



## **Pocopson Township Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force Meeting #2 AGENDA**

Monday, April 6, 2026

5:30PM to 7:00PM

Pocopson Township Building

**01. Welcome and Call to Order**

*Neil Vaughn, Task Force Chair*

**02. Meeting Overview**

*Beth Burns, Brandywine Conservancy*

**03. Public Engagement: Community Survey & Visioning Session**

*Liv Falcone, Brandywine Conservancy*

**04. Introduction to Open Space, & Recreation: Discussion of Township Accomplishments  
& Draft Recommendations**

*Beth Burns*

*Things to consider:*

- 1. In this section, what are top priorities? Is it select open space priorities, trails, bikeways, education, river access/recreation?*
- 2. Are there certain areas of the township where future projects should be focused?*
- 3. What 2-3 things would you like see accomplished in the next ten years relating to this topic?*

**05. Final Comments and Questions**

**06. Public Comment**

**Community Visioning Event – Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:30PM-7PM**

**Next Task Force Meeting – Natural & Historic Resources, Monday, June 1, 2026, 5:30-7:00PM**

## Park, Recreation, & Open Space 2014 Goal

Promote the establishment and maintenance of, and programming for, a network of park and recreation facilities, and permanently protect open space, to provide public health, ecological, economic, and quality of life benefits in a manner that is both cost effective and environmentally appropriate.

2014 Comp Plan Recommendations				2026 Update		
	Recommendation	Timeframe	Township Responsibility	Accomplished	Keep?	Questions/Notes for TF
8.1	Consistently define terms such as open space and different types of ownership in plans, ordinances, and other Township materials.	Short-term	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes		
8.2	Review existing provisions and adjust as necessary to provide the necessary funding and staff to maintain existing park, recreation, and trail facilities.	Short-term	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes	Keep	
8.3	Review and update as necessary formal recreation policies that address property issues and organizational structure.	Short-term	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes		
8.4	Investigation methods to generate funds from the local community for park and recreation facilities and initiatives.	Long-term	BOS, PRTC	Yes		Friends of Barnard Station established in 2020
8.5	Use the Township website and other methods of public outreach to publicize Township park and recreation facilities, with a focus on providing current information.	Short-term	BOS, PRTC, Staff	Yes		
8.6	Consider the adoption of an Official Map.	Long-term	BOS, PC, PRTC	No	Keep	
8.7	Pursue grant funding to support park, recreation, trail, and open space efforts.	Ongoing	BOS, PC, PRTC		Keep	

8.8	Continue to provide a balance of passive and active recreation facilities, and consider the capability of active recreation facilities to serve multiple uses.	Periodic	BOS, PRTC	Yes		
8.9	Consider the need for future park sites to meet specific needs.	Periodic	BOS, PRTC			Is additional park acquisition discussed?
8.10	Periodically review user fees at Township recreation facilities to ensure that they return funds to recreation facilities without discouraging users.	Periodic	BOS, PRTC, Staff	Yes	Keep	
8.11	Continue to offer special events to build awareness of parks as community centers.	Periodic	BOS, PRTC	Yes		Any interest in (from previous comp plan): Music performances and summer outdoor family film nights; Parades, bike races, 5K runs, and charity walks; Seasonal events such as the 4th of July, Christmas house tours and Easter egg hunts, farmers markets, artisans markets, outdoor restaurant festivals, 4H farm shows, vintage car shows, and other show events
8.12	Continue to support open space and agricultural preservation efforts.	Ongoing	BOS, PC	Yes	Keep; Change Language	
8.13	Continue to promote the creation of large, contiguous areas of homeowners association (HOA) open space.	Ongoing	BOS, PC	Yes	Keep; Change Language	
8.14	Continue to support the extension of a protected open space network via greenways.	Ongoing	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes	Keep; Change Language	

8.15	Continue to coordinate with agricultural landowners and other stakeholders to investigate options to protect agricultural interests.	Ongoing	BOS, PC	Yes	Keep; Change Language	
8.16	Establish guidelines that clearly state what types of protected open spaces do or do not permit public access.	Short-term	BOS, PC, PRTC			
8.17	Encourage appropriate management of open space lands.	Short-term and ongoing	BOS, PC, PRTC			Does the township have management plans for municipal lands?
8.18	Investigate the possibility of a wetland restoration project along Brandywine Creek.	Long-term	BOS, PC	No	Keep - Natural resources?	Has any floodplain restoration been done on the township owned property between 52 and 926 along the Brandywine Creek? Is this of interest?
8.19	Continue to plan and establish a recreational network of trails, paths, sidewalks, and bicycle routes.	Ongoing	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes	Keep	
8.20	Ensure ordinances include provisions that address the planning and funding of trails, paths, and bicycle routes through the land development process.	Short-term	BOS, PC, PRTC	Yes		
8.21	Continue to pursue opportunities to coordinate recreation programming initiatives with public, private, and institutional stakeholders.	Ongoing	BOS, PRTC			Does the township provide programming or is it through the school district/other orgs?
8.22	Support a balanced diversity of competitive sports and non-sports recreation programming to meet the various interests of the public.	Ongoing	BOS, PRTC			Above.

8.23	Support the continuation of responsible hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation as a formally recognized form of public recreation.	Ongoing	BOS, Deer Management Committee, Staff	Yes		
------	--	---------	---------------------------------------	-----	--	--

Total Accomplished	15
--------------------	----

## Pocopson Township Comprehensive Plan Survey

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

Help guide the future of Pocopson Township. Please participate in this survey!

Pocopson Township is updating their 2014 Comprehensive Plan, a municipal document that serves as the community's vision for the future. The plan provides guidance for coordinating decisions on the environment, roads, local regulations, and other municipal activities over the next 10 years. Your involvement is essential. This survey helps determine residents' concerns and community priorities about planning issues within the Township. Pocopson Township's Comprehensive Plan Task Force, with technical assistance from Brandywine Conservancy, is guiding this planning effort, and will use your feedback from this survey to develop the 2027 Pocopson Township Comprehensive Plan.

1. Are you a Township resident and/or own property in the Township?
  - a. Yes, resident and own
  - b. Yes, resident and rent
  - c. No, but I own property in Pocopson Township
  
2. How long have you lived/owned property in Pocopson Township?
  - a. Less than 1 year
  - b. 1 year - less than 3 years
  - c. 3 years - less than 5 years
  - d. 5 years - 10 years
  - e. Between 10 and 20 years
  - f. More than 20 years
  
3. What is your age group?
  - a. Under 18
  - b. 18-24
  - c. 25-39
  - d. 40-54
  - e. 55-74
  - f. 74+
  - g. Prefer not to answer
  
4. In which general area of the Township do you live? Will provide a map splitting the township into four sections.
  
5. What are the main reasons you chose to live (or own property) in Pocopson Township?
  - a. Lifetime resident

- b. Family/friends nearby
  - c. Proximity to work
  - d. Average housing costs
  - e. Safety/low crime rates
  - f. Scenic beauty
  - g. Rural character
  - h. Job opportunities
  - i. Public school quality
  - j. Other (please specify)
6. What are the most important things to consider when planning for the Township's future?
- a. Retain rural character, scenic views and historic resources
  - b. Protect natural resources and open space
  - c. Address climate-related impacts (ex: frequent flooding)
  - d. Housing affordability and accessibility
  - e. Maintain community services (i.e., police, fire, healthcare)
  - f. Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy
  - g. Manage development, growth, traffic and roadway improvements
  - h. Improve access to local and regional trails
  - i. Other (please specify)
7. What would cause you to leave/sell your property in Pocopson Township, other than a change in place of employment or other unexpected life circumstances?
- a. Overdevelopment
  - b. Limited shopping/entertainment
  - c. Limited community services (i.e., police, fire, healthcare)
  - d. Long commute
  - e. Public school quality
  - f. Not enough parks/recreation
  - g. Limited walking/biking access
  - h. High taxes
  - i. High cost of living
  - j. Too many regulations
  - k. Too few regulations
  - l. Too much traffic
  - m. Would not leave regardless of future development
  - n. Other (please specify)
8. What type of businesses would you like to see attracted to Pocopson Township?
9. Should the Township prioritize the following? (under PA law, the Township has an obligation to provide for all land uses). Agree/Disagree/Neutral
- a. Open space and historic resource protection

- b. Parks/recreation/trails
- c. Renewable energy (e.g., solar farms)
- d. Agricultural uses (e.g., farming, equestrian, livestock, etc.)
- e. Single-family housing
- f. Diversity of housing types (e.g., twins, duplexes, townhouses, apartments)
- g. Accessory dwelling units (e.g., in-law suites, caretaker cottage, etc.)
- h. Senior housing/assisted living/long-term care
- i. Mobile homes
- j. Mixed residential/commercial uses
- k. Small-scale commercial uses (i.e., local store)
- l. Large regional commercial uses (i.e., shopping center)
- m. Medical/healthcare uses
- n. Office/employment centers/home occupations
- o. Light industrial uses (i.e., industrial parks)
- p. Industrial uses (i.e., mineral/water extraction)
- q. Tower-based Wireless Communication Facilities
- r. Other (please specify)

10. What recreational facilities would you like to see considered in future recreational planning/expansion?

- a. Active recreation (e.g., playgrounds, splash pad)
- b. Passive recreation (e.g., walking trails, nature areas)
- c. Sports fields and courts (i.e., basketball courts, baseball/softball fields, pickleball courts)
- d. Community gathering spaces (e.g., picnic areas, community gardens)
- e. Indoor recreation
- f. Off-leash dog park
- g. Other (please specify)

11. Complete the following statement: "In the future, Pocopson Township should seek to ..."

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION

---

*Liv Falcone and Beth Burns, Brandywine Conservancy*

*April 6, 2026*



**BRANDYWINE  
CONSERVANCY**

# Agenda, Monday, April 6, 2026

- **Welcome and Call to Order-** *Neil Vaughn, Task Force Chair*
- **Meeting Overview** - *Beth Burns*
- **Public Engagement: Community Survey & Visioning Session** - *Liv Falcone*
- **Introduction to Open Space, & Recreation: Discussion of Township Accomplishments & Draft Recommendations** - *Beth Burns*
  - *Things to consider:*
    - *In this section, what are top priorities? Is it select open space priorities, trails, bikeways, education, river access/recreation?*
    - *Are there certain areas of the township where future projects should be focused?*
    - *What 2-3 things would you like see accomplished in the next ten years relating to this topic?*
- **Final Comments and Questions**

# Community Survey

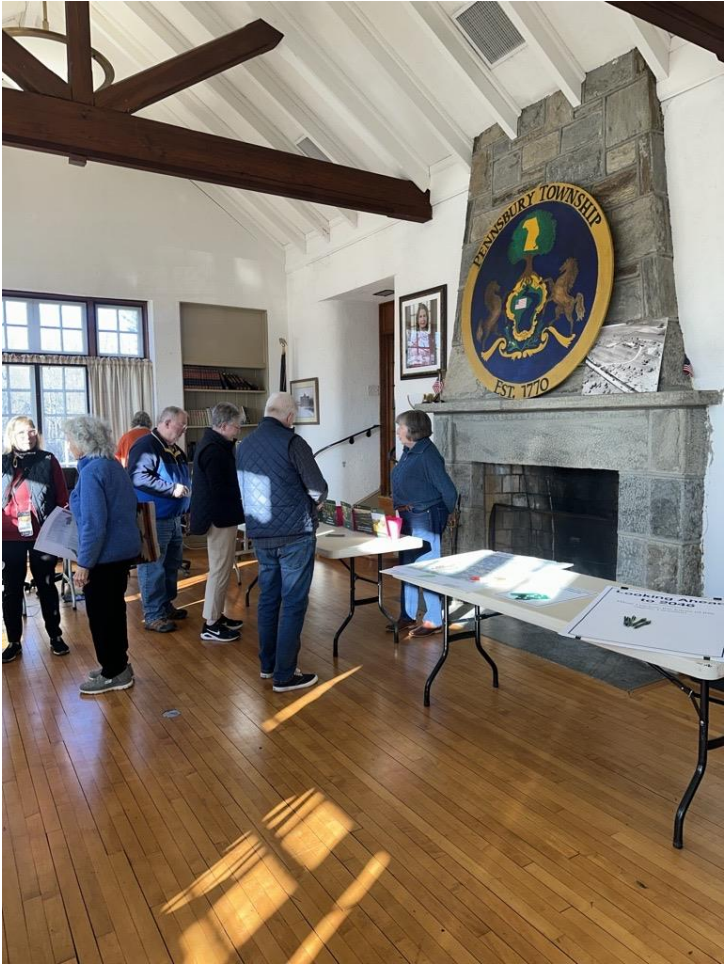


## **Pocopson Township Comprehensive Plan Survey**

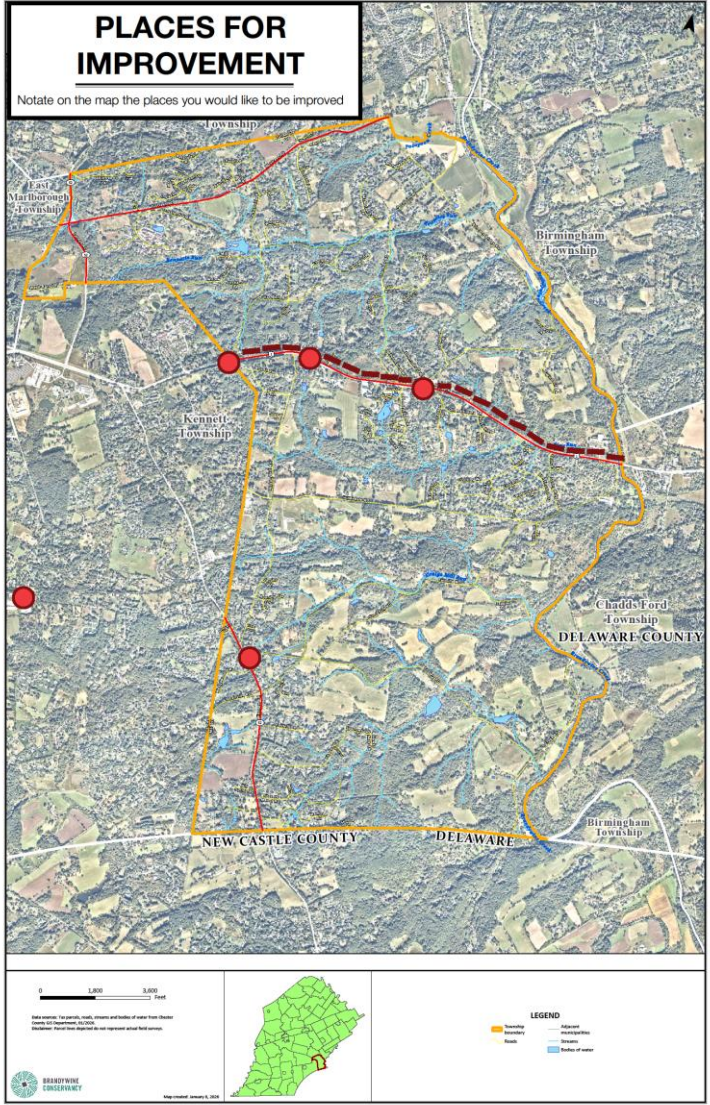
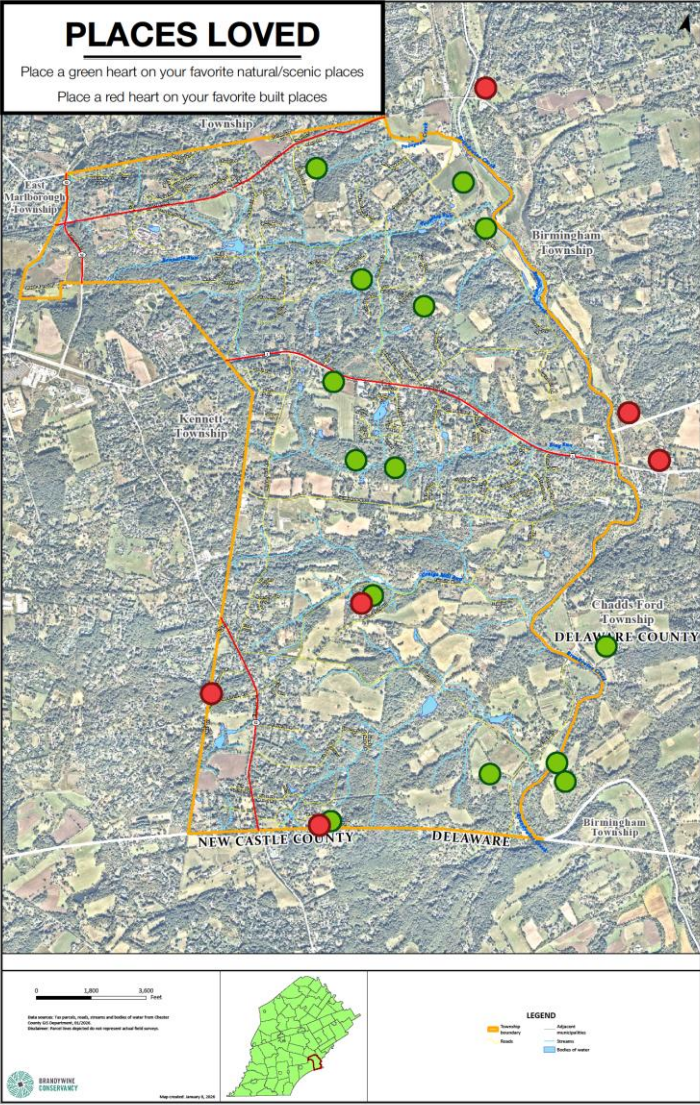
Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

Pocopson Township is updating their 2014 Comprehensive Plan, a municipal document that serves as the community's vision for the future. The plan provides guidance for coordinating decisions on the environment, roads, local regulations, and other municipal activities over the next 10 years. Your involvement is essential. This survey helps determine residents' concerns and community priorities about planning

# Community Visioning



Example: Pennsbury Township  
Community Visioning (March 2026)



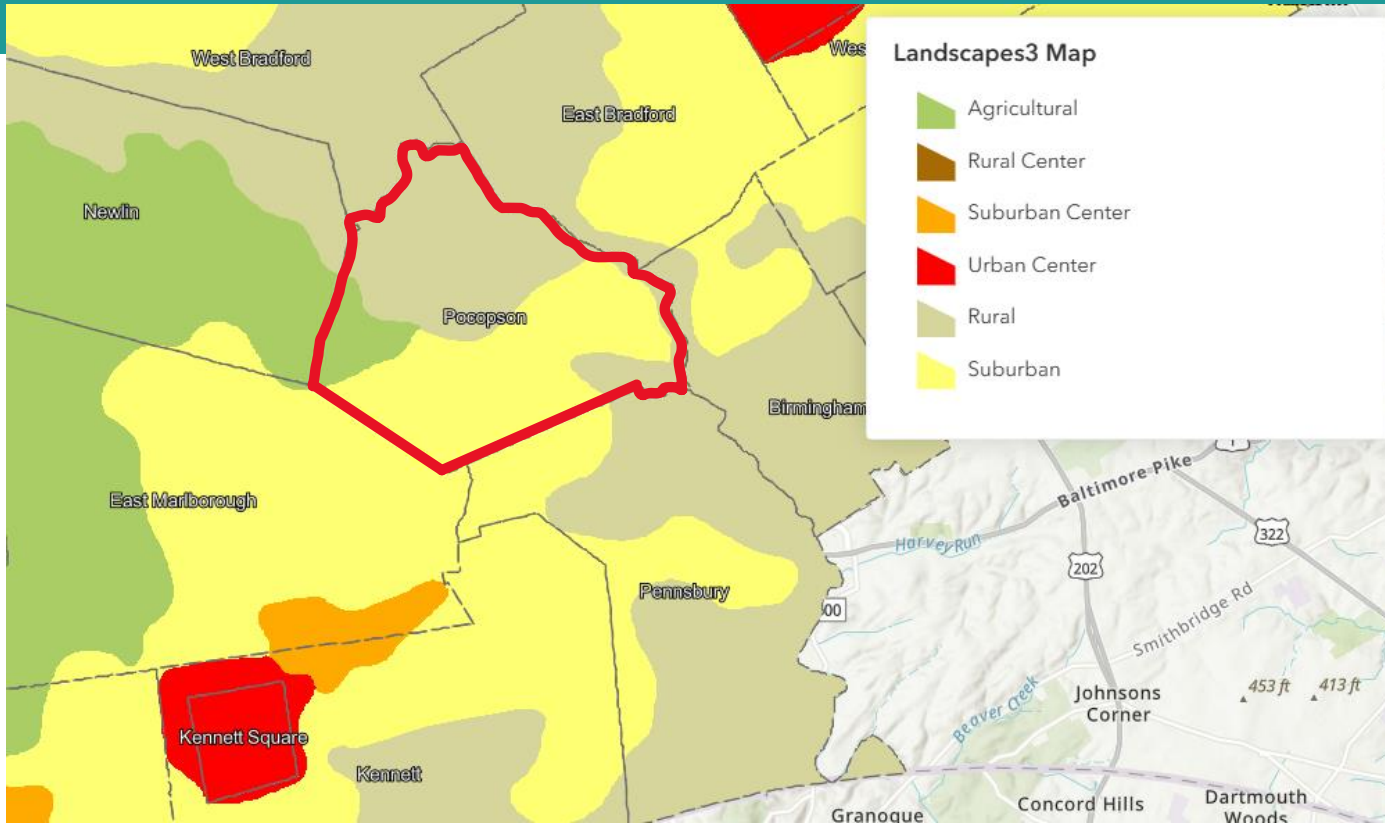
Example Maps from Pennsbury's Visioning



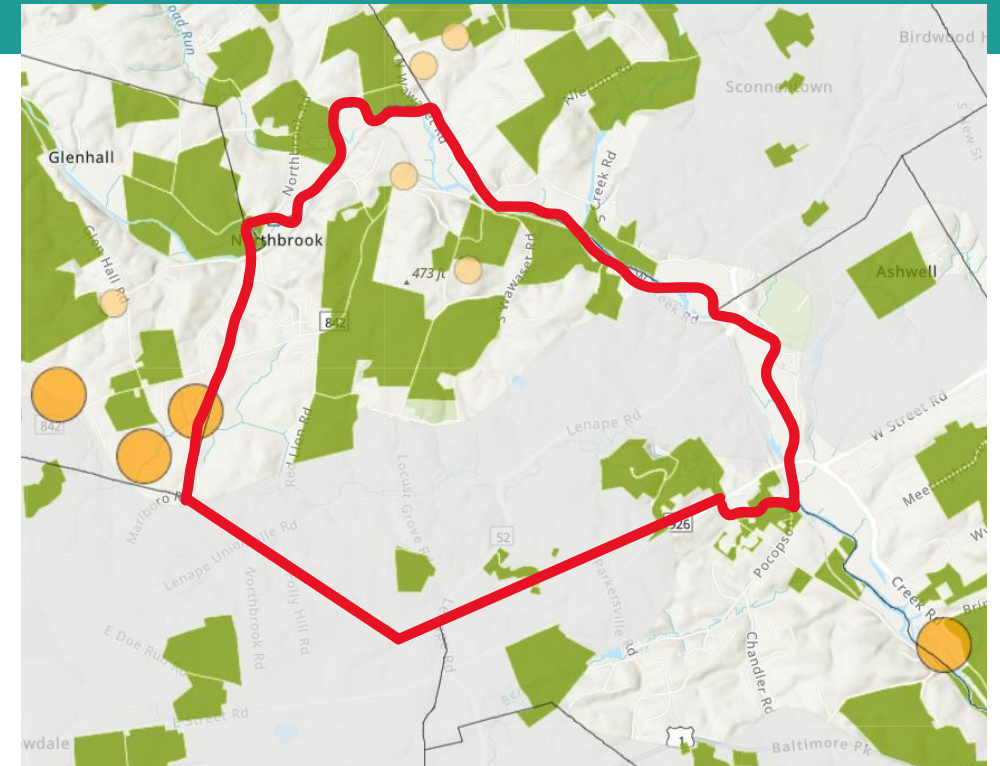
# OPEN SPACE



# LANDSCAPES3

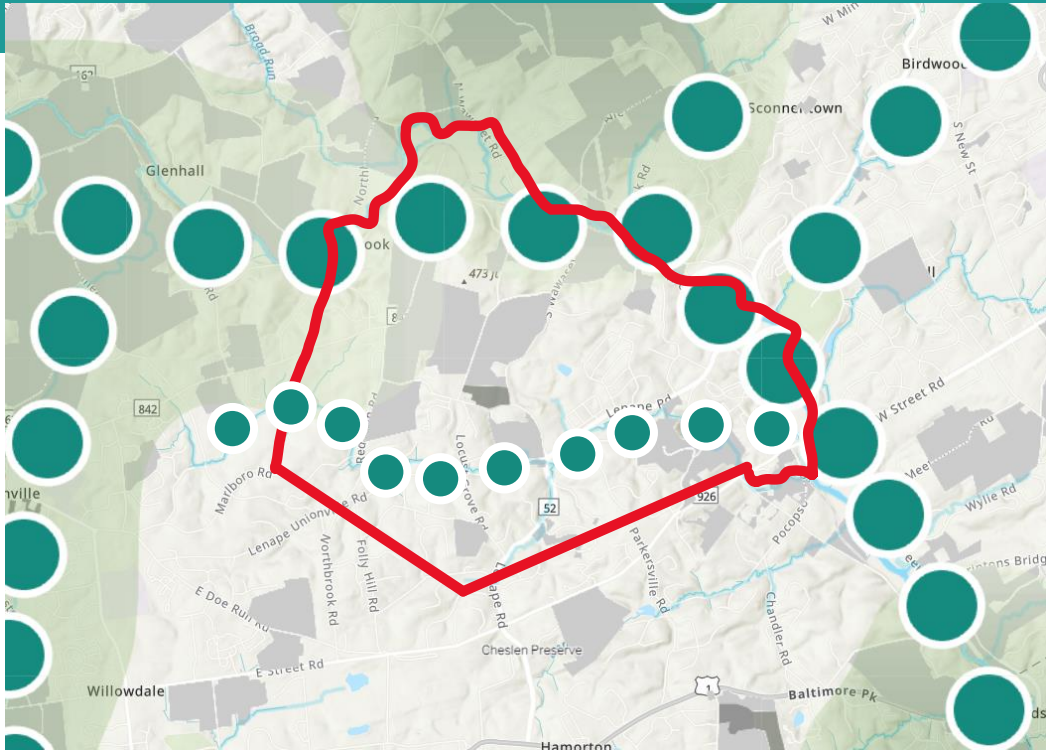


Landscapes Map



Agricultural Preservation Priorities

# LANDSCAPES 3



Conservation Clusters and Corridors

- ● ● Conservation corridor
- Protected open space cluster
- Public park
- Other protected open space








Natural Resource Priority Protection





- Natural heritage inventory core habitat area
- Important bird areas (IBA) core conservation
- Special terrestrial resources
- Creek
- Watershed boundary and name
- Exceptional value and high quality drainage area
- Impaired streams
- Natural trout fisheries
- Sources of water supplies
- Natural trout fisheries and sources of water supplies

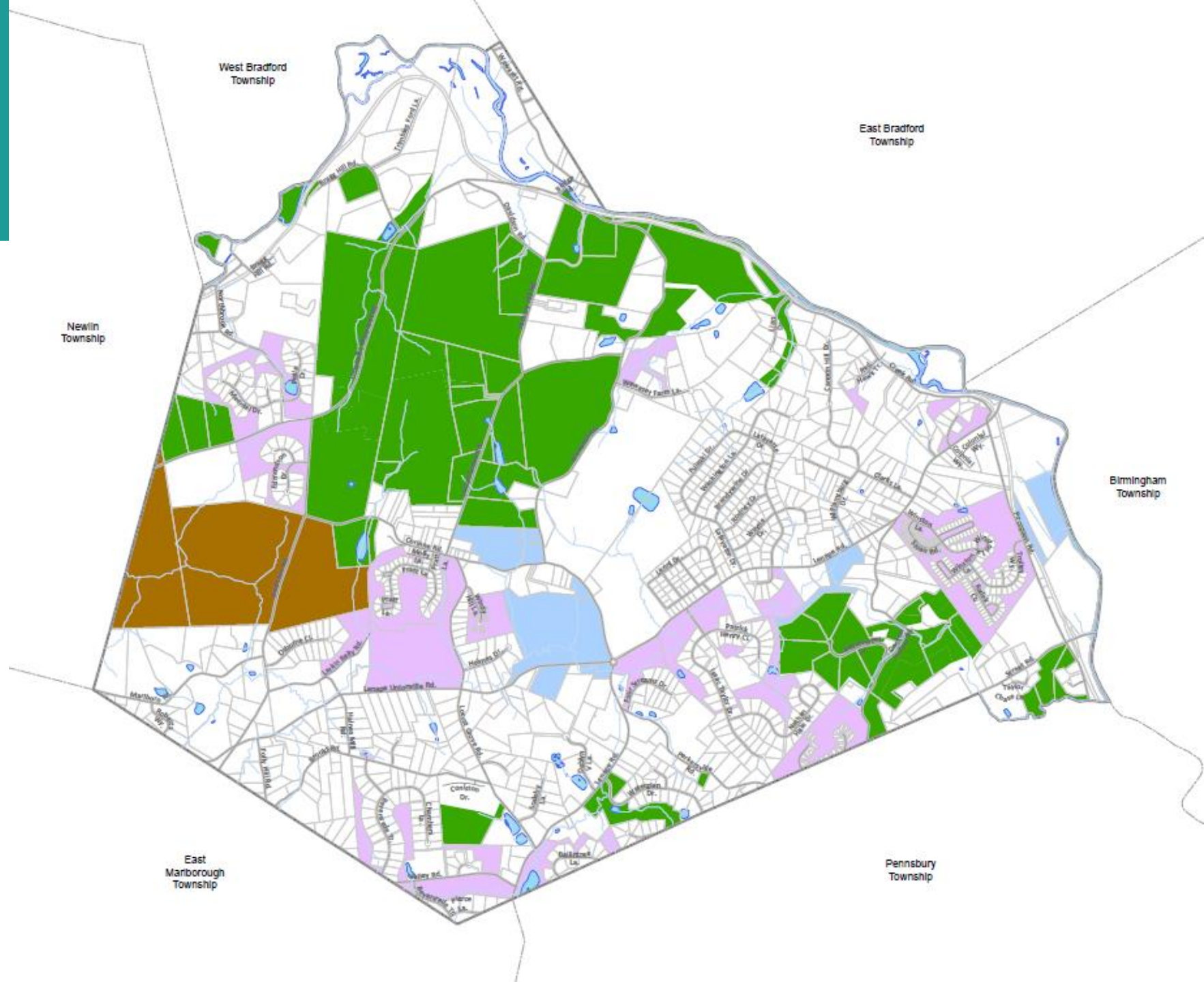


# PROTECTED LANDS MAP






-  Roads
-  Water resources
-  Tax parcels
-  Adjacent municipalities
-  Township boundary-5,328 acres

Protected lands-2027.2 ac. (38.0% of twp)





-  Lands owned or eased by land trusts-1179.5 ac. (22.1% of twp.)
-  County agricultural easements-264.6 ac. (5.0% of twp.)
-  Public lands (federal, state, county, and municipal)-139.6 ac. (2.6% of twp.)
-  Other protected lands (HOA, spray, deed-restricted, etc.)-443.5 ac. (8.3% of twp.)

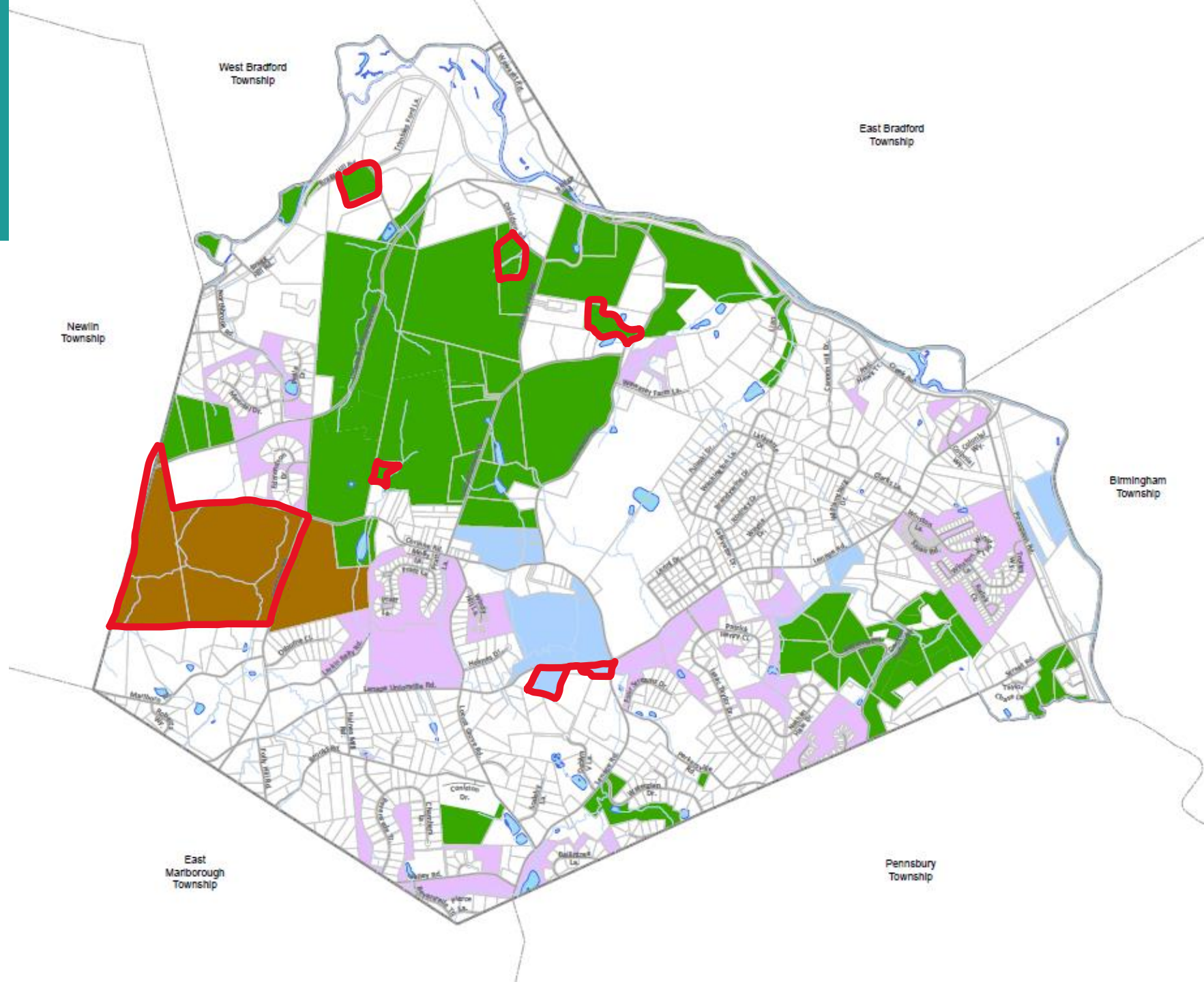


# LANDS PRESERVED SINCE 2014

-  Roads
-  Water resources
-  Tax parcels
-  Adjacent municipalities
-  Township boundary-5,328 acres

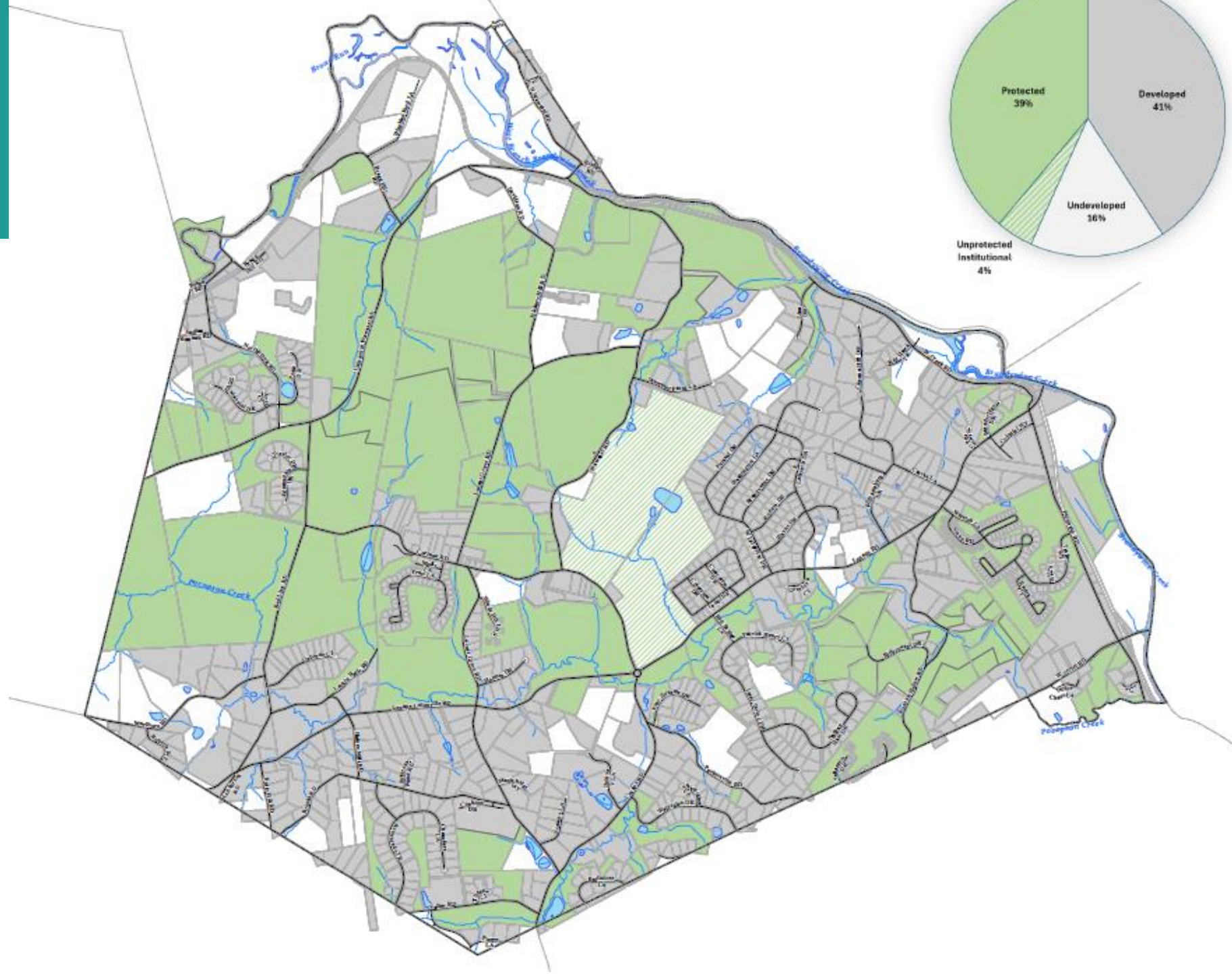
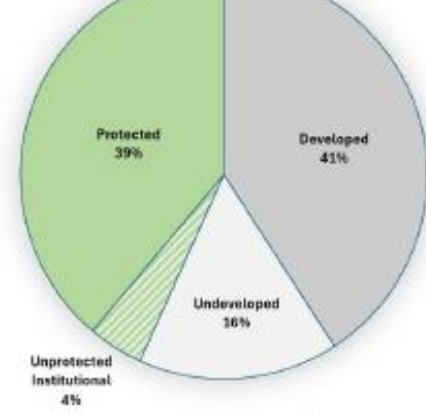
Protected lands-2027.2 ac. (38.0% of twp)

-  Lands owned or eased by land trusts-1179.5 ac. (22.1% of twp.)
-  County agricultural easements-264.6 ac. (5.0% of twp.)
-  Public lands (federal, state, county, and municipal)-139.6 ac. (2.6% of twp.)
-  Other protected lands (HOA, spray, deed-restricted, etc.)-443.5 ac. (8.3% of twp.)



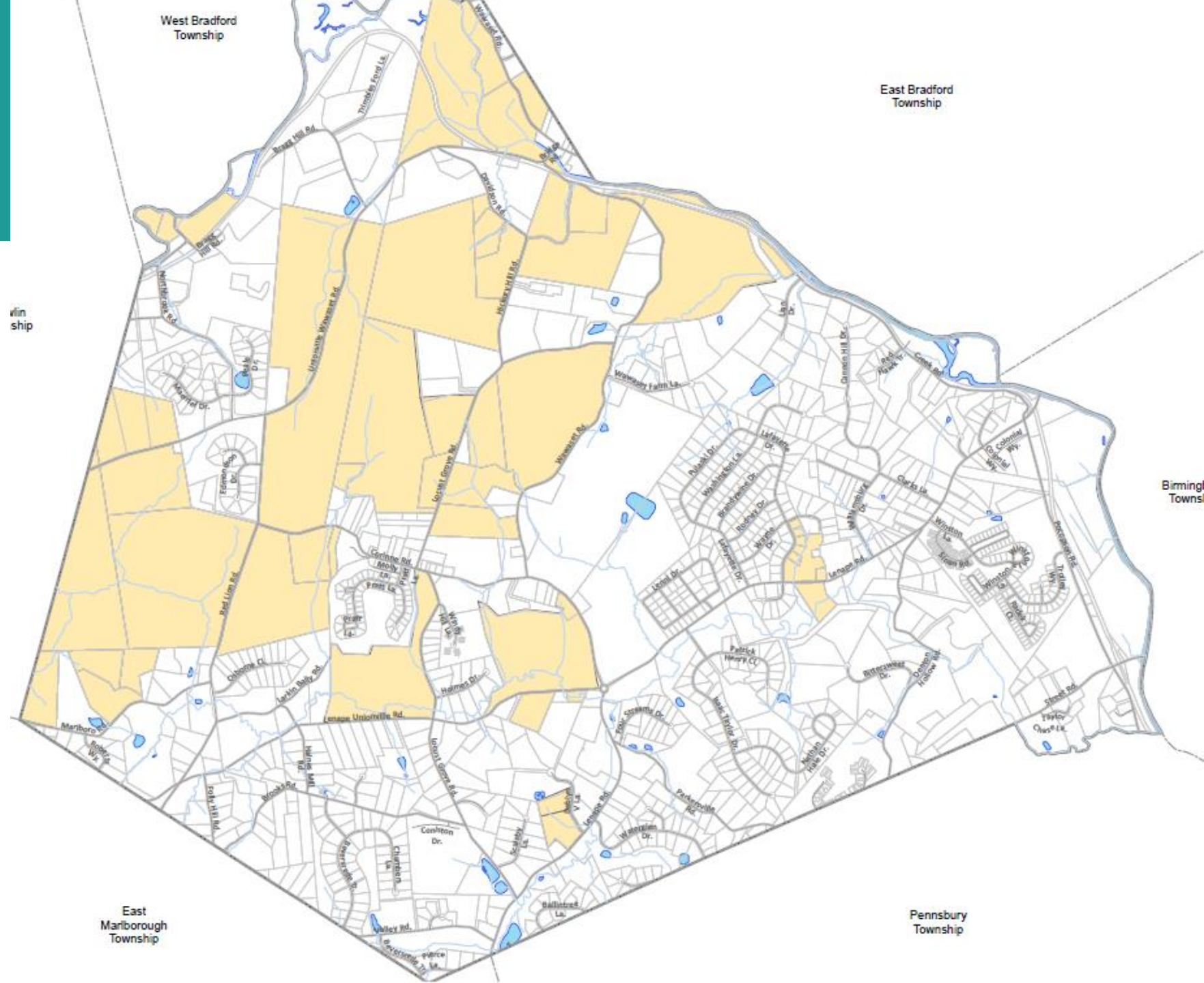
# OPEN SPACE AVAILABILITY

- Township boundary
- Roads
- Adjacent municipalities
- Tax parcels
- Streams
- Bodies of water
- Developed~2099.0 acres
- Undeveloped~807.6 acres
- Unprotected Institutional~222.9 acres
- Protected lands~1970 acres



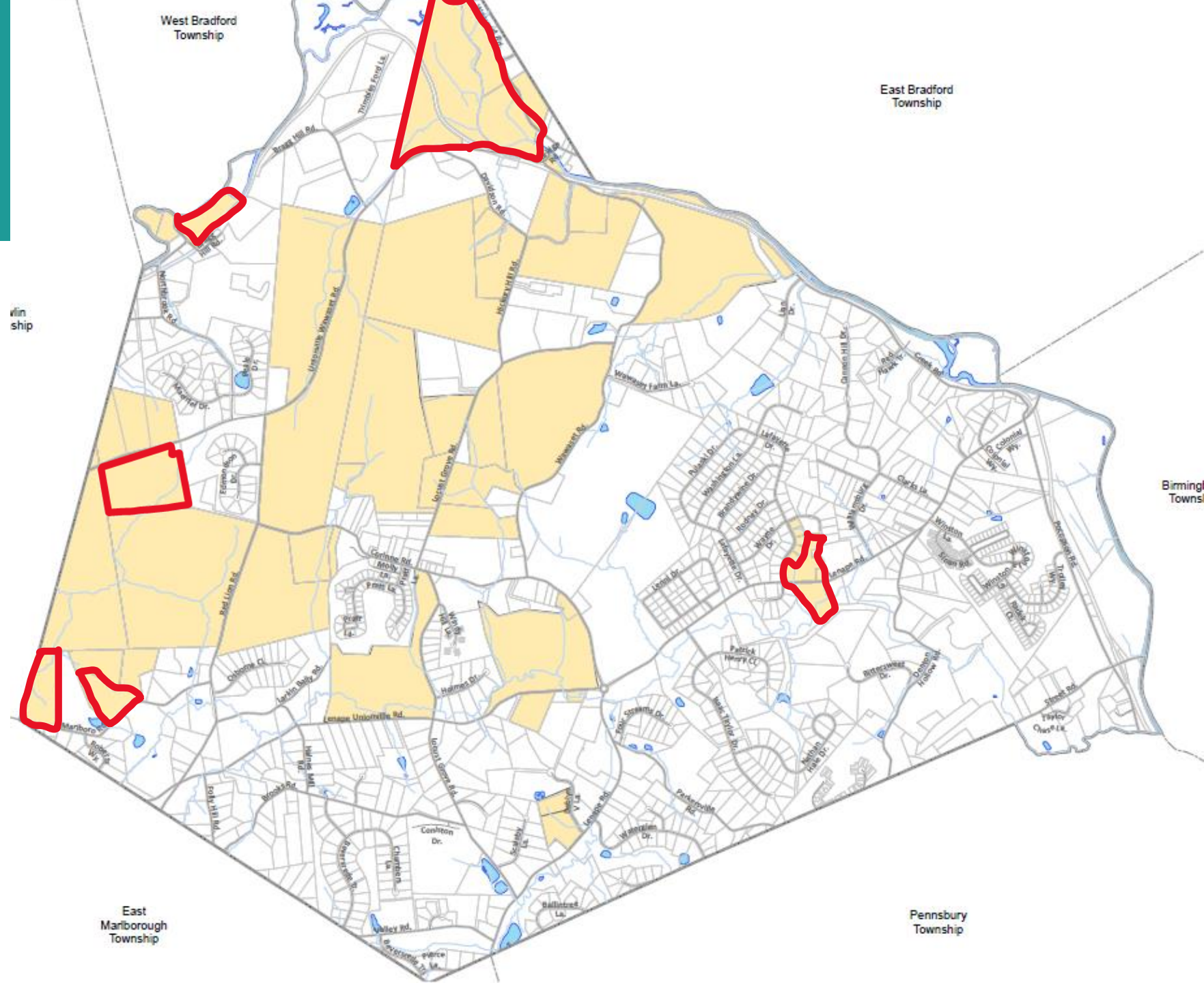
# AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS

- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Tax parcels
- Roads
- Water resources
- Adjacent municipalities
- Agricultural Security Areas(2023)-1495 acres



# AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS

- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Tax parcels
- Roads
- Water resources
- Adjacent municipalities
- Agricultural Security Areas(2023)-1495 acres

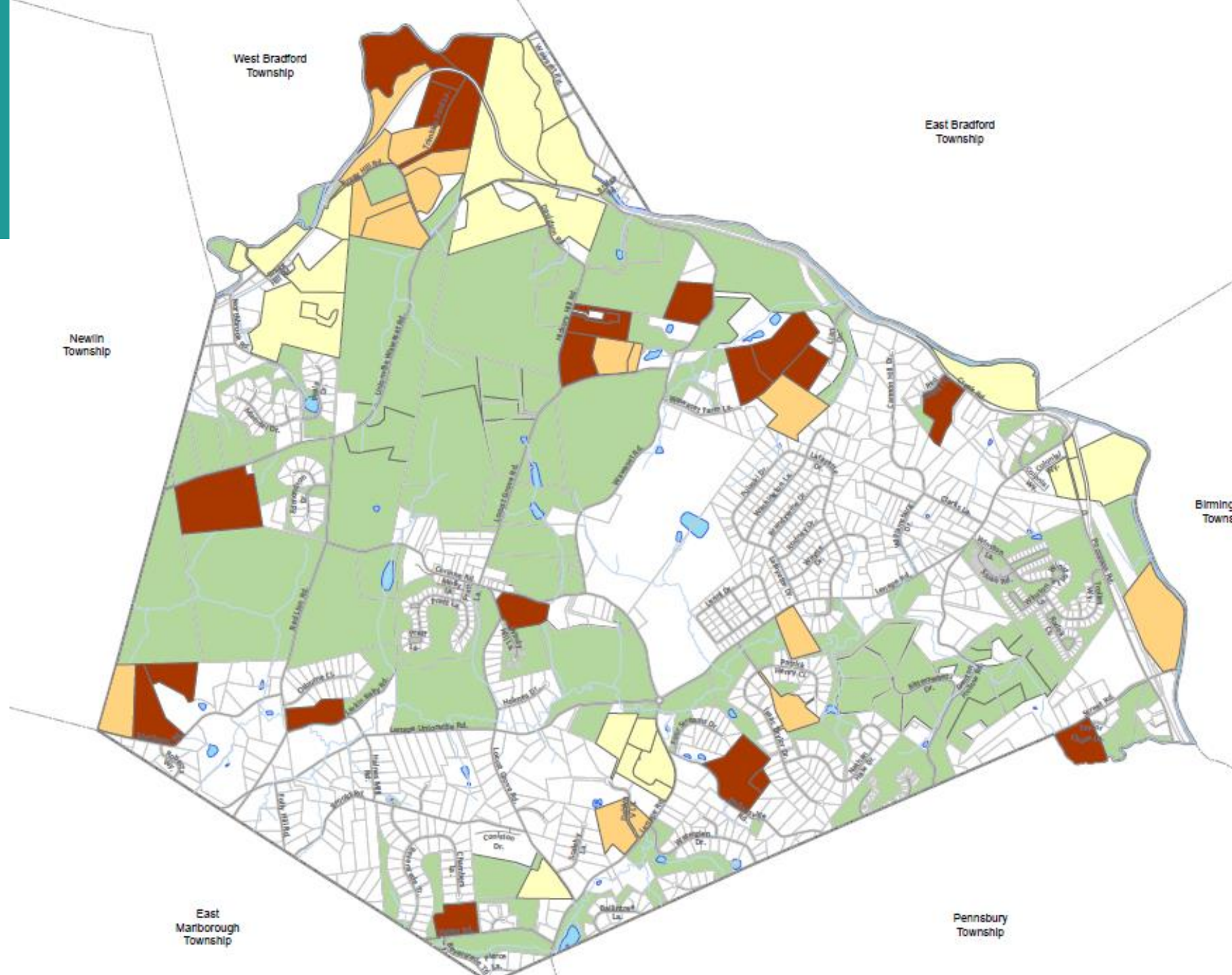


# AG OPPORTUNITIES

- Roads
- Water resources
- Tax parcels
- Adjacent municipalities
- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Protected lands

Preservation Opportunities\*-868.5 acres (16.3% of township)

- Agricultural soils less than 50%-362.2 acres (6.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 50-75%-201.0 acres (3.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 75% and greater-305.3 acres (5.7% of twp.)

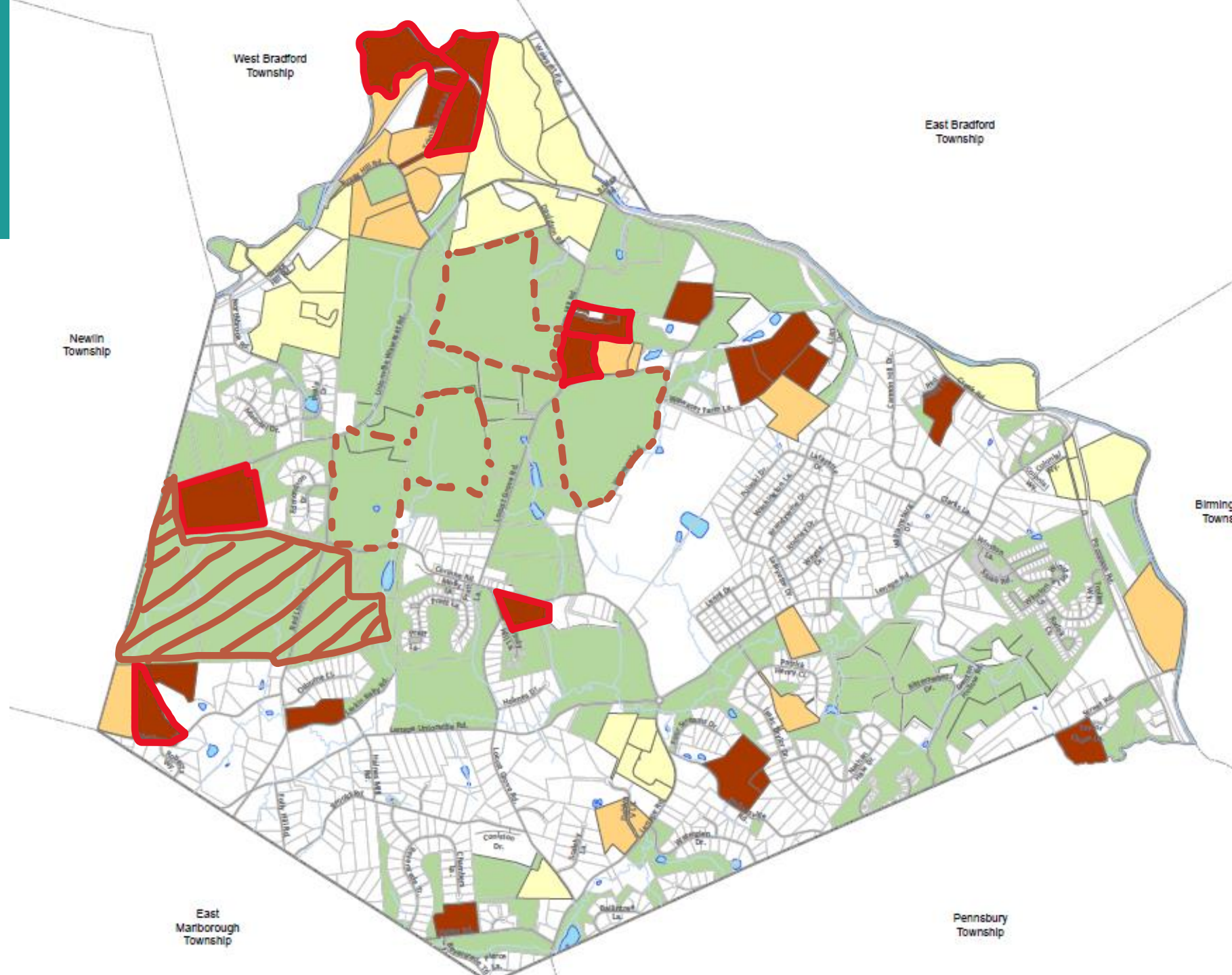


# AG OPPORTUNITIES

- Roads
- Water resources
- Tax parcels
- Adjacent municipalities
- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Protected lands

Preservation Opportunities\*-868.5 acres (16.3% of township)

- Agricultural soils less than 50%-362.2 acres (6.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 50-75%-201.0 acres (3.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 75% and greater-305.3 acres (5.7% of twp.)



# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1

CRITICALLY EVALUATE  
REMAINING AVAILABLE  
LANDS AND SEEK  
OPPORTUNITIES,  
PARTNERS, AND FUNDING  
TO PRESERVE.

2

ENSURE EQUITABLE  
ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE  
FOR PASSIVE REC. AND  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

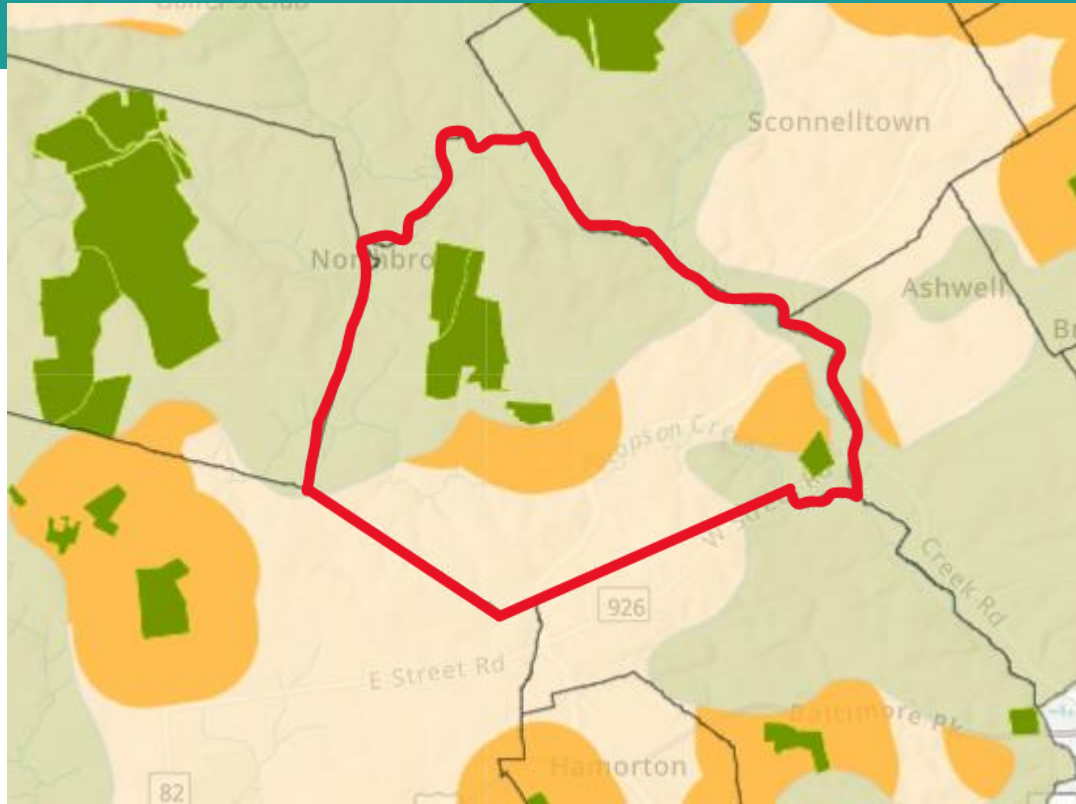
3

UTILIZE FEE-OWNED  
PROPERTIES AS  
DEMONSTRATIONS OF GOOD  
STEWARDSHIP AND LAND  
RESTORATION STRATEGIES TO  
PROMOTE SIMILAR PRACTICES  
AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON  
THE BENEFITS OF  
CONSERVATION.

# RECREATION & TRAILS

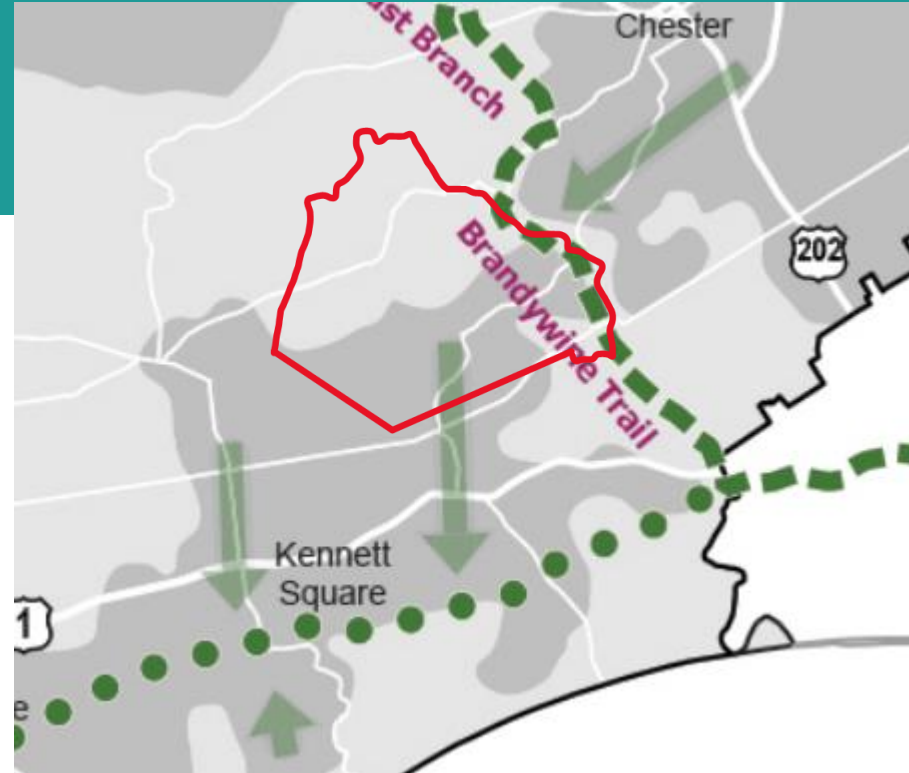


# LANDSCAPES3



## Rec opportunities

- Public recreational opportunity  
(Municipal, county, state, and national parks; publicly accessible preserves; public school lands)
- Landscapes3 growth areas located within 1/2 mile of a public recreational opportunity
- Landscapes3 growth areas located beyond 1/2 mile of a public recreational opportunity
- Landscapes3 rural resource areas



## Circuit Trails

### Circuit Trails












- Existing  
Trails currently open for use, as of 2015.
- Proposed  
Actively under study, or design, or in the acquisition or funding stage.
- Potential addition  
Potential opportunity for multi-use trail network expansion; additional planning recommended.
- Generalized trail connections  
Potential opportunity for a local trail connection to the regional network; additional planning recommended.

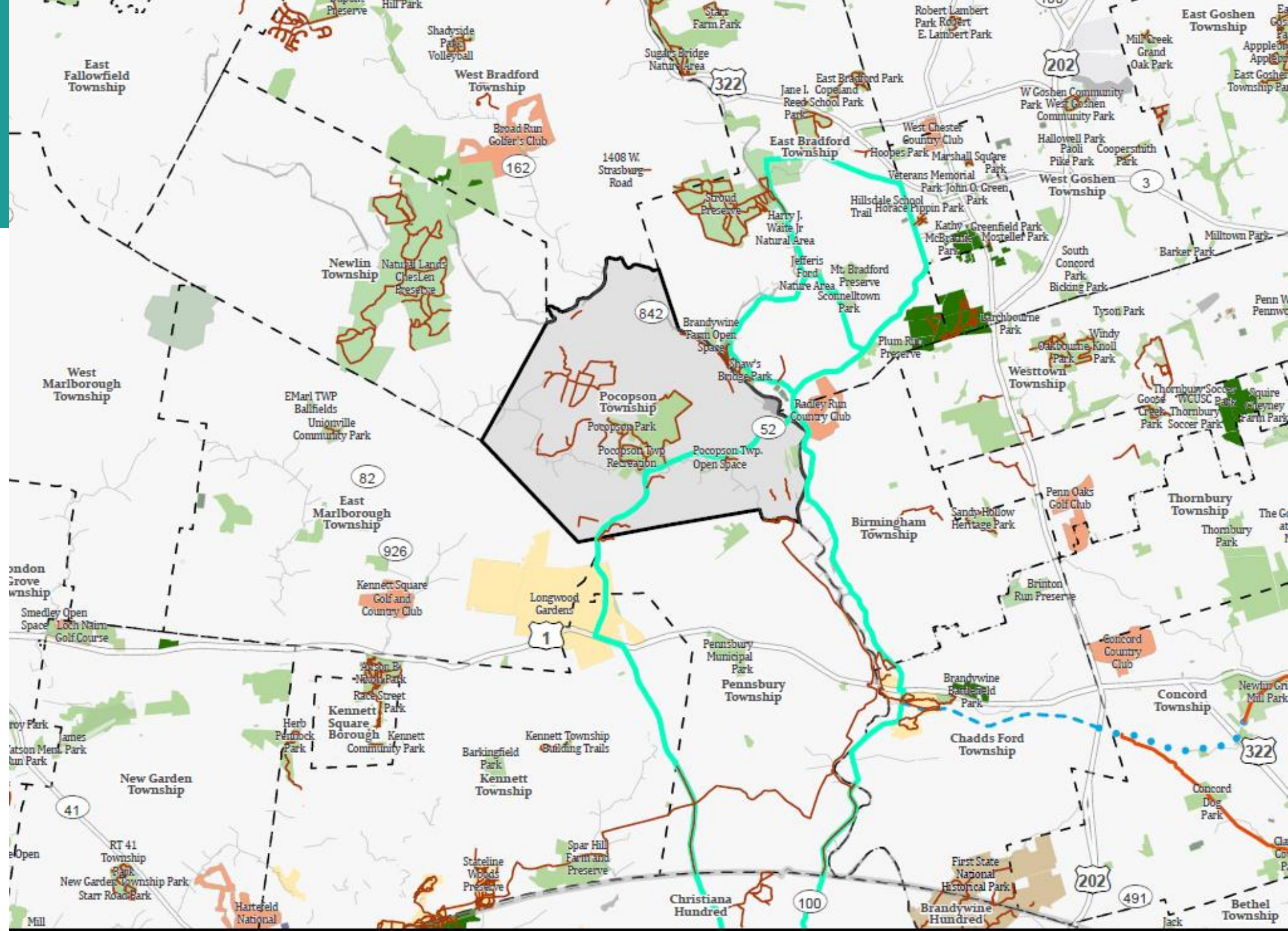
### Landscapes3

- Growth areas
- Rural resource areas

# REGIONAL REC

## LEGEND

-  Township boundary
-  Golf course
-  Non-profit gardens and open space
-  Federal lands
-  County and Municipal lands
-  State lands
-  Scenic Byway
-  Existing Trails
- DVRPC Circuit Trails**
-  DVRPC Circuit Trails (in progress)
-  DVRPC Circuit Trails (pipeline)
-  DVRPC Circuit Trails (planned)




















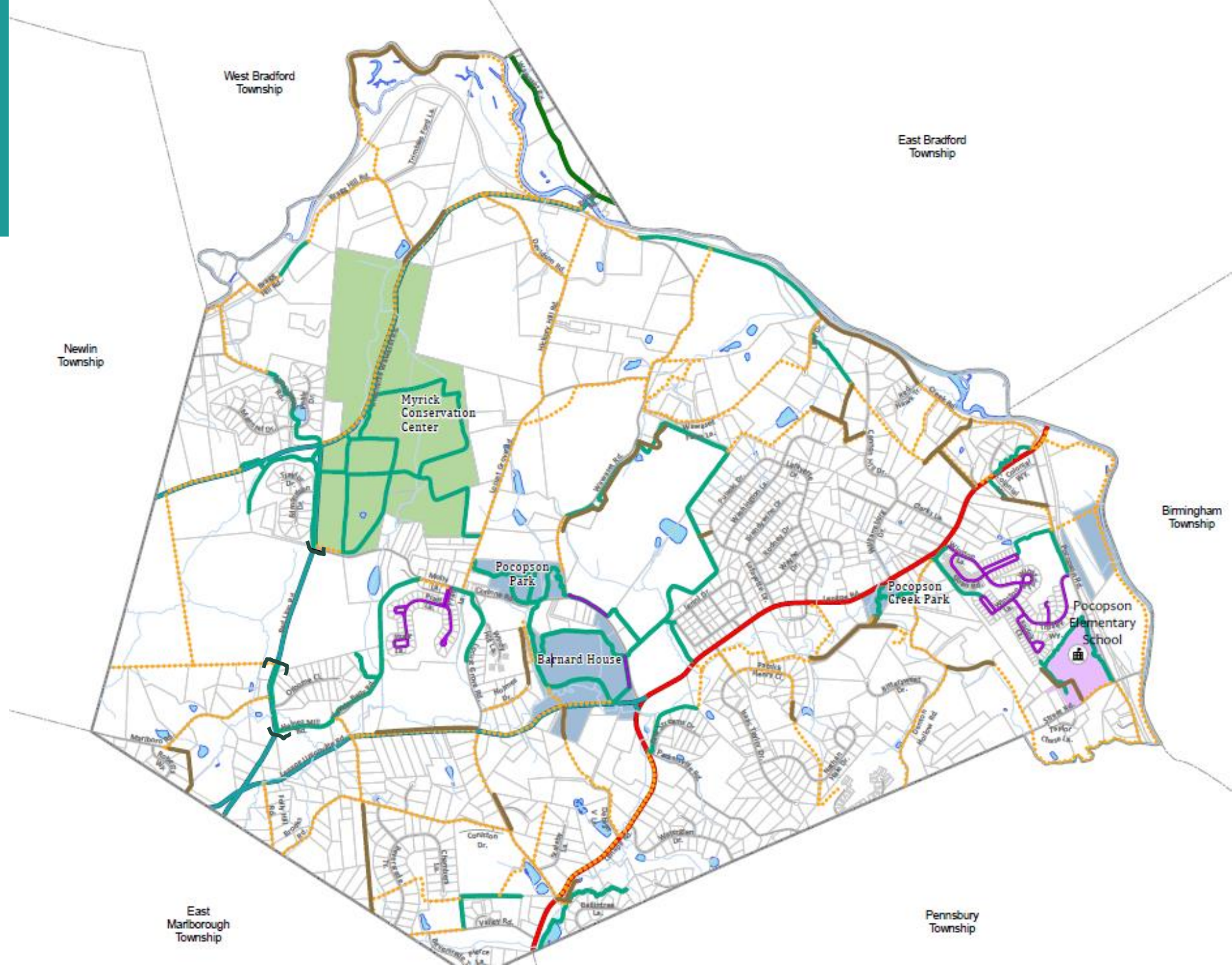
**BRANDYWINE  
CONSERVANCY**

# Parks and Recreational Areas

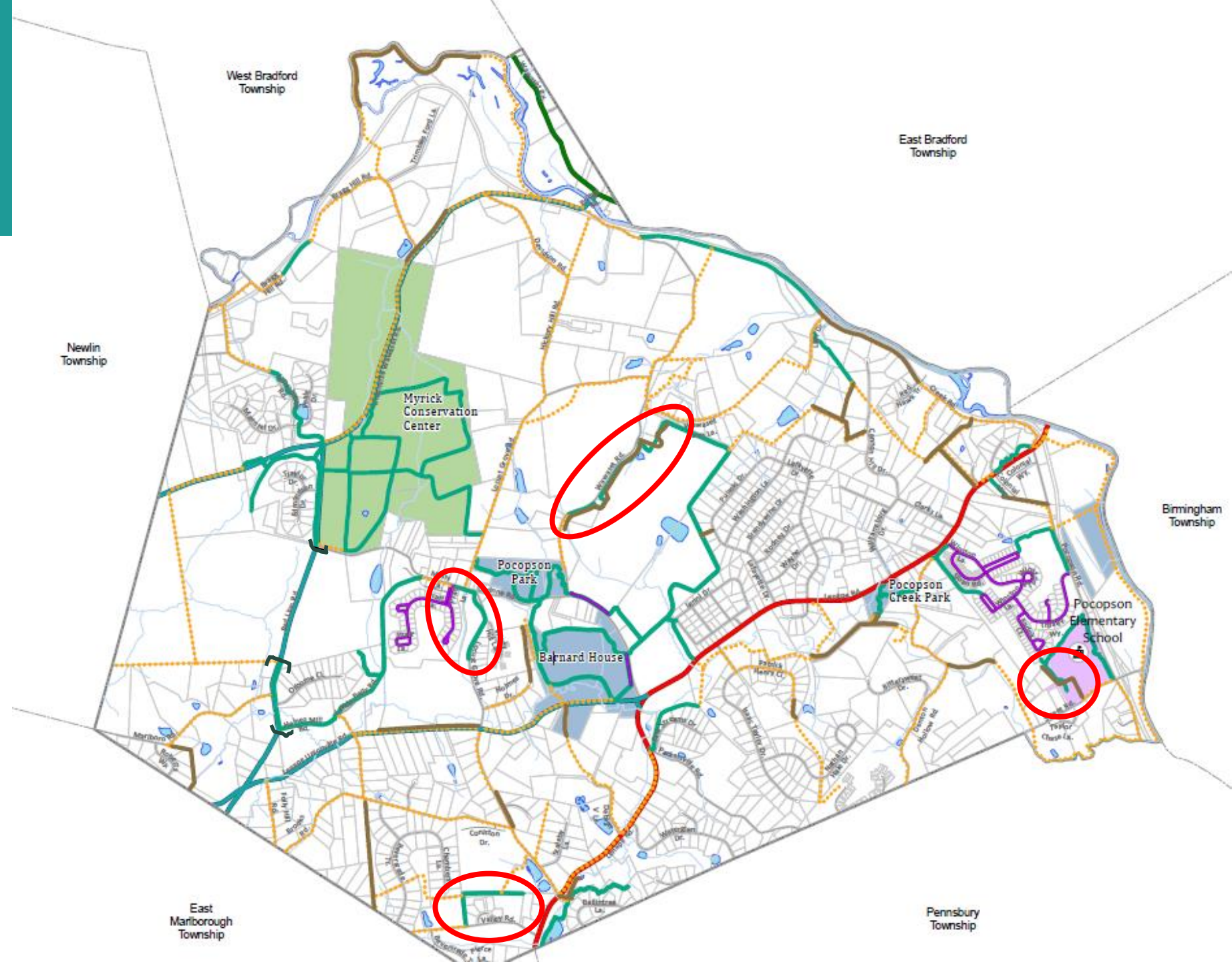
Facility Name/Location	Acres	Amenities
<b>Township Parks</b>		
Pocopson Park	28.9	Playgrounds, courts, fields, pavilion, trails
Pocopson Creek Park	8.5*	Trail
Barnard House Property	64.2	Trail
<b>Limited Public Access within Pocopson Township</b>		
Myrick Conservation Center	318	Trails (4.4 miles), Horseback riding
<b>Private Recreation within Pocopson</b>		
Northbrook Canoe	6	Canoeing, kayaking, and tubing on Brandywine Creek
<b>Municipal/County Parks/Rec near Pocopson</b>		
Shaw's Bridge Park, East Bradford	37	Trails, Brandywine Creek access
Anson B. Nixon, Kennett Square	106	Trails, fields, courts, and playground
Pennsbury Park, Pennsbury	54	Trails and dog park
<b>Limited Public Access Recreation outside of Pocopson (Free)</b>		
ChesLen Preserve, Natural Lands, Newlin Township	1,282	Trails, Brandywine Creek Access
Stroud Preserve, Natural Lands, East Bradford Township	571	Trails, Brandywine Creek Access
<b>Limited Public Access outside of Pocopson (Fee)</b>		
Longwood Gardens	1,077	Public botanical garden with trails and events

# EXISTING RECREATION

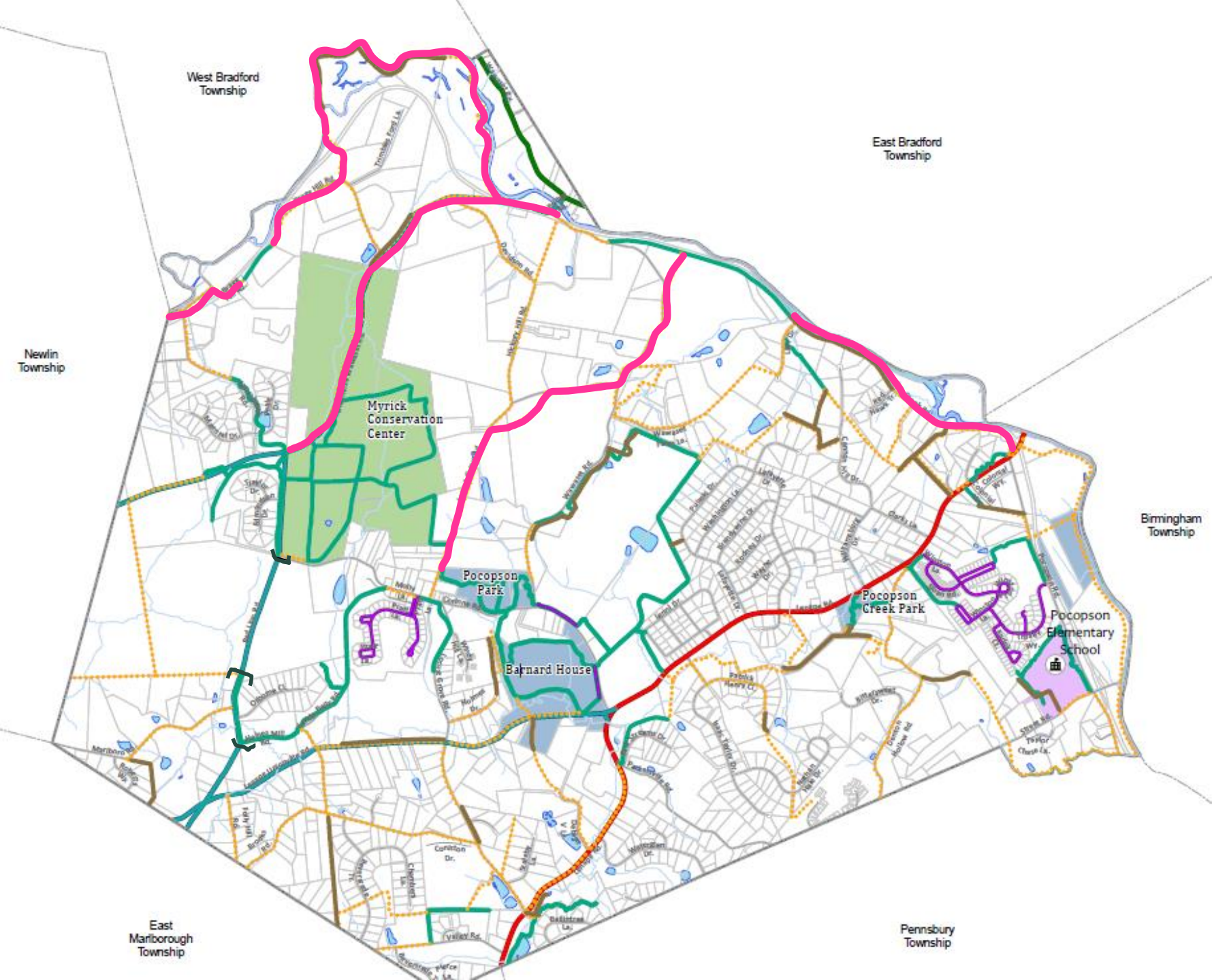
-  Township boundary-5,328 acres
  -  Roads
  -  Water resources
  -  Tax parcels
  -  Adjacent municipalities
  -  Schools
  -  Township lands
  -  Myrick Conservation Center-Brandywine Red Clay Alliance
  -  School lands
  -  Sidewalks
  -  Existing trails
  -  Conceptual trails (from 2010 Trail Feasibility Study)
  -  Trail easements (from 2010 Trail Feasibility Study)
- County Bikeway Network Functional Classification(2013)
-  Beginner Recreation
  -  Intermediate Recreation
  -  Commuter / Connector
  -  Advanced



# TRAILS ADDED SINCE 2014

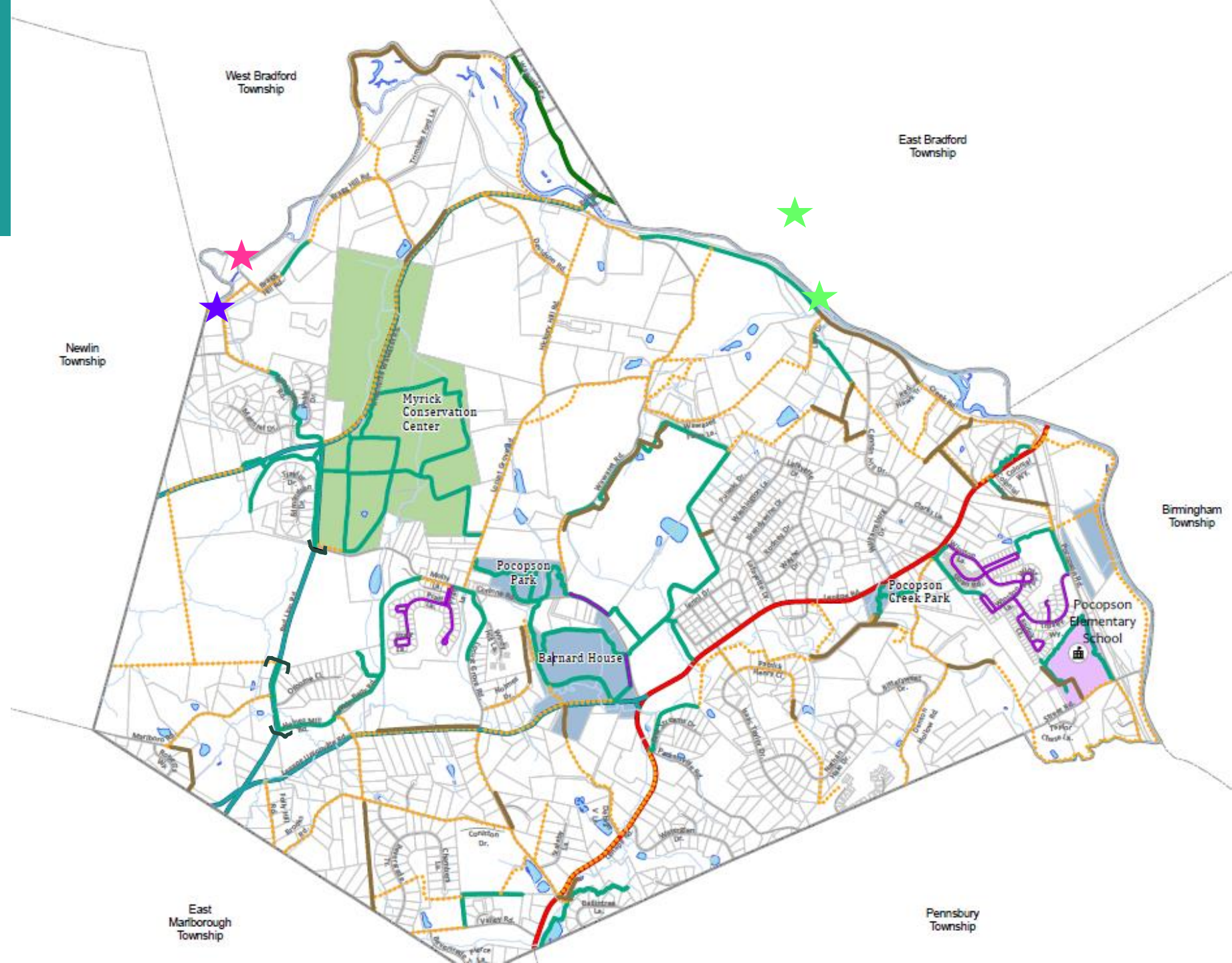


# PRIORITY CONNECTIONS: Brandywine Creek Greenway Project Portfolios



# RIVER ACCESS

- ★ MUNICIPAL – PUBLIC ACCESS
- ★ PRIVATE - FEE
- ★ PRIVATE – PUBLIC ACCESS



# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1

COMMUNITY INPUT WILL  
PROVIDE FURTHER  
DIRECTION REGARDING  
DESIRED RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES

2

CONTINUE TO  
ENGAGE REGIONALLY  
ON TRAILS AND  
OTHER RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES

3

ENSURE ADEQUATE  
FUNDING FOR EXISTING  
RECREATION FACILITIES  
AND ANY FUTURE  
EXPANSION

## TASK FORCE INPUT

- *What are top priorities? Is it select open space priorities, trails, bikeways, education, river access/recreation?*
- *Are there certain areas of the township where future projects should be focused?*
- *What 2-3 things would you like see accomplished in the next ten years relating to this topic?*
- *What did we miss?*

# OPEN SPACE GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## pocopson comprehensive plan 2026

Goal 1: Pursue the preservation of important unprotected open space to protect critical natural and agricultural resources, strengthen area greenways, help mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide for passive recreation, and ensure the protection of scenic viewsheds and cultural resources.

- 1.1 Through the acquisition of conservation interests, regulatory mechanisms, and the land development process prioritize open space preservation along riparian corridors, forested areas, and other greenways to strengthen ecological connectivity. Where possible, pair greenway protection with trail development.

**Why:** Connected landscapes are more resilient and ecologically valuable than isolated parcels. Protecting corridors along streams, woodlands, and agricultural lands helps maintain water quality, support wildlife movement, reduce flooding, and preserve scenic and cultural character. Linking these areas also creates opportunities for greenway and trail development that benefit both the environment and the community.

**How:** With 38% of the Township land protected through easements, parkland, or HOA restrictions, Pocopson should prioritize gaps between protected lands to provide continuous swathes of open space that further connect and expand habitat, riparian buffers, and protect scenic viewsheds. Potential lands to target for preservation would include those identified on Map XX as undeveloped lands of 10 acres or more (particularly those currently enrolled in Agricultural Security Areas), lands that include critical natural and cultural resources, and lands that enhance connectivity.

- 1.2 Seek opportunities and partnerships to protect the remaining farmland and agricultural interests in the Township through Chester County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program, enrollment in Agricultural Security Areas and the Clean and Green program (Act 319), and regulations allowing accessory uses to agriculture.

**Why:** The agricultural community and landscape in Pocopson enhances community character and economic benefits. Protecting agricultural land and interests ensures the continuity of these landscapes even as developmental pressure increases. Enrollment in an ASA provides protection from local ordinances and nuisance lawsuits that would affect farming activities and special consideration from condemnation. The Clean and Green Program (Act 319) is a voluntary program that offers lower property tax assessments for land (use value rather than fair market value) kept in agricultural or forest use.

**How:** The Township should continue to coordinate with agricultural landowners and other stakeholders to encourage enrollment in these programs. Encouragement of secondary or accessory agricultural businesses by ensuring regulations permit and encourage these activities is important support for the agricultural community. Pocopson has regulations in

place permitting the sale of products produced on property and seasonal roadside stands. These regulations should be reviewed periodically as needs may change in the future.

- 1.3 Work with local land trusts to evaluate remaining available lands in the Township and educate the owners on the benefits of open space and opportunities to protect their land.

**Why:** Much of land conservation that occurs is on privately owned land, making voluntary conservation critically important. Educating landowners on the benefits of land preservation can lead to the protection of important natural resources and/or cultural heritage while respecting private property rights. Land trusts bring expertise, funding opportunities, and long-term stewardship capacity that supports land preservation efforts.

**How:** Pocopson should collaborate with local and regional land trusts to reevaluate remaining undeveloped and unprotected lands since the last Open Space Priorities plan was developed in 2006. Outreach efforts should inform property owners about conservation options such as easements, agricultural preservation programs, and financial incentives. Partnerships can also help facilitate transactions, provide technical assistance, and ensure long-term stewardship of preserved lands.

- 1.4 Actively seek grant funds to leverage municipal funds for the acquisition of conservation interests.

**Why:** Open space acquisition and conservation can be costly, and municipal resources alone are often insufficient to meet preservation goals. Grants can significantly expand the Township's ability to protect key resources and reduce the financial burden.

**How:** Pocopson should identify and pursue funding opportunities from county, state, federal, and private sources. This includes grants for land acquisition, conservation easements, planning, and stewardship. Maintaining a pipeline of priority projects and partnerships will improve competitiveness for funding. Grant funds should be used strategically to leverage municipal investments and advance high-priority conservation efforts.

- 1.5 Promote and encourage the use of best management practices on agricultural lands to prevent soil erosion, protect the areas waterways, and minimize impacts on adjacent properties.

**Why:** Agricultural lands are an important component of the Pocopson's western landscape, and poor management practices can lead to soil erosion, water pollution, and impacts on nearby properties. Implementing best management practices (BMPs) helps maintain productive farmland while protecting natural resources and community health.

**How:** Pocopson should work with farmers, the conservation district, and local land trusts to promote BMPs such as cover cropping, contour farming, riparian buffers, cattle stream crossings, and nutrient management. Educational programs, technical assistance, and financial incentives can support adoption of new practices.

1.6 Review and update as needed Township Code to ensure it reflects current best practices and evolving community needs relating to open space protection.

Why: Municipal codes play a critical role in shaping how land is developed and conserved. Outdated or unclear regulations may limit the effectiveness of open space preservation strategies or fail to reflect current planning approaches. Regular updates ensure that policies remain relevant and effective.

How: In reviewing ordinances, consideration should be given to the Conservation Design Option, Cluster development, Lot Averaging and fee-in-lieu provisions.

Other items to consider:

- Forming an open space committee to engage on land preservation and stewardship education?

DRAFT

# RECREATION GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## pocopson comprehensive plan 2026

**Goal 1: Provide a range of safe, well-maintained active and passive recreational facilities for all abilities, ages, and interests.**

1.1 Allocate adequate municipal funding for the maintenance and improvement of existing park, recreation, and trail facilities.

**Why:** Well-maintained recreational facilities are essential to providing safe, accessible, and enjoyable spaces for residents. Aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and increased use can lead to declining conditions that limit usability and detract from the overall user experience. Investing in upkeep and improvements helps extend the life of existing assets, supports public health and wellness, and ensures that facilities continue to meet the needs of the Township's population. Maintaining existing resources is often more cost-effective than developing new facilities.

**How:** Pocopson should annually evaluate current funding levels for park, trail, and facility maintenance.

- At the time of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, the township had two fee-in-lieu recreation programs established (recreation Fund and Trails Fund). Where do these funds currently stand? Are they the primary method for funding park, recreation, and trail improvements?
- The previous plan also mentioning a capital improvement program specifically park, recreation, and trail facilities. Was this considered? Is it of any interest now?

1.2 Partner with neighboring municipalities to expand public access to the Brandywine Creek, and promote safe water recreation through educational materials.

**Why:** The Brandywine Creek is a significant natural and recreational asset, offering opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and passive enjoyment. The nearest access points along the creek currently exist at Shaw's Bridge Park in East Bradford Township. Access is also possible at Northbrook Bridge, but parking is extremely limited. Additional river access points should be considered within the municipality, and information should be provided to residents on locations. Increased use without proper guidance, however, can also raise safety concerns and environmental impacts. Coordinated efforts can expand equitable access while ensuring that recreation is safe, sustainable, and respectful of natural resources and private property.

**How:** Pocopson should work collaboratively with neighboring communities, and partner organizations to identify and improve public access points along the creek. Efforts may include signage, parking improvements, and connections to existing trails or parks. Local organizations like the Brandywine Conservancy and First Station National Historical Park have been working to develop educational materials on water recreation that can be distributed to promote safe navigation, awareness of water conditions, and environmental

responsibility. Further regional coordination can help ensure consistency in messaging, improve user experience, and support long-term conservation of the creek corridor.

- Is there interest in more river access on the Pocopson side of the river? The township owns a parcel along the creek, could that be used as a location?
  - o The only other access point in Pocopson is at Northbrook Road Bridge which is on private property with a small gravel lot provided by the property owners.
  - o No other sites assessed in the Brandywine Water Trail Feasibility Study completed by the Brandywine Conservancy in 2020.

1.3 Continue to verify that the township subdivision ordinance requires the maximum allowable fee for fee-in-lieu provisions for recreational land and facilities and that the fees are tied to the value of the land.

**Why:** As new development or redevelopment occurs, additional demand is placed on parks and recreational facilities. Fee-in-lieu provisions allow Pocopson to collect funds from developers when land for recreation is not dedicated as part of a project. Ensuring these fees reflect the true value of land helps the township secure adequate resources to expand, improve, or maintain recreational amenities needed to serve new residents. Without appropriate fee structures, municipalities may face funding gaps that limit their ability to keep pace with growth.

**How:** The township should periodically review and update its subdivision and land development ordinance to confirm that fee-in-lieu provisions align with the maximum amounts permitted under state law and reflect current land values. This may involve conducting or updating land valuation studies and ensuring fees are applied consistently across development proposals. Collected funds should be directed toward clearly identified recreation priorities, such as park improvements, land acquisition, or trail development.

1.4 Coordinate with neighboring municipalities and the local school districts to ensure a comprehensive suite of recreational facilities and programs are provided for area residents while also avoiding unnecessary duplication.

**Why:** Recreational needs often extend beyond municipal boundaries, and residents may already rely on facilities and programs in neighboring communities or school districts. Without coordination, municipalities may duplicate services, miss opportunities to share resources, or leave gaps in offerings. Regional collaboration can expand access to a wider variety of facilities and programs, improve cost efficiency, and better serve residents of all ages and abilities.

**How:** Pocopson should establish regular coordination with adjacent municipalities and school districts to share information on existing facilities, planned improvements, and programming. Joint planning efforts can identify opportunities to complement services, such as locating specialized facilities where they are most needed or sharing access to school recreational amenities. Regional planning efforts should also consider equitable access, transportation connections, and the evolving recreational needs of the broader community.

1.5 Periodically review user fees at Township recreation facilities to ensure they return funds without discouraging use.

**Why:** User fees can provide an important source of funding to support the maintenance and operation of recreational facilities. However, fees that are too high may discourage participation, particularly among lower-income residents, youth, and seniors. Striking the right balance ensures that facilities remain inclusive and widely used while still contributing to their financial sustainability.

**How:** Pocopson should periodically review and adjust user fees based on operating costs, regional comparisons, and community input. The Township may also explore alternative funding sources to reduce reliance on user fees and maintain equitable access.

**Goal 2: Increase the availability of a safe pedestrian, and bicycle trail network that connects residents to community parks, nature areas, local schools, and local commercial centers.**

2.1 Adopt an official map and ordinance to identify and reserve future trails and other key recreation areas.

**Why:** An Official Map is a proactive planning tool that allows municipalities to designate future public improvements, such as trails, parkland, and greenway corridors, before land is subdivided or built upon. It serves as a notification system for future public improvements, preventing construction in areas identified for future rights-of way or public spaces. When a property owner plans to develop or subdivide land shown on the official map, the municipality has one year to negotiate the purchase of the property or acquire an easement. This helps ensure long-term connectivity, protects critical links between neighborhoods and destinations, and reduces the cost and complexity of acquiring land later.

**How:** The municipality should prepare and adopt an Official Map in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), identifying proposed trail alignments, greenway corridors, park expansions, and other recreation areas. This map should be informed by existing plans, such as the 2010 Trails Master Plan, as well as other regional trail initiatives. The accompanying ordinance should outline procedures for reviewing development proposals that affect mapped features, including provisions for reservation of land, coordination with developers, and potential acquisition strategies. Priority should be given to closing gaps in existing trail networks, improving access to parks from population centers, and preserving corridors along waterways or other natural features.

2.2 Continue to plan and establish a recreational network of trails, paths, sidewalks, and bicycle routes.

**Why:**

How:

2.3 Ensure municipal codes contain provisions that enhance trail connectivity of existing, new or redevelopment projects wherever possible.

**Why:** Development and redevelopment present important opportunities to expand and connect trail networks over time.

2.4 Explore ways to secure the East Penn – Wilmington & Northern rail line right-of-way for future use as a trail and recreational facility if the line becomes inactive.

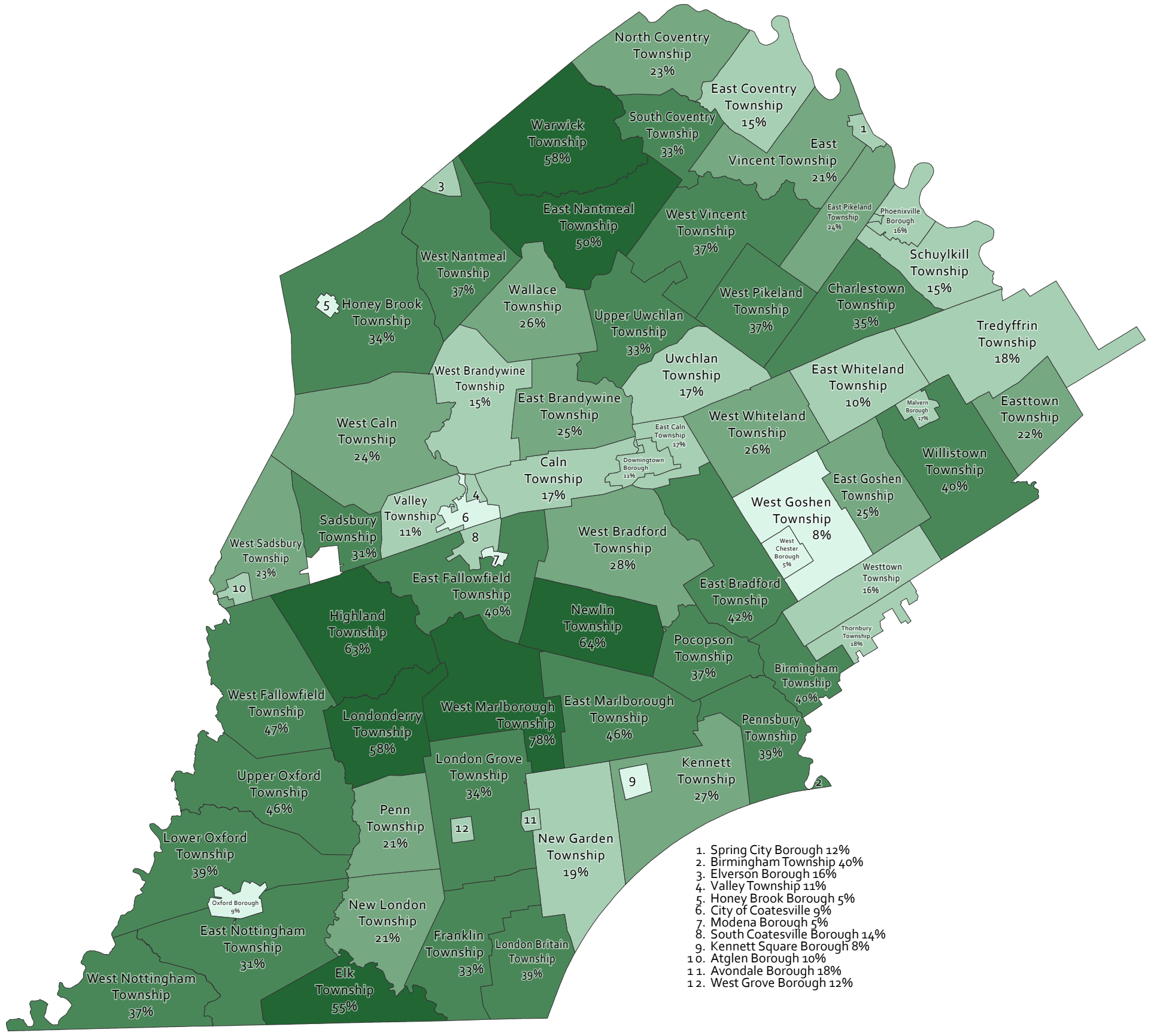
**Why:** Rail corridors represent unique opportunities for future trail development due to their continuous alignment, gentle grades, and connections between communities. If such corridors are lost to private development, the opportunity to create long-distance trails or greenways may be permanently eliminated. Proactively planning for their potential reuse helps preserve these valuable assets for future recreational and transportation purposes.

**How:** Pocopson should monitor the status of the rail line and coordinate with rail operators, regional agencies, and conservation organizations to understand potential changes in use. If the corridor becomes inactive or is proposed for abandonment, the Township should explore acquisition strategies, easements, or railbanking opportunities to preserve the right-of-way for public use. Planning efforts should consider how the corridor could connect to existing and proposed trail networks, as well as potential funding sources and partnerships to support its long-term development and management.

- From the 2024 Chester County Trails Master Plan: “As of 2024, this trail is not feasible nor recommended given the active use of the railroad, however is included as a long-term opportunity should the corridor become inactive in the future.”
  - Would this be of interest to include as a long term goal within this comprehensive plan?

# Figure xx: Percentage of Municipality Permanently Protected

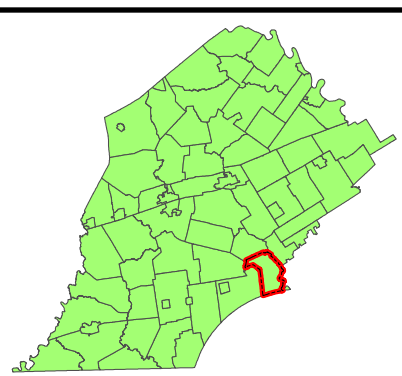
as of December 31, 2024



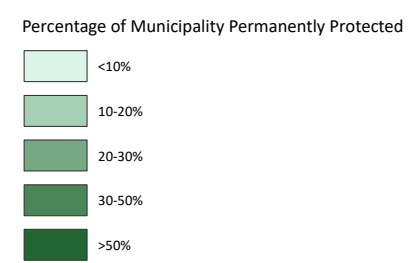
**Data sources:** Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 01/2026. Protected Lands data from Chester County Planning Commission, 12/2024.  
**Disclaimer:** Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



Map created: February 3, 2026



### LEGEND



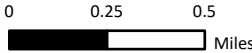
**Figure xx: Protected Lands**



- Roads
- Water resources
- Tax parcels
- Adjacent municipalities
- Township boundary-5,328 acres

**Protected lands-2027.2 ac. (38.0% of twp)**

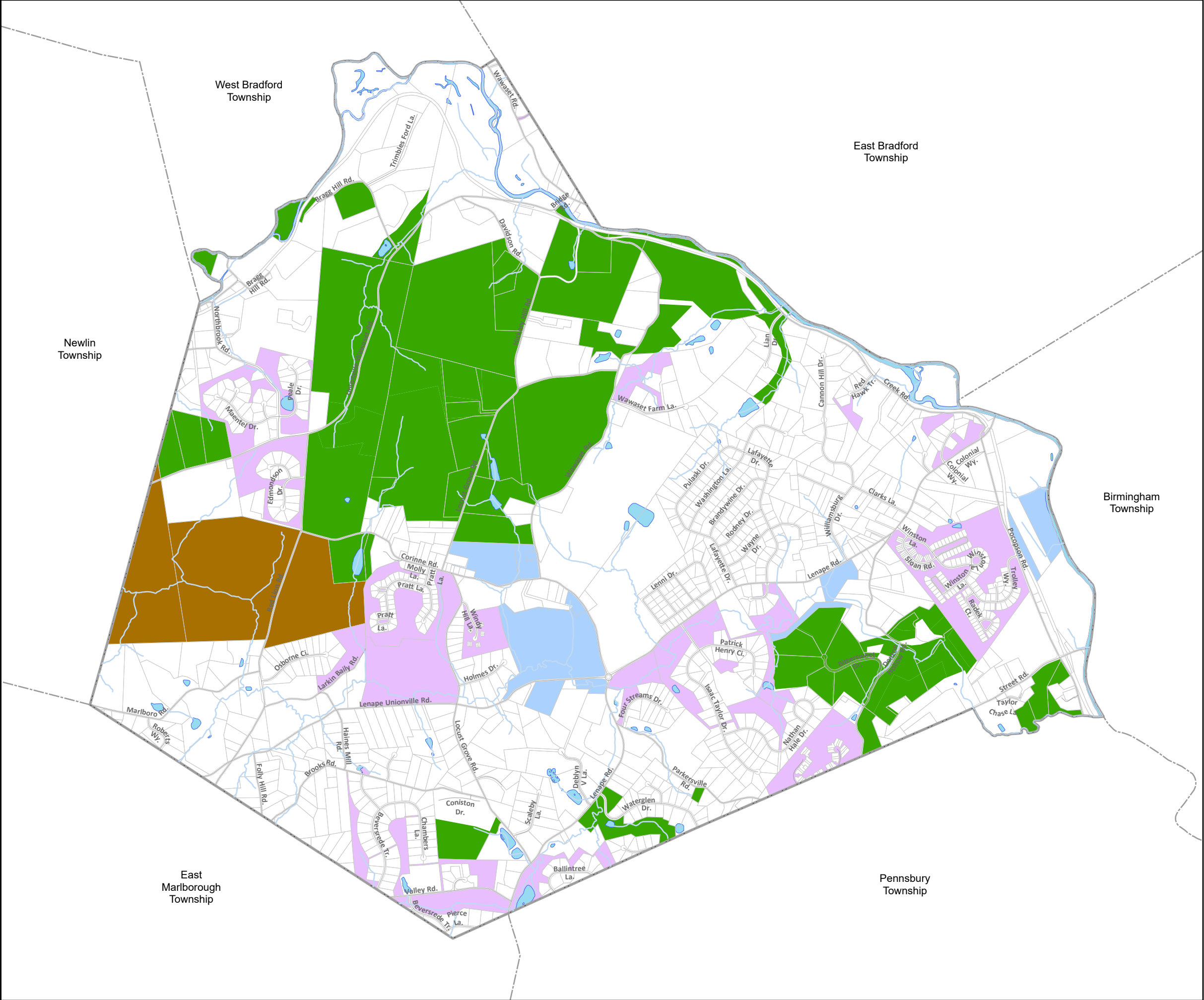
- Lands owned or eased by land trusts-1179.5 ac. (22.1% of twp.)
- County agricultural easements-264.6 ac. (5.0% of twp.)
- Public lands (federal, state, county, and municipal)-139.6 ac. (2.6% of twp.)
- Other protected lands (HOA, spray, deed-restricted, etc.)-443.5 ac. (8.3% of twp.)



Data sources: Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026.  
 Disclaimer: Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



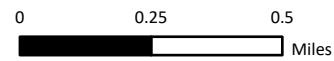
Map created: March 24, 2026



# Figure xx: Developed and Undeveloped



- Township boundary
- Roads
- Adjacent municipalities
- Tax parcels
- Streams
- Bodies of water
- Developed~2099.0 acres
- Undeveloped~807.6 acres
- Unprotected Institutional~222.9 acres
- Protected lands~1970 acres



**Data sources:** Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026.  
**Disclaimer:** Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



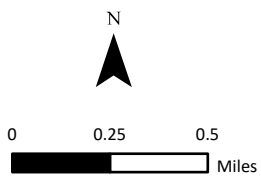
Map created: April 1, 2026



# Figure xx: Prime Agricultural Soils



- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Tax parcels
- Roads
- Water resources
- Adjacent municipalities
- Soils**
- All areas are prime farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance



Data sources: Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026. Soils from NRCS, 2013.  
 Disclaimer: Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



# Figure xx: Agricultural Security Areas



- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Tax parcels
- Roads
- Water resources
- Adjacent municipalities
- Agricultural Security Areas(2023)-1495 acres



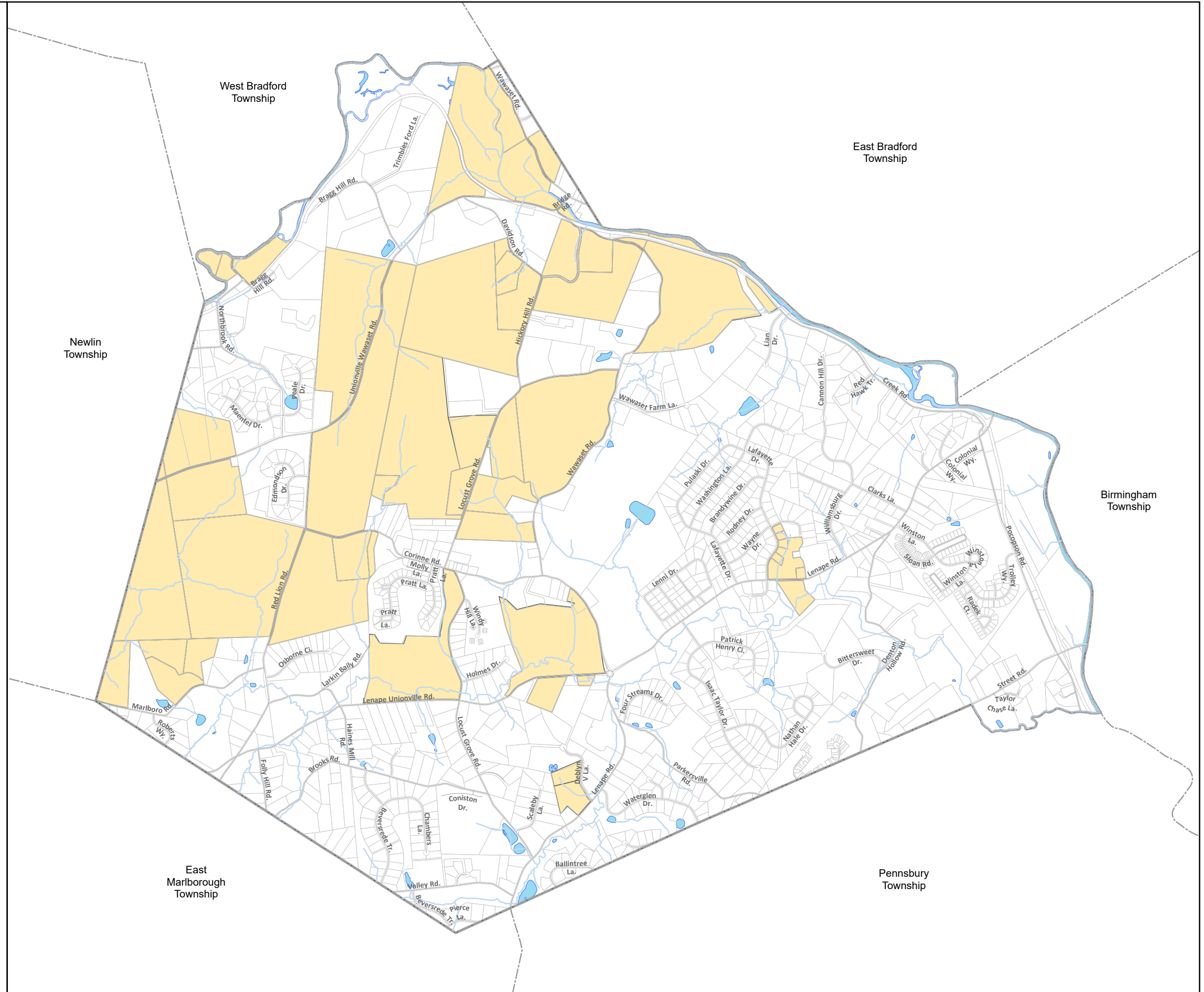
0 0.25 0.5  
Miles

Data sources: Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026. Agricultural Security Areas from WeConservePA, 2023.

Disclaimer: Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



Map created: April 3, 2026



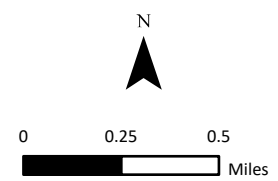
# Figure xx: Agricultural Opportunities



- Roads
- Water resources
- Tax parcels
- Adjacent municipalities
- Township boundary-5,328 acres
- Protected lands

**Preservation Opportunities\*-868.5 acres (16.3% of township)**

- Agricultural soils less than 50%-362.2 acres (6.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 50-75%-201.0 acres (3.8% of twp.)
- Agricultural soils 75% and greater-305.3 acres (5.7% of twp.)

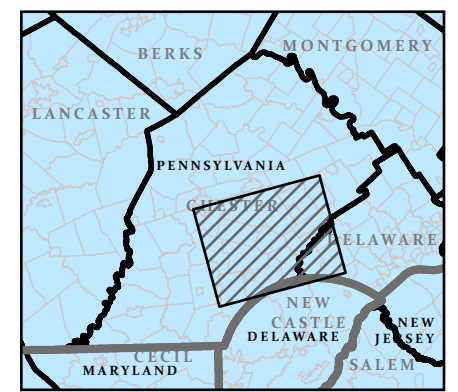
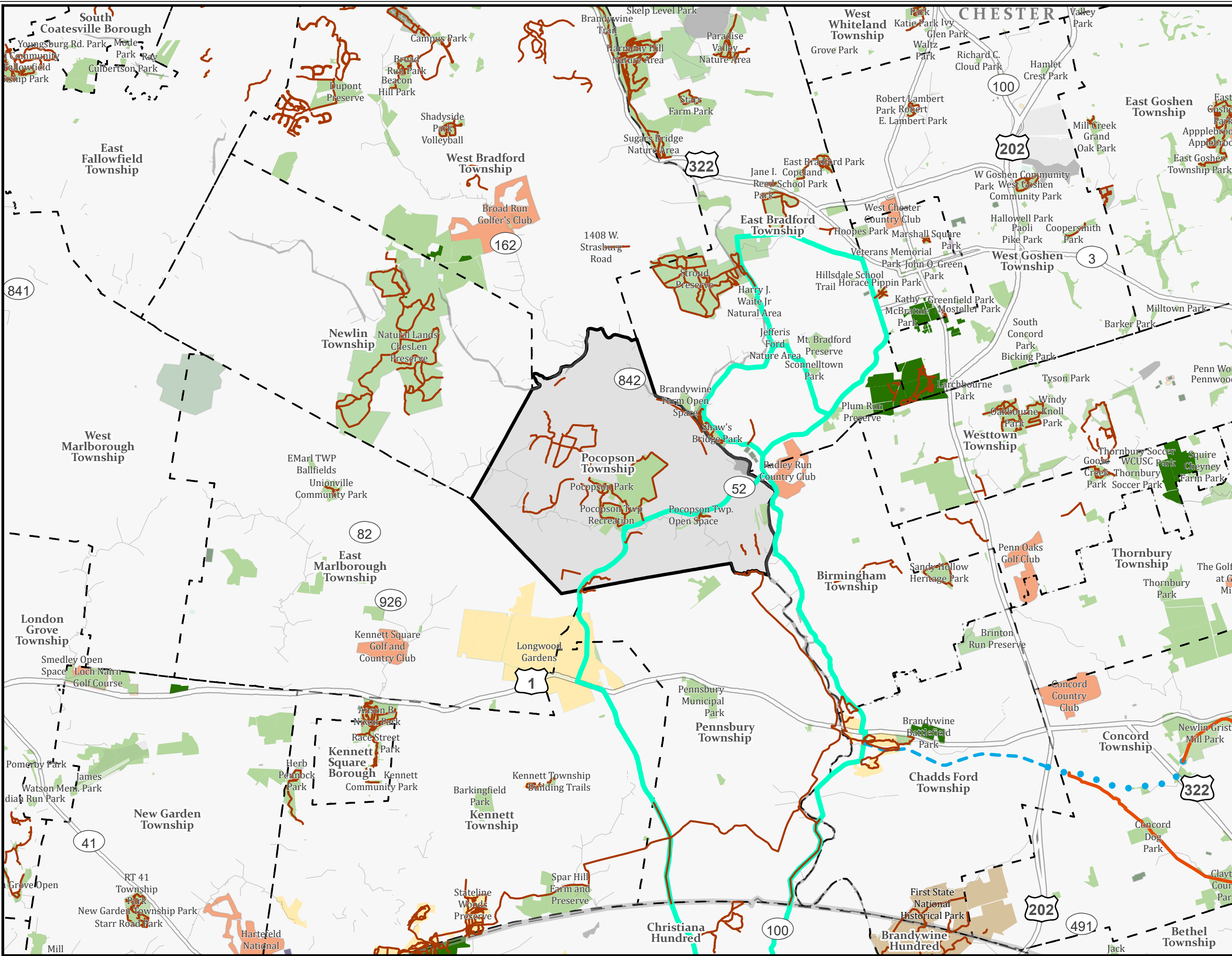


**\*Note:** Preservation Opportunities are all unprotected parcels 20 acres and greater or 10 acres and adjacent to protected land.

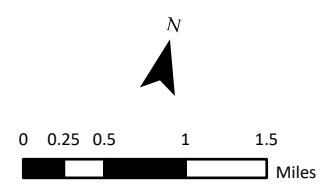
**Data sources:** Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026. Agricultural soils from NRCS, 2013.  
**Disclaimer:** Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



**Figure xx: Regional Recreation**



- LEGEND**
- Township boundary
  - Golf course
  - Non-profit gardens and open space
  - Federal lands
  - County and Municipal lands
  - State lands
  - Scenic Byway
  - Existing Trails
- DVRPC Circuit Trails**
- DVRPC Circuit Trails (in progress)
  - DVRPC Circuit Trails (pipeline)
  - DVRPC Circuit Trails (planned)



Data sources: Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026.  
 Disclaimer: Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



# Figure xx: Existing Parks and Trails



- Township boundary-5,328 acres
  - Roads
  - Water resources
  - Tax parcels
  - Adjacent municipalities
  - Schools
  - Township lands
  - Myrick Conservation Center-Brandywine Red Clay Alliance
  - School lands
  - Sidewalks
  - Existing trails
  - Conceptual trails (from 2010 Trail Feasibility Study)
  - Trail easements (from 2010 Trail Feasibility Study)
- County Bikeway Network Functional Classification(2013)**
- Beginner Recreation
  - Intermediate Recreation
  - Commuter / Connector
  - Advanced



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Data sources: Tax parcels, roads, streams and bodies of water from Chester County GIS Department, 03/2026.  
 Disclaimer: Parcel lines depicted do not represent actual field surveys.



Map created: March 24, 2026

