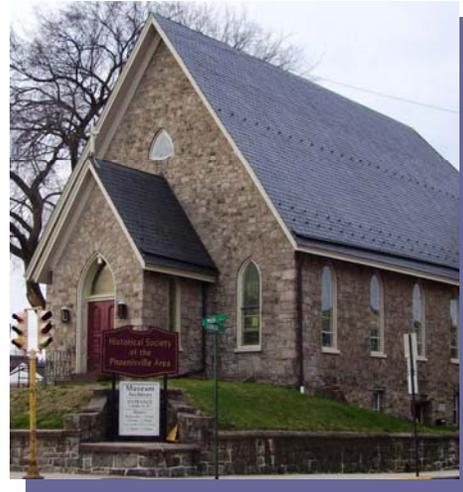


BOROUGH OF PHOENIXVILLE HERITAGE ACTION PLAN



Historic and Cultural Preservation and
Heritage Tourism Initiatives
In the Borough of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Borough of Phoenixville
The Schuylkill River Heritage Center
The Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area
Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area and Greenway

February 20, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

As a growing community, the Borough of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania has highlighted the continued importance of preserving its heritage resources in the *Phoenixville Heritage Action Plan*. Phoenixville's heritage resources include historical sites and structures, architectural treasures, important cultural places, and the scenic and natural environment that make the Borough special and unique. The Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC), the Phoenixville Historical Society (HSPA), and the Borough of Phoenixville are working in partnership to create a unified approach to presenting heritage-related information that will enable visitors and residents to better appreciate and experience the resources and amenities that currently exist in the Phoenixville Historic District.

General Location: The Borough of Phoenixville is located in Chester County, Pennsylvania. The Borough is located at the junction of French Creek and the Schuylkill River approximately 30 miles northwest from the City Philadelphia.

Demographics: In 2000, the Borough of Phoenixville had a population of 14,788. As of the 2010 Census, there were 16,440 people and 7,590 households. The racial makeup of the Borough was 81.7% White, 8.9% African American, 0.5% American Indian, 3.3% Asian, 0.00% Pacific Islander, 4.1% from other races, and Hispanic or Latino of any race were 5.6% of the population. The median age was 37.90 years, 52.6% (8,448) are females, and 47.4% (7,606) are males. The median income for a household in the Borough was \$56,704 and the median income for a family was \$71,005.

Source: Borough of Phoenixville Website; http://www.phoenixville.org/About/About_Demographics.html

Governance: Phoenixville is governed by a mayor and by eight council members. The Borough has four wards: Middle, East, North, and West. Two council members are elected for each ward, which is comprised of precincts. Phoenixville is in Pennsylvania's 6th Congressional Election District, the 157th State House of Representatives District, and the 19th State Senatorial District.

Historical Summary: Phoenixville was settled in 1732 and was originally called *Manavon*. It was incorporated as a Borough in 1849. Phoenixville was an industrial leader in the 20th Century and became an important center for iron and steel manufacturing, most notably the Phoenixville Iron Works/Foundry Building, which is now home the Phoenixville Heritage Center highlighting the Borough's illustrious past and future. French Creek and the Schuylkill River were an important part of the Borough's growth and development over the last several centuries. Phoenixville's heritage is highlighted in its Historic District, which is the largest National Register of Historic Places site in Chester County. The district was nominated in 1987 and contains 908 contributing buildings and 52 non-contributing buildings.

VISION, MISSION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Vision Statement: The Phoenixville Heritage Team envisions a regional community that values its rich history and culture. Together with its partners and stakeholders, it will work to protect its heritage resources, while also creating opportunities for increased economic development and the promotion of heritage tourism that will benefit everyone in the greater Phoenixville region.

Mission Statement: To bring the various partners in Phoenixville together through the heritage trail signage project and other wayfinding initiatives to insure the continued preservation, enhancement, and promotion of the Borough's heritage resources through active support of the heritage program.

Goals & Objectives:

Management and Organization

“Goal 1: Establish a long-term management structure to implement the Phoenixville’s Heritage Action Plan and Program.”

- Insure that heritage efforts are adequately staffed with professionals and volunteers that can advance the Vision and implement Phoenixville’s Heritage Action Plan.
- Implement planning, programming, marketing, and project development as described in the Heritage Action Plan with partners.
- Insure appropriate management and oversight for Phoenixville’s heritage program.

Stewardship

“Goal 2: Preserve, protect, and promote Phoenixville’s heritage resources.”

- Raise public awareness of Phoenixville’s heritage resources, while also promoting these resources.
- Work with partners, most importantly Borough government, to preserve and protect the important heritage resources.
- Seek official recognition for important heritage resources by linking them to the broader heritage program for economic development and tourism.

Interpretation

“Goal 3: Raise public awareness of Phoenixville’s history, culture, and resources through a coordinated signage and wayfinding program.”

- Enable visitors to have greater access to and understanding of Phoenixville’s rich history, culture, and unique stories by linking Phoenixville’s surrounding trail system, heritage resources, and recreation and natural resources to the existing and planned system of linkages in the Borough.
- Provide for the integrated interpretation of heritage resources by ensuring the development of a cohesive interpretive structure for resources and their physical linkages through coordinated signage and wayfinding.
- Foster partnerships among and between heritage attractions, businesses, and local residents to encourage visitors to explore, linger, and sample the diverse offerings of the area.
- Encourage a greater understanding of important heritage resources through interpretation and education.

Marketing and Outreach

“Goal 4: Increase economic development related to heritage tourism for the benefit of all stakeholders, partners, and friends in the Phoenixville area.”

- Ensure appropriate communications and coordination by and between partners and potential partners.
- Work with partners to promote heritage attractions through existing marketing and advertising mechanisms and develop successful heritage products.
- Ensure an adequate communication and partnership network system to coordinate heritage initiatives (digital and physical resources).
- Improve Phoenixville’s existing tourism economy through the implementation of the Heritage Action Plan and development of the heritage program.

PARTNERSHIPS

Coordinating their efforts with the Borough of Phoenixville, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC) and the Phoenixville Historical Society (HSAP) are leading the efforts to coalesce all of the community's resources into a cohesive signage program for interpretation. Both of these organizations have made a major commitment to reach out to the community by providing a variety of activities and programs that benefit everyone.

Primary Partners: The three primary partners preparing the *Phoenixville Heritage Action Plan*, and responsible for implementing and managing the Borough's heritage program, include:

1. Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC): The SRHC is both a museum and a place of welcome for visitors. It is located in the 1882 historic Iron Foundry Building and is a contributing structure to the Phoenixville Historic District. The Heritage Center's award-winning design showcases the industrial legacy of Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River. It also provides information about the many exciting places to visit in Chester and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania.
2. The Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area (HSPA): The HSPA was founded in 1977 and has become the main source and repository of artifacts and records relating to the Phoenixville area. Situated in a historic church in the Phoenixville Historic District, the HSPA is adjacent to a main intersection in Phoenixville. The HSPA has an amazing array of materials on permanent display. It also gives the public, including genealogists and academic scholars, an opportunity to use its extensive archives and library for research.
3. Borough of Phoenixville: The Borough of Phoenixville has been named by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission as a Classic Town in the Greater Philadelphia region. This important designation recognizes Phoenixville's significance as a desired place to live, work, and visit. Because of its location at the confluence of French Creek and the Schuylkill River, it is a manufacturing and transportation hub.

Phoenixville Partner List (Active and Potential): Table 1 below lists important partners in the Phoenixville area for the implementation of the Heritage Action Plan. The table also identifies whether partners are actively engaged in the heritage program and what their roles and responsibilities will be.

TABLE 1: PHOENIXVILLE - PARTNERSHIPS				
ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	CONTACT INFO	STATUS	ROLES
Borough of Phoenixville	Borough Hall 140 Church St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	E. Jean Krack ejkrack@phoenixville.org	Active	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Schuylkill River Heritage Center	2 N. Main Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Barbara Cohen 610-935-2181	Active	A, B, D, E, F, H, I, J
Phoenixville Historical Society	204 Church St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	Susan Marshall 610-935-7646	Active	A, B, D, E, F, H, J
Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corp.	P.O. Box 427 Phoenixville, PA 19460	Jim Reading 610-436-6100 x12	Active	A, C, D
Phoenixville Area Business Association	P.O. Box 235, Phoenixville, PA 19460	Ellie Acampora 610-917-0260	Potential	D
Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce	171 Bridge St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	Steve Giampetro 610-933-3070	Potential	A, D, E, F, G
The DeMutis Group	184 East Bridge Street P.O.Box 597 Phoenixville, PA 19460	Manny DeMutis 610-415-1699	Potential	D
Schuylkill Canal Association	P.O. Box 966 Oakes, PA 19456	Betsy Daley edaley@schuylkillcanal.com	Active	A, B, D, E
Bike Schuylkill and Phoenixville	165 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Kyle Guie 610-933-2210	Potential	D
Phoenixville Village Art Center	207 Bridge St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	Kathy Bestwick Wendy Nickerson 610-983-9430	Potential	A, D
Colonial Theater	227 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Mary Foote 610-917-1228	Potential	A, B, D, H
Phoenixville Public Library	183 Second St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	Sue Mostek 610-933-3013	Potential	A, D, E
Forge Theatre	241 – 243 First Avenue Phoenixville, PA 19460	Maureen Clarke 610-935-1920	Potential	A, D, H
Black Rock Sanctuary	953 Black Roack Road – Rt. 113	John Mikowychuk 610-344-6415	Potential	D

Key: Partner Roles

- A – Collaborative Skills
- B – Professional Expertise
- C – Funding
- D – General Support
- E – Information
- F – Investment Time/Resources
- G – Marketing Assistance
- H – Space
- I – Technical Assistance
- J – Tourism Assistance
- K - Volunteers

HERITAGE RESOURCES & LINKAGES

Phoenixville's heritage is highlighted in its Historic District, which is the largest National Register of Historic Places site in Chester County, Pennsylvania. The Historic District is roughly bounded by Penn Street, the Railroad tracks, Fourth Avenue, and Wheatland Street (see Figure 1 below). Phoenixville has local policies and regulations for heritage preservation including a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), consistent with Pennsylvania law.

Heritage Resources: The official Phoenixville Historic District is approximately 2,969 acres. It was nominated in 1987 and site details include the following: 908 contributing buildings, 1 contributing structure, and 52 non-contributing buildings. These are local resources with an area of significance in architecture, commerce, and industry. Significant years for development include 1750 to 1799; 1800 to 1824; 1825 to 1849; 1850 to 1874; 1875 to 1899; 1900 to 1924; and 1925 to 1949. Significant years include 1765 and 1936. Primary architectural styles include Colonial, Greek revival, Italianate, and Second Empire. Official information includes the following:

Applicable Criteria: Architecture/Engineering, Event

Certification Date: 19870317

Certification Status: Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Nominated Name: State Government

Other Certification: Date Received/Pending Nomination

Other Certification 19870202

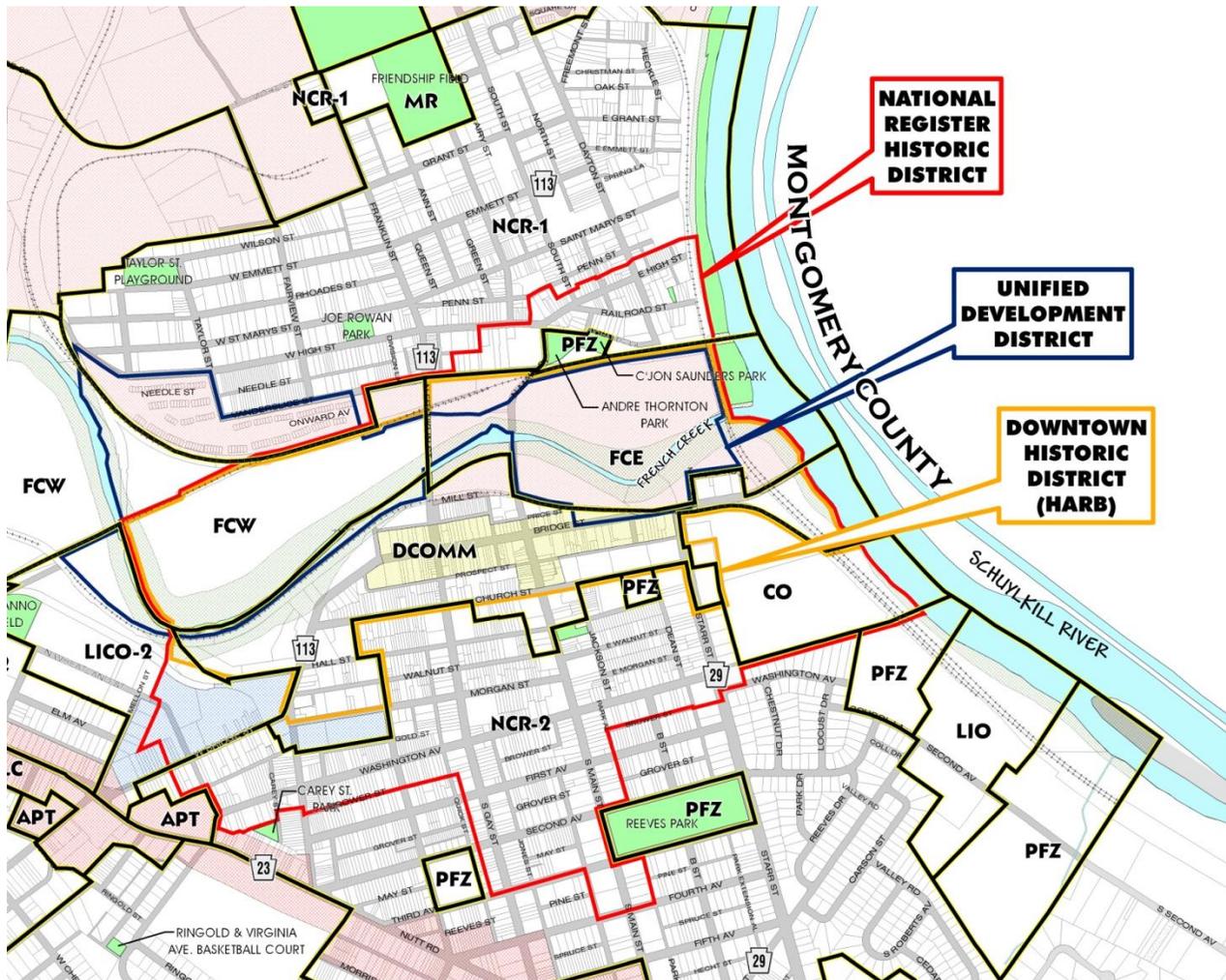
Reference Number: 87000378

Contact: E. Jean Krack, Phoenixville Borough Manager

Primary Resource Areas and Linkages: Primary resources areas include the lands along French Creek and the Schuylkill River, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District, and Borough parks and other amenities in this area. Trails, roads, and Borough streets are used as connections.

The Schuylkill River Trail follows the meandering French Creek through the former Phoenix Iron and Steel Company property, which is adjacent to Phoenixville's Downtown Historic District. It also converges with three other trails along the creek, and most significantly joins the Schuylkill River. The important connection, combined with the resources in Phoenixville that have already become part of the community tapestry, is of regional significance to many business and cultural partners that are supporting heritage tourism initiatives.

FIGURE 1: BOROUGH OF PHOENIXVILLE ZONING MAP



Source: *Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan* – Chester County, PA; Ray Ott & associates

TABLE 2: PHOENIXVILLE - KEY HERITAGE RESOURCES

ID	RESOURCE	LOCATION	DATE	CONDITION	CONTRIBUTION	PROJECT(S)
01	Schuylkill River Heritage Center	2 Main Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	1882	Excellent – Key resource linking trails system and historic downtown	Public/Historic: Museum, education, interpretation, recreation, historic	Interpretive signage program for the Phoenixville area trail system – French Creek and Schuylkill River
02	Historical Society	204 Church Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	1872	Excellent – Located in central part of Phoenixville.	Preservation of Phoenixville history; digitization of documents; museum exhibits; research library; speakers	Miscellaneous community outreach projects. Tours, Historic Markers.
03	Borough Hall	140 Church Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	1960	Adequate. New Borough Hall under design.	Government services	Wayfinding system for Phoenixville Borough
04	Colonial Theatre	227 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Circa 1903	Excellent – newly restored facility	Programming that appeals to a diverse audience.	Continued restoration of existing building. Development and configuration of newly acquired building.
05	Schuylkill River Trail	French Creek and Schuylkill River front areas	N/A	N/A	Public/Recreational: Recreation trails for linking heritage resources/promoting interpretation	Interpretive signage program for the Phoenixville area trail system – French Creek and Schuylkill River
06	Reeves Park	Main Street between 2 nd and 3 rd Avenue Phoenixville, PA		Good. Dogwood Festival, Community Day, Concerts	Athletic fields, Benches, Concert stage, Playgrounds	See Borough web site for the Reeves Park Master Plan
07	Reservoir Park	600 Franklin Ave., Phoenixville, PA 19460		Good	Benches, Picnic pavilions, Playgrounds	See Borough web site for the Reservoir Park Master Plan
08	Morris Cemetery	428 Nutt Rd, Phoenixville, PA 19460	1867	Minimally maintained. Vandalism is a problem	Used by visitors for family history. Special memorial garden for veterans, including Civil War.	Maintenance of cemetery
09	Great Valley Nature Center	State Rd & Hollow Rd, Phoenixville, PA 19460	1974	Good	Fosters an appreciation and understanding of the natural world and promotes a sense of responsibility for its care.	Programs for Children and adults
10	John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove	1201 Pawling's Rd, Phoenixville, PA 19460		Good	The museum located in the historic home features all of John James Audubon's major works, including the magnificent <i>Birds of America</i> .	Part of Montgomery County Park system.
11	Schuylkill Canal Lock 60	400 Towpath Road, Mont Clare, PA 19453	1846	Good	Canoeing, cycling, hiking, geocaching, cross-country skiing and running in a historical backdrop.	Part of Montgomery County Park system.
12	Valley Forge Park		1920	Excellent	National History, Recreational Activities	National Park

INTERPRETATION

Phoenixville is currently a heritage destination in Chester County, Pennsylvania and in the larger Schuylkill River Heritage Area region. This Heritage Action Plan seeks to refine interpretive, wayfinding, and marketing elements already in place within the Borough. Interpretation will be the vehicle that brings partners and potential partners in the Phoenixville area together. The purpose is to preserve and promote heritage resources and the interesting stories associated with Phoenixville for increased heritage tourism in the Borough and the surrounding region.

Phoenixville Heritage Study Area: Phoenixville has defined an area to focus their initial heritage efforts for interpretation and wayfinding. Identification of signage locations is anticipated in early 2012. This includes four potential interpretive signs that will incorporate graphics from the Borough's wayfinding signage system.

Key Interpretive Venues: Key interpretive venues for Phoenixville's heritage resources include the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, the Historical Society for the Phoenixville Area, and the Borough of Phoenixville, which includes the Borough's many parks, trails, and other amenities and infrastructure. These partners will be directly involved in interpretive and wayfinding efforts to improve heritage tourism in the Borough. For example, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center and the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area have created a variety of tours over the years that include some public parks. The Borough's wayfinding project also will include signage for these community resources.

- Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC): The SRHC sponsors events and programs so that everyone from students to seniors can gain insight and an appreciation for Phoenixville's and the Schuylkill River's industrial legacies. Interactive kiosks provide information about places of interest to visit along the Schuylkill River and throughout Chester County. There are also video presentations that tell the story of Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River and the history of the Phoenix Iron and Steel Company.

The Symbols of Steel Sculpture Garden administered by the SRHC, is an outdoor installation on the Foundry Building site that celebrates and memorializes the former iron and steel company workers. Historic photographs of the former iron and steel company that will be used for storage along the trail will provide continuity in telling this multi-cultural community story (see photographic documentation).

- Historical Society for the Phoenixville Area (HSPA): The HSPA regularly sponsors special exhibits and presentations, group visits, and walking tours that educate the public so that individuals have a better understanding and appreciation for the heritage of the Phoenixville area. As part of this initiative, the HSPA plans to update and enhance outdoor signage to

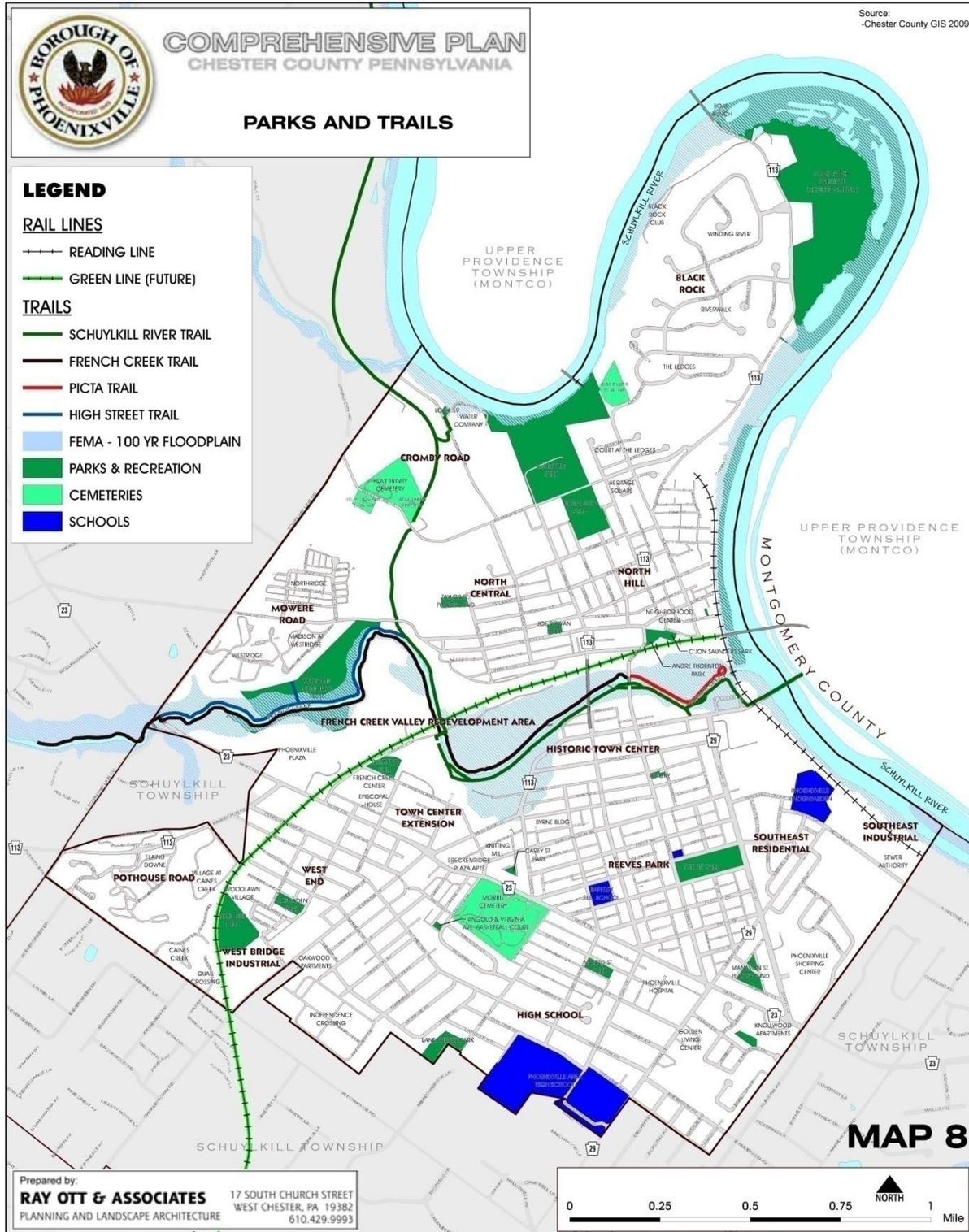
improve interpretation of the Borough's many heritage resources. This will enable both motorists and pedestrians to be instantly informed about the HSPA and its community outreach activities (see photographic documentation).

- Borough of Phoenixville: Surrounded by Chester County's pastoral landscape, the Borough of Phoenixville's classic 19th Century architecture provides an ideal context for joining the past with the future. The Historic District has over 1,200 properties, more than any other place in Chester County. Phoenixville's population grew by 11% over the last decade since it offers such a special setting for families. It is a safe and walkable community with many recreational, educational, cultural, and business opportunities.

TABLE 3: PHOENIXVILLE - BOROUGH PARKS

ID	PARK NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACT
01	Civic Center	123 Main Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	610-933-7728
02	Friendship Field – Multi-Purpose Field	Fillmore Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	610-933-7728
*03	Reeves Park – Playground, Small Ball Field, Band Pavilion, Gazebo, Historic Monuments	Main Street and 3 rd Avenue Phoenixville, PA 19460	610-933-7728
04	Reservoir Park – Playground, Pavilion, Picnic Area, Basketball Court	Franklin Avenue Phoenixville, PA 19460	610-933-7728

FIGURE 2: BOROUGH OF PHOENIXVILLE PARKS MAP



MARKETING & OUTREACH

Image and Brand: As part of the wayfinding project, the Borough of Phoenixville and its partners are developing logos. Historically, the image and brand of Phoenixville is the phoenix, a mythical bird. Legend states that at the end of its life-cycle the bird would ignite and then be reborn from the ashes to live again in another form. It highlights the concepts of reincarnation and immortality. The image of the phoenix is based on mythologies found in cultures ranging from the ancient Greeks and Egyptians to the later empires of Rome and Persia. Much like the mythical phoenix bird, Phoenixville also characterizes the traits of change, rebirth, and regeneration.



Source: *Book of Mythological Creatures*:
F.J. Bertuch (1747-1822)

Marketing and Outreach: The Borough of Phoenixville does have a marketing plan but the Plan is out of date. The Borough is revising the plan and anticipates updates in 2012. Phoenixville will research new forms of digital media and marketing concepts during the update to the Borough's marketing plan. This is a major goal of the heritage program to improve overall marketing and includes I-Phone applications, mapping and map guides, and enhanced web browsers. Currently, Phoenixville uses a series of websites and local events and initiatives to market the Borough. The following websites promote Phoenixville:

- Bridge & Main: <http://www.bridgeandmain.com/events/index.htm>;
- Phoenixville Patch: <http://Phoenixville.patch.com>;
- Around Phoenixville: <http://www.aroundphoenixville.com/>;
- First Friday Downtown Phoenixville: <http://www.phxfirstfriday.com/>;
- Phoenixville Fun: <http://phoenixvillefun.com/>;
- Phoenixville Dish: <http://phoenixvilledish.com/>;
- Historic Phoenixville: <http://HistoricPhoenixville.com/>;
- Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau;
- Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia designation – Greater Philadelphia Marketing Initiative; and
- Local Newspapers.

Entities currently involved in marketing and outreach for Phoenixville include the following:

- Phoenixville Area Chamber of Commerce (*First Fridays Program*);
- Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corp;
- Phoenixville Area Business Association (PABA); and
- Historic Phoenixville

Target markets and potential markets for Phoenixville include the following:

- Heritage Tourists;
- Recreational visitors;
- Young professionals; and
- Others to be determined.

The Chamber of Commerce and PABA maintain visitation statistics and will be part of the future heritage program as active partners. Detailed visitor profiles and statistics can be obtained from these entities. The top two visitor demographics are people over the age of 50 and people from age 25 to 45. Phoenixville will enhance web-based marketing as part of the heritage program and research the impacts of web-based marketing as part of updates to the Borough's marketing plan. Cross-marketing initiatives include the Classic Towns initiative, Chester County tourism, Valley Forge National Historic Park, and the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area and Greenway.

Events and Festivals: Phoenixville hosts many events, festivals, and activities that directly promote the Borough and its unique heritage resources. These are listed in Table 4.

TABLE 4: PHOENIXVILLE – EVENTS, FESTIVALS, AND ACTIVITIES				
ID	EVENT	ADDRESS	CONTACT INFORMATION	ACTIONS/PROJECTS
01	Bike Schuylkill Phoenixville	Phoenix Cycles 165 Bridge St. Phoenixville, PA 19460	Kyle Guie 610-933-2210	Publicize and expand program – Plan to add bike racks
02	Black Rock Sanctuary	953 Black Rock Road – 1 mile north of Phoenixville on Rt. 113 between River Drive and Winding River Blvd.	John Mikowychuk 610-344-6415	Publicize and expand program - This park is an important Chester County Resource and recreational area. It also is a Historic Industrial Resource that is interpreted by the county located on the Schuylkill River.
03	Phoenixville Farmer's Market	200 Mill Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	(610) 933-0486	Enhance – This is a venue for promotion of events and organizations around town
04	Forge Theatre	241 First Avenue Phoenixville 19460	610-935-1920	Exposure/Outreach - Presents plays on a regular scheduled basis.

05	Blob Fest	Colonial Theatre 227 Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA 19460	Mary Foote (610) 917-0223	Exposure/Outreach - Annual event. A street fair is held the Saturday of the Blob Fest. A good venue for promotion of your organization
06	Dogwood Festival	Phoenixville Jaycees 8 Gay St Phoenixville 19460	610 935-7910	Exposure/Outreach - Popular week long annual event. Ongoing since the 1940s.
07	Firebird Festival	Henrik Teglbjaerg	henrik11@verizon.net	Exposure/Outreach - Held early December. Opportunity for information tables, etc.
08	Fireworks – July 4	Karen Johns		Community Pride Initiative - Privately funded event.
09	First Fridays	Chamber of Commerce 171 Bridge St. Phoenixville, PA 19460		Exposure/Outreach - Large draw of people from outside. Good venue for promotion.
10	Schuylkill Canal Day	Schuylkill Canal Lock 60 400 Towpath Road, Mont Clare, PA 19453	Betsy Daley edaley@schuylkillcanal.com	Community Pride Initiative and Exposure/Outreach - Family event

Specifically, as active partners in the heritage program, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC) and the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area (HSPA) perform the following activities:

- Speakers program for the public (SRHC);
- Annual Heritage Award celebration in October (SRHC);
- Quarterly programs for members and the public (HSPA);
- Strawberry Festival in June (HSPA);
- Flea Markets in January and June (HSPA); and
- Regular speakers program (Phoenixville Public Library).

PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Borough of Phoenixville, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC), and the Historical Society for the Phoenixville Area (HSPA) will be responsible for the implementation and management of the Heritage Plan and Program. This Heritage Action Plan and Program may be amended in the future to reflect changing circumstances in the Borough of Phoenixville. The purpose is to address issues and opportunities as they arise.

Phoenixville's heritage resources are important because they define the community and provide social and economic benefits, which contribute to quality of life. The Borough's heritage resources are valuable commodities because they are capable of bringing new dollars into the Borough through increased property values, investment, and tourism-related businesses.

Improving Internal Partnerships: The most important part of heritage efforts in Phoenixville is increasing partnership coordination and cooperation as a basis for revitalization. Through a series of coordinated signage and wayfinding projects, described below, the Phoenixville Heritage Action Plan will seek to bring together all of the community organizations that have been included as partners in this Plan. This includes developing a coordinated wayfinding and interpretive system in the Borough to link assets and resources. Future heritage related activities and initiatives will further assist in expanding interest in heritage tourism and the preservation of key resources.

The focus of the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, Phoenixville Area Historical Society, and Borough Government is to seek funding for informational signage, as capital projects to facilitate interpretive and wayfinding efforts and generate partner enthusiasm for future heritage initiatives. The Phoenixville Heritage Action Plan will be the beginning of a comprehensive planning effort to unite all community stakeholders. The Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation has already begun to lead an effort to increase coordination and communication between all of the relevant organizations in the Borough by having regularly scheduled meetings with leaders. These meetings will help bring the implementation of the Heritage Action Plan to fruition. By bringing together and harmonizing activities and organizations that promote Phoenixville's significant connection to the Schuylkill River and French Creek, as well as the adjacent trail system, will enhance the interpretation of the cultural and historic resources in the Borough as assist in completing the community's 21st Century renaissance.

Improving External Partnerships: External trails and roads/highways serve as major connectors to bring visitors into Phoenixville. In addition, there are major historic and cultural venues located outside the Borough that draw people into Phoenixville's center and impact tourism. For example, John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove is on the outer edge of the

Phoenixville area. Valley Forge National Historical Park is located approximately four miles from Phoenixville. This National Park provides tremendous exposure for the Borough. People visiting these sites are drawn to the Borough, which offers a wide range of services and facilities from historic and cultural sites to shopping and dining. Signage and other marketing materials will reflect the proximity of these sites to the Phoenixville Area.

Borough Heritage Initiatives: As part of the Borough of Phoenixville's Comprehensive Plan, several important initiatives are highlighted, which positively impact the Heritage Plan and Program when implemented. This includes the following:

- 1) Updating the historic resource surveys to determine historic properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or local designation;
- 2) Identifying and listing historic resources in the Borough's Zoning Ordinance;
- 3) Considering adoption of a comprehensive Historic Resources Ordinance;
- 4) Adopting zoning regulations that protect the cultural setting of historic resources; and
- 5) Adopting design guidelines for infill development to protect historic districts or adjacent to historic resources.

Major economic development objectives from the Comprehensive Plan that positively impact the Heritage Action Plan and Program include:

- 1) Steering appropriate commercial and industrial development to the French Creek Center and other Phoenixville Borough locations, which complement and add to the Borough's revitalization efforts. The French Creek Center should be viewed as an important long-term component of Phoenixville's revitalization.
- 2) Continuing the revitalization of downtown Phoenixville using various strategies, such as infill development and adaptive reuse.
- 3) Continuing the Main Street Program and identifying financing as needed to allow new retail and service businesses to locate to downtown Phoenixville.

In terms of the Borough's Comprehensive Plan objectives, the heritage team will assist the Borough to provide cultural tourism brochures and other products in public places and coordinate with Chester County to provide website links for online cultural tourism resources in the Phoenixville area.

Capital Projects: Phoenixville will use new interpretation signage and wayfinding to enhance heritage tourism in the Borough and bring partners and potential partners together. The purpose is to preserve and promote the Borough's heritage resources and the interesting stories associated with Phoenixville. This Heritage Action Plan seeks to refine elements already in place within the Borough. Specific projects related to interpretation and wayfinding include the following:

- 1) The Schuylkill River Heritage Center (SRHC) is planning to install interpretive signage along the trail that borders the French Creek and the Schuylkill River with appropriate photography and graphics that illustrate the buildings that once were part of the Phoenix Iron and Steel Company, enabling trail users to appreciate the size and scope of the former mill and its legacy.
- 2) The Phoenixville Borough government plans to implement a wayfinding signage program that will enable everyone visiting the Borough to find easily their way to important resources located in the community. As part of the program, this initiative will provide an illustrated map, depicting historic properties in the Historic District, on a sign at the corner of Bridge and Main Streets. This location in Renaissance Park is a major intersection in Phoenixville and it is also at the core of the Downtown Historic District.

Project Budget: The budget is based on approximate square footage documentation with input and estimates from Interpretive Graphics, the highly regarded graphic signage company that produced the signage for the Symbols of Steel Sculpture Garden at the Schuylkill River Heritage Center on the Foundry Building property. Estimates for installation were provided by Blue Ridge Landscaping. The firm installed the sculpture garden signage, which has remained perfectly in place almost five years.

Project	Quantity	Description	Approximate Costs
1	4	24 X 36 signs showing historic images of the former Phoenix Iron and Steel Company with accompanying interpretive language: a) Posts - \$160.00 each (8 posts); b) Graphic Design - \$300.00 each; c) Production - \$2,400.00 each	\$1,280.00 \$1,200.00 <u>\$9,600.00</u> \$12,080.00
2	1	24 X 36 sign in a map format depicting former historic places in the community so visitors can appreciate their significant legacy: a) Posts - \$250.00 each (2 posts); b) Graphic Map Design; c) Production	\$500.00 \$500.00 <u>\$1,725.00</u> \$2,725.00
Estimated Total Production Costs:			\$14,805.00
Historic Phoenix Iron and Steel Co. Signs – 4 @ \$675.00 each			\$2,700.00
Phoenixville Borough Map Sign			\$675.00
Estimated Total Installation Costs:			\$3,375.00
EST. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS			\$18,180.00

Recommendations/Actions:

- 1) Continue the partnership between the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, the Historical Society of Phoenixville, and the Borough of Phoenixville to set an example for other groups and organizations to participate in initiatives and projects that showcase the community's resources and assets.
- 2) Seek official approval of the Heritage Action Plan and Program from the Borough of Phoenixville.
- 3) Complete the Borough of Phoenixville's Wayfinding Signage Plan to provide a graphic and substantive guide to aid businesses, economic development, and cultural organizations. This project also will assist organizations with cohesive branding and marketing.
- 4) Promote coordination between the HARB District and the Historic District including researching the real boundaries of the Historic District versus the HARB boundaries.
- 5) Preserve heritage resources in Phoenixville by working with the Borough and heritage partners to improve the effectiveness of the HARB and Historic District.
- 6) Work with the Borough to improve the various issues facing the downtown historic district including access, wayfinding, interpretation, traffic, and parking,
- 7) Support and assist, where appropriate, the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation (PAEDCO) and VFTMA to explore options for funding a shuttle bus from Valley Forge National Park to the Phoenixville area. This project is related to the Borough's larger wayfinding signage plan.
- 8) Support and assist, where appropriate, the DeMutis Group efforts to link the seven acres of the former Phoenix Iron and Steel Company property to Phoenixville's main shopping thoroughfare and French Creek and trails. The Shoppes at French Creek development project will include 90,000 square ft. of retail space, a 30,000 square ft. office building, 275 apartments, and a 630 space parking garage. With the installation of interpretive signage telling the iron and steel company story; new residents, office workers, and visitors will have a cultural and historic link to the past, and will gain a better appreciation for Phoenixville's legacy.

- 9) Seek assistance and funding to create a new walking tour brochure for the Schuylkill River Heritage Center and the Historical Society in both paper and electronic application formats. This will enable everyone to have “then and now” interpretive information and photography about Phoenixville’s Historic District and the places from the past that should not be forgotten.
- 10) Work with the Phoenix Village Art Center, the Colonial Theater, the Forge Theater as well as other community partners to develop a “Community Calendar” so that each organization’s activities and events are coordinated, supported, and adequately publicized by other partner organizations.
- 11) Promote cooperation with the Schuylkill River Heritage Center and Historical Society by working with the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation, the Community Development Corporation, the Phoenixville Area Business Association, and the Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce to help craft business models that include Phoenixville’s history and geography, giving credence to the significant and unique character that these elements bring to the community. The final phase will be to create a revised Heritage Action Plan, which will then consolidate all of the community’s historic, environmental, recreational, business, cultural, and political resources.
- 12) Work to place small graphic signs, with images of historic buildings that are no longer part of the Borough’s landscape, at key intersections in the Downtown Business District; residents, tourists, trail users, shoppers, diners, and those participating in special regional events, will be able to appreciate the community’s growth and development. This is an important component of the Borough’s historical legacy and its significant relationship to the Schuylkill River.
- 13) Improve wayfinding signage so that more visitors and residents can make use of community resources like the Phoenixville Farmer’s Market.
- 14) Coordinate electronic publicity resources with the various organizations of Phoenixville so that activities and special events will be made known to the public. This may require a central Borough or other web-server, which will run all Phoenixville traffic through the host, where it can be coordinated. This also may require more cross-marketing efforts on the part of individual websites.
- 15) Assist partners in the Phoenixville area to promote events, festivals, and activities related to heritage tourism, where and when appropriate.

- 16) Meet with Chamber of Commerce leadership to share information and investigate ways to better promote the Chamber's non-profit members and discuss the possibilities for marketing non-profit cultural institutions that participate in the *First Fridays Program*.
- 17) Meet with PABA to share information and make them aware of the Heritage Action Plan and program in order to better coordinate projects, activities, and events.
- 18) Recently the Association for the Colonial Theater has acquired funding to purchase the historic building and have made significant progress in defining space configuration. The Colonial Theater is positioned to become a major entertainment magnet the region. Request participation of the Colonial Theater in the Borough's heritage program, including participation in planning events at the Colonial Theater that will benefit the cultural non-profit community
- 19) Organize a common event related to the canal history of the Borough (possibly in advance of the Schuylkill Canal Day which occurs in late June).
- 20) Meet and discuss the creation of a special event with the Phoenixville Art Center that includes art and history, including marketing and promotion for such a new event.
- 21) Meet with the historic Carnegie Library (Phoenixville Library), which is an important part of the Borough's cultural legacy, to discuss funding, assistance, sharing information, coordinating efforts, and implementation of the Heritage Action Plan and Program.
- 22) Meet with the Forge Theater to share information, coordinate efforts, and discuss the Heritage Plan and Program.
- 23) Consider all programs and projects that will assist Phoenixville to expand outreach and marketing potential. This includes further integrating the Heritage Plan and Program into marketing for heritage tourism.