



The Delaware County Digest

Your source for the latest news from Delaware County | July 17, 2026

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Delaware County Council Unanimously Approves Sending Greenway Grants Bond Referendum to Voters

At Wednesday's meeting, Delaware County Council unanimously approved a resolution to send a ballot question to the voters in November's election asking whether they would like to give Council the option to take out up to \$120 million in bonds to finance land conservation across Delaware County.

These land conservation projects include protecting drinking water sources, water quality in rivers and creeks, and wildlife habitats, conserving trees and wetlands, providing greenways and parks, and protecting natural areas from development.



"This is an investment that is game changing for our county," said Delaware County Council member Elaine Paul Schaefer. "I think that the majority of voters will agree with me because they know the value having open, green spaces brings to their daily lives. It is on us as leaders of the community to do everything we can to protect against losing these spaces in our community, and this bond will do just that."

If more than 50% of voters vote in favor of the ballot question, Council will have 10 years to issue bonds if they choose to do so. Schaefer also noted that if the full \$120 million was utilized, the cost for the average household would be less than \$24 per year.

Residents from across Delaware County came out to voice their support of the bond referendum, sharing the importance of open spaces to their communities and explaining how more green spaces improve the quality of life across Delco.

At their June meeting, Council was presented with the Delaware County Greenways Finance Feasibility Study. The study, which was done alongside the Trust for Public Land, Natural Lands, and the Nature Conservancy, was conducted to determine the optimal way to acquire funding for land conservation, open space, and natural area protection. The study determined that Delaware County could go after a bond with Council approval or send the question to the voters for them to approve the bond, recommending the latter option. The Feasibility Study can be accessed [here](#).

The Delaware County Greenways Grant Program shows the importance and recent success of investing in trails, parks, and environmental preservation in Delaware County. The program was first established in 2019 and saw the County commit \$16.8 million in funding alongside more than \$33.7 million in outside funding. The program, which consisted of four rounds, has helped municipalities conserve open space and natural features, enhance the environmental and recreational uses of projects, connect communities, cultural/historic resources, and natural features, and plan/design future amenities in a strategic fashion.

In total, the Greenways Grant Program awarded 118 grants in every corner of the County. Highlights include:

- Roosevelt Community Center in Middletown Township: retrofitting of the existing stormwater basin and redesign of the existing drainage and stormwater infiltration infrastructure
- Reservoir Park in Lansdowne: streambank restoration
- Wes Coale Park in Parkside: rain garden
- Plum Street Park in Media: planters and shade installation
- Birney Highway Enhancement + Stormwater Infrastructure Project in Aston Township
- Phillip Green Park in Media: cleanup and removal of invasive plant species, repair of eroded park slopes, planting of native trees/shrubs, and creation of a riparian buffer for the stream

For more information about the Delco Greenways Grant Program, click [here](#). The full text of the resolution can be found [here](#).

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Delaware County Planning Department Updates Council on Recent Work



At Wednesday's Delaware County Council meeting, Delaware County Planning Director Gina Burritt updated Council on the progress her department has made in the last year across their three sections: **Planning Services, Environmental, and Infrastructure.**

The mission of the Delaware County Planning Department is to elevate quality of life, prosperity, and pride in Delaware County through innovative, sustainable, and equitable planning, as well as meaningful collaboration with communities, governments, and organizations. The Planning Department provides resources to support municipalities, historic preservation, trails & parks planning, environmental planning, and transportation & infrastructure planning.

"I want to thank the Planning Department for the work that they do," said Delaware County Council Chair Richard Womack. "Gina Burritt and her team always come through and make our county proud by making complicated and important projects look easy."

Among the infrastructure initiatives Planning has worked on, Vision Zero Delco has been a highlight. In February of 2025, County Council adopted the Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, which is intended to keep roadways across the county safe by reducing traffic deaths and injuries. This

plan has been adopted by 19 municipalities, allowing Planning and these municipalities to acquire grant funding to make Delco's roads safer. To learn more about Vision Zero Delco, click [here](#).

In line with Vision Zero Delco, this spring, Planning started their Safe Streets for Schools initiative, funded by the US Department of Transportation. This included events where residents and students at Chester Upland School for the Arts in Chester and the Harris School in Collingdale implemented low-cost, temporary street improvements like safety bollards and high visibility crosswalks that will increase safety while reducing speeding and crashes. After implementation, they will measure traffic data and work with students and teachers to see the impact the changes have had on the intersections, providing the community with a report on the impact of the project. Two more schools will benefit from the initiative in the fall.

They are also in the process of adopting Walk Roll Delco, the county's active transportation plan, which establishes a long-term vision to create a balanced transportation system that prioritizes safety, accessibility, and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities. Planning found that between 2018 and 2022, roughly 1,000 pedestrians and cyclists were involved in crashes in Delaware County, proving the need for safer roadways and transportation for residents. In addition to focus groups and other public engagement, Planning conducted a survey with over 1,700 responses that determined that 35% of Delco residents walk, bike, use transit, or use a mobility device daily. 13.7% of people said they might bike more if there were protected bike lanes. The survey found three main issues: missing infrastructure (lack of sidewalks or separated bike lanes), inadequate facilities (the existing network does not protect users from danger), and missing connectivity (the existing network has gaps that interrupt safety and comfort of users).

Walk Roll Delco has already resulted in recommendations, which are divided into policy actions, programming actions, and sidewalk actions. Policy actions are intended to create or modify design and regulatory standards in Delco to better serve active transportation. Programming actions include studies, pilot programs, and events to expand and promote active transportation. Sidewalk actions reflect the expansion and upgrade of sidewalk infrastructure as being a major priority for Delco by continuing to develop a list of high-priority sidewalk gaps based on a variety of factors.

When it comes to Planning Services, the department has been focusing on a Housing Needs Study and Market Analysis, which determined that the inventory of single-family homes in Delaware County has collapsed over the past decade. Delaware County has less housing supply than comparable counties, and real estate transactions are concentrated in the south and east where the oldest/lowest cost housing is located. The collection of this data surrounding housing was long overdue and will be critical to decision making moving forward to keep Delaware County affordable for generations to come.

The environmental section of the Planning Department is responsible for land development reviews and is heavily focused on stormwater and the countywide Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan. The objectives of this plan, which is mostly funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, are to maintain water quality, maintain groundwater recharge, prevent streambank erosion, manage overbank flooding events, and manage extreme events. They have identified 230 flood problem areas (130 of which are high priority) by examining flood data and coordinating with all 49 municipalities. So far, they have conducted 177 field visits, resulting in a thorough analysis and set of recommendations for each area.

To learn more about the Planning Department, please visit delcopa.gov/planning. To sign up for their quarterly newsletter, please click [here](#).



Delaware County Controller Louis Rosenthal Presents 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report



At Wednesday's Delaware County Council meeting, Controller Louis Rosenthal presented the 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), an independently audited accounting of the County's finances for last year and shared his takeaways from the report.

"Delaware County enters the coming year with audited financial statements it can and should be proud of," said Rosenthal. "A workforce whose dedication I've grown to deeply admire, and abundant opportunities to become more efficient

and effective in how we serve our residents."

Across 160 pages, it presents the County's complete financial statements, covering every fund of the Delaware County government and all its component units. The report was audited by Baker Tilly US LLP, who issued a clean opinion, giving the highest level of assurance an audit provides that the report accurately represents the County's financial position.

This is the document read by lenders, grantors, and rating agencies when they price the County's debt, and more, shaping the financial future of Delaware County.

"I couldn't be prouder of the work that's done by the Controller's Office and the staff," said Council member and former Controller Joanne Phillips. "The heart that's in that office is incredible, and I'm grateful for all the work they've done."

Rosenthal highlighted the transmittal letter at the beginning of the report, his office's narrative analysis of the County's position, the economic backdrop they are planning against, and the progress of the County's strategic initiatives.

This report represents months of work reconciling every fund and every account, coordinating with component units across the County, preparing schedules, and responding to the independent auditors' requests. All this work is done by employees in the Controller's Office running the Delaware County's daily financial operations, which continued on as normal.

Rosenthal shared that fiscal year 2024 marked the 31st consecutive year that Delaware County received the Government Finance Officer Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, recognizing the foundation that has been laid by decades of work in the Controller's Office.

"Excellence in Financial Reporting is not a partisan achievement or a personal one," said Rosenthal. "It is an institutional habit, and Delaware County has it."

This is a testament, Rosenthal says, to the dedication and conviction of the staff in the office, which is something he rarely saw in his over four decades in the private sector.

"These are people who could have pursued careers elsewhere," said Rosenthal. "But they chose instead to serve their communities and their neighbors. This report is full of evidence of that."

An example of this is the work that staff did to mobilize a coordinated response so municipalities could secure emergency medical coverage in the wake of the closure of the Crozer Health system.

This ACFR provides immense value to the County looking ahead, explaining where the value, obligations, and opportunities lie moving forward. The report shows reasons for optimism, with the General Fund finishing the year favorable to budgeted expenditures and every dollar of the County's American Rescue Plan Act funds having been obligated.

The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report can be accessed at delcopa.gov/controller/reports or by clicking [here](#).

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Delaware County Names Jeffrey Lange Interim Warden, Chris Welsh Chief of Human Services, and Taylor Dunn Public Defender



On Tuesday, Delaware County named Jeffrey Lange Interim Warden, Chris Welsh Deputy Executive Director, and Taylor Dunn Public Defender. Lange was appointed at the Jail Oversight Board Meeting while Welsh and Dunn were appointed at the Personnel Board Meeting.

“We are thrilled to have three incredibly accomplished individuals stepping into these roles,” said Delaware County Council Chair Richard Womack. “I look forward to working with them to

continue delivering for Delco residents.”

Lange, who has over 35 years of experience in public safety, will be uniquely positioned to lead George W. Hill Correctional Facility, which the County assumed control of in 2022, ending decades of private mismanagement. He has served as the Administrator of the Delaware County Office of the Medical Examiner since 2022, where he has overseen a crucial medicolegal operation with a multimillion-dollar budget. In this position he has been responsible for investigations, operational leadership, regulatory compliance, strategic planning, and workforce management.

Before coming to Delaware County, Mr. Lange built a career in public safety spanning over 35 years. Since 1989, he has served in a variety of roles within corrections, fire services, and law enforcement, demonstrating a longstanding commitment to public service. At his most recent stop before becoming Medical Examiner, he served for nearly two years as the Chief Investigator for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Special Commitment Center, a confinement center for the state's most violent sexual predators. Before his time in the Pacific Northwest, he served as the Chief of Police in Wiscasset and Paris, Maine and as a detective in Columbus, Ohio. His career also includes three tours as a Law Enforcement Professional (LEP) with the U.S. Department of Defense in Afghanistan and Iraq between 2008 and 2013.

Mr. Lange holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from Columbia Southern University. He also holds several professional certifications, including Certified Public Manager (CPM), Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP), and more. He is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Certificate in Emergency Management from Columbia Southern University.

For more information about George W. Hill Correctional Facility, visit delcopa.gov/prison.

Welsh was named Deputy Executive Director of Human Services & Community Programs after serving in an interim role for the last five months.

Over the last five months, Welsh has worked to restore critical mental health services, address homelessness and eviction, and use Opioid Settlement funding for prevention, treatment, and supportive services. Throughout the past five months, he has also worked to make the operations of Human Services more cost-effective, ensuring that limited resources are used to meet community needs.

Welsh brings a wealth of experience, highlighted by five and a half years as the Chief Public Defender for Delaware County. In this position, he worked with other system stakeholders to reduce the daily prison population at George W. Hill Correctional Facility by nearly 40%, or roughly 700 people per day. He also uncovered evidence of abuse in the county Juvenile Detention Center, leading to the closure of the facility in 2021. Additionally, Welsh transformed

the Public Defender's Office, improving the quality of legal representation for indigent clients, creating social work and investigation divisions, and expanding access to social services through the Partners for Justice Program.

Before starting at the County, Welsh was the Executive Director of the Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. In a role that set him up to make a difference in Delaware County, he spent nearly 13 years at the Defender Association of Philadelphia, where he worked his way up to Deputy Defender of Operations and System Development. Throughout his career, he has built up a wealth of experience working on major trials, juvenile defense, mental health, domestic violence, and more.

He has a bachelor's degree from St. Joseph's University in Political Science and Government, and graduated magna cum laude from the Temple University James E. Beasley School of Law. Welsh has deep Delco ties, with his mother growing up in Sharon Hill and attending Archbishop Prendergast High School and his father growing up in Springfield and attending Cardinal O'Hara High School. He currently lives in Havertown with his wife and two daughters.

To learn more about Human Services, visit delcopa.gov/human-services. To contact Human Services, please email humanservices@co.delaware.pa.us or call **610-713-2115**.

Since joining the Office of the Public Defender in 2014 as an intern, Dunn has served in a variety of roles, working his way to an executive leadership position. In his most recent role, he served as the Deputy Public Defender, where he oversaw the office's litigation divisions and led a team of managing attorneys responsible for adult trial, major felony, mental health, pretrial, and appellate practice.

A lifelong Public Defender, Dunn has litigated thousands of criminal matters, from misdemeanor offenses to homicide cases, while championing holistic client representation and innovative approaches to indigent defense. Throughout his career, he has supervised high-volume litigation teams, trained more than 30 new Public Defenders, and helped modernize the office through professionalism, strategic partnerships, and leadership development.

Dunn is committed to leading an office that works to transform the criminal legal system in ways that increase public safety and foster healthy communities. Supporting people on the margins, providing healing for those experiencing harm, and expanding access to justice and services for everyone.

A recognized leader in Pennsylvania's public defense community, Dunn served as President of the Delaware County Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers from 2024 to early 2026 and serves as a trainer for the Public Defender Association of Pennsylvania.

Dunn is a graduate of Loyola University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts in both Psychology and Philosophy and earned a Juris Doctor from Widener University Delaware Law School. Outside of the courtroom, he remains committed to serving the residents of Delaware County by serving as a member of Media Borough Council.

The Delaware County Office of the Public Defender provides legal representation to those accused of crimes in Delaware County who cannot afford a private attorney, representing thousands of clients each year and practicing in the District Justice Courts, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Appellate Courts of Pennsylvania. The Office of the Public Defender also represents those charged with contempt in Family Court who face the threat of incarceration and youth facing accusations in the Juvenile Court of Delaware County.

To learn more about the Delaware County Office of the Public Defender, visit delcopa.gov/delco-defenders. To contact the office, please call **610-891-4100**.

Delaware County Juvenile Court and Probation Services Partners with AJ Brown Foundation,

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Mindset of Champions, and Villanova University for Transformative Youth Workshop



Delaware County Juvenile Court and Probation Services partnered with the foundation of former Philadelphia Eagles legend AJ Brown, Mindset of Champions, and Villanova University to host an unforgettable youth development workshop this spring. Social Media and The Business of Sports was a dynamic two-day experience held in April at Villanova University, introducing 13 at risk and justice involved youth from Delaware County and

Philadelphia to the professional world behind sports.

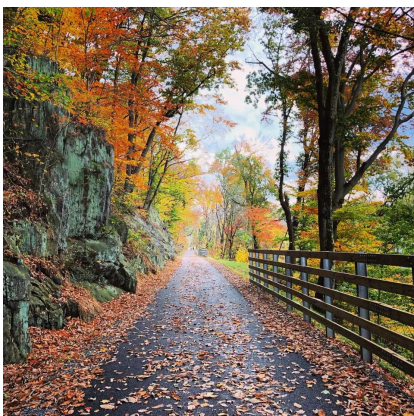
Throughout the workshop, participants explored the “business side of sports,” gaining exposure to concepts such as sports marketing, personal branding, digital strategy, and fan engagement. Youth were encouraged to reflect on their own strengths, including resilience, teamwork, leadership, and strategic thinking—and to consider how these transferable skills can open doors to future opportunities in sports related careers.

Delaware County probation staff and youth were thrilled to take part in this inspiring, informative, and hands on event. Activities included classroom instruction on branding, website design sessions, a tour of Villanova’s athletic facilities, discussions with university student athletes, and even a live FaceTime conversation with Super Bowl champion AJ Brown, who has since forced his way off the team he won the Super Bowl with. Participants also collaborated in groups to develop their own social media marketing campaigns, which they presented before their peers, Probation Officers, and a panel of sports professionals. Winning teams were recognized, and all participants proudly received a Certificate of Accreditation from Villanova University.

This workshop builds upon the powerful relationship our department established last year with the AJ Brown Foundation, inspired by AJ’s mission to “create a pathway for success that fosters resilience, confidence, and a brighter future for youth.” In May 2025, AJ Brown met with 13 Delaware County youth for a mentorship experience that was impactful, personal, and deeply motivating—setting the stage for continued collaboration and growth.

Delaware County Juvenile Court and Probation Services department looks forward to expanding this partnership and creating more opportunities that encourage positive youth development, broaden horizons, and spark long term success.

Take Part, Spread the Word, Stay Connected



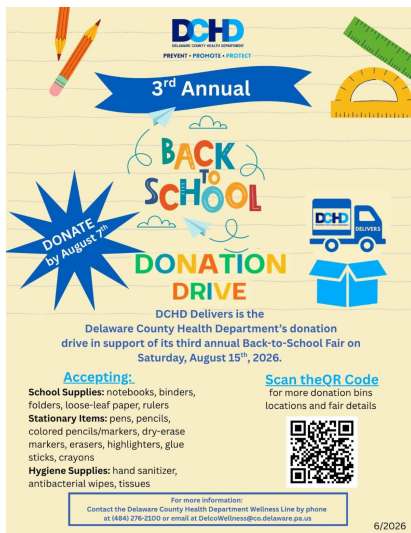
Delaware County to Unveil Expanded Chester Creek Trail Parking on Knowlton Road in Media on Tuesday, July 21

Delaware County will cut the ribbon on a new parking lot for the Chester Creek Trail at **249 W Knowlton Road, Media, PA 19063** with expanded handicap parking on **Tuesday, July 21 at 10 AM** alongside State Representative Leanne Krueger and other local partners. The project reflects a \$340,000 investment into Delaware County that will connect residents to communities, encourage residents to spend time



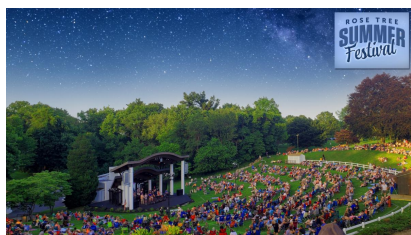
Delaware County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to Host Veteran Authors and Memoir Keepers Event in Havertown on Saturday, July 25

The Delaware County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is hosting a Veteran Authors and Memoir Keepers Event at the Haverford Township Free Library (**1601 Darby Road, Havertown, PA 19083**). Veterans and community members are encouraged to attend to discuss the military service of Delco residents and gather with local veterans. Please call **610-891-4645** for more information.



Delaware County Health Department Collecting Items for Back-to-School Donation Drive Until Friday, August 7

The Delaware County Health Department is collecting items for their Back to School Donation Drive across the county until Friday, August 7 ahead of their 3rd Annual Back to School Fair on Saturday, August 15 at the Delaware County Wellness Center (**125 Chester Avenue, Yeadon, PA 19050**). Collection bins can be found at 16 library locations, four county buildings, three YMCA branches, and nine Franklin Mint Credit Union locations across the county. Items being accepted include school supplies, stationary items, and hygiene supplies. For more information, visit delcopa.gov/health/dchd-donation-locations.



Enjoy the Rose Tree Summer Concert Series Wednesday-Sunday Through August 16!

Delaware County is excited to invite residents to the 51st Annual Summer Concert Series at Rose Tree Park, which began on Wednesday, June 17 with the Delaware County Symphony. Concerts will be held Wednesday-Sunday until

August 16 with a variety of bands performing, many of which will be honoring America's 250th Birthday with relevant performances. To learn more, visit delcopa.gov/parks/summer-festival.

Unearth a Story with Delaware County Libraries Summer Reading Programs!

Delaware County Libraries will be celebrating summer reading throughout the summer with a variety of programs and events. Each of the 28 local libraries will have Summer Reading Kick-off



Programs, there will be a challenge for young readers to visit as many libraries across Delco as possible, Beanstack will provide online reading challenges, libraries will partner with the Franklin Institute and GSK for science programs, and much more! For more information, visit delcolibraries.org/summer-quest.



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