

MONTGOMERY AWARDS

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2017 Award Winner

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Crossways Bridge & Trail Lower Gwynedd and Whitpain Townships

The Crossways Bridge & Trail, an outstanding recreational amenity located in Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township, received a 2017 Montgomery Award for innovative planning, environmentally sensitive design, and extensive collaboration. This successful multiuse trail, which connects people and nature by providing wonderful opportunities for walking, running, bicycling, and horseback riding, is a critical link to the regional trail system.

Planning Concept

The Crossways Bridge & Trail is a 1.3-mile paved multipurpose trail that connects Lower Gwynedd's Penllyn Woods Park, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's Crossways Preserve, and the Montgomery County Community College to Montgomery County's Green Ribbon Trail. The wooded trail, which begins in Penllyn Woods Park in Lower Gwynedd Township and ends at the Montgomery County





Community College, is a critical link in the regional trail system. The trail traverses 9.7 acres of land, some of which was donated by private property owners. It also travels through lands owned by the watershed association, community college, municipalities, and water authority. In 2011, Lower Gwynedd Township was awarded grant funding from the Montgomery County Open Space Program to install a pedestrian bridge across the Wissahickon Creek. The installation of the bridge in January 2016 was an essential component of the overall project, which was a joint effort between Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township. With the cooperation of state, county, and local governing bodies; permitting agencies; municipal officials; the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; various stakeholders; sponsors; and residents, the trail was completed in December 2016 and officially opened to the public. The completion of the trail also resulted in PennDOT's installation of a four-way traffic stop near the trail crossing at Plymouth Road.



Design

The 8-foot-wide trail navigates diverse habitats and different trail surfaces and accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, and horseback riders. Achieving this result required flexibility in design, alignment, and surface materials and the protection of sensitive wetland, woodland, and floodplain environments. Trail surfaces include asphalt, stone, turf, and a low and elevated boardwalk. Because environmental sustainability was an important design component, great care was taken in selecting resourceful and sustainable trail materials and in construction techniques. The base for the asphalt trail was composed of recycled milled asphalt from tennis courts that were removed as part of a nearby floodplain restoration project. The soil excavated from the trail base was used in the same floodplain project, resulting in reduced use of fuel and labor.





The pedestrian bridge was constructed of unpainted weathering steel with hardwood decking. The boardwalks were created from prefabricated concrete that was assembled in place, allowing for fast construction and minimized removal of mature trees.

Collaboration and Funding

The bridge and trail project used a creative approach to management that focused on the shared goal of a regional trail network for residents. Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township shared construction costs and grants as well as costs for signage, maintenance, and management of the boardwalks and asphalt trails. Project funding was provided from several sources including the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Montgomery County Open Space Program, the Montgomery County Community College, a private foundation, and the two municipalities. As a result of the new trail, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association has expanded educational programming, including staff-guided walks and training, as the trail provides much better access to some of the richest habitats in the Wissahickon Valley. Members of the community have adopted sections of the connected regional trail, enthusiastically serving as trained trail stewards who monitor the trail, perform maintenance, and serve as outreach ambassadors.



The Crossways Bridge & Trail, an appealing and inviting community asset, has successfully enabled Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township to achieve their goal of creating an important trail connection that enhances walkability in their communities. This outstanding project is an excellent example of how collaborative efforts among various levels of government, private and public partnerships, individual participants, and the community can result in an enhanced public amenity that is certain to be a regional treasure.



Location

1227 E. Township Line Road
Lower Gwyedd Township & Whitpain Township
Montgomery County

Project Data

Land Use

Open space/recreation

Tract Size

9.7 acres (trail length 1.3 miles)

Key Features

- Extensive collaboration
- Open space preservation
- Innovative planning process
- Environmental sustainability

Owner/Developer

Lower Gwynedd Township
1130 N. Bethlehem Pike
P.O. Box 625
Spring House, PA 19477

Whitpain Township
960 Wentz Road
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Engineer – Lower Gwynedd

CKS Engineers, Inc.
88 South Main Street
Doylestown, PA 18901

Engineer – Whitpain

Metz Engineers
410 Derstine Avenue
P.O. Box 647
Lansdale, PA 19446

Land Planner/Landscape Architect

LandConcepts Group
593 Skippack Pike, Suite 300
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Contractor – Lower Gwynedd

Doli Construction Corporation
120 Independence Lane
Chalfont, PA 18914

Contractor – Whitpain

James R. Kenney Excavating & Paving, Inc.
3950 Germantown Pike
Collegeville, PA 19426

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The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.

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