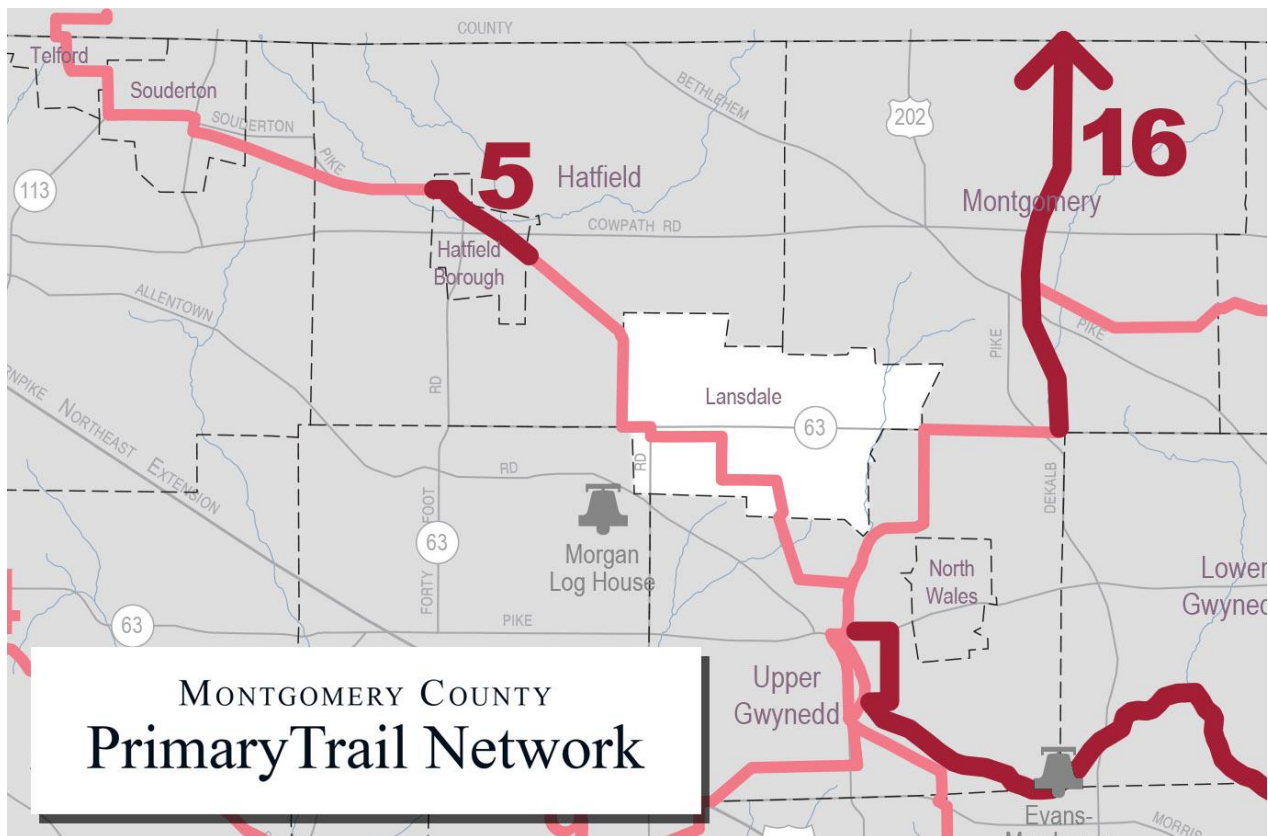




## Liberty Bell Trail – Planning and Feasibility Study

**Introduction to Current Study:** Eight municipalities in Montgomery County are collaborating with the PA Environmental Council and consulting firm, Michael Baker International, to advance the planning of the Liberty Bell Trail (LBT). Those municipalities include Upper Gwynedd Township, North Wales Borough, Lansdale Borough, Hatfield Township, Hatfield Borough, Franconia Township, Souderton Borough and Telford Borough. A prior LBT Feasibility Study completed in 2005 investigated the potential development of the former 25-mile Liberty Bell Trolley route between Norristown to Quakertown into a shared use path network for walking and bicycling.

This feasibility study will provide an update to the 11-mile portion of the LBT in Montgomery County. In the last 16 years, some progress has been made towards its completion including construction of approximately 1.5 miles in Lansdale Borough and another 0.5 mile in Hatfield Borough. As part of this trail update, we will investigate changes that have occurred along the planned trail route, explore alternatives, and make recommendations for a preferred trail route. These technical tasks will be supported by a robust public outreach program using numerous virtual and traditional outreach techniques. The study is anticipated to be completed by early 2022.

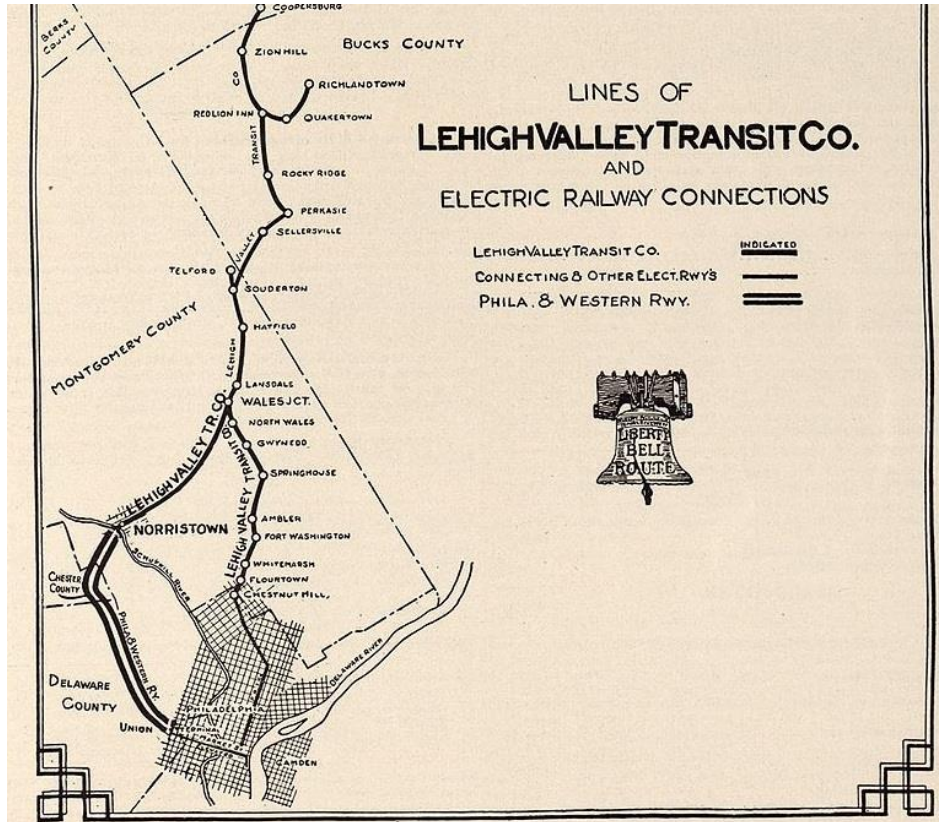


*This excerpt of Montgomery County's 2015 trail map shows trails in and around the study area. Number 5 is Liberty Bell Trail; 16 is 202 Parkway. (In Lansdale, an outdated future alignment of Liberty Bell Trail is shown.)*

**Background on the Past Trolley Line:**

The LBT generally follows the alignment of the Lehigh Valley Transit Company's Philadelphia Division, which was known as the Liberty Bell Route. Constructed in stages between 1900 and 1913, electric railway service was abandoned in 1951. Portions of the electric railway alignment survive as power line rights-of-way with an earth-surface maintenance road where the rails and ties had been.

Straightforward rail-to-trail conversions are possible for some portions of the LBT. However, long stretches of its namesake trolley line were never implemented "railroad style," running instead in the shoulders of highways and in the centers of streets, neither of which are suitable as trail alignments. In those locations where rail-to-trail conversions will not be possible, alternate trail alignments will need to be established.



*Portion of the Lehigh Valley Transit Co. network map which included the Liberty Bell Trolley route between Norristown and Quakertown.*



*The Liberty Bell Trolley Route utilized railroad-style right-of-way in Upper Gwynedd and Hatfield (left) but in Lansdale operated as a streetcar down the center of W. Main St and S. Broad St. (right)*