

## Recommendation Board of Supervisors

**Meeting Dates:** January 4, 2022 & February 1, 2022

**Prepared by:** Christina Norland, Chairperson, Trails & Sidewalks Committee

**Recommendation:** A resolution approving the Mason-Dixon Trail be routed off Burnt Mill Road into the Township's Lord Howe and Spar Hill Preserves. Until otherwise determined by the Township, the trail will be situated on the properties pursuant to the map recommended by the Township's Trails and Sidewalk Committee, which is attached to this recommendation.

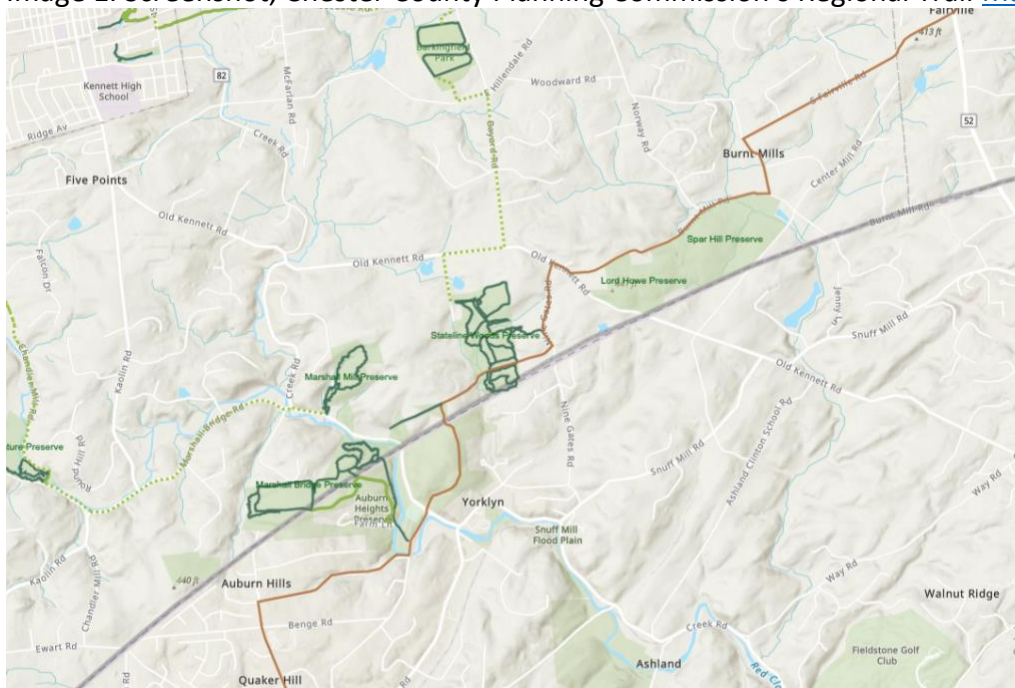
### **Background:**

#### The Mason-Dixon Trail

The 199-mile long [Mason-Dixon Trail](#) connects the Appalachian Trail with the Brandywine Trail in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The trail starts at Whiskey Springs on the Appalachian Trail, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania and heads east towards the Susquehanna River, passing through Gifford Pinchot State Park en route. The trail then follows the west bank of the Susquehanna River south to Havre de Grace, Maryland. Across the river, the Mason-Dixon Trail continues east, passes through Elk Neck State Forest, then on to Iron Hill Park, Delaware, north along the Christina River and White Clay Creek to the White Clay Creek Preserve. The trail then heads northeast through Kennett Township to its eastern terminus in Chadds Ford on the banks of the Brandywine River.

The current route of the Mason-Dixon Trail in Kennett Township is shown below in brown. Note that access is no longer permitted on the private property north of Auburn Valley State Park.

Image 1. Screenshot, Chester County Planning Commission's Regional Trail [Map](#).



The Mason-Dixon Trail is predominantly a pedestrian walking or hiking trail, but people also mountain bike on portions of the trail that permit such access. Because the trail crosses over both public and private properties across its 199-mile length, trail users are expected to comply and respect the varying usage rules of individual landowners. The trail also frequently uses roads where off-road trail options are unavailable. The materiality of the Mason-Dixon Trail can vary from a paved road surface to unmowed meadows to narrow deer paths through rugged terrain.

**Current Matter:**




On January 4, 2022, the Trails & Sidewalks Committee (TSC) met with Peter McLaughlin, the Eastern Coordinator for the Mason-Dixon Trail. In that meeting, Mr. McLaughlin discussed the organization’s goal of moving as much of the Mason-Dixon Trail off-road as possible, for both the user’s safety and trail experience. Kennett Township portion of the Mason-Dixon Trail currently runs along Burnt Mill Road, which is a beautiful but relatively narrow, curvy and hilly road. As a result, the TSC discussed moving the Mason-Dixon Trail onto the Lord Howe and Spar Hill Preserves. Due to the current condition of the farm buildings on Spar Hill Preserve, the committee discussed keeping the trail relatively close to Burnt Mill Road at this time.

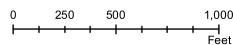
After discussion in the February 2, 2022 TSC meeting, the TSC unanimously recommended the trail be moved onto the preserves, per the following map:



Kennett Township's Spar Hill/Lord Howe Trail System

Green enclosed sections highlight the Committee's discussion at the January and February Trails and Sidewalks meetings regarding the request to relocate the Mason-Dixon Trail onto the Kennett parcels to remove a portion from the road and allow for a more scenic and safer route.

-  Existing Trails
-  Kennett Property
-  State Border



Map made by TLC for TSC use.  
January 28, 2022, Updated February 1, 2022.  
Not for engineering purposes.

The trail largely follows existing mown or cleared paths within the preserves, with the exception of the portion from Burrow's Run stream to Spring Mill Road. The trail surfacing would remain in its current state. If the Supervisors approve this recommendation, the TSC, the Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County, Kennett Trails Alliance, and the Mason-Dixon Trail System will work together with Township management on final routing, marking/blazing and any arrangements for trail maintenance.

It is not anticipated that any additional Township funds would be required as the trail mowing is conducted by TLC via its contract with the Township. TLC has also stated that if approved, they could mow a trail from the Burrows Run to Spring Mill Road to maintain a designated path for the Mason-Dixon Trail. Further, it is not anticipated that the inclusion of the Mason-Dixon Trail on the Spar Hill or Lord Howe will interfere with any future master plan visions for the properties.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Norland  
Trails & Sidewalks Committee Chair