

ChesGO!

Expanding Clean Transportation Opportunities

Community-driven Solutions for a Greener Future

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A publication of

TMACC

Transportation Management Association of Chester County



The mission of TMACC is to advance equitable, safe, and sustainable multimodal transportation solutions by serving as

- a resource center for innovative mobility strategies,
- a collaborator of the public, private, and non-profit sectors, and
- a catalytic agent for advancing and implementing best practices.

Learn more at [TMACC.org](https://tmacc.org)

Staff

Executive Director

P. Timothy Phelps / tphelps@tmacc.org

Manager of Transportation Operations & Planning

John Meisel / jmeisel@tmacc.org

Project Coordinator

Justin D. Lytle / jlytle@tmacc.org

Office Administrator

Laura Guman / lguman@tmacc.org

Customer Service Representative

Diane Minka / dminka@tmacc.org

Board of Directors

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Robert Emmanuel

Neal Fisher, P.E.

Dr. Bradley J. Flamm, Ph.D.

Shane Flickinger

Buddy Sload

Jeff Todd

Kathryn Tucker

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Media Contact

Transportation Management Association of Chester County

7 Great Valley Parkway, Suite 144, Malvern, PA 19355

610.993.0911 / [TMACC.org](https://tmacc.org)

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The New Acela Liberty

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A Note From Our Executive Director

Zooming Along

Transportation Is More Than a Choice. It's Essential.

At TMACC, we've always said transportation is the thread that ties our communities together. In these times—when economic pressures are real, when public transportation faces cuts, and when families are stretched to their limits—that truth feels more urgent than ever. Every day, people across Chester County depend on safe roads, reliable buses, clean air, and accessible options to connect them to work, school, healthcare, and one another.

This issue of ChesGO! highlights why those connections matter. From expanding clean transportation opportunities with electric vehicle infrastructure, to planning safer and more connected corridors like Route 30, to imagining the extension of the Main Line Greenway, we're reminded that mobility is not a luxury—it's a life-line. These stories show what happens when communities and leaders step up with foresight and collaboration.

We're also adapting to meet today's needs. ChescoBus is moving to a cashless fare system, making transit easier and more convenient for riders of every age and ability. We're standing

with our partners during TDM Week to remind residents that smarter commuting choices—carpooling, biking, vanpooling, or simply walking—make our county healthier and more resilient. And we're raising our voices on air quality, because mobility and public health are inseparable.

When public transportation is cut, we all feel it: in lost opportunities, in isolation, in job losses, and in the increased strain on families and businesses. But when we invest in better systems—every bus stop improved, every trail extended, every lane made safer—we invest in people. Each improvement is an investment in economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and the quality of life that defines Chester County.

At TMACC, we're not standing still. We're listening, planning, and moving forward with purpose. Because in these times, transportation isn't just about getting from point A to point B—it's about ensuring that Chester County remains a place where everyone can thrive. ♦



P. Timothy Phelps
Executive Director

Expanding Clean Transportation Opportunities

By Sean Green

Relaxing on vacation on a hot summer day is a good time to re-evaluate your transportation choices.

Sometimes you'll hear messages on the radio encouraging you to avoid driving alone or even avoid driving at all, for many reasons, like preventing air pollution, reducing traffic congestion, or even just saving yourself money.

There are numerous ways that you can reduce your car trips by taking transit, joining a car or van pool, working from home, or even walking or biking to your destinations. These are all great options but to be fair, it is not always convenient or even possible to accomplish all your errands, visit friends, or commute to work using these methods. Sometimes you simply need to drive to where you need to go.

The good news is that vehicle technologies are constantly improving to help reduce air pollution from driving. From cars with better gas mileage to electric vehicles (EVs) that have no tailpipe emissions at all, modern vehicles are a far cry from your grandfather's muscle car that burned leaded gasoline. As Sean Greene, Manager, Office of Freight and Clean Transportation

at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission notes, "Expanding clean transportation is not just about putting more electric vehicles on the road, it's about giving people real choices for how they get around while protecting our air and communities." Pennsylvania already has more than 2,800 public Level 2 charging ports and over 500 fast chargers across the state, and DEP's Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant and Driving PA Forward programs continue to help businesses and municipalities expand this network.

Widespread adoption of electric vehicles can be part of the solution to ensure mobility while reducing the environmental impact of driving. But expanding EV ownership also means expanding the infrastructure that fuels those vehicles. While some estimates say that over eighty percent of EV charging occurs at home with a personal charger, most people want to see chargers in their communities and on the highways to feel comfortable knowing that an EV can reliably meet their transportation needs and reduce "charging anxiety."

Community feedback is vital

“ for siting chargers where they'll really make a difference.

People who live in apartments or in homes without garages especially need public charging options. "When you're trying to reduce transportation emissions in a real, practical way, you have to listen to the community," said Tim Phelps, Executive Director of the Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC). "That's how we make sure investments match people's daily lives."

The available locations for publicly available EV chargers in our communities are as diverse as EV owners. Chargers can be installed in retail centers where people can charge while they shop or eat lunch. They can be installed in public parking lots, so people can charge while they run errands, visit tourist attractions, or even go to work. Fast chargers can be installed at convenience stores to give that quick charge for people on the go. "Community feedback is vital for siting chargers where they'll really make a difference," Greene added. "It's how we make sure clean transportation opportunities work for everyone."

During the spring of 2025, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) conducted outreach and a public survey for the residents of southeastern Pennsylvania to help determine the public's preference for specific situations where EV chargers could be used. DVRPC also collected information on locations, communities and transportation corridors where survey respondents would like to see publicly available EV chargers.

The outreach included seven public meetings and presentations with county planning staff, member municipalities, and the public. The region's Transportation Management



Associations (TMAs), including TMACC, were instrumental in reaching a wide audience of local businesses, government stakeholders, and interested citizens.

One hundred and twenty-seven surveys were returned, recommending over 100 locations for where the public would like to see publicly available EV charging stations. The information collected from the survey and outreach efforts will be shared with PennDOT and DVRPC's partners to assist with planning for EV chargers, provide support for funding applications, and identify the charging wants and needs of the people in the Greater Philadelphia region.

While it may be a long time until public EV chargers are everywhere, community support for chargers will likely encourage local businesses and governments to invest in that infrastructure, adding electric vehicles to the growing list of clean transportation opportunities. ♦

East Whiteland Township: A Community That Balances Growth, Connection, and Quality of Life

If there's a single word that defines East Whiteland Township, it's balance. Nestled in the heart of Chester County, East Whiteland has earned a reputation as one of the region's most dynamic places to live, to work, and to play.

With a rich history, vibrant neighborhoods, a growing business community, and a forward-thinking approach to managing change, this township is more than a dot on the map, it's a model of what suburban excellence can look like in the 21st century.

From its sprawling parks and open spaces to the thriving corporate corridor along Routes 202 and 29, East Whiteland is proving that it's possible to preserve community character while welcoming growth and progress. Residents describe it as a place where small-town warmth meets big opportunity.

A Township Growing Responsibly

Growth is never simple. For many communities, it can feel like a tug of war between preserving what makes a place special and seizing the potential of new opportunities. In East Whiteland, Township Manager Steve Brown sees growth as a responsibility, not a challenge.

"We are committed to excellence in municipal management that balances the needs of our residents, our businesses, and our future," Brown explains. "Our role is to make sure East Whiteland evolves with the times without losing the strong sense of community that defines us."

That philosophy is evident in the township's investments in infrastructure, its long-standing dedication to safety, and its openness to public input. Rather than chasing growth for growth's sake, East Whiteland has taken a measured approach: fostering development that supports families and businesses alike while ensuring the parks, schools, and public services keep pace.

A Community That Engages

For Scott Lambert, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, community engagement is central to East Whiteland's success.

"Our job is to serve the needs of both residents and employees who call East Whiteland home," Lambert says. "That means listening, collaborating, and making sure we're investing in the things that make daily life better whether it's open space, sidewalks, or local services."

With more than 15,000 residents and thousands more commuting into the township daily for work, East Whiteland plays host to diverse needs. Corporate headquarters and small businesses coexist with multifamily residential, all connected by a commitment to collaboration. It's no wonder professionals, young families, and retirees alike see East Whiteland as a place where they can belong.

Transportation and Connectivity

No modern community can thrive without smart transportation choices. East Whiteland has embraced this reality, not just with roads but also with trails, sidewalks, and bike-friendly initiatives. The township is an active Sustaining member of the Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC) and a vocal advocate for transportation demand management (TDM).

Tim Phelps, Executive Director of TMACC, underscores that commitment.

"East Whiteland has consistently championed progressive transportation initiatives," Phelps says. "From supporting Bike to Work Month to advocating for sidewalks and trails, the Township understands that mobility and open space aren't luxuries, they're essential to building a sustainable, healthy community."

This forward-thinking perspective is vital for attracting businesses and employees who value accessibility and quality of life as much as they value economic opportunity.

We measure our success by the
“ quality of life our residents experience every day.”

Parks, Open Space, and Play

Of course, it's not all work. East Whiteland's dedication to recreation and open space is evident in its parks, playgrounds, and walking trail connections in such places like Valley Creek Park and the Chester Valley Trail. Neighborhood green space offer residents opportunities to recharge and connect with nature. For young families, that means safe, inviting places to spend weekends together. For older residents, it means a healthier, more active lifestyle.

The Township's Parks & Recreation Board is always looking for new volunteers to lend their time and creativity. Whether helping organize community events, guiding open space projects, or brainstorming new recreational opportunities, residents are encouraged to get involved. East Whiteland isn't a community where things "just happen" it's one where people make them happen together.

A Call for Community Volunteers

The Township's open invitation for volunteers speaks to its culture of inclusivity and engagement. By stepping forward, residents don't just shape local government and events; they help shape the very character of the community. From summer concerts to seasonal events, East Whiteland's calendar reflects the energy of its people.

As Lambert notes, "Engagement isn't just about showing up at meetings, it's about being part of the life of this community. Our volunteers bring energy, ideas, and a personal touch that you can't buy or legislate."

Business and Opportunity

East Whiteland isn't just a bedroom community. Its corporate corridor is home to national and international companies, while its local business community fuels innovation and entrepreneurship. Professionals looking to relocate find opportunities that match their skills. Small business owners discover a township willing to partner with them. Retirees often see East Whiteland as a community where they can contribute while enjoying the fruits of their labor.

Here, the message is clear: whether you're building a career, a family, or a business, East Whiteland has a place for you.

The Commitment to Safety and Excellence

In the end, East Whiteland's story is one of dedication to its people, its environment, and its future. Safety is a priority woven into every decision, from well-maintained roads to reliable emergency services. Excellence isn't an aspiration; it's the standard.

Brown sums it up best: "We measure our success by the quality of life our residents experience every day. If East Whiteland is safe, welcoming, and thriving, then we've done our job."

And that's the essence of East Whiteland: a township where balance, progress, and community responsibility come together. A place where living, working, and playing isn't just possible, it's exceptional. ♦

Paul Miller's Law: A Safer Road Ahead for Chester County

Governor Shapiro signed Paul Miller's Law in June 2024.

On June 5, Pennsylvania put a new guiderail in motion: Paul Miller's Law. Named after a young man from Monroe County whose life was tragically cut short by a distracted driver, the law makes it illegal to hold or use a handheld phone while driving. Simple as it sounds, this measure carries profound weight; it's not about restriction, but about preservation.

Paul Miller's Law builds on what many of us already know deep down: our phones have an almost Pavlovian pull. That little buzz at the traffic light or notification ping triggers an automatic glance, a swipe, a quick scroll. But here's the hard truth: checking a text while stopped at a red light keeps your brain tethered to the screen even after the light turns green. Research shows drivers remain mentally distracted long after putting the phone down. The danger lingers, even when you think you've refocused.

This is why TMACC, Chester County's transportation management association, strongly supports the law. In transportation demand management (TDM), the goal is safer, more reliable mobility options for everyone, whether you drive, walk, bike, or ride transit. Fewer distracted drivers and walkers mean fewer crashes, fewer delays, and a safer road for all commuters. It's not just

about avoiding accidents; it's about giving people the confidence that they can share the road without fear.

Still, the change requires empathy. Our phones aren't just tools; they're emotional lifelines. We crave connection, and the fear of missing out makes us reach for them almost unconsciously. But here's the dark irony: the very act of checking a phone while driving could create the ultimate becoming unalive, one where you're no longer present to connect with anyone at all.

Paul Miller's Law isn't about punishment; it's a collective promise. A promise that Chester County's drivers will look up, stay present, and choose connection with life over the illusion of being connected online. By putting the phone down, we're choosing safer roads, longer lives, and a community that values every journey home. ♦

TMACC Launches Route 30 Safety & Accessibility Improvement Project

Route 30 (Lincoln Highway) is one of Chester County's most vital transportation corridors, connecting the farmlands and suburbs of the west to the urban heart of Philadelphia. As the backbone of east-west travel, it plays a crucial role in the daily lives of communities like Downingtown, Thorndale, and Coatesville. For these towns, Lincoln Highway is not just a road—it's the focal point of residential, civic, and commercial activity.

However, as Chester County continues to grow, especially in its western regions, the need for safer and more accessible transportation options along this busy corridor has become increasingly urgent. Route 30 must evolve to serve not only cars but also pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit riders. This shift is crucial to ensure the safety and efficiency of travel for all users, especially as new development puts more pressure on the road.

One major concern is the connection between Coatesville—an important population center—and the shopping, services, and amenities located further east in Caln Township. With the growth of local populations, it's essential to plan for a future where Route 30 is safer and more cohesive, offering better connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users.

The Active Transportation Improvement Plan

In response to these challenges, TMACC has secured a grant from the DVRPC (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission) to develop an improvement plan for a five-mile stretch of Route 30, spanning from Lloyd Avenue in Downingtown to 12th Avenue in Coatesville. The plan, called the "Lincoln Highway Active Transportation Improvement Plan,"

aims to enhance the corridor's accessibility and safety by incorporating active transportation solutions—such as expanded sidewalks, coordinated crosswalks, and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.

One of the key goals of the plan is to create safer pedestrian and bike routes across and along Route 30. This includes adding new sidewalks, creating safer crosswalks with ADA-accessible signals, and potentially adding bike lanes or shoulder space for cyclists. The plan also seeks to improve north-south crossings over Route 30, ensuring safer travel for pedestrians and cyclists moving between the communities on either side.

Improving Public Transit Access

Another important aspect of the improvement plan is improving public transit access. Route 30 serves as a major route for both SEPTA Route 135 and ChescoBus LINK bus lines, but many of the existing bus stops and amenities are outdated or poorly coordinated. The project will explore better locations for bus stops, mid-block crossings, and safer intersections to ensure a more seamless and safer experience for transit users. Enhanced bus stop amenities, including shelters and clearer signage, will also be a priority to improve the overall experience for passengers.

Collaboration and Public Engagement

TMACC has partnered with Toole Design, a nationally recognized firm specializing in transforming suburban roads into more livable spaces. Toole Design will provide expert guidance on designing safe and accessible transportation solutions, while TMACC will lead the project's overall management, including public outreach and engagement. Given the number

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 Transportation
Improvement
Inventory

“What makes the TII unique is that it’s truly grassroots. It reflects what local leaders and residents are asking for—projects that protect lives, grow economies, and promote a sustainable future.”


 Matt Edmond, Executive Director, Chester
County Planning Commission

Smooth Moves Ahead: How Chester County Sets the Stage for Better Transportation

Picture this: you’re enjoying a morning stroll to your local farm market, biking on the Chester Valley Trail or Struble Trail, or hopping on a local bus or train to meet friends for craft cider at your favorite taproom.

Every smooth ride and safe crossing you experience didn’t just happen; it was planned, prioritized, and fiercely advocated for. That’s the heart of Chester County’s Transportation Improvement Inventory (TII) and its powerful role in shaping the transportation systems that help us live, work, and play sustainably.

Let’s break it down. Chester County is growing, and with growth comes increased demand on roads, bridges, trails, and transit. The Transportation Improvement Inventory (TII) is Chester County’s master list of priority projects across every municipality. Updated every two years, it captures what’s needed, whether that’s a bridge replacement in Honey Brook, a new sidewalk in Kennett Square, or improved transit access in Coatesville. The 2023 TII was not just a spreadsheet of projects; it’s a collaborative vision crafted by municipalities, informed by residents, and supported by planning experts who understand that great communities start with great connections.

The TII includes over 400 projects across the county, all broken down by modes, such as roadways, bridges, public transportation, trails, and pedestrian infrastructure. Want to see what’s proposed in your community? There’s an interactive map that lets you explore every project by municipality and mode. Simply visit chescoplanning.org/transportation/tii.cfm or dive into the live map [here](#).

To move from wish list to real-world change, projects from the TII are often nominated for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a four-year regional funding document managed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). The TIP unlocks state and federal dollars for construction and design. If you’ve ever seen new pedestrian signals go up or a trail extension open with little fanfare that probably started in the TII and got funded through the TIP.

So how can you follow along or get involved?

Start with the 2023 Inventory itself, [available here](#), and explore your municipality’s priorities. You can also track TIP-funded projects through DVRPC’s portal at dvrpc.org/tip/pa/.

While the technical process might seem complex, it all circles back to people, families biking to a local park, seniors catching a bus to a doctor’s appointment, and workers commuting safely to their job. That’s where the **Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC)** plays a pivotal role. Through education, outreach, and partnerships, TMACC helps ensure that residents know their transportation system and their voice matters.

Want to help your community move forward? Here are two ways you can make a difference:

1. Get to know your TII list.

Use the interactive map to see what projects are proposed near you. Is your town asking for better sidewalks? Do they need safer intersections? Knowing what’s on the list helps you understand what’s in the works and what might be missing.

2. Talk to your municipal leaders.

Every township and borough has the power to propose projects to the TII. You can help guide that process by sharing your lived experience, maybe it’s a dangerous crosswalk near a school, a lack of trail connectivity, or a need for more bus stops. Your voice

matters. Make your pitch grounded in how it improves safety, access, sustainability, or equity.

Chester County’s strength lies in its people and in its amazing communities. From the vineyards of West Marlborough to the lively streets of Phoenixville, every community deserves a say in how we travel. And the TII is your invitation to the table.

In the end, this isn’t just about concrete and asphalt. It’s about creating a Chester County where everyone, no matter their age, ability, or ZIP code, has the freedom to move, to connect, and to thrive. Your ideas could help shape that future of transportation in Chester County.

So be bold. Reach out. Ask your local leaders: “What’s our transportation priority, and how can I help?” Because when it comes to moving forward together, every voice deserves a lane. ♦

ChescoBus Goes Cashless

New Electronic Fare Payment System Makes Riding LINK and SCCOOT Easier and More Convenient

Imagine boarding a LINK or SCCOOT bus and simply swiping a refillable, electronic farecard instead of scrambling for exact change. No more counting out \$3.25 to drop in the farebox. Your fare and departure details, including whether you're a full-fare or senior rider, are automatically recorded with a quick swipe. It's fast, seamless, and future-ready.

Thanks to a partnership between ChescoBus and the Boston-based company *Modeshift*, this cashless fare system to be launched in October 2025.. Using a simple card and scanner (or "validator") installed on every bus, riders of any age or ability can bypass cash transactions. The system will also collect valuable ridership data, helping TMACC to better plan schedules and routes.

Here's how it works: Riders can buy or obtain a refillable "ChescoBus Pass" at the TMACC office in Great Valley. (English and Spanish versions will be available.) As an alternative, passengers can purchase paper two-trip tickets with a scannable QR code.

After purchasing a pass, customers can easily reload their cards via an online "E-Wallet" on their computer, tablet, or smartphone. Seniors can get a special pass at the TMACC office by showing their senior ID, and won't need to refill it. In addition, electronic 10-trip and monthly passes will offer discounted rates, making regular commuting more affordable.

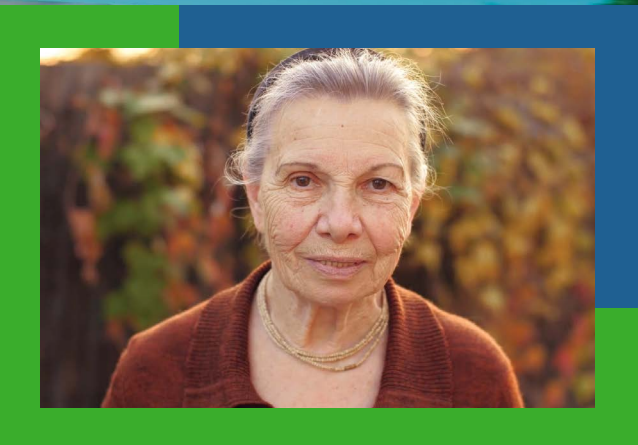
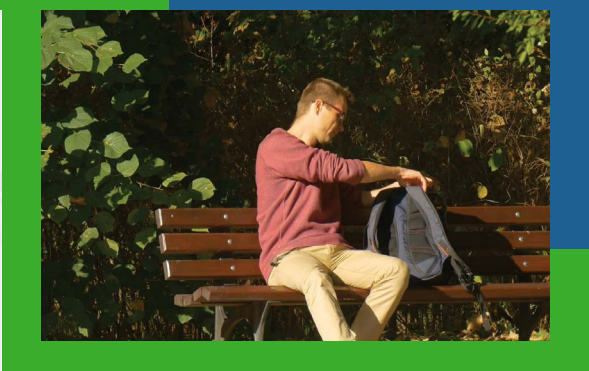
As a future convenience, ChescoBus plans to bring passes directly into local communities. TMACC staff will sell passes at pre-arranged events using handheld sales devices, and long-term plans include partnering with local libraries and other community centers as permanent sales points.

For riders who prefer cash, the current fareboxes will remain in use—offering a choice to either pay via the new system or continue with traditional methods.

For more information or to sign up for the new fare system, visit www.tmacc.org. ♦

Get to know YOUR ROUTE!



No matter what you do or where you need to go SEPTA can get you there!

From West Chester to Newtown Square, Route 104 is the dependable option for people living and working on the Route 3 corridor.

Get ON! SEPTA can get you there!

Route 104 West Chester

TMACC.org/GetOn

The New Acela Liberty

America's Next Chapter in Rail

Enter the next-gen Acela trains (Avelia Liberties). After nearly three years of delays (and nine years since Amtrak borrowed \$2.4 billion to procure them), the first four new trainsets are finally here, entering service on August 28, 2025.



From smoother rides to stiffer seats, my first trip on the Liberty.



A Review by Hayden Clarkin
@thetransitguy

Our only “high-speed” train in America has been limping along since Y2K. The Acela sets are worn out, shabby, and well past their prime. Don’t get me wrong, I love them the way you love an old dog. But like dogs, I believe all trains go to heaven, and these are ready for their next chapter in the big rail yard in the sky.

Enter the next-gen Acela trains (Avelia Liberties). After nearly three years of delays (and nine years since Amtrak borrowed \$2.4 billion to procure them), the first four new trainsets are finally here, entering service on August 28, 2025.

My plan was just to stand on the Penn Station platform, snap some photos, and geek out from the sidelines. But when I got invited to ride one for a press event yesterday? Of course I said yes.

One note before I dive in: this is a review of the trains themselves. Yes, America should already have Shinkansen-level service. Yes, the tech is dated compared to Europe and Asia. I’m not grading the Acela Liberty against global high-speed rail systems; I’m grading it against what we had, and what Amtrak promised us.

Here are my first impressions of America’s newest train.

My high-level thoughts:

- The added capacity (+27%) is handled so well you barely notice; it just feels natural.
- The ride is the smoothest I’ve ever had on Amtrak. In some stretches, it honestly just glides, but it is heavily dependent on track geometry and condition.
- The Wi-Fi is excellent, a huge step up from the current Amtrak network.
- The bathrooms are massive and way more accessible.
- The seats are... not the best. They’re stiff, and the recline is clunky.
- You can tell these trains were designed by Europeans (and that’s both good and bad).

Let’s go through things one by one.

Design & Look

The new Acela is a stunner. The exterior design and livery are sharp, modern, and unapologetically patriotic. Signage is crisp and easy to read, and the new door screens showing direction and next stops are a big upgrade. The gap fillers are a subtle but huge win, no more leaping over wide gaps like on the old sets.

Ride Quality

Stable. That’s the first word that came to mind in certain segments. Compared to the current Amtrak fleet on the Northeast Corridor, these new trains are far less shaky, with a suspension system that feels worlds ahead. A big part of that is the Jacobs bogie design; the cars share wheelsets, which cuts down on the side-to-side sway movement between cars. It makes the whole ride feel tighter and more stable.

Tilting tech hasn't been approved for the line yet, so I didn't get to experience that feature, but even without it, the difference is obvious.

Seats & Personal Space

Comfort

Honestly? Not great. The seats feel stiff, with almost no give. The recline is especially awkward; instead of actually changing the pitch of the back, it just pushes your butt forward while your back stays at the same angle. Not exactly relaxing. My charitable opinion is that maybe they're not broken in yet? That said, there is plenty of space. At 5'10" with my legs fully extended, I didn't feel cramped at all, which is more than I can say for planes.

Power/Plugs:

Big improvement here. Instead of the old wall outlets (always awkward for the aisle seat), the new Acelas put two outlets and two USB ports (still USB-A, unfortunately, given these were designed in 2017/2018) under the center armrest. Much easier to reach for both riders. There's also a reading light built into each headrest, which feels smarter and less intrusive than overhead airplane-style lighting.

Tray Tables & Cup Holders

The tray tables are generously sized, but they feel kind of flimsy and plastic-y compared to the old ones. I'm curious to see how they hold up over time. And the cup holder shelf? Weirdly designed. It only works for tapered coffee cups; my soda can fell right through it. Feels like a very European design quirk that didn't translate.

Amenities

Luggage

Mixed bag here. The new luggage racks at the ends of the cars are deeper and more consistent than what you'll find on today's Northeast Corridor trains, a definite upgrade. But the overhead racks? They're tiny, only good for a small carry-on or backpack. They feel more like what you'd see on a European commuter train. On the plus side, the smaller racks make the cars feel more open and spacious. On the downside, I'm not convinced the extra end-of-car storage will fully make up for it. TBD.

Wi-Fi

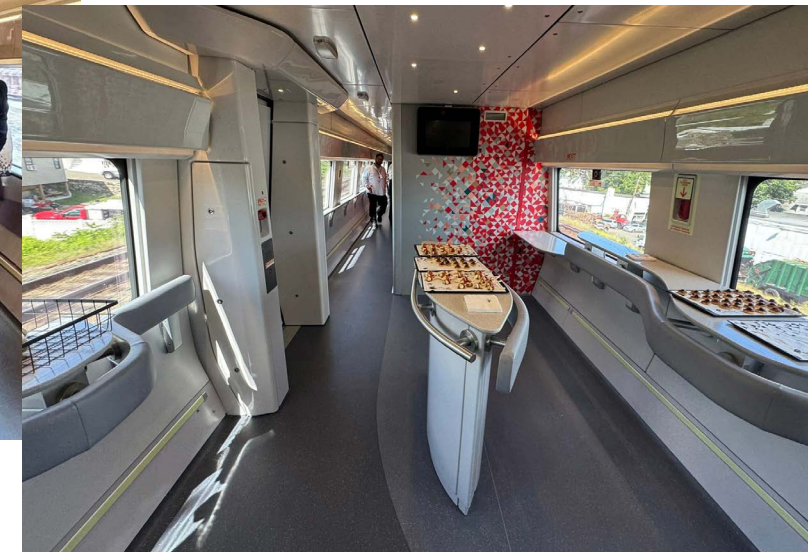
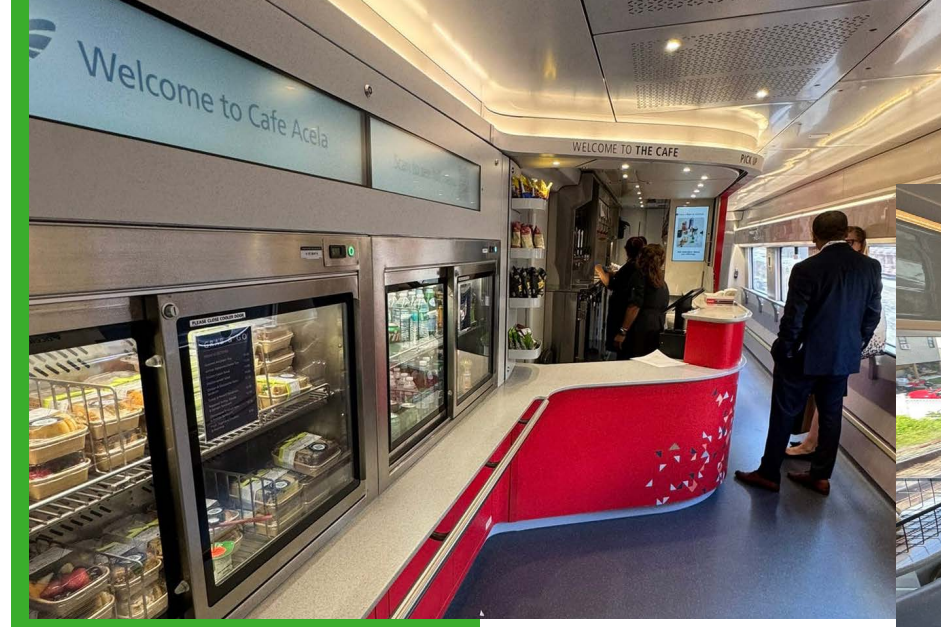
Huge improvement. I only used it briefly, but everyone around me kept pointing out how fast it was. Whether it's new hardware, a better vendor, or both, the difference was noticeable. Connecting was quick, and download speeds felt way better than the old Acela Wi-Fi. (I didn't get to measure mbs upload/download speeds)

Digital Signage

The screens are plentiful but not overwhelming, and they're positioned well throughout the train. Since I was on a non-revenue run, I didn't get the full experience of how they'll display stop info, but if the UI is clean, this could be a big win for riders.

Shades

Goodbye, sad little curtains. The new pull-down shades run the full height of the window, feel modern, and filter the sun without completely blacking it out. Honestly? One of my favorite changes, even though that sounds silly. They clean up the whole vibe of the car, and several riders around me noticed immediately.



Shared Spaces

Cafe Car

The layout is almost the same as the current Acela, with two noticeable upgrades: stocked fridges and a self-service checkout option (not yet active during my ride). The space feels airy and modern, but personally, I still prefer the cozy vibe of the old Amfleet café cars, one of my all-time favorites. If you like the existing Acela café setup, though, you'll feel right at home. One odd quirk: the rest of the train has automatic doors, but in the café car, you need to press a button to open them. I guess that constant foot traffic would otherwise have the doors opening and closing nonstop.

Bathrooms

Strange sentence to write, but the bathrooms are awesome. They're huge, accessible, and fully button-operated for opening, closing, and locking. When locked, a red bathroom icon lights up in the car, so you know it's occupied without walking over or waiting awkwardly outside. My only concern is long-term durability, lots of electronics, lots of moving parts, but in terms of accessibility and design, this is a massive upgrade.

Egress & Aisles

The aisle width feels about the same, but the real difference is at the car ends. There's more space near the luggage racks and doors, and the vestibules between cars are roomier and smoother. Crossing between cars now feels more like gliding through a Deutsche Bahn ICE than the rattle-and-sway of old Acela. A subtle change, but a great one.

Windows

I think the windows are wider (still TBD on height), but either way, the cars feel noticeably brighter. The switch from drab curtains to modern pull-down sun shades makes a huge difference; they filter light without fully blocking it, giving the cars a cleaner, more open look.

First Class

Honestly? Meh. I've never ridden first class on the current Acela, but compared to business class here, the differences feel minimal. The seating layout is 2-1 instead of 2-2, and the seats are slightly wider, but the material and comfort feel almost identical. The real perk is the onboard service and attendant, but in terms of the physical experience, it doesn't justify the big price jump, at least to me.

Overall Take

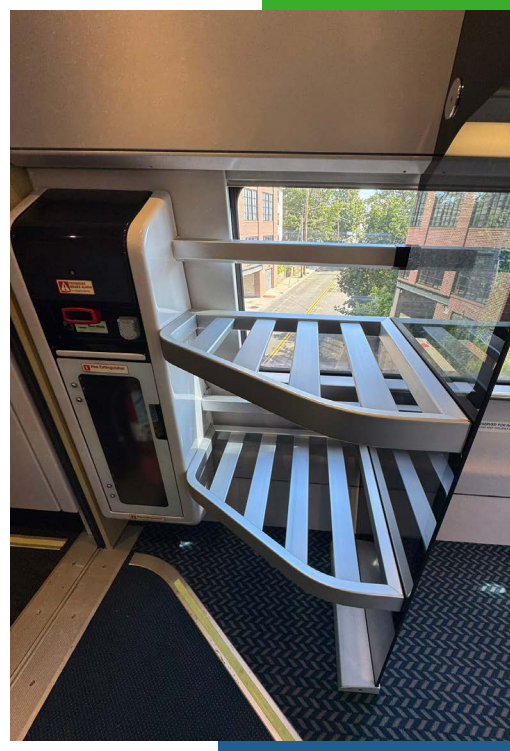
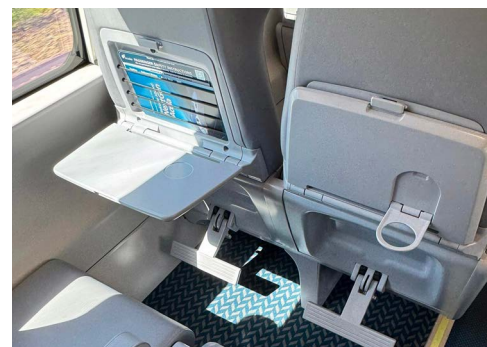
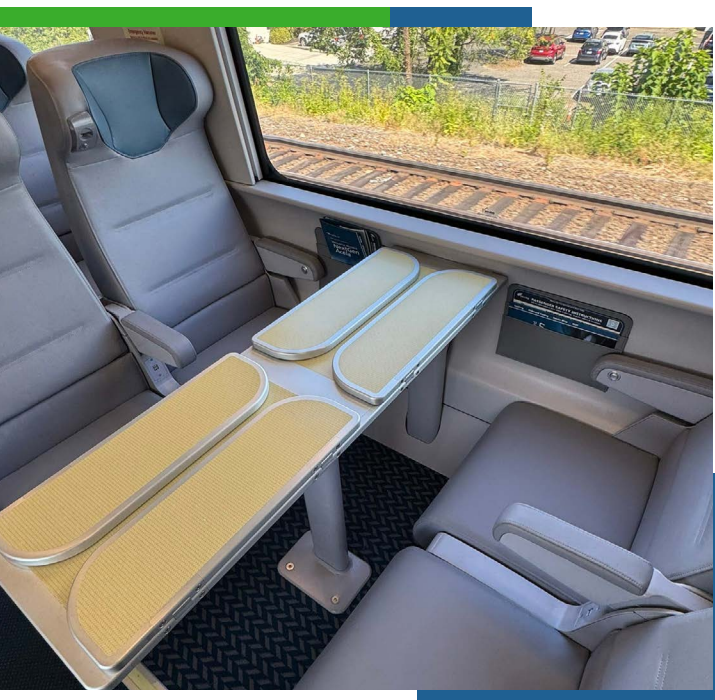
These trains are a solid 8/10.

They're not perfect; the seats and lack of luggage space miss the mark for me, but everything else feels like a major step forward. The added capacity, smoother ride, modern amenities, and accessibility upgrades will transform how people experience Amtrak's flagship service.

More than that, they set the tone for what train travel in America should look like as the rest of the aging fleet is replaced. By the time all 28 trainsets are in service by 2027, the Northeast Corridor will feel like a different railroad altogether.

Here's to a new chapter in U.S. rail, and my thanks to Amtrak for letting me sneak a preview of the future.

Author's note as to why my review might not match yours: I almost always ride the Northeast Regional instead of Acela, mostly because I like the price point (and honestly, the café car setup) better. So I don't have the same day-to-day experience with Acela that other rail nerds might. Plus, I'm an able-bodied 5'10" guy, so I can't fully speak to accessibility needs or what the ride feels like for taller folks. ♦



Smarter Commutes, Healthier Communities: TDM Week 2025 Comes to Chester County

Every September, communities across the country celebrate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Week, and this year occurred September 15–19, 2025.

For Chester County residents, it's more than a national movement, it's a chance to reimagine how we get from point A to point B in ways that benefit our health, our wallets, and our environment.

So, what exactly is TDM? Think of it as the art and science of making smarter travel choices. Instead of relying on single-occupancy vehicles, TDM strategies encourage walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, public transit, or even remote work. The payoff can be big: less congestion, cleaner air, more reliable access to jobs, and a stronger quality of life.

At the center of this effort is the **Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)**, the leading national organization dedicated to advancing policies and programs that make travel more efficient. TMACC (Transportation Management Association of Chester County) is a proud and engaged ACT member, ensuring that Chester County is at the table when the nation talks about mobility, sustainability, and commuter well-being.

TDM Week shines a spotlight on action. For individuals, it might mean swapping a solo drive for a bike ride or a carpool using Share-A-Ride. For businesses, it's a chance to

promote commuter benefits like pre-tax transit passes or flexible schedules. For municipalities, it's about policies that expand sidewalks, improve bus stop amenities, and support parking reform. Each small change adds up to a healthier, less car-dependent community.

This year, the message lands with extra urgency. With SEPTA navigating funding shortfalls and service challenges, Chester County commuters face uncertainty. TDM offers a safety net: carpool programs, vanpool services, and employer-based ride-matching can bridge the gap, giving commuters dependable alternatives while reducing the strain on families and businesses.

As Chester County looks toward a greener, more connected future, TDM Week is a timely reminder that transportation isn't just about roads and rails, it's about people. For more information on how TDM can be incorporated into your municipality or business, **TMACC stands ready as your local resource.** ♦



The Krapf Group's Legacy of Excellence and Community

Transportation is more than just moving people; it's about trust, reliability, and connecting communities. Few companies in Chester County embody this better than The Krapf Group, a family-owned leader in transportation since 1942.

What began when George Krapf, Jr. started a school bus service with two vehicles in Chester County has grown into one of the most respected transportation organizations in the U.S. Today, the Krapf family of companies—Krapf School Bus, Krapf Transit, and Krapf Coaches—serves Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, offering a range of services from school transportation to public transit routes like TMACC's ChescoBus.

Professionalism Rooted in Community

Krapf's philosophy prioritizes people—students, commuters, travelers, and employees. Gary Krapf, President of Krapf Coaches, explains, "We see ourselves as partners in the well-being of our communities. Professionalism and accountability are the foundation of trust." This approach has helped build strong community partnerships, including launching the Coatesville Link in 1994 to expand local transit options.

A Partner in Growth

Krapf is more than a service provider; it's a collaborator. TMACC's John Meisel highlights how Krapf's proactive involvement has helped grow local services and find smarter ways to serve riders. Their public-private collabora-

tion continues to enhance local transit networks, such as shuttle programs and the Saint-Gobain corporate shuttle.

Advancing Transportation Demand Management

Tim Phelps, Executive Director of TMACC, emphasizes Krapf's leadership in shaping mobility strategies. They've been instrumental in advancing transportation demand management, improving sustainability, reducing congestion, and expanding choices for commuters.

Investing in People and Opportunity

Krapf's success depends on its employees, from drivers to support staff. The company recruits actively, offering competitive pay, career growth, and flexible schedules. Employees often say, "We don't just transport passengers; we carry futures," reflecting the respect and responsibility that define the company culture.

The Constant of Safety

Safety remains Krapf's top priority, from meticulous vehicle maintenance to rigorous driver training. Whether transporting students, commuters, or tourists, Krapf ensures every route is designed with passenger well-being in mind.

Looking Ahead

After more than 80 years, Krapf remains a company with small-town roots and big-picture vision. It continues to innovate with technology, partner with organizations like TMACC, and uphold the values that have defined it from day one.

As Gary Krapf reflects: "Transportation is the quiet backbone of daily life. We're proud to play our part in making sure it's safe, dependable, and meaningful for the people we serve."

That's why TMACC is proud to have Krapf as a business partner and board member. In a world where mobility is essential to economic vitality, community growth, and environmental sustainability, Krapf stands out as both a dependable operator and a thought leader.

From its legacy of school buses to its role in today's complex transit networks, Krapf continues to prove that transportation done right is transportation that cares; for people, for communities, and for the future. ♦

Breathing Together

How Air Quality Shapes Our Community's Health

On a warm summer morning in Chester County, you step outside and take in a deep breath... but have you ever stopped to wonder what's really floating in that air?

With vivid sunsets and gentle breezes, our region boasts natural beauty, but hidden within the atmosphere lies a growing concern affecting our health and communities. Let's talk about air quality and why it matters more than ever.

What is the Air Quality Index (AQI)?

Imagine checking a weather app and seeing a rainbow-like bar colored from green to purple—that's the Air Quality Index (AQI). Developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this simple scale (0–500) helps us understand pollution levels from “Good” (green) to “Hazardous” (purple). Each color signals what precautions you—and especially vulnerable individuals like children, seniors, and those with lung or heart conditions—should take.

- Green (0–50): Air quality is good - ideal for all outdoor plans.
- Yellow (51–100): Moderate - okay for healthy people but watch for mild symptoms.
- Orange (101–150): Unhealthy for sensitive groups - limit prolonged exertion.
- Red (151–200): Unhealthy - everyone should reduce outdoor activity.
- Purple (201–300): Very unhealthy - avoid outside entirely.
- Maroon (301–500): Hazardous - serious health warnings, stay indoors

Want to check today's AQI? Visit [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov) the authoritative resource powered

by the EPA to see real-time levels in your community.

Why Air Quality Matters and Who's at Risk

According to the 2025 State of the Air report by the American Lung Association (ALA), nearly 156 million Americans, 46% of the population, are exposed to unhealthy levels of ozone (smog) or particle pollution That's 25 million more people than just a year ago; a worrisome record high.

Both ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pose major health threats:

- Ozone irritates the lungs like” a sunburn on the respiratory tract” exacerbating asthma, COPD, and even increasing heart attack and stroke risk.
- PM2.5 (“soot”) penetrates deep into lung tissue, linked to heart disease, cancer, developmental and neurological harm.

And here's the heartbreaking truth: air pollution affects low income neighborhoods and communities of color the most. The ALA report found Hispanic individuals are nearly three times more likely than white individuals to live in areas with failing air quality grades.

Our Region's Efforts lead by DVRPC

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) highlights that our region still fails to meet federal standards for ground level ozone and, in the past, fell short with particle pollution. They've teamed with local, state, and federal partners on programs like congestion mitigation, clean grid initiatives, and outreach campaigns to reduce air emissions especially in disadvantaged communities. Transportation Management Association of Chester County (TMACC) is one of the seven TMA's designated to focus on congestion mitigation and air quality issues as it relates to commuting. One of our roles is to provide commuting options for employers to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles (SOV) on our roads.

During National Air Quality Awareness Week in May, DVRPC launched its Air Quality Action Days, educating residents on “what to do when the air's bad” from staying inside to choosing alternative transportation.

Voices for Change: ALA & EPA on the Front Lines

Harold Wimmer, President and CEO of the American Lung Association, warns, “Families across the U.S. are dealing with the health impacts of air pollution every day... It's time to defend the EPA's ability to protect human health.”

From the EPA's side, ground level ozone regulations are based on robust science linking ozone to respiratory inflammation, heart disease, and even premature death. They urge policy, planning, and personal action to stem this silent crisis.

What is the Air Quality Index (AQI)?

- GREEN (0–50):**
Air quality is good - ideal for all outdoor plans.
- YELLOW (51–100):**
Moderate, okay for healthy people but watch for mild symptoms.
- ORANGE (101–150):**
Unhealthy for sensitive groups, limit prolonged exertion.
- RED (151–200):**
Unhealthy, everyone should reduce outdoor activity.
- PURPLE (201–300):**
Very unhealthy, avoid outside entirely.
- MAROON (301–500):**
Hazardous, serious health warnings, stay indoors.

Visit [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov) to see real-time levels.

How You Can Help Clean Up the Air

Community action plays a powerful role:

1. **Choose cleaner transit.** Carpool, bike, or take public transit especially on Air Quality Action Days. This is where TMACC can be a resource to you.
2. **Car maintenance.** A well-tuned engine and proper tire pressure reduce toxic emissions.
3. **Minimize wood-burning.** Burn only clean, dry wood; avoid outdoor fires when smog is high.
4. **Support green energy.** Advocate for solar panels, electric vehicle incentives, and clean-grid policies.

These choices, especially taken together across our community, have the power to lower emissions, protect health, and safeguard our environment.

Two Ways You Can Make a Difference Today

A. Green Your Routine

Swap just one car trip for a bike ride or walk each week. Over a year, that saves pounds of carbon emissions and strengthens your lungs and heart. TMACC has a tool that can help you track your savings.

*Continued on **page 27***

Why Route 29's Sinkhole Remediation Matters: Morehall Road Deep Fix

If you've driven along Route 29, formally known as Morehall Road, in East Whiteland or Charlestown Townships lately, you've been in the traffic snarls with the cones, jersey barriers, and the backhoes. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is in the middle of a massive sinkhole remediation project, and while it's inconvenient, it's also a lifeline for commuters and businesses alike.

At its core, this project addresses one of Chester County's quirks: our geology. Beneath the rolling hills lies limestone, beautiful but problematic. Water seeps

in, slowly dissolving the rock until the ground collapses. These sinkholes aren't just potholes on steroids; they're unpredictable, dangerous, and potentially catastrophic. That's why PennDOT is stabilizing the ground, rebuilding the roadway, and investing in long-term safety.

For commuters, the frustration is real. Morning backups lengthen, deliveries are detoured, and local businesses feel the squeeze. But every delay, every re-route, is part of ensuring no one wakes up to find a car swallowed by the earth. Projects like this take longer not out of

laziness, but out of necessity; engineering solutions must account for the unknowns beneath our feet. When safety is at stake, "fast" simply isn't an option.

Think of it as preventive medicine. The disruption today protects tomorrow's livelihoods. Without this work, the "shortcut" between Phoenixville and Malvern could have become a no-go zone something out of a dark-humor playbook where drivers add "avoid falling into a sinkhole" to their daily commute checklist.

As neighbors, patience matters. Please stay alert, be courteous, and merge with grace. Road crews aren't out there to slow you down; they're literally keeping the ground solid beneath your tires.

Chester County is growing, and safe, reliable infrastructure is the backbone of that growth. The Route 29 remediation project reminds us that while we can't control geology, we can control how we respond. And in this case, that means investing in the stability of the road we all depend on.

For most current updates on the project, check out Route 29 (Morehall Road) Sinkhole Remediation Project | Department of Transportation | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. ♦

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) commences a \$22.4 million sinkhole remediation project on U.S. 202 (DeKalb Pike) in Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County, and Route 29 (Morehall Road) in East Whiteland Township, Chester County.

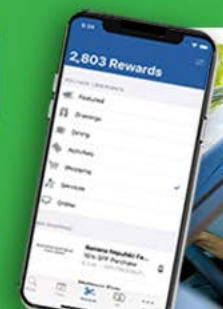


Share-A-Ride is a resource where employees can discover sustainable travel options like carpool, vanpool, transit, bike and walk. You can also record your sustainable trips and earn rewards.

JOIN SHARE-A-RIDE
DOWNLOAD THE APP TODAY



Find Rides,
Record Your Trips
and Get Rewards!



These are the connections that matter. ▶



Join Chester County's largest transportation solutions network.

As a member of TMACC, your company will be directly involved in advocating for sustainable transportation options and improving the connectivity of Chester County.

▶ We're all about helping you connect with transportation experts and advocates.

TMACC
Transportation Management Association
of Chester County

610-993-0911 | www.tmaccc.org

ADVERTISE

in **ChesGO!** magazine



The definitive source for moving around the county.

Reach commuters and other influential people in the transportation industry in and around Chester County.

To learn more about advertising opportunities email info@tmacc.org.

Connecting Communities, One Pedal at a Time

Extending the Main Line Greenway is More Than a Path—
It's a Smart Investment in Our Future!



Imagine a scenic, low-stress route that links neighborhoods, parks, libraries, and SEPTA stations, offering a safe and enjoyable way for families, commuters, and recreational cyclists to get around. The Main Line Greenway extension isn't just a bike path—it's a community connector, a traffic reducer, and a healthier way to travel. By investing in this regional Greenway, we're not just adding paint and signs; we're building a better, more connected future that's safe, accessible, and welcoming for everyone.

Lower Merion's Main Line Greenway Overview

Lower Merion's Main Line Greenway is a continuous, safe, and scenic corridor designed to connect communities through low-stress streets, parks, schools, and commercial centers. The Greenway uses existing low-traffic roads, painted lanes, and signage to guide cyclists and pedestrians, making it an ideal route for commuters, recreational cyclists, and families. The Greenway emphasizes accessibility, safety, and convenience, enhancing the community's active transportation options while reducing traffic congestion.

Imagining the Greenway Extension to West Chester

The concept of the Main Line Greenway can be extended westward from Lower Merion Township to the Borough of West Chester, connecting Radnor, Easttown, Tredyffrin, Willistown, Malvern Borough, East Whiteland, East Goshen, and West Goshen. This extension would create a regional corridor, linking key destinations such as SEPTA stations, parks, libraries, and town centers. The Greenway would continue to prioritize low-stress roads, utilizing painted sharrows, bike lanes, and signage to maintain continuity and safety.

Utilizing Low-Stress Roads for Safe and Accessible Travel

The extension would carefully select low-stress roads that feature reduced traffic volumes and slower speeds, making them safe for all users, including new cyclists, parents with children, and elderly residents. These roads offer a relaxed and enjoyable experience, avoiding high-traffic areas and major roadways. The goal is to create a route that feels safe and welcoming, encouraging more residents to choose biking or walking for short trips.

Key Connections: Linking SEPTA Stations, Parks, and Libraries

The extended Greenway will strategically connect to SEPTA stations, such as Radnor, Berwyn, Paoli, Malvern, and Exton, providing multimodal options for commuters. Parks like Malvern Memorial Park, East Goshen Park, and Willistown's Okehocking Preserve, along with local libraries, will be easily accessible, transforming the Greenway into a resource for recreation, education, and everyday errands. These connections will make the Greenway not just a transportation route but a community asset.

Guidance Through Paint and Signage

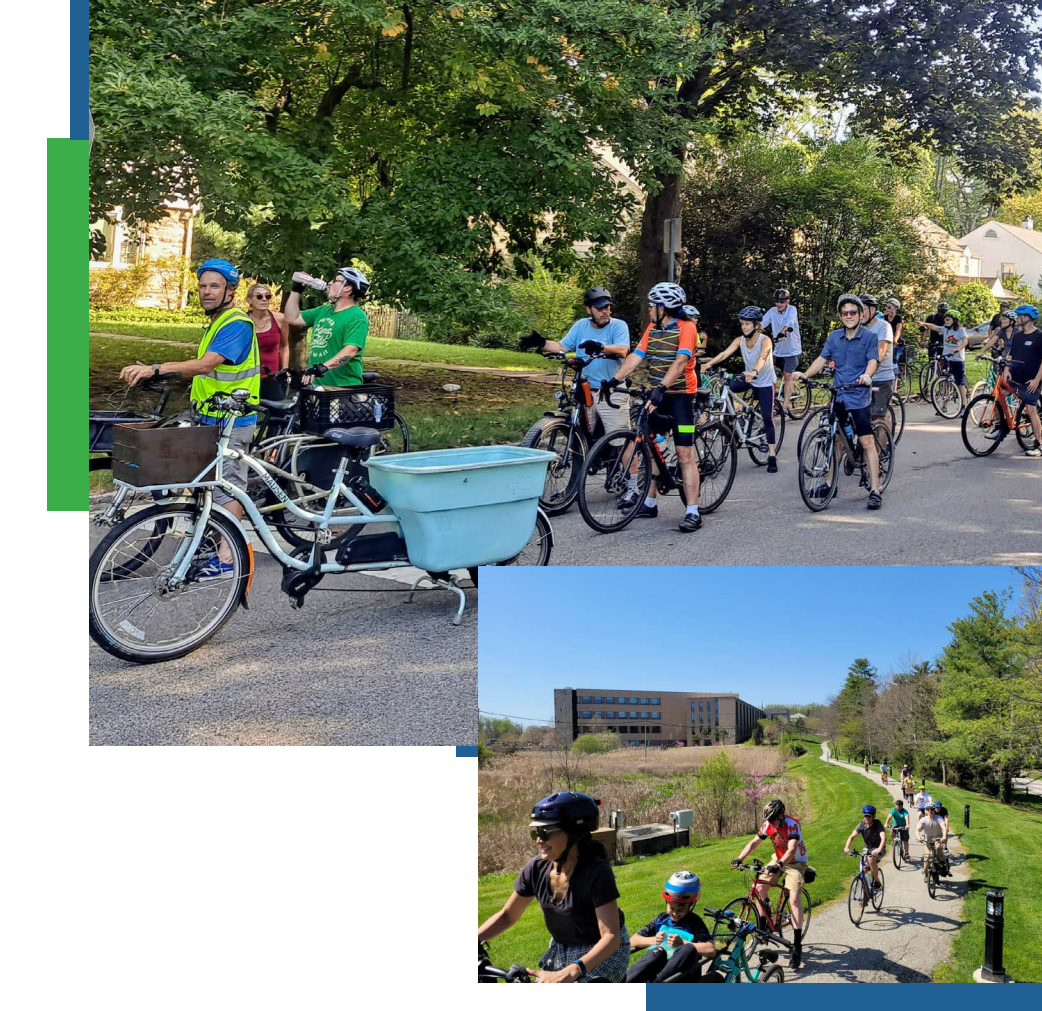
The Greenway will utilize painted bike lanes, sharrows, and clear wayfinding signage to guide users along the route. These simple yet effective tools help ensure that cyclists and pedestrians feel confident navigating the Greenway, knowing they are on the correct path. Signage will include distance markers and directional arrows, enhancing the user experience and encouraging more people to explore the route.

Municipal Collaboration and Community Engagement

Municipalities along the proposed route will play a crucial role in planning, designing, and implementing the Greenway extension. Local governments can provide input on route selection, help identify key community connections and engage residents through public workshops and surveys. This collaborative approach ensures that the Greenway aligns with each community's unique needs and priorities.

Promoting Safety and Awareness: Education and Law Enforcement

Safety education for both drivers and cyclists will be essential, promoting shared road rules and respectful behavior. Municipalities can partner with local law enforcement to conduct safety campaigns and enforce road-sharing laws. Educational initiatives can include distributing materials on safe passing distances, yielding, and other critical safety practices.



Intersection Upgrades and Joint Funding Applications

Key intersections along the route will be identified for safety upgrades, including improved crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and traffic calming measures. Municipalities can collaborate to create joint applications for multimodal transportation funding, leveraging resources to implement intersection improvements and enhance overall safety along the Greenway.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Enforcement

An MOU among the participating municipalities would outline the responsibilities for design, construction, maintenance, and enforcement of the Greenway. This agreement would establish clear guidelines for each jurisdiction's role, ensuring the Greenway is developed and maintained to a consistent standard. The MOU would also detail procedures for managing safety concerns and coordinating efforts across municipal boundaries, fostering a unified approach to the Greenway's long-term success.

A Vision for a Connected and Active Region

Extending the Main Line Greenway westward offers a transformative opportunity to enhance connectivity and active transportation for Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester Counties. By leveraging low-stress roads, engaging municipalities, and fostering a safe and welcoming environment, the Greenway will become a vital corridor that supports healthier, more sustainable communities. ♦

Were You There?

JUNE 2025 TRANSPORTATION BRIEFING



Continued from **page 9**

of communities, businesses, and stakeholders along the Route 30 corridor, a comprehensive public engagement process will be essential for ensuring the project meets the needs of all affected groups.

Public input will be gathered through public meetings, open houses, and social media platforms to inform the design and implementation of the plan. The success of the project will be measured not only by the physical improvements made to the corridor but also by the level of public awareness and community involvement in the planning process.

Next Steps and Funding

Once the Lincoln Highway Active Transportation Improvement Plan is completed by mid-2026, the next step will be for the municipalities of Coatesville, Caln, and Downingtown to seek funding and grants, such as Chester County’s Vision Partnership Program, to bring the proposed improvements to life. Additional funding may also come through PennDOT, which could help accelerate the implementation of key upgrades.

By improving the safety and accessibility of Route 30, the project will help create a more connected, livable corridor for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit riders. TMACC and Toole Design are poised to begin the planning process with the Project Steering Committee in early September 2025, with the goal of completing the plan by the end of June 2026. ♦

Continued from **page 21**

B. Get Informed on Action Days

Sign up on [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov) for Air Quality Alerts. When the AQI spikes, rally friends to stay indoors, cancel strenuous outdoor activities, or choose low-emission transportation. It’s a small change with a big collective impact.

Breathing Hope: A Community Right

As summer heat and wildfire-prone seasons challenge air safety nationwide, local action matters more than ever. We feel the shifts in air quality, especially in sensitive lungs, families, schools, and outdoor gatherings. But when neighbors come together, checking the AQI, making cleaner choices, and advocating for statewide policy, the air gets better. That’s the TMACC promise: **Clean air should be a community right.**

To every parent, teacher, senior, and young soul living in Chester County, your health matters. Let’s breathe easier, together. ♦

GET TO WORK,
safely.



One is commuting to work.
One is working.
Be aware of one another
and beware.

As advocates for safe commuting throughout the county, the Transportation Management Association of Chester County is the comma in the headline.

We’re all about commuters, period.



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Matt Edmond Brings 20+ Years of Planning Expertise to Chester County, Focusing on Sustainable Growth and Community Development



Matt Edmond,
Executive Director of
the Chester County
Planning Commission.

Matthew “Matt” Edmond, AICP, became the Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) in February 2025. With over 20 years of planning experience at the Montgomery County Planning Commission, including roles as Transportation Section Manager and Executive Director of the Montgomery County Transportation Authority, Matt brings extensive expertise in transportation, long-range planning, and community development.

Growing up in Northeast Philadelphia, Matt witnessed the importance of community and the challenges faced by working-class neighborhoods. His experiences in Newtown, Bucks County—where farmland turned into housing developments—shaped his passion for revitalizing struggling areas. Matt pursued a master’s degree in city planning, which led to a role as a transportation planner at the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

Matt’s approach to planning focuses on moderation, pragmatism, and common sense. He believes that transportation is the most powerful force shaping communities and that planners should focus on making places economically healthy and socially diverse. He emphasizes practicality over idealism, noting that planning should address real-world issues rather than lofty ideals. Common sense, he argues, is essential for making planning relevant to everyday people and gaining broad support for policies.

Matt also highlights that change is inevitable in communities, and planners must manage that change proactively to ensure neighborhoods thrive. He believes planning is about anticipating and preparing for changes that will shape communities in the future.

National Planning Trends and What They Mean for Chester County

Matt Edmond sees planners as “prophets,” tasked with spotting challenges and helping communities face them. One major issue today is the rising cost of housing: “There are many reasons why this is happening, but the consensus across many different professions is that there is just not enough housing.” The U.S. faces a shortage of 4.5 million homes, exacerbated by high demand from millennials. “To put it simply, demand outstrips supply.” For Chester County, this means more apartments in boroughs and townhome communities in suburban growth areas, preserving the county’s character without overhauling it.

Another trend is the reduced demand for office space. “In the past, we could always count on office development to generate high-quality jobs and tax revenue. Now, white-collar workers are working from home, at least some of the time.” Chester County has the opportunity to repurpose office parks into housing, retail, and entertainment spaces, diversifying land use to remain economically resilient.

Transit agencies are also struggling, with falling ridership and budget gaps. “When SEPTA talks about the ‘fiscal cliff,’ this is precisely the situation they are facing.” Remote work has led to weakened public transit, a shift that has major consequences for communities.

Healthcare consolidation and hospital closures are also affecting Chester County. “Chester County lost two hospitals recently and Delaware County lost four of their six hospitals in the last three years.” This has created a planning problem, with vacant hospital buildings and longer travel times to the remaining hospitals.



Matt points out that the closure of colleges is another unexpected trend: “After two or three centuries of constant growth, our academic institutions are shrinking.” The same economic forces that affect businesses are now reshaping the higher education sector.

The most pressing issue for Chester County, though, is the “megalopolis” in the Northeast. “People from Philadelphia are moving west and people from Wilmington are moving north into Chester County. We see it in the Census’ journey-to-work data, where our workforces are commuting in and out of all directions.” The challenge is to balance growth while preserving the county’s local culture.

Lastly, Matt highlights a shift in social habits: “The average American spends nearly 100 minutes more at home each day compared to 2003.” Technology has fueled social isolation, and this trend is reshaping how we use our spaces.

“Put all of this together and the future generally looks like a big realignment of land uses away from retail, office, and institutional – and toward residential housing,” Matt concludes. In Chester County, this means denser, higher buildings, with more townhomes, apartments, and mid-rise buildings coming from repurposed office spaces. “Our homes are becoming our workplace, our entertainment center, and our shelter from the disruptions in society.”

Landscapes3 (and beyond)

Under Matt Edmond’s leadership, CCPC continues to focus on the goals of Landscapes3, now in its eighth year. “We maintain our reputation as the go-to planning resource and will continue successful initiatives like the Town Tours and Vision Partnership Program,” he says.

He emphasizes that relationships are key to the success of county planning. “Our team is committed to growing our relationships with townships and boroughs.”

With the state requiring a comprehensive plan update every decade, planning for the successor to Landscapes3 is already underway. “We’re discussing our goals and direction,” Matt notes. The new plan will address the societal trends changing how we live and work.

Matt points out that while Chester County’s population is growing, the pace has slowed since the mid-2000s. According to the 2024 housing report <https://www.chescoplanning.org/LandUse/NonResConstruction-24.cfm>.

Chester County’s Future

Matt sees a bright future for Chester County, citing its abundance of open spaces, parks, diverse housing, and transportation access. “It has all the ingredients for long-term success—great places to live, work, and do business.”

With excellent access to airports and highways, Matt believes the county’s appeal will continue. “High land values are enabling more redevelopment, but greenfield development still holds economic advantages,” he adds.

He warns, “When the economy grows, it brings change, and that can be uncomfortable. But decline is the real danger—communities are either growing or shrinking, there’s no in-between.”

Matt also foresees continued growth for Chester County’s urban centers, offering walkability, local retail, and a connection to history. “As demand increases, these areas will become denser and more cosmopolitan, but with careful planning, they can retain their charm and become the ultimate representation of life in Chester County.”

A Man of Many Talents

Beyond his professional work, Matt is highly involved in his community and planning. He’s volunteered on several boards, including as Executive Director of the Montgomery County Transportation Authority and Chair of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Technical Committee. He also served 12 years on his local planning commission, 10 as Chair.

Currently, Matt is Secretary of the Southeast Section of the American Planning Association, serves on the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association’s board, and teaches for the PA Municipal Planning Education Institute.

In his free time, Matt enjoys driving his 1998 Jeep Wrangler, attending Phillies games, and playing keyboard (and occasionally bass) in his church’s worship band. He lives in East Norriton with his wife and three children. ♦

Pedals & Passion: A Conversation with Regional Chairperson of Bike Chester County

Q&A with Manny Menendez

Early Pedals & Personal Story

Q: When did you first start cycling and what got you hooked?

A: Over my summer breaks in my high school and early college years, I worked odd jobs (painting, cleaning, garden work) in the township where I lived. A one speed bicycle was my only means of transportation. The odd jobs kept me pretty busy and so I became very accustomed to riding my bike all around town and found that I enjoyed the ride.

Q: How has your bike evolved over the years, and which one is your favorite?

A: Once I determined that I had enough money to pay my college expenses, my first purchase was a new Schwinn 10-speed bike. I rode that bike for about 25 years. I commuted by bicycle to work 8 months out of the year and took weekend excursions and overnight tours with my wife as often as I could. As my three boys grew into teenagers, the Schwinn eventually got inherited by one of the boys. So, I upgraded to a new aluminum 21 speed bike (the standard for new bikes at this time). With the boys capable of longer rides, often our family vacations included bike/camping tours.

Q: Do you have a “dream bike” that still sits on the wish list?

A: Although I always enjoy taking my bike out for a spin, especially in the early morning, what I really enjoy most is bicycle touring and having a destination and purpose for the ride. About 12 years ago I upgraded by bike to a Salsa touring bike which is ideally equipped to carry panniers and is capable to ride on the road and most gravel trails. This was my “dream bike” and it still is! Additionally shortly after purchasing the Salsa, I purchased a tandem bicycle to ride with my wife. The tandem is also equipped as a touring bike (my 2nd dream bike).

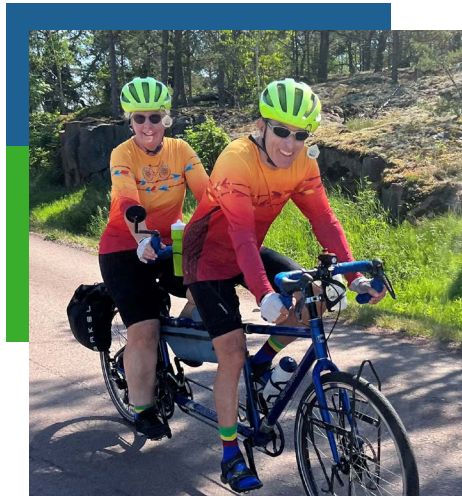
Partners on the Road

Q: Who is your favorite cycling partner and when did you start riding together?

A: I have ridden with a number of groups, clubs, and friends over the years. But the partner with whom I have logged the most miles is my wife of 46 years, Marsha. Marsha and I met in college, and our third date was a bike ride on a cold and windy spring break day. Since that first ride we have logged many miles together on local rides and tours across the USA, Europe, and New Zealand.

Q: Cycling and marriage: any advice for couples who want to keep the wheels spinning in harmony?

A: There is no one answer for everybody, but for Marsha and I we have always enjoyed cycling. Once our boys left home, we in a sense needed a way to reconnect with each other and cycling was an activity we could do together. To level the playing field we invested



Manny Menendez,
Regional Chairperson of
Bike Chester County

in the tandem bicycle. The tandem requires a lot of cooperation to ride smoothly and efficiently. Working together we have been able to extend our cycling tours far beyond what we could do independently. Additionally, the tandem and participation in tandem events has introduced us to other tandem couples locally and across the country so that we can enjoy social interaction with other cyclists. The purchase of the tandem bicycle was the best investment in our relationship!

Q: What’s your favorite memory of a ride shared with her?

A: We have many good memories of riding in many parts of the world, but our favorite is a tour we did in the summer of 2024. This tour did not require any car ride to a starting point or a plane ride to a foreign country. We left by bicycle right from our home and traveled self-supported for 8 weeks and covered 2200 miles. The unique aspects were that about 75% of the tour was on trails following rivers and canals across five states and we ended up back in our home driveway. We traveled routes through and around the mountains of Pennsylvania and New York without having to climb over the mountains. We traveled through major cities such as New York seamlessly on dedicated bike paths. And best of all “we did it”.

Favorite Roads & Rides

Q: Where’s your go-to spot to ride in Chester County when you just need a good spin?

A: My favorite spot to get out for a good and quick spin is Ridley Creek State Park. Although it is in Delaware County it is close to home, peaceful, and shaded in summer. The ride to and from the park does traverse some equally scenic Chester County roads.

For a longer ride my favorite area is the Brandywine River valley and maybe out to Northbrook Market or a stop at the Green St Grill in Downingtown for lunch.

Q: What’s your favorite domestic ride in the U.S.?

A: My favorite trail ride in the US is the Great Allegheny Passage.

Q: Have you cycled abroad, and if so, what trip still lives rent-free in your memory?

A: We have cycled in Europe and New Zealand. New Zealand is very pretty with endless unspoiled coastline, but it is very hilly and challenging.

Europe is my favorite overseas cycling destination. It is very, very bike friendly! Well-marked extended bike routes, lots of bike paths and bike lanes, convenient bike amenities in towns and villages, and courteous drivers.

Bike Chester County Mission

Q: For those who don’t know, what exactly is Bike Chester County?

A: Bike Chester County is a regional affiliate of the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. Our Mission is to advocate for bicycle infrastructure (trails, bike lanes, bike parking) and bike safety in Chester County. We work with other organizations with an interest in cycling in Chester County as well as municipalities.

Q: What’s your role as Chairperson and why is this work important to you personally?

A: My role is to coordinate activities with the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, members of Bike Chester County, and other parties with an interest in cycling such as The Chester County Planning Commission and TMACC.

There are many wonderful opportunities for cycling in Chester County including the Chester Valley Trail and many miles of scenic roads. However, there are also many opportunities to improve the cycling experience in Chester County so as to encourage more people to travel by bicycle and feel safe doing so. I feel that my cycling experiences across the US and in Europe can add value to the discussion for improvements in Chester County.

Q: How can people get involved or join Bike Chester County?

A: People can join by first joining the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia on their website and then check the box for interest in Chester County.

Bike Chester County activities are organized by our Steering Committee. If you are interested in volunteering with the steering committee, then you should contact myself or Patrick Monahan, BCGP Regional Organizer

Cycling Wisdom & Lessons

Q: What perspective would be helpful for motorists to understand about cyclists sharing the road?

A: Cyclists and motorists are out on our community roadways, which we all pay for with our taxes, with a desire or need to get some place. We all need to be respectful of other road users no matter what transportation means they choose. Cyclists need to ride to the side of the road when it is safe to do so and indicate their intentions for making turns and stops. Motorists should pass a cyclist at safe speed and with 4 ft clearance at all times. A motorist does not need to sound their horn when approaching or passing a cyclist – this only serves to startle the cyclists. Motorists need to be particularly careful around cyclists at intersections and never try to pass a cyclist at or approaching an intersection. If a cyclist is making a turn, they may need to pull out into the traffic lane to safely make the turn particularly for left turns.

Q: What’s the best advice you’d give to someone just getting into cycling?

A: Start slowly and go for short rides in your neighborhood or on a trail. As you gain confidence and want to go for longer rides find a friend or group to ride with. Riding with others is more fun and adds a level of safety. Also search out routes on low traffic roads (other riders may know some good roads in your area). Most of all enjoy the ride, it is not a race, and stop for lunch along the way with friends

Q: What was the hardest lesson you learned about cycling either on the road or off it?

A: Just do it! Get up every morning and ride to wherever you need or want to go.

Q: Last but not least: describe cycling in one word.

A: Fun! ♦

Meet the New Faces of TMACC: Introducing Our New Board Members

The TMACC organization is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of a talented, and diversified group always ready to support the TMACC mission. Their collective background helps to facilitate the smooth operation of TMACC. Members represent businesses, universities, municipalities, engineering firms, healthcare organizations, and transportation and governmental agencies.



This year, the TMACC board added four new members: **Jaren Bailey, Aristidis Christakis, Matthew Edmond, and Robert Emmanuel.**

As Lead Civil Engineer with WSP, **Jaren Bailey** works closely with PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to preserve and expand existing roadway corridors. He is responsible for the design and delivery of roadway projects of various sizes from trails all the way up to interstate designs. He is currently serving as deputy project manager on a few large interstate projects in Chester County.

“I think one of the most important things for society is multimodal transportation,” stated Jaren. “I come from a family where not everyone was able to afford a car, and they heavily relied on other means of transportation. My hope with joining TMACC is to further this agenda and

help facilitate more efficient transportation.”

Jaren makes his home in Exton, with his wife, two daughters, one dog and two cats. In his spare time, you will find Jaren golfing, chasing his kids around his yard, or doing anything outside.

As a lawyer and Partner at Buckley, Brion, McGuire & Morris LLP, in West Chester, **Aristidis Christakis** works in the firm’s zoning and land development practice group. His practice focuses on representing private developers, with a focus on mid-to-large scale commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential projects – particularly those involving highly-regulated industries like community living arrangement homes, senior living facilities, and outdoor advertising.

Ari believes that “Chester County stands at the threshold of tremendous

opportunity. With major upcoming events placing us in the spotlight, I’m excited to help us shine. By planning smartly for today’s transportation needs, TMACC can ensure Chester County remains vibrant and full of promise for generations to come.”

In addition to his extremely rewarding work at Royer-Greaves School for Blind in Paoli, Ari is very involved in the sport of rugby. He lives in Berwyn with his wife and two sons. Ari’s favorite mode of transportation is his 1963 Cadillac Model 62 Six-Window (when it runs). And when it doesn’t? “Any sailboat will do.”

The Chester County Planning Commission has a new Executive Director, **Matthew Edmond**, who has taken over for the retiring Brian O’Leary. In addition to leading a team of over three dozen planning and technical staff, Robert frequently interacts with a wide range of planning partners, elected officials, municipal managers, and non-profit leaders to help implement the goals of Landscapes3, Chester County’s comprehensive plan. His list of responsibilities is long, and, among other tasks, include setting long-range policy direction for the agency, and

representing the Chester County government on all matters related to urban planning.

“Transportation is as essential to life as air and breathing,” stated Robert. “Every time a person leaves their home, they are interfacing with the transportation network. When you walk out your front door, you are either getting into your car, catching the bus, or walking down the street. Transportation is inescapable. And it’s always been that way through every generation and culture. That’s why being part of the TMACC board is important: because transportation is so essential to our lives, having a balanced transportation network that offers everybody rational and practical choices is a key component to a functioning and prosperous society. And the purpose of TMACC is to help make our transportation network balanced and practical. There are lots of causes that people can dedicate themselves to, and they are all good. When you think about it that way, transportation might be one of the highest causes.”

A lifelong resident of the Philadelphia area, Robert currently lives just outside of Norristown with his wife, Jennifer, and their three children. In his free

time, you can find Robert attending Phillies games and working on home improvement projects.

Robert Emmanuel believes “that TMACC is an integral part of promoting public transit within Chester County. Access to transit allows people to thrive within their communities and live up to their full potential. Providing transit to the spaced-out and oft overlooked populations within the county is a difficult, yet incredibly important task to ensure a resilient and equitable future.”

In his role as a Planner I for Tredyffrin Township, Robert is responsible for preparing, updating, and implementing planning documents and reports while supporting the Planning Commission. His involvement also includes public communication and collaboration with developers and professionals on land development matters.

Robert has always loved cities and enjoys exploring the many beautiful urban centers in the region. During his downtime he rides motorcycles, fixes up old cars, or rides public transit, especially the Route 15 trolley. ♦



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