

Trails

I researched trails, and rode thousands of miles with Margot. I have a plan for a trail system that everyone can enjoy, without requiring \$30+ million and decades to complete. *Click to read more*



I have bolded some text for emphasis

Claim

I CLAIMED (About Kennett Greenway) “After a promising start back in 2015, **little has been built**”.¹ In fact, not a single mile of new trail has been built according to Greenway specifications since Hoffman took office. Even the \$4.2 million 1.4 mile path proposed for Chandler Mill Rd does not meet the minimum specifications for the

Counter

HOFFMAN COUNTERED Hoffman has yet to dispute these claims

Claim

Greenway – at only 6’ wide, it cannot accommodate cyclists. It is not a multi-modal path but functions instead as a wide sidewalk, with cyclists restricted to a road identified as unsafe for cars seeking to pass cyclists.

I CLAIMED “(About Kennett Greenway) “**the current plans are controversial**”.¹

- It requires cutting down **hundreds of trees**, some of them hundreds of years old. While new trees may be planted, the canopy will not begin to recover for at least a generation.
- It requires that **private property be seized**
- It builds a trail in **environmentally sensitive areas**.
- At about \$90/sq foot, it is **2 to 4 times more expensive** compared to multimodal trails built elsewhere in the region by the same engineers
- **It reframes the Greenway as “pedestrian priority”, and makes no provisions for cyclists.** In fact, it forces them into a road identified as dangerous for passing cars.

Counter

HOFFMAN COUNTERED Hoffman has yet to dispute these claims

Claim

I CLAIMED “(About Kennett Greenway) **“the project’s core funding has been needlessly put at risk.”**¹ To catch up, Kennett had to incur additional costs to push through requests for extensions.

I CLAIMED “(About Kennett Greenway) **“Supervisor Hoffman’s poor oversight is a big part of the problem”.**¹ Multiple stakeholders raised concerns about the plans being presented over the past 4 years, the costs of the consultants, and other issues.

I HAVE CLAIMED, at meetings of the Trails and Sidewalks Committee for the past two years, that the **challenges involved in building Greenway are being seriously underestimated.** I have reviewed [every trail of comparable distance across the greater Philadelphia region](#), and biked almost every one of them. Whereas every other trail of comparable length was built in a right-of-way that has been largely established (e.g., an existing rail-trail, municipal/state park, roadway), the Greenway as currently imagined requires securing easements through private land for most of its length.

Counter

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HOFFMAN COUNTERED Hoffman has yet to dispute these claims. To my knowledge, **Hoffman has never attended a meeting of the Trails and Sidewalks Committee.** Has Hoffman has ever biked any comparable trails in the region? I do not know, but suspect that she has not.

Claim

I HAVE CLAIMED that the challenges of completing the Greenway as currently envisioned can be understood by looking more closely at the options for an off-road multi-use path on the southern half of the Greenway (from Chandler Mill Bridge to Stateline Woods). **I have spoken with every single landowner** along the possible routes, and **I have led 7 hikes with 4 different groups along part or all of this route.** This included one specifically inviting the supervisors to see the challenges and opportunities first-hand – like steep slopes that make ADA access impossible and narrow sections along busy roads, together with beautiful vistas that link existing parks and preserves.

I HAVE CLAIMED for the past two years that, in the light of the escalating costs and delays, and unique challenges of the Greenway, **we need to adopt a multi-pronged, long-term plan.** In parallel with our continued efforts on the Greenway, this would include working on the 2018 Active Transportation Plan, hailed as innovative when completed but on which no progress has been made since. This would also include pursuing shared roadways that offer a temporary or permanent route. I have proposed

Counter

HOFFMAN COUNTERED Hoffman has yet to dispute these claims. **Hoffman has never hiked this route despite repeated invitations,** and, to my knowledge, **Hoffman has never spoken directly to a landowner concerned.**

HOFFMAN COUNTERED Hoffman has offered no alternative strategy, suggesting she thinks we should stay the course. Along with the other supervisors, **she rejected a Greenway Master plan** that would have begun to help us to at least estimate the long-term timeframe, costs, and challenges.

Claim

specific connectors involving shared roadways from downtown Kennett to Longwood, and down [Chandler Mill Road](#). I enlisted a national expert to develop a resource to educate resident about [one such option down Chandler Mill Road](#) that could **save millions of dollars**.

I CLAIMED that the **70+ page prospectus presented to the Supervisors last year did not include a single documented project comparable to the Greenway** (i.e., involving the completion of a trail at least 10 miles in length largely through private lands). I later confirmed this through a review of every project available on the website of the consultants. Despite repeated requests, the consultant team has yet to produce relevant projects.

I CLAIMED that we should **designate a seat on the Trails and Sidewalks Committee to ensure that we pursue every opportunity to increase access to our trails for people with disabilities**. I volunteered to fill that seat, citing a [new guide](#) I developed to build the capacity of people with disabilities to hike longer and more difficult trails. Since that time, portions of this guide have been presented at state³ and national conferences in education⁴ and conservation⁵, and

Counter

HOFFMAN COUNTERED that of course the consultants have the experience needed to complete this project. But I have noted that Hoffman cannot, despite my repeated requests, point to a single example of a project like this, or **demonstrate any familiarity with any projects she considers comparable**.

HOFFMAN COUNTERED, voting in November 2020 against my request to sit on the Trails and Sidewalks Committee. While she was interested in increasing access, she was not convinced that I was qualified. All of a sudden, [in a recent event](#), **Hoffman now claims that she is ready to work to increase access for people with disabilities** on trails and in other programs.

Claim

incorporated in new national guidelines for trail accessibility to be published later this year. More generally, I have also helped to author new national guidelines to increase inclusion of people with disabilities by land conservancies⁶.

HOFFMAN CLAIMED “My opponent apparently thinks everything can happen overnight- The Greenway is a multi-year project that will have to happen in stages- everything ranging from purchasing and easing open space to getting funding or budget”⁷.

HOFFMAN CLAIMED “In fact, we just got another grant for the greenway last week- here's the link in case you missed it.

This means more greenway, with less money out of your pocket as taxpayers!”⁷.

Counter

I COUNTER Just read everything above! Hoffman has no long term plan that maps out the timeline or costs of the Greenway. She has never spoken to a landowner on the critical southern portion. She has never attended any Trails and Sidewalks meetings. She attended her first Land Conservation Advisory Meeting just this past month. She has never walked the route to understand the challenges and opportunities. I have attended many meetings, walked the route multiple times, spoken with many landowners, offered alternative proposals, and have specific experience in helping to ease and acquire lands.

I COUNTER It is great that the state granted \$400,000! But here are some important facts Hoffman left out:

- The cost of the two projects is over \$3 million, so other grants will have to be written to cover the remaining 85% of the project costs. This still also delay completion by several more years.

Claim

Counter

- The larger of the two projects (on Birch St) is entirely in the Borough, and is not part of the principal Greenway loop.
- The smaller of the two projects (the Magnolia Underpass) is the only one that is on the principal Greenway route and that meets Greenway specifications. It will be several hundred yards long, and dead-end in a field, until other grants are secured.
- RE Chandler Mill, only about one-half of the \$4.2 million needed to complete the current design is actually in hand. And the current design does not accommodate cyclists.
- So given that **we need \$5 million to complete these three projects, only one of which actually results in the completion of a multi-use trail meeting Greenway specifications**, \$400,000 does not in fact move the Greenway significantly forward, covering less than 10% of projected costs.

HOFFMAN CLAIMED “I think you have to start asking yourself- how is Peter planning on paying for all his projects? What's his plan for your money?”⁷

I COUNTER Unlike Hoffman, I have actually walked the route of the Greenway, and ridden all of our streets in search of alternatives. **Unlike Hoffman, I have a plan that is based on a clear-headed review of the actual costs and actual progress to date, a plan that**

Claim

“Despite the most recent mailer by Peter Doehring predicting the demise of the Kennett Greenway under my administration, the Greenway is alive and expanding as we speak. On April 21, 2021, the Greenway was awarded a **\$400,000 grant** by the State to add to our system of trails and bikeways. This **brings us another important step closer to fulfilling all of our wishes of a truly connected Kennett** - neighborhood to neighborhood, trail to trail.”⁸

HOFFMAN CLAIMED What appears to be lost on my opponent is that open space acquisitions and appropriate land use plans require thoughtful decision making using data, and inviting stakeholders and taxpayers to participate in discussions on usage. Tone deaf decision making and impulsive action as if the opinions of one are the wishes of the many do not work in an inclusive community. Interestingly enough, Peter’s criticism via his mailer came out just as this grant award was announced in the press.

As I said earlier, my decision-making is based on data, community feedback and a commitment to the truth and best interest of our community.

Counter

considers how to grow both the Greenway and our active transportation network. Unlike Hoffman, I know we have to pivot to a multi-pronged strategy, because a Greenway without at least some sections utilizing shared roadways will take tens of millions of dollars and take 30 years to build, if it can be built at all. My plan is based on facts, not wishful thinking and empty sound bites. **Hoffman does not recognize that Greenway is only one small component of the active transportation plan adopted in 2018.**

I COUNTER Please check my fact checker on Open Space for details regarding the mistakes Hoffman has made, costing us millions of dollars and unnecessary delays.

Claim

HOFFMAN CLAIMED “I support... growing our trail system and bikeways through land acquisition”⁹.

Counter

I COUNTER Of course, if you owned all of the land, you could put trails where you want! **But Hoffman’s strategy is unrealistic.** There are recent examples of landowners who have elected to not sell important and beautiful parcels that would contribute to a trail system because they do not trust what the township will do with the land. **Hoffman’s strategy is also extremely expensive.** Only expanding the trail network through acquisition would increase the cost of the Greenway by a factor of 5-10. **Hoffman just does not understand how a trail system grows.** She does not seem to recognize that you can grow bikeways through creative use of shared roadways. You can also grow trails through easements (not acquisitions). In fact, we are making great progress on a critical trail connection through an easement that started after a series of conversations that started when I knocked on a landowner’s door.

1. Doehring, [Kennett Greenway postcard mailer](#)
2. Hoffman Facebook post of 4/26
3. Knutson, L., & Doehring, P. (2021). Progressive Access for Trail and Programs. *WeConservePA Annual Conference*, Virtual Conference. March.
4. Doehring, P. (2020). Into the Wild: Adaptive outdoor recreation for young adults with I/DD. *Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Annual Conference*, Columbus, OH. November.

Claim

Counter

5. O'Donnell, M, Mahung, K., Doehring, P., Bloomer, R., & Lewkowicz, B. (2020). Engaging People with Disabilities to Improve Access to the Health Benefits of Nature. *National Land Conservation Conference. Land Trust Alliance*, Portland, OR. October.
6. Land Trust Alliance Advisory Council on Inclusive Health and Disabilities. (2021). *Open to All: A disability inclusion resource guide for land trusts*. Land Trust Alliance. May (Projected).
7. Whitney Hoffman for Supervisor Facebook post of 4/26
8. Whitney Hoffman for Supervisor email of 4/27
9. Hoffman Postcard, "Preserving the Heart of Kennett Township", 5/8