

# Ardentown Paths Plan



November 2017

**WILMAPCO**



Village of Ardentown



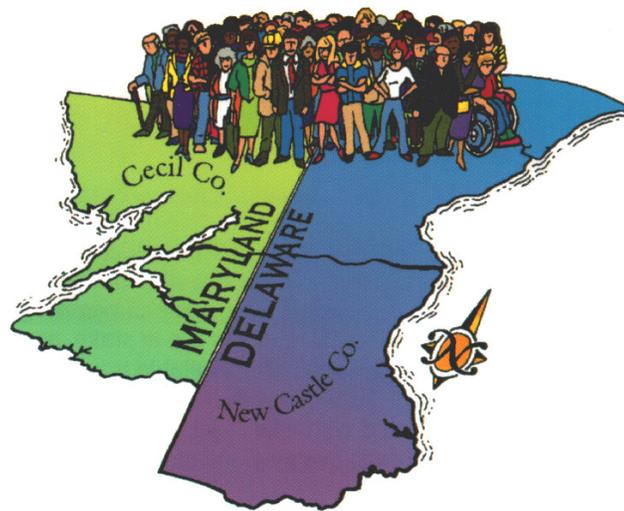


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## Who is WILMAPCO?

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is a federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consisting of two counties; Cecil County, Maryland and New Castle County, Delaware. Our mission is to serve the residents and stakeholders of the Wilmington region by carrying out a comprehensive, continuing and cooperative regional transportation planning process consistent with federal transportation legislation. To that end, WILMAPCO informs and involves the public of transportation planning decisions, guides the investment of federal transportation funds, coordinates transportation investments with local land use decisions, and promotes the national transportation policy expressed in federal transportation law.



WILMAPCO is responsible for the development of the best transportation plan for the region. The implementation of that transportation plan is carried out by WILMAPCO's member agencies. We collect, analyze and evaluate demographic, land use and transportation-related data and seek public input to understand the transportation system requirements of the region. Understanding these requirements allows for the development of plans and programs and the implementation of a transportation system that provides for the efficient transport of people, goods and services.



## Executive Summary

The village of Ardentown, Delaware has a historic network of walking paths, which developed informally in the early twentieth century as transportation corridors between homes, community buildings, and a former train station. The paths are mostly natural, consisting of dirt and grass or mulch. Some paths run parallel to and between roads, offering a safer alternative to walking in the street, while others run through undeveloped woods, connecting residents to natural areas. While their original purpose was primarily for transportation, they now serve more of a recreational role, with transportation being a secondary function.

The Village of Ardentown submitted a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) request to the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) to develop the Ardentown Paths Plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify, preserve, and enhance the network of paths and to support making Ardentown a more walkable community. This plan provides an update and enhancement to the 2013 Ardentown Paths Report, which was developed by the Village of Ardentown Planning Committee.

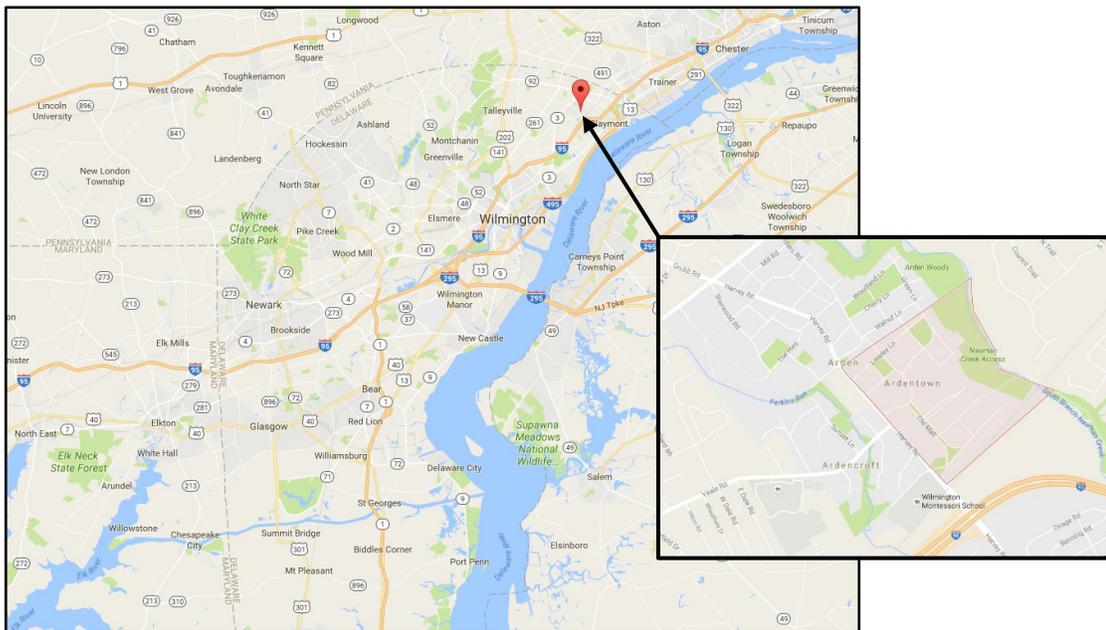
This plan has been guided by a steering committee, including representatives from the Ardentown Planning Committee, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), WILMAPCO, and additional residents of the village. Through a public outreach process, including two public surveys and workshops during town meetings, the steering committee developed and prioritized a list of recommendations for the path network:

1. **Keep the paths cleared of obstructions**, based on a prioritization of path segments developed through a public survey.
2. **Improve the pedestrian crossing at Sconset Road and Harvey Road**, which would allow a safer crossing for students of the Wilmington Montessori School as well as better access to Ardencroft and its own path network.
3. **Improve the connection from the Harvey Road Bridge to the Sunnyside Tract**, which would serve as the primary entrance into the nature preserve.
4. **Name and sign the paths**, which would improve wayfinding and help to identify the paths and their locations.
5. **Open overgrown paths**, which have been disused and are no longer passable.
6. **Improve the pedestrian crossings at Millers/Veale Roads and Harvey Road**, providing an additional safe crossing of Harvey Road as well as better access to Ardencroft and its own path network.
7. **Improve the connection across Naamans Creek and the CSX railroad**, which is an indirect connection between the Creek Path and the Sunnyside Tract underneath the railroad bridge.
8. Additional recommendations written in by survey respondents, including repairing existing small bridges and improving access to and through the woods.

This plan provides maps of the paths and recommendations, methodology, more detailed descriptions of the recommendations, and next steps.

## Introduction

Ardentown is a village in New Castle County, Delaware, and as of 2010, it has a population of 264. The village was founded in 1922 as an expansion of the village of Arden, which was founded in 1900 and is located directly to the northwest. Ardencroft, located southwest of Ardentown, was founded in 1950. Together, the three villages are known as “the Ardens.” Land in each of the Ardens cannot be bought or sold. All land in Ardentown is held in a common trust, from which people lease properties, or leaseholds. This limits new development, which is intended to maintain the historic, rustic nature of the village.



Ardentown has an interconnected network of historic walking paths, predating paved roads and widespread use of the automobile. These paths are open to the public and are owned by the trustees of Ardentown. Paths run between leaseholds, through parks and natural areas, and between public buildings and other destinations. At the village’s boundaries, some paths connect to similar path networks in Arden and Ardencroft. Others have become overgrown and are no longer functional.

Ardentown’s paths developed informally as transportation corridors between leaseholds, community buildings, and a former train station that connected residents to jobs in Wilmington. While their original purpose was primarily for transportation, widespread automobile use and subsequent changes in transportation infrastructure and regional land use patterns have led to a decrease in transportation use. Paved roads became the village’s primary transportation corridors. Today, many of the paths serve more of a recreational role, with transportation as a secondary function. For example, the Harvey Road Path, which runs between leaseholds parallel to Harvey Road, was originally known as the Station Path, as it connected residents to the former train station. The train station no longer exists, and today the path is used for both transportation and recreation, connecting residents to destinations as well as recreational paths in natural areas.

In September 2013, the Village of Ardentown Planning Committee developed a report titled “Report and Recommendations from the Planning Committee Regarding Village Paths.” This report identified



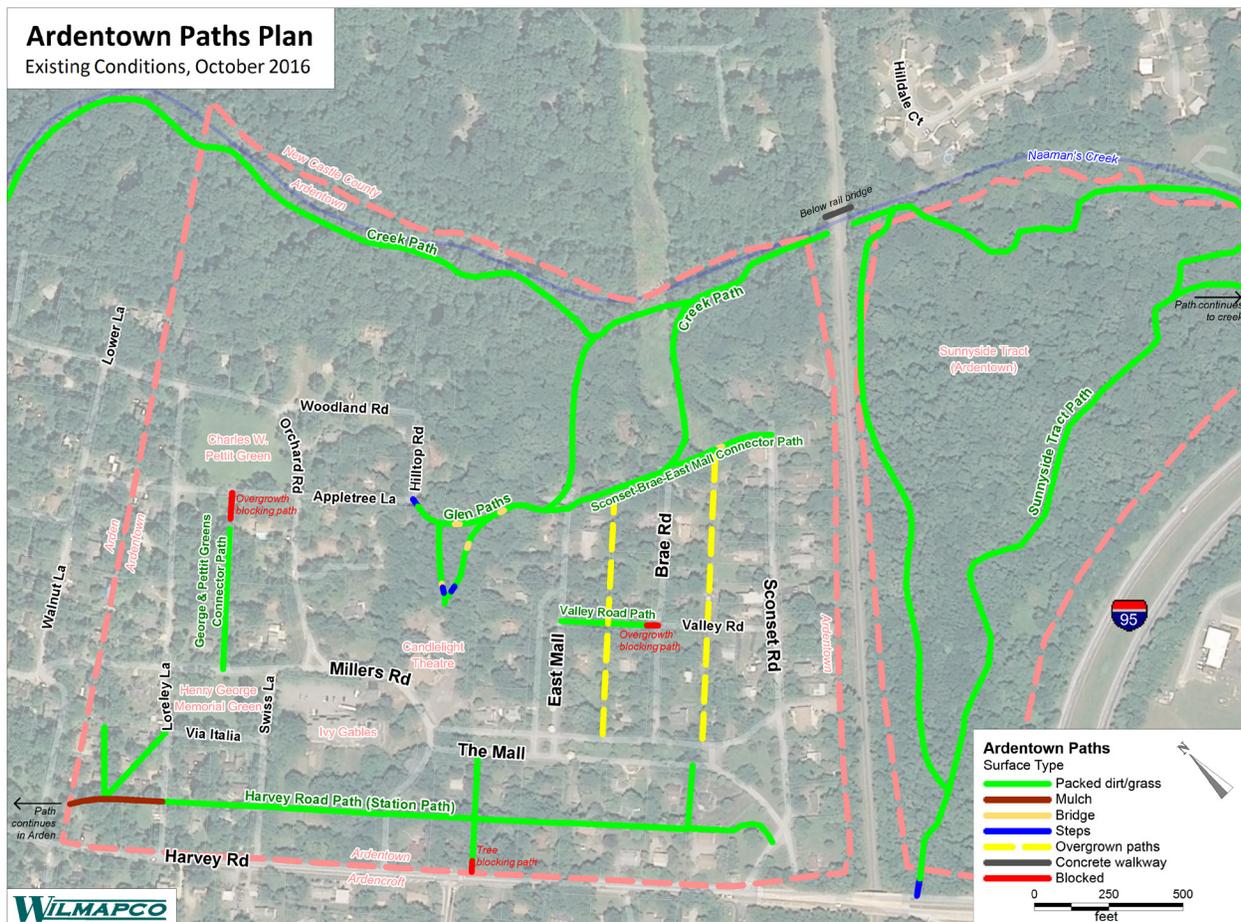
unofficial path names and their locations, barriers to path use, and recommendations for improvement. In 2015, the Village of Ardentown submitted a UPWP request to WILMAPCO to develop the Ardentown Paths Plan, in order to support making Ardentown a more walkable community through implementation strategies for path improvements. This plan provides an update and enhancement to the 2013 report.

In October 2016, a steering committee was formed to guide the planning process, including members of the Village of Ardentown Planning Committee, other residents, and staff from DeIDOT and WILMAPCO. Staff from New Castle County and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) were also invited to join the committee, but did not. The steering committee met monthly to review previous work, plan outreach activities, review maps and other plan materials, and develop and prioritize recommendations based on public feedback. The following sections will provide an overview of the methodology of the planning process, prioritized recommendations, and next steps.

# Methodology

## Path Data Collection and Mapping

The initial step of the planning process was to develop a GIS (geographic information system, software for creating maps and analyzing map data) inventory of existing conditions of Ardentown’s paths. Following the October 2016 steering committee meeting, steering committee members walked the entirety of the path network on multiple days, using a combination of GPS data, aerial photos, and handwritten traces on printed maps in order to identify path locations as accurately as possible. During these walks, the surface types of path segments were also recorded. Surface types included a combination of packed dirt and grass, mulch, wooden bridges where paths cross over streams, and wooden steps built into slopes. Path segments that were obstructed by overgrowth or fallen trees were recorded as being blocked. Two fully overgrown paths were noted on the map, which had previously been open to the public but are now inaccessible. Near the northwestern corner of the map, the CSX-owned railroad crosses over Naamans Creek. Under the railroad bridge, there is a small concrete walkway on the north side of the creek. When the water level is low, it is possible to continue between the Creek Path and the Sunnyside Tract Path, both on the south side of the creek, by hopping on rocks across the creek from the paths to the concrete walkway.



Path names are as identified by the Ardentown Planning Committee in the Report and Recommendations from the Planning Committee Regarding Village Paths, 2013.

## Public Outreach and Survey Analysis

In order to involve the public in the planning process and to collect feedback, the steering committee developed a public survey in November 2016. The survey included questions about residency in Ardentown, familiarity with the paths, and path usage. Additionally, it asked respondents to share any suggestions for improving the paths as well as opinions on paving, safety, lighting, naming, and signing the paths. At Ardentown’s public meeting in the Candlelight Theatre on November 14, 2016, WILMAPCO staff introduced the plan and distributed the survey. The survey was also available online via Survey Monkey.

- 65 responses to the first public survey were received, a response rate of 25% based on the village’s 2010 population of 264.
- 75% were residents of Ardentown.
- 92% were familiar with the paths, and 85% use the paths “often” or “sometimes.”
- When respondents were asked where they travel on the paths, most listed path names rather than destinations, suggesting that paths are used more for recreation than for transportation.
- Many suggestions were offered for improving the paths, but the most common suggestion was to clear the paths of debris and other obstructions. Other suggestions included filling in gaps in the path network, making safety improvements to Harvey Road, and marking or signing paths.
- When asked for opinions on alternative options for the paths, most preferred natural paths over paved paths, signage over no signage, and keeping the paths free of lighting in order to reduce light pollution, costs, and maintenance needs.
- 74% of respondents were not concerned about personal safety on the paths; for those who were, safety concerns included crime and tripping hazards.
- When asked for additional thoughts on the paths or about pedestrian or bicycle transportation in general, respondents said that the roads are safe for bicycling, so there is no need to pave the paths. They also said that better access to the woods is needed, as well as safe connections to the Wilmington Montessori School and Ardencroft, both located across Harvey Road.



After the first public meeting, the committee identified two access points to the Sunnyside Tract, a nature preserve which the Village of Ardentown acquired from the Delaware Department of Transportation. The Sunnyside Tract is located east of the developed part of town, bounded by the CSX railroad on the west, Interstate 95 on the east, Naamans Creek on the north, and Harvey Road on the south. Residents often access the area by illegally crossing the CSX railroad, demonstrating a need for a safe and legal access point. In addition to the concrete walkway along Naamans Creek underneath the CSX railroad bridge, another access point is on the Harvey Road bridge over the CSX railroad. The Sunnyside Tract paths can be accessed from the north sidewalk of the Harvey Road bridge by stepping over a railing, walking down steps made from tree branches, and entering the Sunnyside Tract through



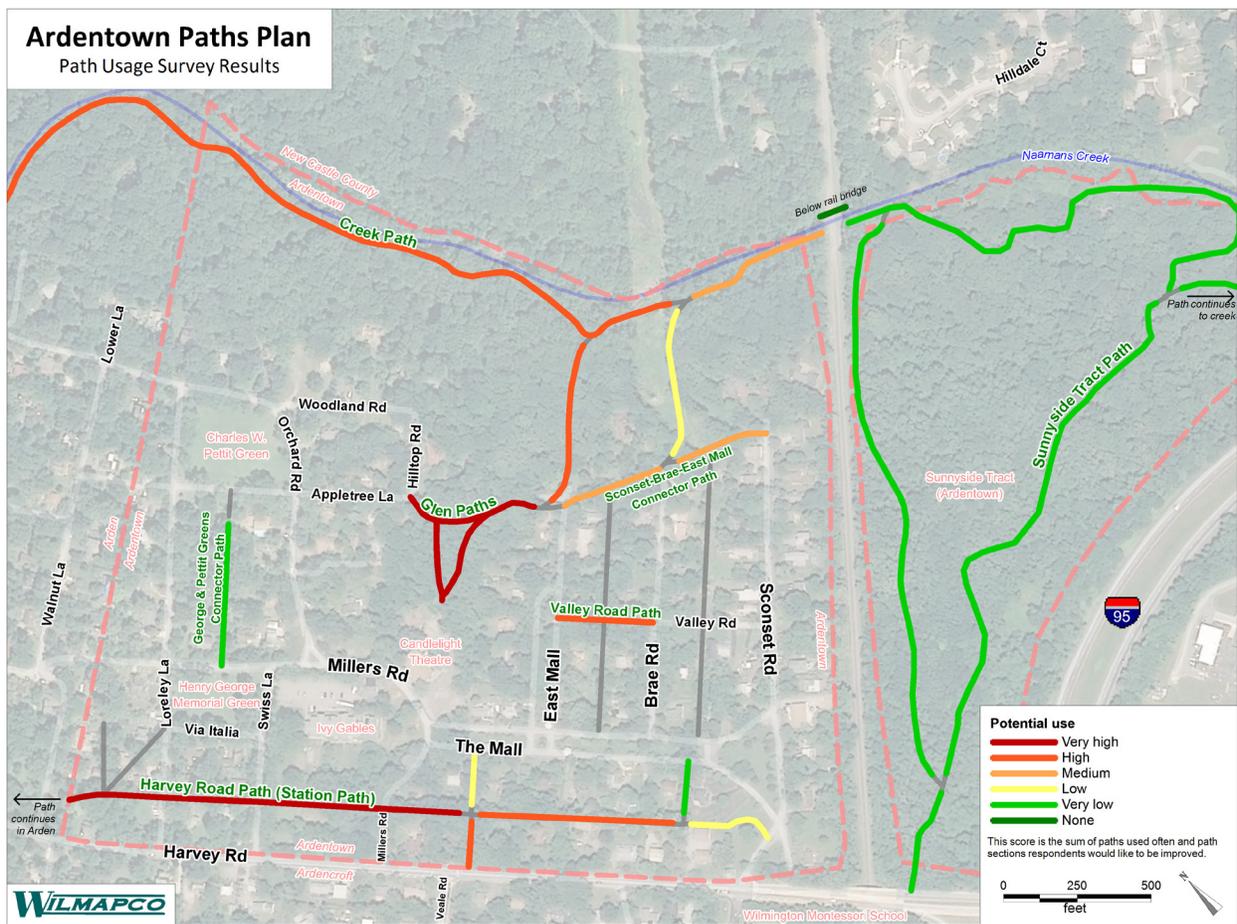
an opening in a fence. The area between the Harvey Road sidewalk and the Sunnyside Tract is part of DeIDOT right of way.

Additionally, the steering committee identified pedestrian crossings on Harvey Road where improvements could be made. The draft list of recommendations included the following: keep paths cleared, based on priority; name and sign the paths; improve the connection across Naamans Creek and the CSX railroad; open overgrown paths; improve the connection from the Harvey Road Bridge to the Sunnyside Tract Path; improve the pedestrian crossing at Sconset Road and Harvey Road (to the Wilmington Montessori School); and improve the pedestrian crossings at Millers/Veale Roads and Harvey Road.

In order to prioritize the recommendations as well as the paths for improvement, the steering committee developed a second public survey. This survey was distributed at Ardentown's public meeting at Ivy Gables on February 13, 2017 and was also made available online. The survey consisted of two exercises. The first exercise (Survey A) showed a map of the existing trails, asking respondents to indicate which paths they use often and which paths they do not use often but would if conditions were better. The second exercise (Survey B) listed the draft recommendations and asked respondents to indicate the three most needed recommendations, including a space to write in additional recommendations. In total, 30 responses were received to the second public survey, a response rate of 11% based on the village's 2010 population of 264.

## Survey Analysis and Prioritization

The responses to Survey A indicated that the most often used paths included the Harvey Road Path, the Glen Paths, and parts of the Creek Path, as shown in the map below. Few of the respondents indicated which paths they do not use often but would if conditions were better, so these responses were combined with the results of the first question to create a map showing potential use of the paths, shown below.



Note: The two branch paths near the west end of the Harvey Road Path are shown in gray because they were not included on the map at the time the survey was conducted. Overgrown paths were also not included in the survey.



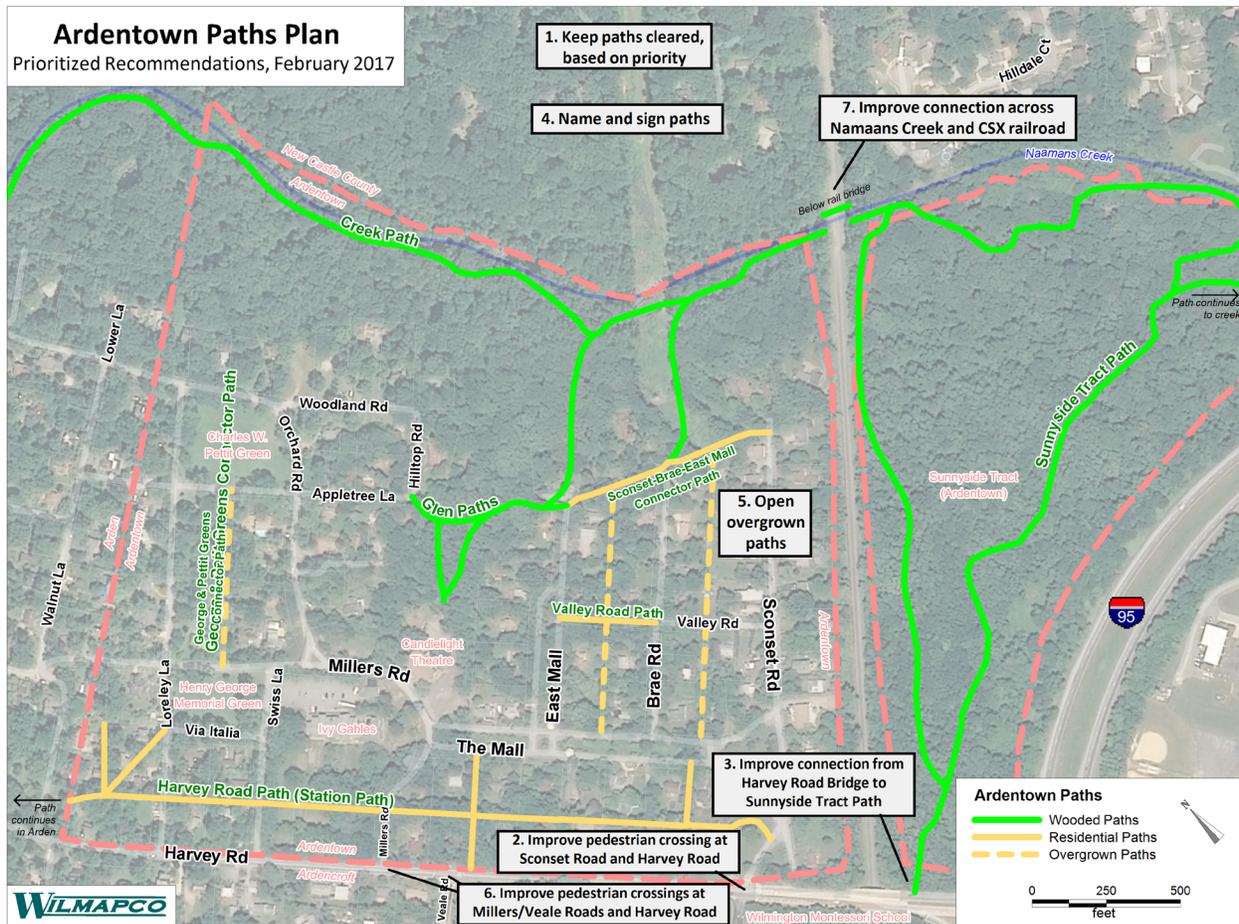
The responses to survey B were scored and ranked. For each survey response, recommendations were awarded 3 points for being ranked as the most needed, 2 points for second, and 1 point for third. This resulted in the following prioritized list of recommendations:

1. Keep paths cleared, based on priority (64 points)
2. Improve pedestrian crossing at Sconset Road and Harvey Road (to the Wilmington Montessori School) (44 points)
3. Improve connection from the Harvey Road Bridge to the Sunnyside Tract Path (23 points)
4. Name and sign the paths (18 points)
5. Open overgrown paths (18 points)
6. Improve pedestrian crossings at Millers/Veale Roads and Harvey Road (17 points)
7. Improve the connection across Naamans Creek and the CSX railroad (12 points)
8. Other (write-in) recommendations, including:
  - a. Repair existing small bridges
  - b. Better access to and through the woods

# Recommendations and Next Steps

## Overview

This section describes the recommendations in detail, in order of priority. The map of prioritized recommendations is shown below. Keeping the paths cleared of obstructions was the most highly supported recommendation, and would require removing complete obstructions as well as general maintenance of the paths. The recommendations also include improving pedestrian crossings of Harvey Road, improving access points into the Sunnyside Tract, naming and signing the paths, and opening overgrown paths.



## Implementation Funding Possibilities

The following table lists potential funding sources for the proposed recommendations.

Funding Type	Responsible Agency	Sponsor Match Required	Project Eligibility
Community Transportation Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeIDOT</li> <li>• Legislators</li> </ul>	No match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repaving</li> <li>• Drainage problems</li> <li>• Curb replacements</li> <li>• Sidewalks and sidewalk repairs</li> </ul>
Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails (ORPT) Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation</li> <li>• DNREC</li> </ul>	50% match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail construction</li> <li>• Trailhead development and associated facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>• Pedestrian and bicycle bridges</li> <li>• Trail markers and directional signs</li> <li>• Water trail planning</li> <li>• Acquisition of fee simple title to property for trail development</li> <li>• Educational or interpretive brochures</li> <li>• Trail maps for information board or kiosks</li> </ul>
Safe Routes to School	DeIDOT	No match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian and bicycle improvements near schools</li> </ul>
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WILMAPCO</li> <li>• DeIDOT</li> </ul>	20% match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities</li> <li>• Infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to transit and enhanced mobility</li> <li>• Environmental mitigation</li> <li>• Recreational trails</li> <li>• Safe Routes to School projects</li> </ul>
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	WILMAPCO	Match requirements vary by project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major, federally funded projects, including pedestrian and bicycle improvements</li> </ul>



## 1. Keep paths cleared, based on priority

Keeping the paths clear of obstructions was the most common suggestion from the first public survey, and it ranked as the highest priority recommendation from the second public survey. Clearing paths of obstructions is necessary to keep paths functional, maintain connections in the path network, and provide a safer alternative to walking on roads. The most significant obstructions are where paths are completely blocked by overgrowth. As shown in the Existing Conditions map on page 7, the north end of the George & Pettit Greens Connector Path is completely overgrown, rendering the path unusable and inaccessible from Appletree Lane and Charles W. Pettit Green. The east end of the Valley Road Path is also overgrown, rendering it inaccessible and invisible from Brae Road.

On the north side of Harvey Road, just east of Veale Road, an entrance to the Harvey Road Path is blocked by a tree. The path is not clearly delineated, so users of this path segment are likely to walk around the tree into the neighboring leasehold, which is trespassing. However, walking around the tree leads more directly to the marked crosswalk on Harvey Road. This is a short walk from the DART bus stop at the corner of Harvey Road and Millers Road, making this a potentially useful pedestrian connection to public transit. One option for improvement is to remove the tree blocking the path and reduce the steepness of the slope from the path to Harvey Road. Alternatively, the Village of Ardentown could request the neighboring leaseholder to allow the area adjacent to the tree to be designated as a path.

Keeping the paths clear will be the sole responsibility of the Village. External grant funding does not currently exist which would help offset the cost of ongoing maintenance. The Village should utilize the map shown on page 10 to help prioritize sections of the paths to focus on first. Teams of volunteers or staff paid by the Village could keep the paths clear on a routine basis, such as a few times per year.

**Timeline:** This recommendation can begin immediately and will be ongoing.

## 2. Improve pedestrian crossing at Sconset Road and Harvey Road

Several respondents to the first public survey expressed concern for the safety of crossing Harvey Road at Sconset Road, where the Wilmington Montessori School is located. The steering committee walked the area to analyze safety conditions and noted that there are high traffic speeds on Harvey Road, few safe places to wait to cross the street, and a missing crosswalk on the west side of the intersection. These findings were consistent with comments and suggestions from the first public survey.

Due to the facts that Harvey Road is a state road, the intersection is on the border between Ardentown and Ardencroft, it is an entrance to a school, and it is outside of the scope of the Ardentown Paths Plan, WILMAPCO staff suggested developing a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. WILMAPCO and DeIDOT offer free assistance to schools interested in developing an SRTS program, which aims to make bicycling and walking a more appealing transportation choice for students, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle



through education and events. In addition, the SRTS program includes limited funding for infrastructure improvements. More information about WILMAPCO’s Safe Routes to School program is available online at <http://www.wilmapco.org/saferoutes/>.

The steering committee reached out to Wilmington Montessori School faculty to schedule a meeting in March 2017. WILMAPCO staff introduced the Safe Routes to School program, and the group discussed infrastructure issues and next steps for the program. Through this program, WILMAPCO, DeIDOT, the Village of Ardentown, and the Wilmington Montessori School will seek to improve the pedestrian crossing at Sconset Road and Harvey Road, as well as pedestrian approaches to the intersection.

DeIDOT is the implementation agency for the Safe Routes to School program. Each phase of SRTS takes approximately three years: one year for planning, one year for engineering, and one year for construction. No local match funding is required. School children will receive pedestrian and bicycle safety education and encouragement through the program.

**Timeline:** This recommendation has begun and will be implemented over the next three years.

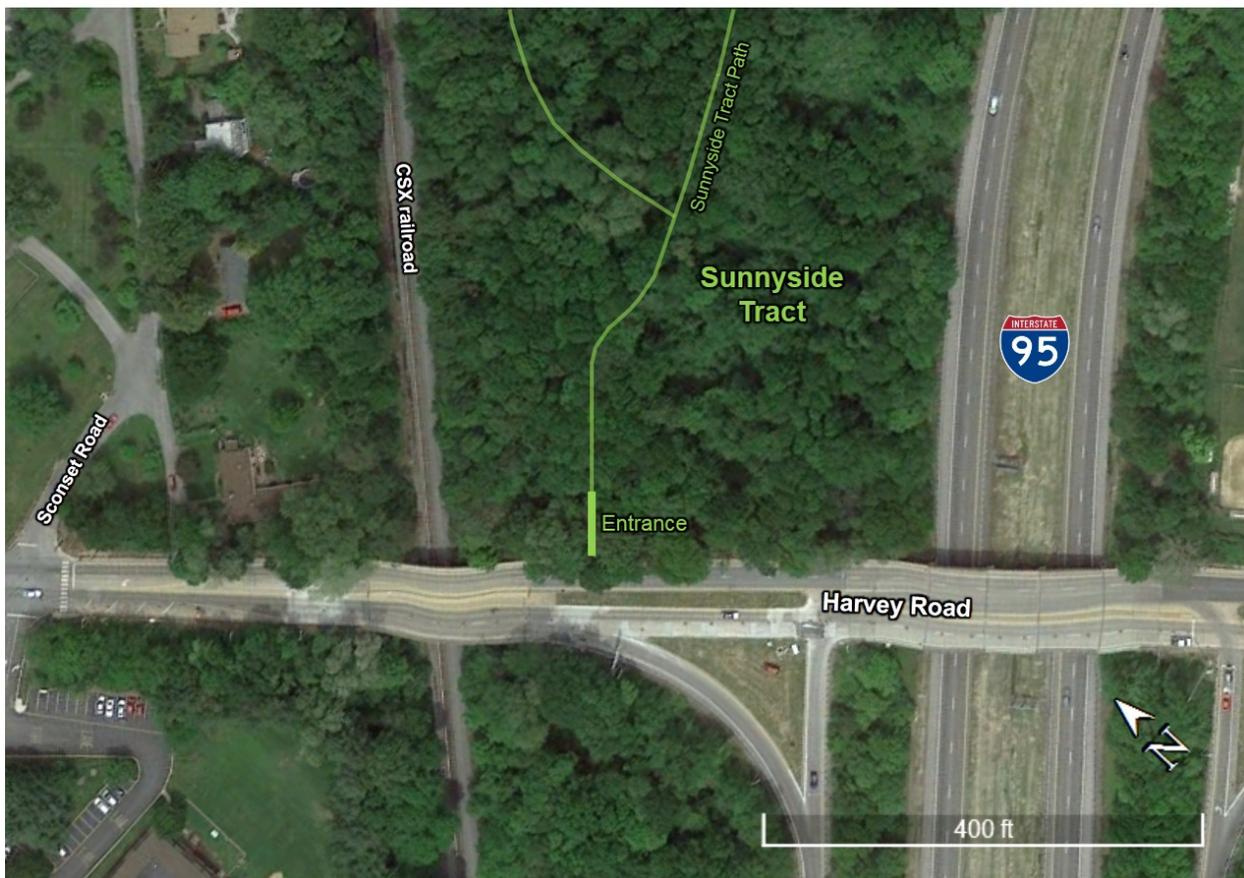
### 3. Improve connection from the Harvey Road Bridge to the Sunnyside Tract

In response to survey respondents’ suggestions to improve access to the Sunnyside Tract, the steering committee investigated the existing access points into the nature preserve. One access point is located along the Harvey Road bridge over the CSX railroad from the sidewalk on the north side of the roadway. The preserve can be accessed by stepping over a railing, walking a short distance down steps made from tree branches, and entering an informal opening in a fence. The area between the Harvey Road sidewalk and the Sunnyside Tract is part of DeDOT right of way, is not currently designated as a trail, and is in need of safety improvements.

In order to facilitate making improvements to this entrance, WILMAPCO staff suggested having DeDOT provide an easement for this land to the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). DNREC could designate this land as a trail and work with the Village of Ardentown to make improvements. Potential improvements could include creating an opening in the railing, adding signage, reducing the steepness of the slope, creating a wider opening in the fence, and installing a gate.

WILMAPCO is coordinating with DeDOT, DNREC, and the Village of Ardentown to organize a meeting to discuss this trail access point. Ultimately, the goal is for this access point to be the sole responsibility of DNREC to upgrade and maintain to the benefit of the Village and area residents.

**Timeline:** This recommendation should begin immediately and can be completed within about two years.



## 4. Name and sign the paths

The 2013 report titled “Report and Recommendations from the Planning Committee Regarding Village Paths” noted that the planning committee did not discover any formal or commonly accepted names for the paths in the village. The report identified unofficial path names, including the following:

- The Harvey Road Path
- The Valley Road Path
- The Sconset-Brae-East Mall Connector Path
- The Creek Path
- The Glen Paths
- The George & Pettit Greens Connector Path

Additionally, the steering committee for the Ardentown Paths Plan has identified the paths in the Sunnyside Tract as the Sunnyside Tract Paths. The committee also recognized the historic name of the Harvey Road Path, which is the Station Path.

Survey respondents generally preferred to keep the paths as natural as possible. For this reason, simple wooden signs showing just the names of the paths are recommended. As an example, at the west end of the Harvey Road Path, there is a wooden post holding up two signs pointing to Arden and Ardentown, on the border between the two villages. Signs should be placed at all path entrances and intersections between paths, as needed.

The Village of Ardentown should coordinate the implementation of this recommendation, and seek assistance from state grant funding. As a first step, additional community outreach should be conducted to ensure that the path names are appropriate. Then, the Village should seek project funding assistance through two funding pools – DNREC’s Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails (ORPT) Program and the Community Transportation Fund (CTF) of local legislators. ORPT will cover 50% of the cost of the project with a local match of 50%. The 50% local match can be either provided through Village dollars, or, optimally though CTF funding.



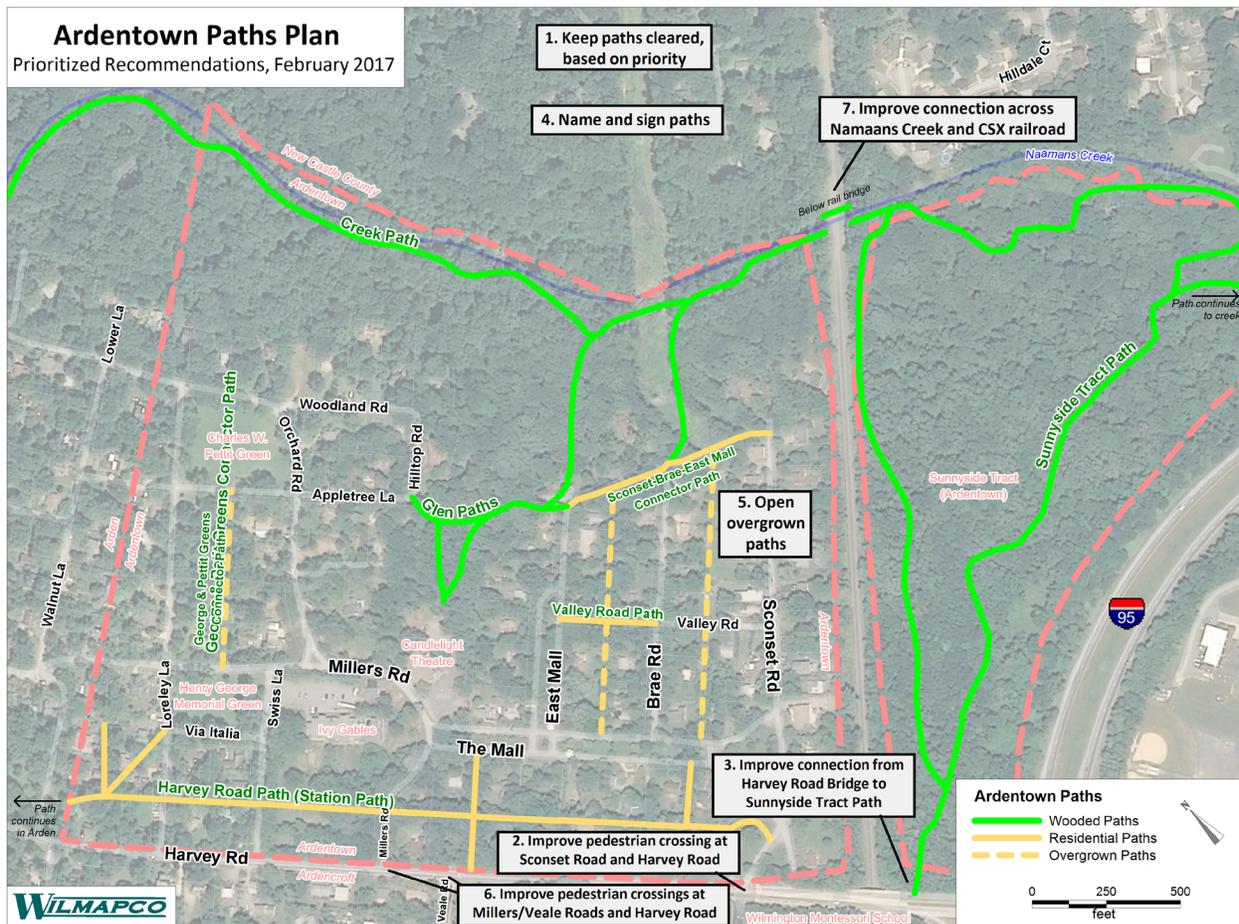
**Timeline:** This recommendation will be implemented in about two years.

## 5. Open overgrown paths

The steering committee identified two paths that have previously been open to the public, but have fallen into disuse, become overgrown, and are no longer accessible or functional. These paths run from the Sconset-Brae-East Mall Connector Path to the Mall, parallel to East Mall and Brae Road, shown as yellow dashed lines on the recommendations map below. The George & Pettit Greens Connector Path is also shown as an overgrown path; although it is mostly clear, overgrowth on the north end renders it unusable. Opening these paths would provide safe, car-free connections between the Harvey Road Path and the Creek Path, forming a more complete and interconnected path network.

The Village of Ardentown should take the lead on implementing this recommendation. If the Village of Ardentown wishes to open these paths, that would require identifying the neighboring leasehold boundary lines and clearing the overgrowth between those lines. An additional step could be to mulch the path to help prevent overgrowth. The Village should seek funding through the Outdoor Recreation, Parks, and Trails (ORPT) Program, with a local match of 50% from Village dollars.

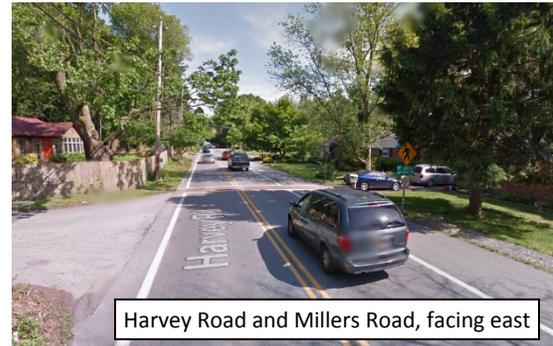
**Timeline:** This recommendation can be implemented within three to five years.



## 6. Improve pedestrian crossings at Millers/Veale Roads and Harvey Road

Several respondents to the first public survey expressed concern for the safety of crossing Harvey Road, noting that traffic speeds are high and that there are few safe places to cross the street. Millers Road intersects with Harvey Road on the north side in Ardentown, and the intersection with Veale Road is located just to the east, on the south side of Harvey Road in Ardencroft. Walking between these two roads requires walking either in the grass on the north side of Harvey Road or in the shoulder on the south side. Additionally, a DART bus stop is located on the south side of Harvey Road at Millers Road. This intersection is not signalized, but there is a textured crosswalk and a sign warning drivers of the pedestrian crossing. The intersection of Harvey Road and Veale Road has a traffic signal and textured crosswalks on the south and east sides of the intersection, as well as pedestrian signals. However, drivers leaving Veale Road must turn left or right onto Harvey, crossing both crosswalks in the process. Traffic calming has been pursued in the past along Harvey Road, but it was limited and has largely been unsuccessful. This project will pursue more aggressive traffic calming techniques.

The intersection of Harvey Road and Millers Road could be improved by adding stop signs in all directions. This would require a traffic study, but it would calm traffic and give pedestrians the right of way, allowing for a safe crossing. Pedestrian signage and/or improving the shoulder on the south side to be textured (as seen further east on Harvey Road) could help direct pedestrians to walk on the shoulder rather than on the grass on the north side. This shoulder leads directly to the crosswalk on the south side at Veale Road, forming a connection to Ardencroft.



The intersection of Harvey Road and Veale Road could be improved by adjusting the signal timing. One approach is to implement a leading pedestrian interval, which turns the pedestrian walk signal on for a few seconds before the traffic signal turns green, giving pedestrians an opportunity to begin walking before vehicle traffic starts moving and increasing their visibility in the crosswalk. This would also require a traffic study, but it would not incur any additional maintenance costs.



The Village should coordinate with the other Ardens to submit a TAP and/or TIP funding request for a general traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle enhancement project along Harvey Road. This work will focus on the improvements to Harvey Road at Millers/Veale Roads and also seek to slow traffic along the stretch of Harvey Road in the Ardens. It will complement and extend the Safe Routes to School project centered at Sconset Road.

**Timeline:** This recommendation can begin immediately and should be completed in five years.



## 7. Improve the connection across Naamans Creek and the CSX railroad

In the northwestern corner of Ardentown, there is an indirect connection between the Creek Path and the Sunnyside Tract Path, both of which are along Naamans Creek but are separated by the CSX railroad, which crosses over the creek. Underneath the railroad bridge, there is a small concrete walkway on the north side of the creek. Because both paths are on the south side of the creek, it is possible to walk between them when the water level is low by hopping across rocks from the path on the south side to the concrete walkway, then crossing back on the other side of the bridge. This connection poses a few problems: it is impassible when the water level is high; the concrete walkway is narrow; and it may be considered unsafe to some path users, especially children and seniors.

The steering committee discussed this matter with New Castle County, investigated land ownership at this connection, and found that several feet east and west of the railroad are part of CSX right-of-way. In addition, the area north of Naamans Creek is privately owned land and is not part of Ardentown. Any improvements to this connection would have to be made in coordination with CSX and neighboring property owners. It is also not possible to add a walkway on the south side of the creek, as there is very little clearance beneath the railroad bridge.

Because this connection is privately owned, outside of Ardentown, and received the fewest votes out of the recommendations in the second public survey, the steering committee does not currently recommend seeking improvements to this connection. Any improvements to this connection would be very costly and subject to periodic challenges from floods.

**Timeline:** This recommendation is not currently advised to proceed.

## Path Forward

Throughout this planning process, the Village of Ardentown and its residents have recognized the historic and cultural importance of Ardentown’s path network. A need has been demonstrated to maintain and enhance the paths while also preserving their history, which will help make Ardentown a more walkable community. The Village will need to work closely with New Castle County and the State of Delaware to implement certain recommendations of this plan, but others can be accomplished through local community efforts. The Village can begin the implementation process immediately, and most recommendations can be completed within five years. After that time, the Village should reassess this plan to determine what has been accomplished and how to continue moving forward.

