercise while social distancing during COVID, cities across the country looked for creative ways to repurpose public open spaces. The City of Philadelphia closed Martin Luther King Jr Drive in March 2020 to vehicles, amplifying the importance of the MLK Drive trail.

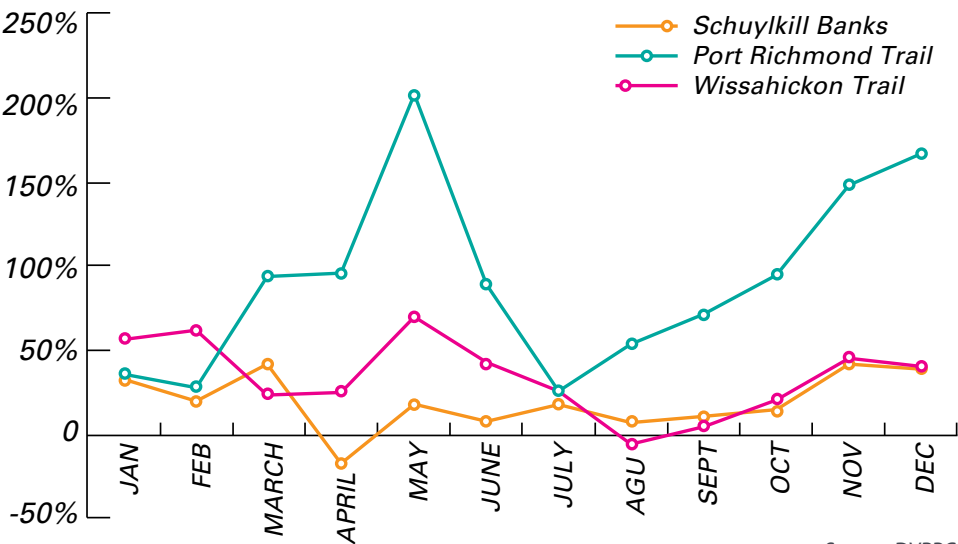


Schuylkill Banks during COVID-19 | Philadelphia Inquirer



MLK Drive during COVID-19 | Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

TRAIL USE CHANGE FROM 2019 TO 2020 (%)



Source: DVRPC

4. NEXT STEPS

The Philadelphia Trail Committee identified several issues to explore in greater depth in the coming years.

Staff and the committee will review the introduction of the equity score and continue to look at national best practices from peer city or county trail master plans.

While this trail master plan update incorporated the prioritization based on 2015-2019 ACS Census data, we will look to update Census data after the 2020 decennial Census is released and update the existing trail rehabilitation prioritization, as several major facilities will have reached the 10 year mark.

After a very tough 2020 with limited trail construction, the Trail Committee will continue to build upon its previous efforts to collaborate on the funding of both the design and construction of additional trail segments. With the expected opening of a number of new trail segments in 2021, the committee will work with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to expand its program to measure trail use through regular trail counts.

The updated version of the complete Philadelphia Trail Master Plan can be found on the PCPC website at:

www.phila.gov/CityPlanning/plans/Pages/TrailsMasterPlan.aspx



Delaware River Trail Under Construction | *Billy Penn*



Frankford Creek Greenway, Phase 2 | *PCPC*

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Philadelphia Water Department
Streets Department

