

Barry Bridge Park Expansion
Chester City
Delaware County, PA

Project Description:

In the mid 1990's, Chester City took the initiative to develop its underutilized waterfront area along the Delaware River. A 4.5 acre park was developed just south of the Commodore Barry Bridge. The Barry Bridge Park became the only public boat launch in the twelve miles of Delaware County's waterfront. In addition to a boat launch, it was a great place for residents to enjoy the scenic view of the river or use the fishing pier. However a 1996 study revealed that only 25 % of Chester residents had ever visited Barry Bridge Park. The study also found that the community would be attracted to utilize the area if the facilities were improved. One problem was that the fishing pier was in the same location as the boat ramp, so these activities often interfered with one another.

In 2002, DCNR partnered with Chester City with the award of a \$200,000 development grant to enable significant improvements to be made at the Park. An overlook plaza, redesigned boat launch, relocated and enlarged parking lot and newly constructed fishing pier are currently in place. Residents can enjoy stunning views of the Delaware River from park benches that are located right on the water. The new fishing pier was constructed north of the Bridge and upstream from the boat ramp and, as a result, the amount of people fishing has greatly increased. The boat launch is now south of the Bridge just off of an attractive sitting area. The fishermen are also using the boat access to enter the water. Access to the park has also been significantly improved due in large part to the widening of Route 291, the major north-



Quote: David Sciocchetti, Executive Director, Chester Economic Development Authority

"The park has been a tremendous asset to the City. It was underutilized before the improvement, and now is a really pleasant experience."

south road along the riverfront through Chester which is one block from the Park. Harrah's Casino has been developed north of the Park, a clear attraction bringing many newcomers to the riverfront. Just south of the Park is the very successful Wharf at Riverton, a major redevelopment of a former PECO power facility

that now contains modern offices and retail space. A public Riverwalk extends along the riverfront side of the Wharf development and is connected to the Barry Park – all part of the national East Coast Greenway bike trail extending 2600 miles from Maine to Florida. A new soccer stadium is soon to be built between the Wharf at Riverton and Barry Bridge Park, also connected along the Riverwalk with a parking lot that will bring people through the park to gain riverfront access to the stadium.

The expansion and improvement of the Park creates a beautiful riverfront area combined with an economic stimulus for the area. Access to the riverfront for all residents, along with recreational and economic development facilities is a key strategy of Chester City's revitalization. Creating a beautiful park and riverfront walking/biking trail has added a new dimension to the City's natural and recreational assets.

Amount of Keystone funding awarded, year and matching sources:

2002: \$200,000 Keystone Grant
 Matching Funds - \$1,300,000 City of Chester Section 108 Loan