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**EDITORS:** The following is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Chester County Public Information Officer Rebecca Brain at 484-798-8710, [rbrain@chesco.org](mailto:rbrain@chesco.org), or Rich Wisniewski at 856-981-9622, [rwisniewski@chesco.org](mailto:rwisniewski@chesco.org).

**PHOTO:** Chester County Commissioners and partners mark the official ground breaking of four more miles of the County's Schuylkill River Trail. Pictured (left to right) are: Dave Stauffer, Chester County Parks + Preservation; Seyi Akinlotan, PennDOT; Commissioner Marian Moskowitz; Ryan Gallagher, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission; Elaine Schaefer, Schuylkill River Greenways; Commissioner Josh Maxwell; Gail Lipstein and Bob Dredge, representing the Circuit Trails; Commissioner Michelle Kichline; and Ed Auble, Chester County Parks Board Chair.

## **Chester County Breaks Ground on Schuylkill River Trail Extension**

**PARKER FORD, PA\_** Chester County Commissioners Marian Moskowitz, Josh Maxwell and Michelle Kichline were joined by partners from PennDOT, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Schuylkill River Greenways and the Circuit Trails to break ground on Chester County's latest extension to the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT).

Phase II of the County's Schuylkill River Trail is a \$6 million, four-mile paved extension that will take the trail from Linfield Road at Parker Ford, to the new Route 422 Bridge crossing of the Schuylkill River at the Montgomery County border. Phase II also includes the construction of a new trailhead parking lot at Linfield Road, and the resurfacing and paving of the County's existing 5.75-mile section of the Trail.

"Our trails, parks and open spaces are such an important part of Chester County's quality of place, and they are loved by our residents," said Chester County Commissioners' Chair Marian Moskowitz. "In addition to providing recreational benefits that contribute to the positive health of those who live here, our trails, including the Schuylkill River Trail, are becoming an important component of the county's multimodal transportation network."

The Schuylkill River Trail is recognized as a local, regional and statewide transportation priority, constructed as a 'shared use path for non-motorized modes of travel'. Phase II is funded through the Federal Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and PennDOT is overseeing the construction of the four-mile extension.

Chester County Commissioner Josh Maxwell said, "The value of trails like the Schuylkill River Trail is substantial. Recreational use is important, but we know that trails are being used more and more for commuting, and businesses use them to attract and retain employees. We also know, based on the findings of our 'Return on Environment' report, that living close to protected open spaces, including trails, increases the value of homes by, on average, \$11,000 in Chester County."

The Connect goal of *Landscapes3*, Chester County’s comprehensive plan, calls for the development and implementation of a countywide trail network that will interconnect urban and suburban growth areas and destinations. The Schuylkill River Trail extension also advances the goal of the Circuit Trails, a vast regional trail network that currently includes more than 320 miles of completed multi-use trails, with a vision of more than 800 miles of interconnected trails across the nine-county Greater Philadelphia region.

“This four-mile extension of the Schuylkill River Trail is also important because it will complete one of the priority ‘puzzle pieces’, helping to fill a gap in the nearly 60 miles of trail connecting Reading to Philadelphia,” said Chester County Commissioner Michelle Kichline.

The SRT Phase II project is constructed partially on a former rail corridor and partially along the former towpath of the Schuylkill Navigation Company Canal. When completed in Chester County, the SRT will parallel the Schuylkill River from the Route 422 Bridge at Pottstown, south to the Route 29 Bridge into Mont Clare, a distance of approximately 12 miles.

The Schuylkill River Trail will ultimately run from Frackville in Schuylkill County to the Delaware River in Philadelphia.

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