

# PHILADELPHIA TRAIL PLAN

## 2022 UPDATE



Schuylkill River Trail at Boathouse Row | PCPC





Delaware River Trail, Washington to Spring Garden | PCPC

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Bicycle Parking Facility on Delaware River Trail | PCPC



# 1. THE YEAR IN TRAILS

## 2022 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 2022 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, 2020 and 2021. While 2020 was characterized by increased trail use during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 will be remembered for the damage and disruption caused by Hurricane Ida across the region, including Philadelphia's trails. 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 2022 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.

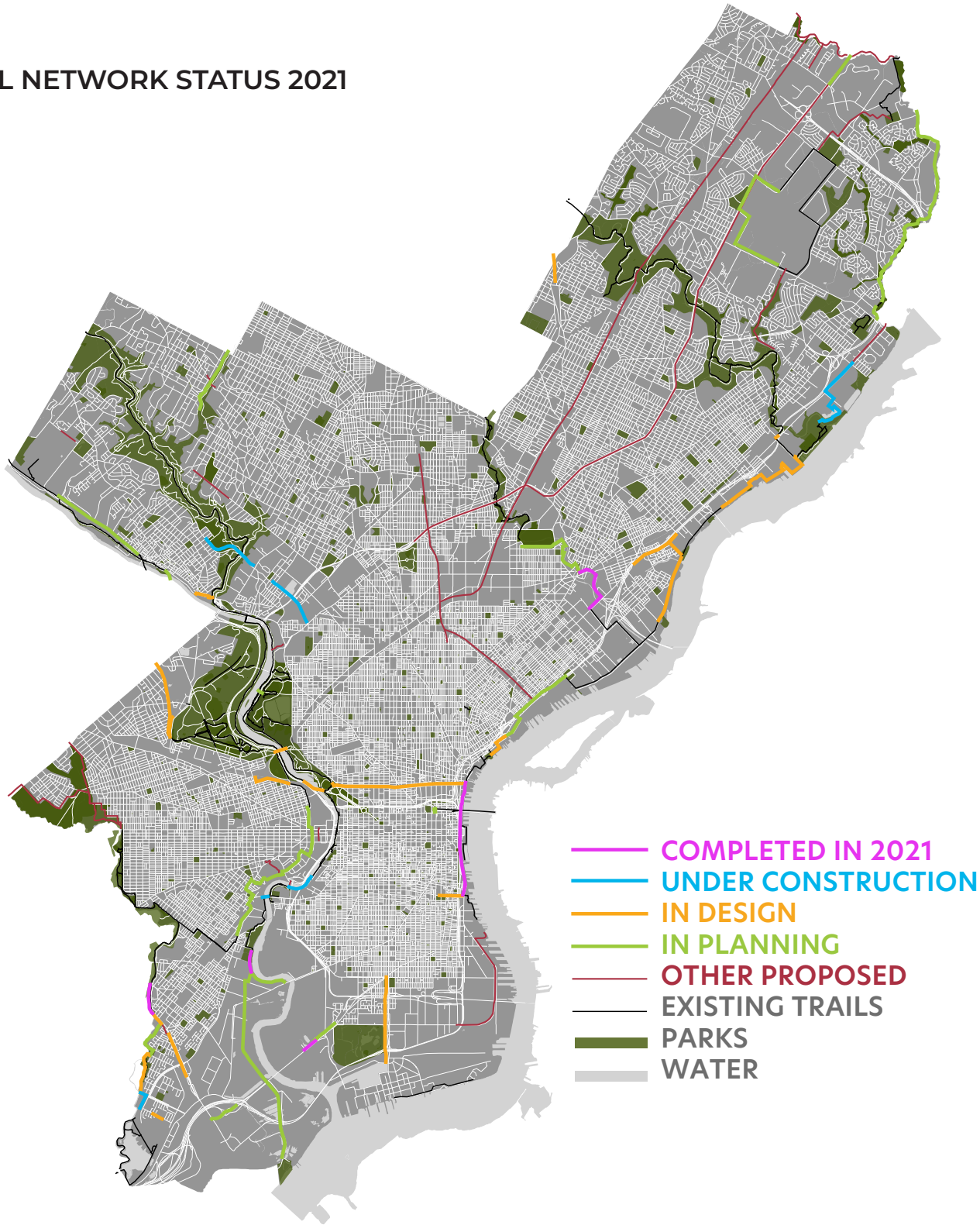


Cobbs Creek Connector Trail, Phase D | PCPC



Penrose Sidepath 2 | PCPC

TRAIL NETWORK STATUS 2021





## TRAIL NETWORK PROGRESS IN 2021

This section reflects the updated status of Philadelphia trails as of December 31, 2021. 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.

There were more than 32 miles of trail completed between the beginning of the planning process in 2011 and the end of 2021, including Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 1, Penrose Sidepath 2, and the Delaware River Trail between Spring Garden Street and Washington Avenue. The Delaware River Trail is separated from motor vehicle traffic by a curb and features a two-way bike path and landscape-buffered sidewalk for walking and running and features furnishings such as benches, bike racks, and waste baskets.

There are 4.5 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, rehabilitation commenced on the bridges of the Wissahickon Bike Trail and initial construction activities took place on the Washington Avenue Connector, Henry Avenue Sidepath, the Grays Ferry Swing Bridge, and Cobbs Creek Connector D. Construction of lighting amenities on the Manayunk Bridge Trail will allow this trail, which connects to Lower Merion, to be accessible at all hours.

Over 13 miles of trail are in preliminary or final design including K&T Trail Phase 2, Christian to Grays Ferry Crescent, Fox Chase Lorimer Trail, Wissahickon Gateway, Parkside Cynwyd Trail, and the State & Rhawn Sidepath. An additional 22 miles of trail remain in the planning phase.





## 2021 Philadelphia Trail Funding Sources & Awards

City of Philadelphia Capital Budget (FY2022)  
Schuylkill River Trail  
Delaware River Trail

PA DCNR  
Bartram's to Passyunk, Phase I  
Wissahickon Trail Access

PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund  
Delaware River Trail

DVRPC/William Penn Regional Trails  
Wissahickon Gateway  
Bartram's to Passyunk, Phase 2

## FUNDING SECURED IN 2021

The City of Philadelphia and trail development partners secured over \$6 million in federal, state, and local funding for construction, design, and planning studies for trail projects in 2021.

Sources include Pennsylvania Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR), Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund. The City of Philadelphia Capital Budget Funds continued to support construction of new trails in FY2022.



Manayunk Bridge Trail Lighting



Rendering of Lower Poquessing Trail beneath Woodhaven Road | PCPC



## PROJECT ADVANCEMENT

During 2021, the City of Philadelphia continued its efforts to study and design trail alignments previously identified in the Trail Master Plan.

Installation of lighting commenced on the Manayunk Bridge Trail. When complete, the trail will be open 24 hours and provide an essential link between Manayunk and Lower Merion Township. The Parkside-Cynwyd Trail is currently in design in West Philadelphia. In Southwest Philadelphia, construction of Cobbs Creek Connector D began and will improve pedestrian and bicycle access to John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge and its miles of existing trails.



Rendering of Spring Garden Street Greenway | PCPC

Both a cable supported bridge on the Christian to Crescent segment and the Grays Ferry Swing Bridge are in construction on the Schuylkill River Trail, and preliminary construction activities began on the Henry Avenue Sidepath in Northwest Philadelphia.

The City of Philadelphia advanced the Lower Poquessing Creek Trail Feasibility Study and conducted community engagement for the 3.7 miles of proposed trail in Northeast Philadelphia near the Bucks County line. This study identified opportunities for a trail alignment to connect Benjamin Rush State Park to Glen Foerd on the Delaware and the East Coast Greenway. Other riverfront projects progressing in Northeast Philadelphia include the Baxter Trail, K&T Trail Phase II, the Tacony Holmesburg Trail, and the State & Rhawn Sidepath. The City of Philadelphia also advanced a study related to sidepath and trail maintenance.



Northwest Philadelphia & Lower Merion Trail Projects 2021 | PCPC



## 2. PRIORITY STATUS UPDATE

### UPDATED PRIORITY RANKING

As part of the 2022 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. Parks & Recreation continued 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 continued including efforts to restore the stone wall adjacent to the trail.

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 2022	RANK 2021
Cobbs Creek Connector D	1	1
Cobbs Creek Connector B.1	2	2
Frankford Creek Greenway, Phase 3	3	3
Cobbs Creek Connector B.2	4	4
Cobbs Creek Connector C	5	5
Poquessing A	6	6
Cobbs Creek Morris Park Connector B	7	7
Cobbs Creek Morris Park Connector A	8	8
Lower Poquessing Creek Trail A	9	9
Lower Poquessing Creek Trail B	10	10
Poquessing B	11	11
Randolph Creek Trail	12	12

Schuylkill River Trail		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2022	RANK 2021
Christian to Grays Crescent	1	1
Grays Ferry Swing Bridge	2	2
Wissahickon Gateway	3	3
Bartram's to Passyunk Phase 2	4	6
Airport Fort Mifflin Trail	5	7
Mule Bridge	6	

Delaware River Trail		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2022	RANK 2021
Baxter Trail	1	2
Kensington & Tacony Trail 2	2	3
Delaware Avenue Extension 2	3	4
Penn Treaty Richmond Connector	4	5
Port Richmond Connector Trail	5	6
Tacony Holmesburg Trail	6	7
Delaware River Trail Port Extension	7	8

Sidepaths		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2022	RANK 2021
MLK Drive Bridge Gap	1	1
Spring Garden Street Greenway	2	4
Pennypack Connector	3	2
Mantua Greenway	4	3
South Broad Street Sidepath	5	6
Henry Ave Sidepath	6	5
Island Avenue Sidepath	7	8
Washington Ave Connector	8	7
Tacony Street Sidepath	9	
Girard Ave Bridge Sidepath	10	11
Benjamin Franklin Bridge Entrance	11	12
West Bank Greenway	12	13
State Road Sidepath	13	15
Roosevelt Blvd Sidepath	14	16
34th Street Bridge Sidepath	15	17
Wissahickon Avenue Sidepath	16	19
NE Airport Trail Extension	17	20
Hunting Park Sidepath	18	18
Penrose Avenue Sidepath 1	19	23
Ben Rush State Park Sidepath	20	22
Germantown Ave Sidepath	21	21
31st Street Sidepath	22	24
Island Ave to Cobbs B Sidepath	23	25
Hagys Mill Sidepath	24	25

Miscellaneous Locations		
Proposed Trail	RANK 2022	RANK 2021
Fox Chase Lorimer Trail Connector	1	1
Parkside Cynwyd Trail	2	3
Eastwick Heinz Connector	3	2
Cresheim Trail	4	4
Ivy Ridge Trail A	5	5
Lehigh Viaduct Trail	6	6
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	12
Tacony Sedgely Trail	13	13



### 3. IMPACT OF WEATHER EVENTS ON TRAILS

Situated along Philadelphia waterways, including Cobbs Creek, Pennypack Creek, Tacony Creek, Wissahickon Creek, and the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, the city's network of trails are increasingly threatened by the impacts of intensifying weather events. The impacts of climate change present a major challenge to trail infrastructure but reinforce the need to encourage sustainable transportation options and resilient design.

On the morning of September 2, 2021, Philadelphians awoke to major flooding, especially along the entire length of the Schuylkill River. Schuylkill Banks was completely submerged and volunteers rallied to clean the debris from its path in the aftermath. Gates providing access to the Schuylkill River Trail from Race and Locust Streets were damaged by flooding and finally reopened six months later in March 2022. Flooding along the Manayunk Canal Towpath resulted in its closure for six weeks through October 15th and an estimated \$350,000 in repairs. Wissahickon Creek surged to 15 feet above its normal level, significantly damaging the bridge on Ridge Avenue that crosses it. Trails across the City, including the recently rehabilitated MLK Drive Trail, weathered the storm without permanent damages but still required days of maintenance by City of Philadelphia staff to remove mud and debris.

Weather events also impacted decisions related to trail planning. A major rain event that caused extensive flooding in the Far Northeast and Bucks County exposed potential issues with the Lower Poquessing Creek Trail proposed alignment. Planners adjusted the preferred alignment for that trail to higher elevations.

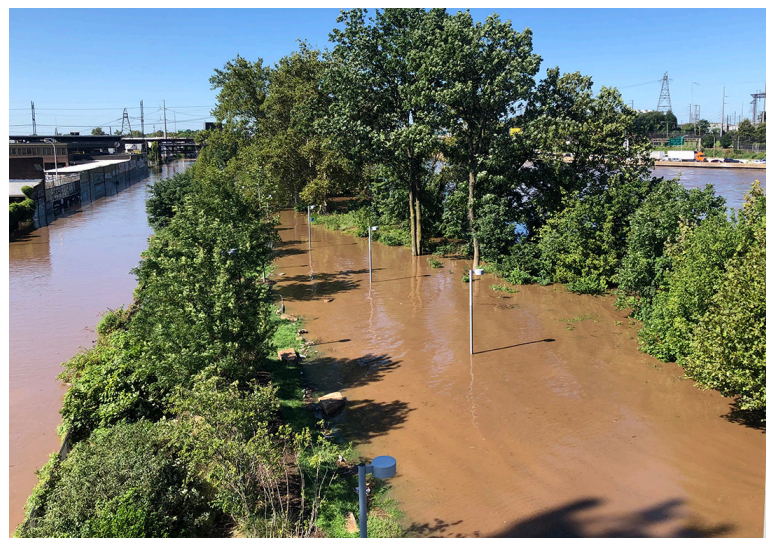
Major public and private forecasting agencies are predicting an above-average storm season in future years while noting a trend of intensifying tropical cyclones and rainfall. As more experts acknowledge the physical and mental benefits of the trails in the aftermath of COVID, the importance of building and maintaining resilient trails will amplify.



Schuylkill River Trail after Hurricane Ida | PCPC



Schuylkill River Trail connection over Wissahickon Creek | PCPC



Flooding on Schuylkill River Trail South to Christian extension | SRDC



## 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.

This trail master plan update incorporated the prioritization based on 2015-2019 ACS Census data. For next year's report, we anticipate using 2016-2021 ACS Census data to update both proposed prioritization and existing trail rehabilitation prioritization, as several major facilities will have reached the 10 year mark.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law in November 2021 and will lead to more funding for regionally significant trail projects. The IIJA contains a variety of transportation programs funding design and construction of projects that relieve congestion, promote active transportation, and improve transportation equity and safety.

Finally, 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](http://www.phila.gov/CityPlanning/plans/Pages/TrailsMasterPlan.aspx)



Future access path below I-95 | PCPC



Construction of Henry Avenue Sidepath | PCPC

## CREDITS

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### Philadelphia Trail Committee

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Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
Philadelphia Industrial Development  
Corporation  
Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority  
Philadelphia Water Department  
Streets Department



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