

Newtown Rail Trail Meeting – July 12, 2022, Minutes

Meeting Attendees:

- Chris Green – Gilmore and Associates – cgreen@gilmore-assoc.com
- Angie Nagle – Bucks County Parks and Recreation – ajnagle@buckscounty.org
- Kevin Spencer – Bucks County Director of Operations – ksspencer@buckscounty.org
- Rich Brahler – Bucks County Planning Commission – rgbrahler@buckscounty.org
- Christian Regosch – Bucks County Planning Commission – cpregosch@buckscounty.org
- Paul Gordon – Bucks County Planning Commission – pwgordon@buckscounty.org
- Kirsten Becker – Churchville Nature Center – klbecker@buckscounty.org
- Bill Woodroffe – Churchville Nature Center – wpwoodroffe@buckscounty.org

1. Meeting Purpose

To discuss and agree upon the final proposed alignments developed by Chris Green, for the portion of the Newtown Rail Trail that will run from the existing rail bed to connect the trail to the Churchville Nature Center (CNC) building. In total 3 concepts are to be reviewed, one for the lower portion of the trail on County property and two for upper portion of the trail, primarily on Aqua property.

2. Overall Concept Plans

Chris presented the 3 concept plans to depict the connection from the rail corridor to the Churchville Nature Center Building. The three concepts are described below.

- **Wetland Crossing:** This alignment for the lower end of the trail begins at the back of the Churchville Nature Center building and heads northwest towards the proposed rail trail. Named the wetland crossing trail because it will require a 150-foot boardwalk to cross wetlands that occur as the trail pivots northwesterly to stay on County property. Towards the northern end of this alignment, an existing hill will need to be graded to meet ADA requirements. None of the Nature Center's existing trails are impacted by this alignment
- **Concept 7:** This alignment begins with a 230-foot elevated boardwalk following the graded section of the wetland crossing alignment. The boardwalk will continue northward until it pivots westerly to meet the trail as it exits County property. It continues westerly for approximately 60 feet until it turns easterly to match the contours of the area. Grading will need to be performed as the trail begins its turn. The trail continues easterly for approximately 240 feet until it then turns westerly to connect to the rail corridor. This alignment has 480 feet of trail on Aqua Land.
- **Concept 8:** This alignment has the same elevated boardwalk as concept seven. However, this alignment pivots westerly and continues along that alignment until it connects to the rail corridor. Grading will need to be performed on this alignment as the trail transitions from boardwalk to an in-ground trail. In total, 375 feet of this alignment will be on Aqua land.
- Neither Concept 7 nor 8 will impact existing trails within the Churchville Nature Center Complex.

After reviewing the plans, the group quickly agreed that all 3 concepts should move forward, with Concept 7 and 8 to be presented to Aqua to open the next phase of development. The group felt both concepts should be presented to Aqua because:

- Both concepts preserve the existing nature trails for the Nature Center, a key request of Nature Center Staff.
- Concept 7, while estimated to be more expensive, provided the opportunity for the County construct more of the Newtown Rail Trail while containing the trail to a smaller area of Aqua Land.
- Concept 8, is estimated to be a lower cost option and more direct alignment, thus having lower maintenance costs. Although this alignment would cross a broader swath of Aqua property, its simple alignment is appealing.

After agreeing to move all concepts forward, the group briefly discussed the following topics:

- Bill asked if a gravel area, near the back of CNC building could be repaved as part of the project. Chris Green said that provided it is in the project area that this is possible.
- Paul asked the group what their preferred material for the boardwalk would be. Kevin responded that tropical hardwood would be preferred.

3. Follow up actions Christian will email Dan Snyder of DVRPC regarding the next steps for engaging Aqua.