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## **Council officially opens the Darby Creek Trail**

### *Officials cut ribbon on Phase 1 of the Darby Creek Trail*

Delaware County Council joined Upper Darby Mayor Tom Micozzie and Director of Delaware County Parks and Recreation Marc Manfre on June 2 for the ribbon cutting and official opening of the Darby Creek Trail in Upper Darby.

The project is a joint venture between Delaware County and Upper Darby Township.

Phase 1 of the project includes a one-mile trail along the Darby Creek from the Swedish Cabin to the Kent Park Dog Park. The location offers residents a place to walk, run or bike on the trail which runs along the scenic Darby Creek, in addition to enjoying a children's playground and dog park adjacent to the trail.

"Delaware County Council has been working with the county's Planning Department and Parks and Recreation to create 'a ribbon of green' and recreational trails along the Darby Creek for decades, beginning with conservation efforts that started back in the 1980s," said Delaware County Council Chairman John McBlain. "Open Space is a priority to council and we know that having green space brings social, environmental, economic, and health benefits to our residents and enhances their quality of life."

Eventually, the trail will connect north through Upper Darby, Haverford, and into Radnor. It will also follow the Darby Creek south through Clifton Heights, Lansdowne, Yeadon, and into Darby Borough where it will connect to the newest County Park at the recently acquired 33-acre Little Flower Manor site.

The Darby Creek Trail is an important segment of the county's Primary Trail Network, which is a countywide system of multi-use trails identified to connect recreational and cultural hubs across the County. It was identified in the Delaware County Open Space, Recreation, and Greenway Plan in 2015. The Darby Creek Trail is also part of the Circuit, a vast regional trail network, composed of hundreds of miles of interconnected trails, that is growing in size each year. One of America's largest trail networks, the Circuit is currently composed of more than 300 miles of completed trails with a vision of completing 800 miles of trails across the nine-county region in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Delaware County has 1,116 acres of county-owned parks and conservation areas and 18,400 acres of protected open space, which includes Ridley Creek State Park and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. There are currently dozens of trails covering over 121 miles across Delaware County, including 36 miles on the Primary Trail Network.

In June 2016 the county acquired the 33-acre Little Flower Manor property in Darby Borough and Upper Darby Township. Once complete, the new property will be the largest county park in eastern Delaware County. Eventually, the Little Flower Manor Site will serve as a major trailhead for the Darby Creek Trail.

In November of 2016 council announced the preservation of 240 acres of Beaver Valley in Concord. This successful preservation was through the partnerships and efforts of the county, Concord Township officials, the Conservation Fund, the Mount Cuba Center, and the Brandywine Conservancy.

In April 2017 Delaware County Council joined officials from Middletown Township and the Friends of the Chester Creek Trail to officially open the Chester Creek Trail. Spanning 2.8-miles along the Chester Creek, from Lenni Road to Chester Creek Road through Middletown and Aston Townships, the tree-lined, fully-paved scenic trail offers elevated views of the creek for recreation and fitness and provides access to some of Delaware County's earliest historical sites including mills of the Industrial Revolution era.

“In response to public interest in open space, Council continues to take a proactive approach in creating open space opportunities in the county,” said McBlain. “Delaware County Council has been working with our Planning Department, Parks and Recreation and municipalities to identify, persevere and create open space across the county. Our goal is to conserve open space, enhance environmental and recreational uses and connect communities.”

Delaware County received a \$615,848 grant from DVRPC's Regional Trails Program, which is funded by a grant from the William Penn Foundation. The County committed additional funds to complete engineering and construction of this section of trail.

Phase 2 is currently in the planning process. For more information about Delaware County's Open Space, Recreation and Greenway Plan, visit [www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning).