

*Chester County within Pennsylvania (top) and Thornbury Township within Chester County (bottom). Both parks within Thornbury Township (right)*



*The Squire Cheyney Farmhouse*



*Waln Run Park*

## Introduction

Squire Cheyney Park and Waln Run Park are located in Thornbury Township, along the southeastern boundary of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

The Squire Cheyney parcel is situated within the northeastern portion of Thornbury Township along Cheyney Road. Twenty eight acres of this property were purchased by the Township from the Dallett family with the goal of protecting the site's historic resources and providing passive recreation for the community. The historic Cheyney Farmstead is located on a seventeen acre conservation lot which is currently owned by the Orleans Development Company. Thornbury Township is currently negotiating with Orleans regarding the dedication of the historic farmstead and open space to the Township. This master plan study includes an analysis of all open space development proposed by Orleans regardless of whether these lands are dedicated to the Township or become private open space controlled by a home owners association.

The Squire Cheyney Park master plan seeks to preserve open space around the historic Cheyney Farmstead, to integrate recreational uses with the potential for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an existing farmhouse and barn currently on the site.

Waln Run Park is located north of Echo Hill Road and West of Westtown Road. It is a unique neighborhood amenity, consisting of twelve acres of preserved park land which is partially surrounded by existing residential development. It is currently used by local residents for passive recreation. Potential improvements to the park would enhance access to and visibility of the site.

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According to the Thornbury Township Open Space Plan, both the Waln Run and Squire Cheyney parcels are to be developed as a “family-oriented lifetime wellness and recreation complex to involve passive recreational uses, to protect historic resources, and to provide permanent open space.”

### Consultant Selection and Master Plan Funding

At the beginning of 2006, Thornbury Township solicited proposals from consultants for the development of a park master plan for Waln Run Park and Squire Cheyney Park. The Township reviewed the submitted proposals and selected Simone Collins Landscape Architecture to perform the work. The Simone Collins project team included Frens and Frens Restoration Architects LLC who provided an assessment of the condition of historic Cheyney structures, and E.L. Crow Inc. who completed a marketing analysis to determine the feasibility of potential income-producing adaptive uses for the two existing structures on the Squire Cheney parcel.

The Squire Cheyney-Waln Run Park Master Plan was funded by Thornbury Township and a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

### Project Goals

Prior to the commencement of the Master Plan development process, several goals for both park projects were identified by the Park Master Plan Steering Committee. These goals included: possible reuse of historic Cheyney structures, preservation of significant viewsheds, a desire for facilities that require low levels of maintenance, and provision of passive recreational opportunities.

### Relevant Planning Documents

Background information for this master plan was provided by several documents including:

Subdivision and Land Development Chapters 115 and 116, and Zoning Chapter 155 from the Code of the Township of Thornbury, July 1997.

The Code of Thornbury Township is intended to “promote the health, safety, morals and general welfare” of Thornbury Township residents. The Thornbury Township Zoning Ordinance outlines permitted land uses within certain districts and establishes setbacks and building height regulations. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance generally deals with the specifics of required improvements and provides design standards for all types of development within the township.

Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan, Thornbury Township Chester County, Pennsylvania, March 1993 (amended April, 1996).

The Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan provides “guidelines or recommendations for the preservation of open space and environmental resources as well as the development of recreation areas within Thornbury for the use of Township residents”. This document contains historical, political, and general information about the Township and its residents. This information includes results from a Parks and Recreation Survey conducted in 1990 outlining Township recreational needs, such as

increased pedestrian/bike paths, community recreational areas, environmental education areas, and preservation of historic sites. The survey also confirms that residents placed both the Waln Run and Squire Cheyney parcels in their list of the top ten desired locations for open space and recreation.

### Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan, September 19, 2004.

The 2004 Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan states the goals and objectives regarding the timing, location and character of future development within the Township. These goals and objectives include future plans for land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, protection of historic and natural resources, and strategies for the implementation of these plans.

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan notes that development of Squire Cheyney and Waln Run Parks provides the opportunity for Thornbury Township to accomplish several of the goals outlined within the Comprehensive Plan. These goals include:

1. To preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and architectural integrity of the Township, including parks and open space, historic structures and natural resources.
2. To create pedestrian trail and bikeway linkages between residential neighborhoods and community facilities.

### Thornbury Township Official Map

Section 401 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code permits the governing body of each municipality power to make an official map which shows appropriate elements or portions of elements of the Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, which may include, but need not be limited to:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closing of same.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
5. Flood control basins, floodways and flood plains, storm water management areas and drainage easements.

The Thornbury Township Bicycle Routes and Trails Map from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan shows proposed walking trails and designated bike routes along existing roadways. Bike routes were compiled from the Thornbury Township Official Map, adopted by the Township on May 1996, and also from the Recommended Bikeway Network Functional Classification Map prepared by the Chester County Planning Commission in 1997. Locations of proposed walking trails are shown on The Thornbury Township Official Map. The trails shown on the map are to be accommodated through a combination of land development processes, acquisition of easements and /or agreements with property owners.

# Introduction

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## **Thornbury Township Community Size, Character and Population**

Thornbury Township is located in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Approximately four square miles in area, the Township is part of what was once a vast agrarian landscape that has been developed largely as suburban single family residential. Thornbury Township is the smallest township in land mass in Chester County. According to the 2002 Chester County Land Records, residential uses comprise approximately 1.8 square miles of the Township's total area. One of the largest landholders in the Township is Cheyney University. Thornbury Township is considered a second class township and is therefore governed by an elected five member Board of Supervisors who are assisted by a Township Manager that oversees the Township Staff.

### Population

When the 2000 census was taken, Thornbury Township reported a population of 2,678. Projections made by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in 2002 indicate an estimated increase in the Township's population of approximately 20% per decade. Population projections for the year 2010 are 3,230, and 3,820 for the year 2020.

### Age

Over half of Thornbury Township's total population is between the ages of 25 and 54, with a median age of 36.8. Nineteen percent of the population were identified as school aged children (aged 5 to 19 years old), and approximately seventeen percent were over 55 years of age.

### Education

According to the 2000 census, approximately one quarter of Township residents were enrolled in school: 40% in elementary school, 19.4% in high school and 23.5% in college or graduate school. Over sixty two percent of residents over the age of 25 have obtained at least a bachelor's degree.

### Employment and Income

The 2000 census reported that just over half of Township residents (a total of 1,490) were employed. A per capita income of \$47, 505 and a median household income of \$84, 225 were also reported. The US Census Bureau reported a median household income of \$67,939 for Chester County in 2003.

## **Township Parks/Open Space**

Until recently, Thornbury Township did not have a municipal park. Residents met their recreational needs at parks and recreational facilities outside of the Township, or used facilities available at local schools. Cheyney University, Concept School, Westtown School, Penns Oak Country Club and Racquet Club, and Stetson Middle School were all used to satisfy the recreational needs of Thornbury Township residents.

The regional park closest to Thornbury Township is Ridley Creek State Park in Delaware County. This park consists of 2,606 acres of Delaware County woodlands and meadows and is located just east of the town of Cheyney near Gradyville. This park offers environmental education and interpretation, camping, fishing, picnicking, and tours of historic structures.

Several community parks are located in proximity to Thornbury Township. Oakbourne Park, located in Westtown Township consists of 93 acres of parkland and offers sports fields, picnic areas, a walking trail and pavilion. Thornbury Park is located in Delaware County's Thornbury Township and offers a play field, sports facilities and a pavilion. The primary municipal park in Thornbury Township is Goose Creek Park. Goose Creek Park is approximately 12 acres in size and provides recreational amenities such as walking trails, a playground, and a pavilion.

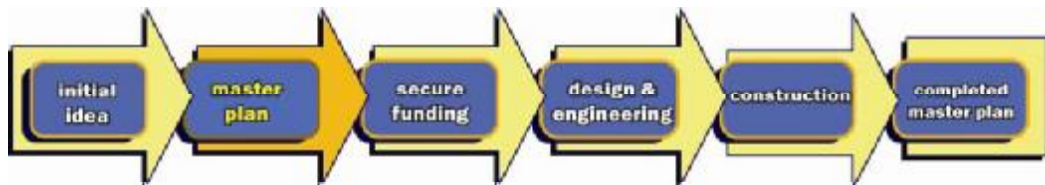
Thornbury Soccer Park is a privately owned recreational facility that provides eight soccer fields for use by the West Chester United Soccer Club.

The 2004 Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan has recommended a greenway corridor that would create connections between several of the Township's public open spaces, such as Goose Creek Park and Wain Run Park.

### Public Participation Process

Public participation in the master planning process is integral to the success of any community project. Meetings held with members of the community offer the opportunity for the consultant and Township to keep the public informed about the status of a project. Public meetings also help the consultant obtain important input regarding the goals, needs, and concerns of Thornbury Township residents.

The development of a master plan, as shown in the graphic below, is one of the initial stages within the overall process of completing a public park project. The purpose of developing a master plan is to establish a general consensus as to how each park will be designed, and to determine the probable cost of construction so that an implementation strategy can be generated.



A master plan serves as the foundation upon which further design and engineering phases of the project are completed, such as the production of construction drawings. Once construction drawings have been completed, the project will be bid and constructed. The entire process of developing a park requires several years with construction of various park facilities likely occurring in phases as funding becomes available.

The Squire Cheyney Park and Wain Run Park master planning process occurred over a nine month period during which several community meetings were held. Meetings usually consisted of a PowerPoint and/or verbal presentation regarding the latest developments in the master planning process, followed by comments and suggestions from those in attendance. Feedback was documented for each meeting and incorporated into subsequent phases of design.

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Meetings included five Steering Committee Meetings, three Public Meetings, two Neighborhood Meetings, and two meetings with the Board of Supervisors. Interviews were also conducted with key members of the community. Comments received from key person interviews generally supported feedback received during meetings.

The Steering Committee included various representatives from Thornbury Township, the Historic Preservation Commission, The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission.

Public Meetings were attended by several members of the Steering Committee in addition to members of the general public.

A Neighborhood Meeting with residents living near Waln Run Park offered insight into the needs and opinions of the immediate neighbors. Residents along College Hill Road, whose properties adjoin the Squire Cheyney Park parcel, were invited to attend the April, 3, 2007 Public Meeting which featured a presentation of the Draft plan.

Attendance records, notes from each meeting, and a summary of findings from Key Person Interviews can be found in the appendix of this report.