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August 5, 2020

«FIRST\_NAME» «LAST\_NAME»  
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RE: Newtown Rail Trail Update

Dear Neighbors:

We hope this communication finds you well. As you are aware, the Bucks County Commissioners in cooperation with Upper Southampton Township, have authorized the construction of a multi-use County rail trail along the SEPTA railroad corridor.

This announcement is the latest effort to keep you informed of the most recent developments relative to the ongoing development of the trail. In our last communication in May of this year, we announced that the Bucks County Commissioners signed a resolution awarding a contract, in the amount of \$2,349,580.25, to James D. Morrissey, Philadelphia, PA, to construct the Newtown Rail Trail. Construction will be funded via tax dollars allocated to PennDOT’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) specifically allocated to fund trail projects on The Circuit. <http://www.circuittrails.org>

Since the selection of James D. Morrissey, we’ve been working with them to develop a tentative construction schedule. As with any schedule of this type, it is subject to change based on a number of factors including weather, materials availability, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. That being said, we did want to give you a generalized schedule outlining the various steps in the construction process.

Activity	Month works begins	Approximate Duration
Survey work	August 2020	2 weeks
Clearing of right-of-way and removal of railroad ties	August 2020	2 weeks
Restoration of pavement at Southampton Train Station parking lot	September 2020	1 week
Drainage improvements	September 2020	7 weeks
Installation of signage, landscaping and fencing	September 2020	15 weeks
Installation of ballast	November 2020	5 weeks
Installation of subbase	December 2020	4 weeks
Installation of top surface stone	February 2021	5 weeks
Installation of traffic signal at New Road & County Line Road intersection	March 2021	7 weeks
Installation of concrete curbs/sidewalks/ADA ramps in select locations	March 2021	7 weeks
Final inspection	June 2021	2 weeks
Trail Opens	July 2021	-



Again, these are all tentative dates, both the start dates and duration are subject to change. Should there be significant departures from this schedule, we will communicate those as they occur. However, as the construction schedule is controlled by the Contractor, please understand that the County does not control when specific activities will occur and how long they will last.

As indicated above, part of the construction process will entail surveying the SEPTA right-of-way. This survey will be based on what are called Railroad Valuation Maps which are equivalent to the deed for your own property. Relative to this, we wanted to take this opportunity to make you aware of several things related to the surveying process:

- The surveying crew and county will be providing advance notification, anticipated to be at least one week in advance, of when the surveyors will be in your area.
- Given the years of disuse of the railroad corridor, and the resulting overgrowth within the corridor, there may be differences as to what you've always considered to be your property line with what the surveying work marks as being the property line. We wanted to bring this to your attention in advance. However, as a reminder, the trail and associated fencing and landscaping will all be within the SEPTA right-of-way, not along property boundaries so please be assured that any surveying stakes and markers do not represent anything but the right-of-way boundaries and do not represent the placement of anything to do with the trail itself.
- Although in most areas the former railroad ties/bed were centered in the right-of-way, there may be instances where it was not. This is important to note in that stakes on one side of the track may be closer to the track than on the other side.
- As the railroad corridor is linear, not all property corners will be marked/staked.

To help facilitate the communication process, including distributing information about upcoming survey dates, the county has developed a website for the purpose of providing details about the construction process. The site currently includes the fencing and landscaping plans, as well as copies of our previous communications. In the future, we will add the tentative construction schedule once it is available. We will also be using this site to communicate key dates such as where the surveyors will be in different areas, again recognizing that these are subject to change. The website address is:

<https://trails-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/newtown-rail-trail-updates>.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to remind everyone one last time that if you currently have personal property located within the SEPTA property boundary, to please ensure that these items are removed as soon as possible. If these items are not removed prior to the start of construction, they will be considered to be abandoned and subject to removal during the trail construction process.

Should you have any questions, please contact Richard Brahler, Director of Transportation Planning, Bucks County Planning Commission, at 215-345-3427 or [rgbrahler@buckscounty.org](mailto:rgbrahler@buckscounty.org).

Sincerely,

**Bucks County Planning Commission**



Evan J. Stone, PLA  
Executive Director