

TOWN CENTER NEWS

A quarterly newsletter on revitalization and economic development in Montgomery County's traditional towns

2017
Summer

GET MOVING!

Many Montgomery County communities are lucky to have a trail (or two) that is easily accessible for walking, biking, and horseback riding. Many of you also utilize the trails as part of your revitalization planning. Summer is the perfect time to encourage local residents to get outside for some fun AND participate in the [Montco Trail Challenge!](#)

Take the Challenge!

The 2017 Montco Trail Challenge offers a family-friendly experience of exploring your community and benefiting your health by getting out on the trails. Participants have until December 3, 2017 to visit 13 of the county's trails, providing ample time to explore the trails and the chance to experience the seasonal changes in Montgomery County's vast open space network. The trails connect greenways, waterways, and heritage corridors throughout the county.

In addition to the listed parks and trails, visit two trails, parks, or county historic sites of your choosing and receive credit toward an achievement level. You don't have to walk or bike the entire trail to get credit for the challenge—just visit, enjoy, and earn your recognitions!

You can [register online](#) or pick up a trail challenge card at any of these [locations](#). Green Lane Park, Lorimer Park, Norristown Farm Park, Central Perkiomen, and Lower Perkiomen Valley Park also have drop boxes where you can submit your cards to receive your recognitions.

This year we will be recognizing three levels of achievement with the challenge:

EXPLORER (Visit 5 trails and earn a patch)

ADVENTURER (Visit 10 trails and earn a medal)

TRAILBLAZER (Visit 15 trails and parks and earn a backpack cooler!)

You have until December 3, 2017 to earn your recognition! Use social media to post your pictures, recognitions, and encourage your friends to participate. The county's [Twitter](#) feed and [Facebook](#) page will be looking to share your accomplishments. Use the hashtag #MontcoTrailChallenge when you post!

If you are into bicycling, either bring your own bike or [rent a bike](#) through Zagster, which has partnered with Montgomery County to offer bikes throughout our trail system!

- [Parks, Trails & Historic Sites Map](#)
- [Montgomery County Trail Network Map](#)



Can you complete this year's trail challenge by December 3rd? Time to get moving!



For additional information, contact the Montgomery County Planning Commission at 610-278-3722 or visit www.montcopa.org/planning

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM (TA SET-ASIDE)

The TA Set-Aside are federal highway and transit funds under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) for community based “nontraditional” projects designed to strengthen the nation’s intermodal transportation system.



Projects like new bicycle facilities are eligible for TA Set-Aside funds.

If your community has project needs along the lines of building new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improving access to public transportation, creating safe routes to school, preserving historic transportation structures, or building new trails, consider a TA Set-Aside funding application as a potential source of funds.

In December 2015, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was passed, renaming the previous TAP to the Set-Aside of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. For clarity, the program is referred to as the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside or TA Set-Aside. Other than the name change, the TA Set-Aside is largely unchanged from the previous TAP.

Project applications are due September 22, 2017!

Applicants are encouraged to view an archived webinar and must also meet with appropriate MPO staff as well as PennDOT Engineering District staff to discuss their project. For more information, visit <https://sportal.dot.pa.gov/Planning/AppReg/TAP/Pages/default.aspx>

BE KIND TO YOUR TREES WHEN MULCHING

Now that annual tree care is well underway on municipal streets and in local parks, it’s worth reminding your public works crew members that when it comes to mulch, more is not better.

It’s not uncommon to see mulch piled up against the trunk of a tree—commonly referred to as volcano mulch—but this is something that negatively affects the health of the tree. Adding mulch is a great way of adding organic matter and nutrients back into the soil (and uses up the leaves that were composted the previous fall). It

also is a great visual reminder to keep lawn mowers and other lawn care equipment away from tree trunks. But piling the mulch too high will easily suffocate the roots of a tree. It creates a moist environment in which fungi can thrive, causing root rot, crown dieback, and various nutrient deficiencies.

Trees have a natural “flare” where their trunks meet the soil. Don’t cover this flare too much—no thicker than 2–3 inches. Mulch should not be climbing up the trunks of trees or the stems of shrubs.



Too much mulch can be harmful to trees and shrubs.



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