

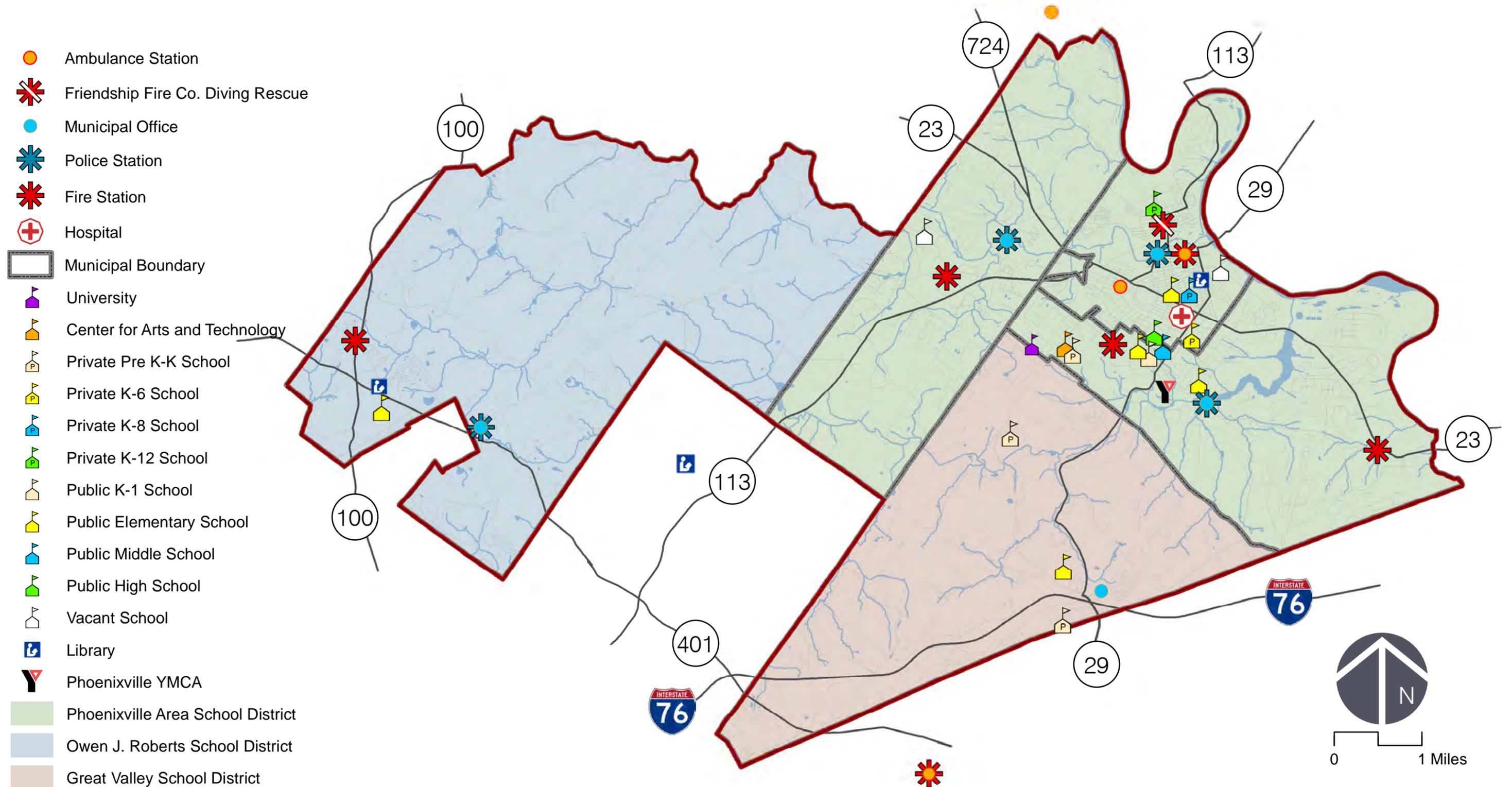


## AGENDA

### **PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMITTEE WORKSHOP PRPC-12** April 25, 2018

1. Economic Development Plan – Revision per PRPC-11
  - a. Clarification on experience based businesses
2. Community Facilities Plan – Revisions per PRPC-11
  - a. Regional Municipal Sewer Authorities
  - b. West Vincent MS4 revision
  - c. Emergency services revisions – hospitals, urgent care
  - d. Schools – Private facilities, community functions for public schools
  - e. Informal mini libraries
  - f. Additional Health and Social Service Providers
  - g. Implementation strategies consistent with revisions
  - h. Map 5 Institutions – added facilities
  - i. Map 6 Infrastructure – revised for improved legibility
3. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan – initial review
  - a. Goals and Objectives
  - b. Existing Park, OS Assets
  - c. Needs Assessment – Active recreation
  - d. Trails
  - e. Senior and Special Needs Populations
  - f. Bike Routes
  - g. Open Space Planning
  - h. Implementation Strategies
  - i. Map 7 Open Space and Recreation
  - j. Map 8 Bicycle Plan
4. Announce Next Workshop – May 30, 2018 – Draft Transportation Plan
5. Adjournment

# Community Facilities - Institutions



Draft: April 18, 2018

# Community Facilities - Infrastructure

## Utilities

### Pipelines

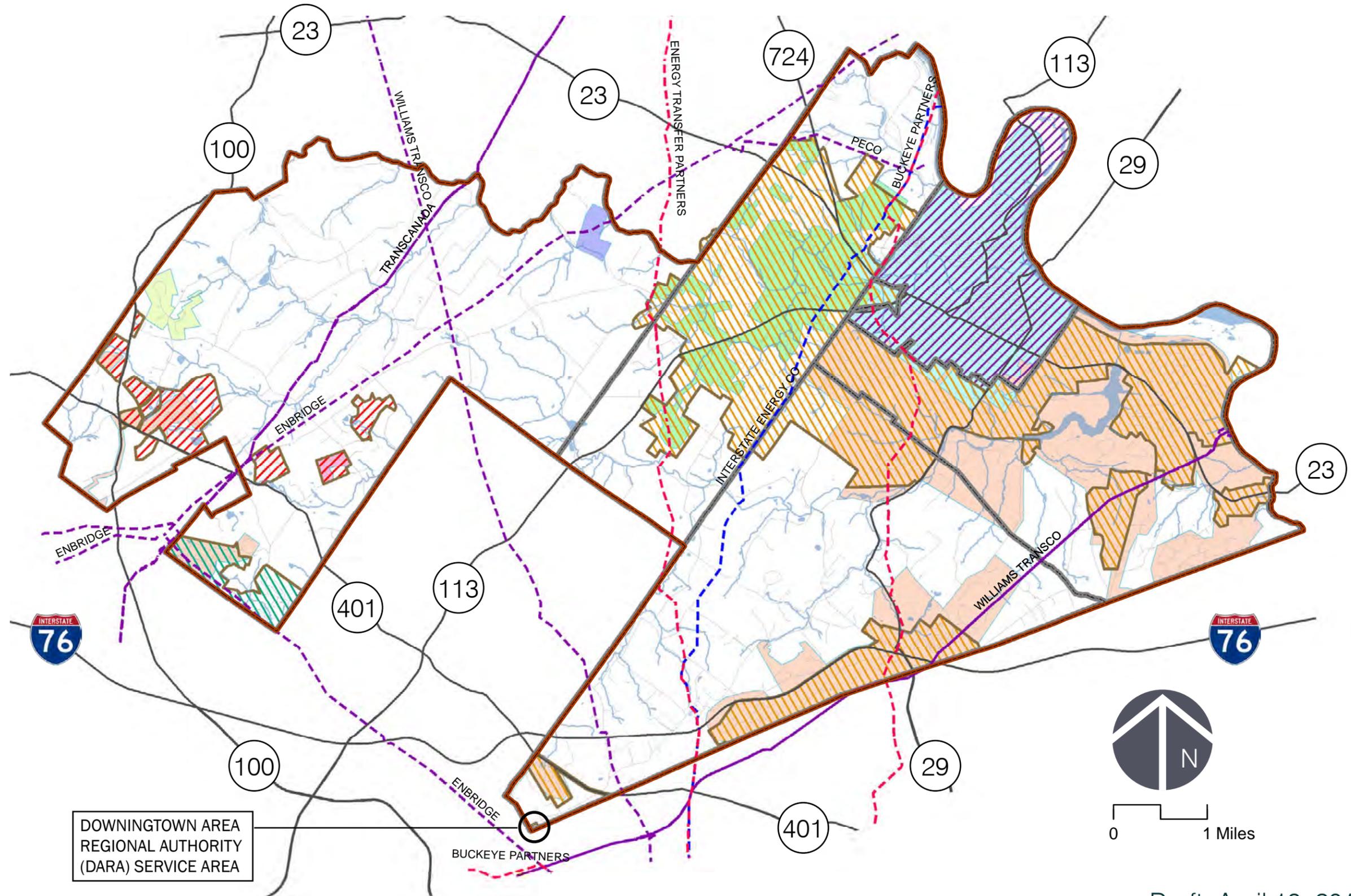
- NATURAL GAS
- NON-HIGHLY VOLATILE LIQUIDS (HVL)
- OIL

### Public Sewer Service Areas

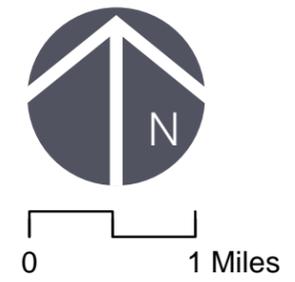
- PHOENIXVILLE BOROUGH PUBLIC WORKS
- VALLEY Forge SEWER AUTHORITY
- UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP
- WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

### Public Water Service Areas

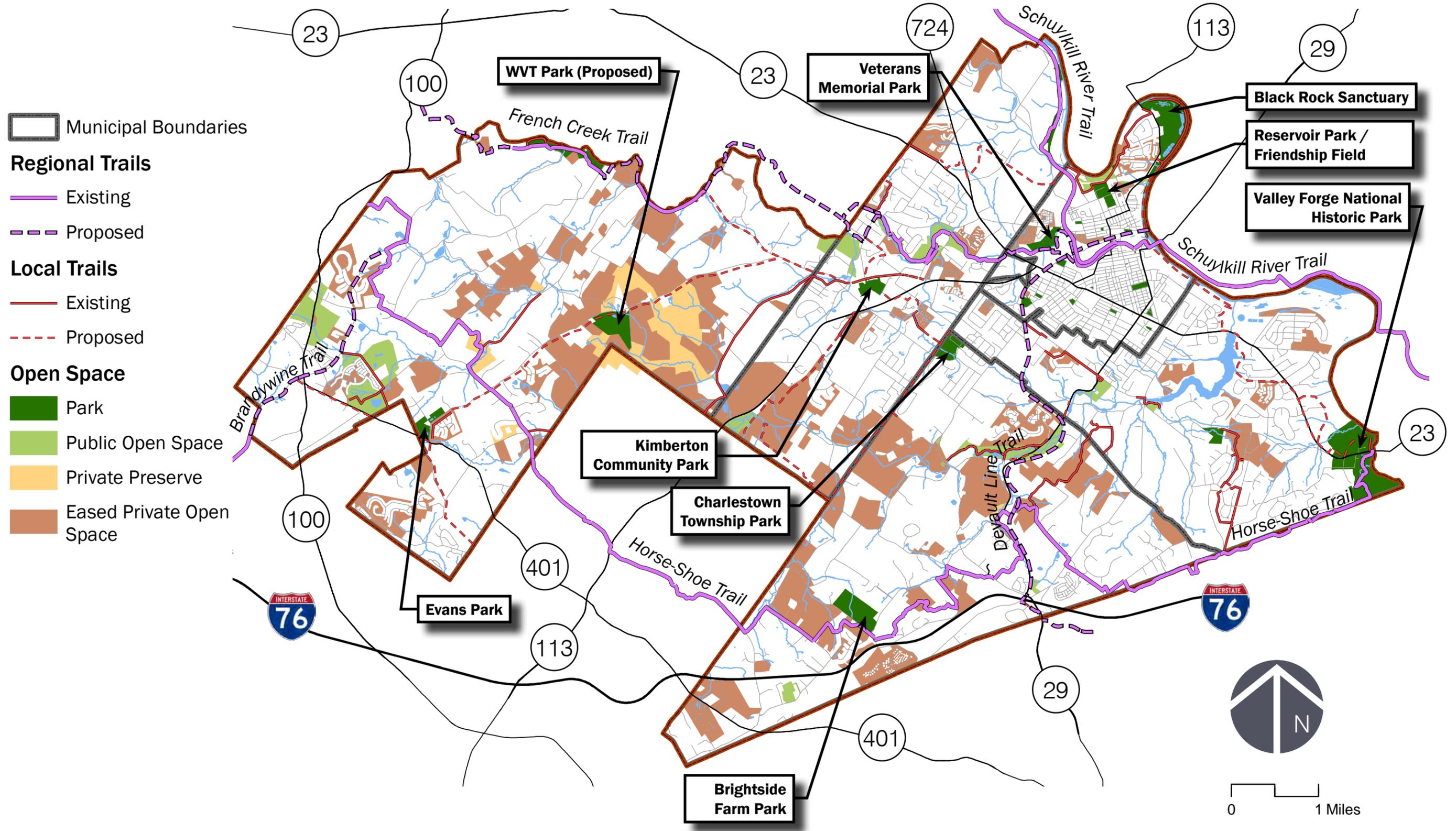
- AQUA PA
- CAMPHILL VILLAGE USA INC
- PA AMERICAN WATER
- PHOENIXVILLE WATER DEPT
- WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP
- WETHERILL ESTATES HOA



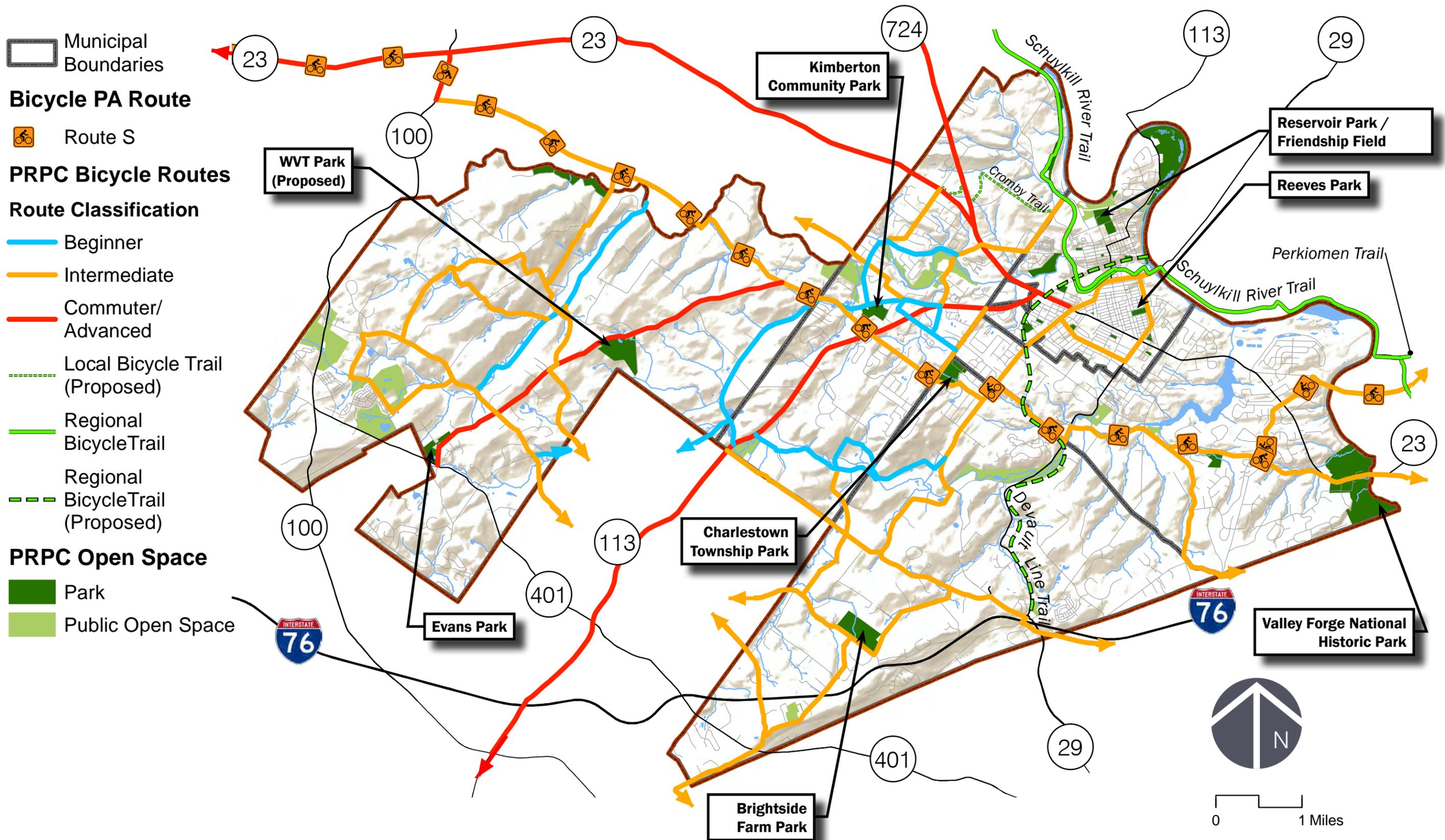
DOWNINGTOWN AREA REGIONAL AUTHORITY (DARA) SERVICE AREA



# Open Space and Recreation



Draft: April 18, 2018



Draft: April 18, 2018

**ED-7 Utilize signage, identity branding, streetscape features, pedestrian enhancements, and other elements of place-making to create successful downtown, village, and exurban redevelopment centers.**

**ED-8 Promote cultural tourism as an element of place-making and a lifestyle-based economy.**

**ED-9 Encourage businesses oriented towards experiences, families, and children as components of a diverse and inclusive lifestyle economy.**

Experience based businesses offer events or environments beyond the exchange of money for commodities. Examples would be retail outlets with educational or artistic exhibits, specialized training, programmed activities, recreation, entertainment and/or dining in addition to or instead of items for purchase.

**ED-10 Coordinate sewer, water, roads, and public transportation infrastructure with development.**

**ED-11 Connect developers with outside funding support for revitalization/redevelopment projects, and when necessary investigate zoning and local tax relief incentives.**

**ED-12 Focus zoning efforts and other stimulus/incentives on identified economic redevelopment areas.**

**ED-13 Promote the adaptive re-use of historic, commercial, and industrial spaces as viable contemporary uses.**

**ED-14 Provide incentives to accommodate housing of different types and affordability suitable to a diverse and dynamic workforce.**

## **CHAPTER EIGHT – COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

Community facilities are the institutions and improvements that promote public health, safety, and welfare. These include systems for environmental protection, education, and emergency services, and can be operated by public and/or private entities. They must be thoughtfully coordinated with land uses, transportation systems, and environmental resources in order to function efficiently and equitably.

### **8.1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

Ensure that infrastructure and public services meet the needs of the community and are coordinated with land use, economic development, housing, and resource protection goals and policies. This goal is to be advanced through the pursuit of the following specific objectives:

1. Provide efficient and environmentally sound sewer and water services that support Regional land use and development purposes.
2. Promote integrated stormwater management systems that protect surface and groundwater resources and provide for ongoing monitoring and maintenance.
3. Assure adequate facilities, equipment, and other resources for emergency service providers.
4. Recognize schools and libraries as essential community resources that can serve many public functions.
5. Provide necessary public services to special needs populations, including senior citizens, the physically disabled, and the economically disadvantaged.
6. Promote resilient and comprehensive electrical and communications systems consistent with public safety and community aesthetic character.

### **8.2 SEWER AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

While on lot wells and septic systems are generally acceptable for low intensity development and land uses, public sewer and water infrastructure is essential to any concentrated or intensive development. Therefore, sewer and water service areas should be coordinated with future land use plans and zoning. By limiting public service areas to locations designated for more intensive development, such developments can be restricted from low intensity areas. In this way, sewer and water infrastructure can simultaneously promote economic redevelopment and conservation.

In order to maintain hydrologic balance and groundwater resources, it is important that areas that are served by public sewers also be connected to public water service. Otherwise, groundwater is withdrawn from onsite wells and transported by sewers for treatment and stream discharge far down gradient, so that the groundwater within the local watershed is depleted. This is the case in part of the a number of the older developed neighborhoods in the Region, where there is public sewer, but no public water service. The PRPC should effect wastewater and water service plans that prohibit this condition for future land developments and correct any existing deficiencies.

Private on lot septic and water systems are the norm in West Vincent and Charlestown Townships, and in less densely settled parts of Schuylkill and East Pikeland Townships. For on lot systems, periodic inspection and/or maintenance are required and are the responsibility of the property owner. Municipalities should provide information to property owners and require that proper upkeep of in-ground septic systems to assure that failed systems do not result in environmental impairment and threats to public health. In addition, private wells should be periodically tested for contaminants so that remediation and/or water treatment can occur as appropriate. Chester County Health Department provides informational resources on septic system maintenance and well water testing that should provide the basis of municipal compliance programs.

Public or private community sewer and water services in the PRPC Region are described on Map 6 as follows:

### Charlestown

Public sewer is provided by Valley Forge Sewer Authority. Areas served include three planned residential developments (PRDs), the University of Valley Forge and surrounding residential community, and the mixed use, industrial, and traditional neighborhood development (TND) areas in Devault and along Phoenixville Pike.

Aqua PA provides water service to the PRD and TND areas, as well as the mixed use and industrial areas along Phoenixville Pike and the University of Valley Forge. Service also extends to the Whitehorse development along Whitehorse Road, but not to the publicly sewerred Bevin's Orchard community.

### East Pikeland

As of 2018, the central area of the Township, essentially between Coldstream Road and Route 23, is served by Valley Forge Sewer Authority. Service is being extended to the northeast of Route 23 for ongoing construction of significant residential development.

Public water in the area east of Kimberton is provided by the Phoenixville Water Department. Other areas of the Township are served by PA American of Royersford. As previously noted, many of the older developed areas in the Township have public sewer, but no public water.

### Phoenixville

Phoenixville provides municipal public sewer service to the entire municipality. An exception is a handful of single family residences along Township Line Road, which will be tied into the sewer extension when facilitated by planned development.

Public water is provided to the entire Borough by the Phoenixville Water Department.

### Schuylkill

Valley Forge Sewer Authority provides service to approximately half the land area of the Township, in the area surrounding Phoenixville, along PA Route 23 and Country Club Roads, and around the village of Valley Forge. The Phoenixville Area Middle School is served by the Phoenixville municipal sewer system.

All sewerred areas of the Township have public water. Most of the Township is served by Aqua PA, except for small areas south and west of Phoenixville, which are served by the Phoenixville Water Department. Some non-sewerred areas have public water, most notably residences on Valley Forge Mountain.

### West Vincent

In West Vincent's denser developments, sewer service is generally provided by systems dedicated to the specific development. The exception is Eagle Farms, which is connected to the Upper Uwchlan Township Municipal Authority. Stonecroft, Stephens Green, Mathews Meadows, Weatherstone, and Stone Rise Apartments each have their own sewer systems. A part of the older Valley Dell development and houses along Kimberston Road are served by Valley Forge Sewer Authority.

Aqua PA Uwchlan provides public water to larger developments in the western part of the Township, including Weatherstone, Stone Rise, and Eagle Farms. Saint Stephens Green, Weatherhill, and Camp Hill have private community water service. The Kimberbrae development adjacent to East Pikeland is served by PA American Royersford.

### Upper Uwchlan Township Municipal Authority

The Upper Uwchlan Township Municipal Authority (UUTMA) provides sewer service to the Ewing Tract residential development in western West Vincent Township. The allocation is set by inter-municipal agreement with PADEP, and there is no current mechanism to expand service to West Vincent Township.

### Valley Forge Sewer Authority

The Valley Forge Sewer Authority (VFSA) provides sewer service to Charlestown, East Pikeland, and Schuylkill townships and each of these municipalities no available further allocation beyond current commitments. However, two of the eight VFSA member municipalities outside of the PRPC Region have as much as two million gallons of excess capacity that could conceivably be reallocated by inter-municipal agreement. Without any such agreement, expansion of the VFSA service area in the Region would require increased plant capacity.

## 8.3 SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

In Phoenixville, solid waste disposal is managed by the Borough Sanitation Department, which provides receptacles for trash and recyclables and a regular weekly pickup schedule. The Borough also offers bulk and yard waste pickup and operates a composting site.

One of the challenges of waste management in the Borough is the presence of waste and recycling receptacles on the streetscape. The Phoenixville Area Business Association has expressed a concern with Phoenixville Borough trash totes that continuously line the fronts of many businesses due to lack of rear alley access with many properties. They have suggested shared dumpsters (screened from view) that would serve localized sections of the business blocks that do not have the ability to store totes in the rear of their properties.

In the PRPC Townships, solid waste and recycling is by private haulers contracted by property owners. In accordance with PA Code §272.411, all municipalities with population of 5,000 or greater must provide for separate recycling collection. Thus, Charlestown, East Pikeland, and Schuylkill Township all have mandatory recycling collection. West Vincent Township requires registered waste haulers to offer recycling collection as an option to property owners. East Pikeland also operates a yard waste composting facility, and Schuylkill Township participates in the one operated by Phoenixville.

Hazardous waste and electronics are collected on scheduled drop-off days operated by the Chester County Solid Waste Authority (CSWA). Electronics can also be dropped off for recycling free of charge Mondays through Saturdays at the CSWA landfill in Narvon, PA. Finally, there are private recycling facilities in the area that will accept various items for a fee.

#### 8.4 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

All of the PRPC municipalities maintain Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4), wherein stormwater is managed to maintain water quality and promote infiltration, in addition to volume rate control. Except for West Vincent, which has a waiver from PADEP, each PRPC municipality maintains an MS4 program, which includes the following components:

- Public Education and Outreach – Municipalities inform residents and businesses of the benefits of effective stormwater management, how to maintain stormwater systems, and applicable regulations
- Public Involvement and Participation – Community activities to improve management of stormwater, reduce pollution of surface water, and repair impaired stormwater management systems (e.g. buffer planting programs, cleanups)
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination – Monitoring, reporting, and enforcement
- Construction Site Runoff Control – Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plans and Permits
- Post Construction Stormwater Management – All Chester County municipalities have adopted the PA Act 167 model stormwater ordinance, which includes infiltration and water quality standards in addition to stormwater runoff volume control
- Pollution Prevention, Municipal Housekeeping, and Maintenance – Activities to assure municipally owned systems function in accordance with MS4 standards

Water quality and groundwater recharge are enhanced through a number of stormwater management strategies and practices, many of which are incorporated in the *Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual (2006)*. This manual includes specific implementation strategies and methodologies, called Best Management Practices (BMPs), to quantify runoff, infiltration, and water quality benefits, to be incorporated in municipal stormwater ordinances. Different surface and subsurface strategies are best applied given specific environmental and development preconditions, and in general include:

- Minimal disturbance of wooded/forested areas
- Minimal impervious cover
- Use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, etc.

- Natural meadow cover in place of lawns
- Decentralized infiltration measures rather than concentrated basins and conveyances
- Green areas for infiltration and temporary containment dispersed throughout developed areas
- Natural plant communities in basins and as stream buffers

When stormwater management facilities are integrated with other design aspects in planning and land development, they can become positive attributes with multiple functions, including recreation, parking, accessibility, habitat enhancement, food/crop production, and aesthetics. They can also add to community resiliency through superior function in terms of flood control, groundwater infiltration, and water quality.

Municipalities can implement the following strategies to promote effective stormwater management:

- Zoning Ordinance Provisions with BMPs
- Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Provisions
- Standalone Stormwater Management Ordinance
- Official Map to Designate Existing and Planned Stormwater Facilities
- Municipal or Multi-municipal Environmental Advisory Council
- Monitoring Programs
- Stormwater Facilities Mapped and Monitored on GIS Database
- Easements
- Restoration and Remediation Projects
- Collaboration with Environmental and Watershed Protection Organizations
- Community Educational Events, Printed and Web Informational Resources, and Landowner Outreach

#### 8.4 EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency services within the PRPC Region include [hospitals, urgent care centers, police, fire, and ambulance and dive and rescue](#). Four of the five municipalities have police departments in-house, and ambulance service in the region is provided by four different ambulance companies.

All municipalities are served by fire companies primarily composed of volunteer firefighters, and some of the fire companies have a limited number of career firefighters. For fire service, the PRPC Region is served by five different fire companies. These include Phoenixville Fire Company, Kimberton Fire Company, West End Fire Company, and Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Company. [Each of the fire companies within the Region depend on volunteers for the provision of emergency services and additional volunteers are always needed.](#)

A detailed breakdown of emergency services by PRPC municipality is provided as follows.

##### Phoenixville Borough

[Phoenixville Hospital is the one hospital located within the Phoenixville Region. The Phoenixville Hospital is located within the Borough of Phoenixville on Nutt Road between Main and Gay Streets and](#)

[offers a wide range of health care services including, but not limited to, a 24-hour emergency room, cancer care, surgical services, maternity- with a newborn intensive care unit, and a range of rehabilitation services.](#)

The Phoenixville Police Department has 28 full-time officers and 1.75 civilian employees serving the Borough and a fleet of 13 cars as reported in the 2016 annual report. The Phoenixville Police Department also includes bicycle patrol in the downtown area and a detective unit.

As reported on the Phoenixville Fire Department website, the Department is a multi-service department that provides fire and rescue services to Phoenixville Borough and surrounding communities. The Department is staffed by a combination of career and volunteer firefighters operating out of the Phoenix Hose, Hook & Ladder Co., No 1 on Church Street. Apparatus includes three pumper engines, a ladder truck, Ford F350 equipped with traffic control devices, EMS equipment and rescue equipment. Additionally, the Phoenixville Fire Department has an ambulance vehicle that is subcontracted and staffed by the employees of the Trappe Fire Company, which serves as the primary EMS response unit for the Borough of Phoenixville.

[In addition to the Phoenixville Fire Department, the Friendship Diving Rescue Unit is an all-volunteer Unit located on W. High Street in Phoenixville that provides specialized search, rescue and recovery services to police and fire departments in the Phoenixville Region and beyond. Services include underwater body recover of drowning victims, water rescue, ice rescue and underwater searches for evidence and items.](#)

#### Schuylkill Township

The Schuylkill Township Police Department consists of 10 full time patrol officers and two part-time patrol officers that provide 24 hour service for the community. The Police Department is based out of the lower portion of the Township building at 111 Valley Park Road.

For fire service, Schuylkill Township is served by Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Company, which has its primary station in the Village of Valley Forge and a substation located on Pothouse Road. The Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Company is an all-volunteer fire company serving all of Schuylkill Township, with approximately 60 volunteers. Major apparatus includes three engines with pumping capabilities, a rescue truck with extraction capabilities, a tanker truck, four smaller utility vehicles with varying EMS and traffic control capabilities and an ATV with brush firefighting capabilities.

The West End Fire Company primarily serves as an EMS/ambulance provider for Schuylkill Township and as a back-up EMS provider for Phoenixville Borough.

#### East Pikeland Township

The East Pikeland Township Police Department consists of 10 police officers and two administrative staff. The department has officers assigned to the Chester County Drug Task Force, Accident Investigation Team, and the Regional SWAT Team.

Fire service for East Pikeland Township is [primarily](#) provided by Kimberton Fire Company [with back-up service provided by the Liberty Fire Company located in Spring City, PA.](#) The Kimberton Fire Company

apparatus includes an engine, a rescue truck, tanker and tower truck which includes a 105-foot tower ladder, all of which have pumping capabilities. The Company also has multiple utility and command vehicles, a mass casualty vehicle, an aftermath vehicle/pod (for keeping belongings not destroyed by a fire), a cargo trailer containing spill containment equipment, and two ATV vehicles for fires inaccessible by larger vehicles. Ambulance service is provided by the West End Fire Company.

[Within the Region there is one urgent care center located on Schuylkill Road in East Pikeland Township. Urgent care centers offer a medical treatment alternative for non-life-threatening situations that need immediate medical attention. Urgent care centers have gained in popularity in recent years as an alternative to an emergency room visit due to lower cost and shorter wait times than an emergency room visit.](#)

### Charlestown Township

Police service in Charlestown Township is provided by the Pennsylvania State Police, Troop J, Embreville Barracks. Charlestown is part of Zone 18 and State patrol cars are available to respond to Charlestown citizens 24 hours a day. If there is an extreme emergency, the State Police can contact a closer police department to respond until they arrive on the scene. Response time is typically less than 15-20 minutes.

Fire and ambulance coverage in Charlestown Township is divided into two service areas. The northern portion of the Township is covered for fire service by the Kimberton Fire Company and ambulance service is provided by West End Fire Company. The southern portion of the Township is covered by East Whiteland Fire Company for both fire and ambulance.

### West Vincent Township

West Vincent Township has its own police department with nine (9) police officers. Service is provided by the West Vincent Police Department from 6 AM to 2 AM, and coverage is provided by the Pennsylvania State Police from 2 AM to 6 AM.

In West Vincent Township fire service is provided by three fire companies. These include Kimberton Fire Company, Ludwigs Corner Fire Company (LCFC), and Ridge Fire Company. The LCFC is located at 1325 Pottstown Pike in West Vincent Township and apparatus includes two engines, a rescue truck, a tanker, a brush vehicle and a traffic vehicle. Ambulance service is provided by Uwchlan Ambulance.

## 8.5 SCHOOLS

The Phoenixville Region is served by three [public](#) school districts [and a wide range of private educational facilities](#). The Phoenixville Area School District (PASD) serves Phoenixville Borough, Schuylkill Township, and East Pikeland Township. The Owen J. Roberts School District serves West Vincent Township, and the Great Valley School District serves Charlestown Township. [In addition to the three public school districts, the Region is home to a variety of other additional educational facilities including Renaissance Academy Charter School, Holy Family School, Technical College High School, University of Valley Forge, and two private kindergarten facilities. Just outside the Region are two additional educational facilities, the Montgomery School and the Waldorf School, both of which provide educational opportunities for residents of the Phoenixville Region.](#)

School facilities within the Region have the opportunity to serve as community facilities during non-school hours. This could include use of meeting space for community meetings and keeping outdoor facilities available for community use during non-school hours. Coordination should be encouraged between municipalities and school districts to maximize opportunities to utilize facilities when appropriate.

The schools within the Region continue to follow a traditional school schedule with a long summer break and also follow traditional bussing programs where students are picked up at combined bus stops in communities where safety allows, otherwise students are picked up from individual properties. Opportunities for alternative school schedules such as year-round school should be considered, if deemed to improve the educational system. Additionally, opportunities to encourage walking to schools and further combining of bus stops should be considered by improving pedestrian networks that would allow students to safely walk further to catch buses.

School districts and municipalities should continue to find opportunities to work together assessing neighborhood pedestrian circulation surrounding school campuses for opportunities to encourage student walking to school rather than bussing students for short distances. Opportunities for developing walking school bus programs should also be considered by each of the school districts. A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be an informal arrangement between families taking turns walking their children to school, or it can be a structured program with a set route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers. The walking school bus model could also be used for encouraging group bicycle commuting when facilities allow.

Each of the three public school districts and other educational facilities within the Region are discussed as follows.

#### Phoenixville Area School District

PASD includes the newly constructed Phoenixville Early Learning Center and Manavon Elementary School along with two additional existing elementary schools including Barkley and Schuylkill, one middle school and one high school. The school district student enrollment is approximately 3,906 students and is estimated to be growing at an average rate of 2 percent per year. With the newly constructed schools it is estimated that there is adequate capacity in the existing buildings to accommodate student population into the foreseeable future.

#### Owen J. Roberts

The Owen J. Roberts (OJR) School District, serving West Vincent Township, is composed of five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The student population of the entire school district is estimated at approximately 5,317 students as reported in the 2016-2017 Annual Report. In addition to serving West Vincent Township, the OJR school district serves six additional municipalities outside the Phoenixville Region. The West Vincent Elementary School is the only school of the OJR School District located in West Vincent Township, with an enrollment of 575 students in grades K-6.

In 2017 the OJR School District redistricted students from West Vincent Elementary to the French Creek Elementary School to accommodate the anticipated growth in the West Vincent attendance area. West

Vincent Elementary hosts two Autistic Support classrooms for elementary children in the district. The school district anticipates the completion of the new East Coventry Elementary School building in the summer of 2018.

### Great Valley School District

The third school district serving the Phoenixville Region is the Great Valley School District, which includes Charlestown Township. According to data available on the Great Valley School District website 2016/2017 school year enrollment was 3,987 students with 296 students at Charlestown Elementary School, which is the only school located in Charlestown Township. According to historical and projected enrollment data available on the Great Valley website based on 2016 3<sup>rd</sup> day enrollment counts, enrollment projections show enrollment dropping slightly until the 2019/2020 school year and then slightly increasing back to 2016/2017 levels by the 2021/2022 school year.

The Charlestown Elementary School capacity is 378 students. With current enrollment at 296 students the school is at 78.31 percent of its capacity, which is lower than three of the other elementary schools. Redistricting may occur to balance out the number of students in each of the elementary schools.

### Other Educational Facilities & Alternatives

In addition to the public schools, the Phoenixville Region is home to a top-rated charter school, Renaissance Academy which provides education for kindergarten through 12th grade. The school has a new campus in the Borough of Phoenixville and serves approximately 1,000 students from the Region and beyond. Within the Borough is also Holy Family School which is a Catholic school providing primary education for pre-school through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Located in Schuylkill Township is the Technical College High School, which is operated by the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) on behalf of the 12 school districts of Chester County, Pennsylvania. This high school offers a range of technical area for students to focus on to help prepare them for careers in these various fields. Also located in Schuylkill Township is campus of the University of Valley Forge, which is a private Christian college with approximately 1,146 students.

For kindergarten there are also additional options within the Region including Charlestown Play School and the Valley Forge Kinder House Montessori School.

A growing education alternative is homeschooling, which is the education of children at home by a parent or tutor. Families that choose homeschooling may still take advantage of some resources available through the local school district such as sports and/or specialty classes.

## 8.6 LIBRARIES

PRPC has two libraries operated by the Chester County Library System. These include the Henrietta Hankin Branch Library near Ludwigs Corner in West Vincent Township, and the Phoenixville Public Library at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Main Street. In addition, the Chester Springs Library is nearby in the village of

Historic Yellow Springs. Libraries are invaluable resources that provide public access to information, facilities, and programs free of charge. They receive funding from County and local government sources, as well as grants and voluntary contributions.

The Phoenixville Public Library includes approximately 69,000 items, including books, videos, CDs, periodicals, special collections, etc. It also has computer resources, meeting rooms, tutoring facilities, and offers passport, tax, and document services. The Phoenixville Public Library also has seasonal and year-round programs for children, teens, and adults.

The Hankin Branch Library opened in 2003 and includes 93,600 items. The library also serves as a community center providing work space, meeting rooms, homework and research help, and a wide variety of educational and cultural programs. The collection includes books, DVDs, audiobooks, magazines, eBooks, and eAudiobooks for early literacy, education, and the enrichment of residents. The Hankin library also provides programs for children, teens, and adults and includes computer facilities and a business center offering resources and workshops on small business, jobs and careers, and personal finance.

[Some businesses and institutions operate informal mini libraries that operate as honor system book exchanges.](#)

## 8.7 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

There are several social service organizations in the PRPC Region that provide a range of assistance and resources to residents of the Region. Those organizations whose primary function is to provide social services are typically based in Phoenixville, likely due to the higher density of jobs and residences, and lower median income of Phoenixville residents. In addition to the primary organizations discussed in the following section, there are also many churches and other organizations that contribute to the social service community helping those in need. Many social service organizations that provide housing assistance and other services were discussed in the Housing Chapter. The following organizations have a primary function of providing social services to those in need in the PRPC Region.

Municipalities within the Region can use their websites as a resource for people in need by including links and contact information for social services organizations available in the Region.

### Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

The Phoenixville Community Health Foundation (Foundation) in Phoenixville was created in 2005 to help establish a health care safety net for low income people who are uninsured or under-insured. It helps eligible residents of the greater Phoenixville Area with access to a variety of health care needs including dental, vision, mammograms, emergency orthopedic, prescription assistance, and mammogram assistance. The Foundation also publishes a “Hep Book” every three years, in both Spanish and English, to help increase access to services for adults and children in the greater Phoenixville region.

The Foundation has a program where clients are referred to local dentists and eye doctors for needed care. These dental and vision providers provide a discounted fee for their services and the Foundation reimburses the providers. The Foundation also assists clients in obtaining prescription medications from drug companies through the “Patient Assistance Programs.”

In 2006 the Foundation began a program called The Ride for Health Initiative which has helped people with transportation barriers to medical and social service appointments. Transportation Partners include the Pottstown Cab Company and the Transportation Management Association of Chester County.

The Foundation also provides assistance to military veterans and military families in an effort to advance the health and quality of life of military personnel and their families. The primary emphasis of this program is to assist veterans and military families with finding and gaining easy access to resources available through a website created dedicated to such services. The website can be found at [www.militaryfamilyinfo.org](http://www.militaryfamilyinfo.org).

#### Phoenixville Community Education Foundation

The Phoenixville Community Education Foundation (PCEF) is an organization in Phoenixville that secures and provides resources that enhance the overall educational experience within the Phoenixville Area School District, including learning initiatives, preparedness programs and out of the classroom activities. The PCEF provides funding for programs and projects not funded by the school district budget, such as after-school clubs and organizations, area pre-schools and community organizations providing educational enrichment programs.

#### Phoenixville Area Community Services

The Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS) organization located in Phoenixville that was created in 1972 to offer support, aid and hope for residents in the Phoenixville community who need information and direction as well as emergency aid. PACS helps connect people in need with appropriate resources, helps people achieve economic self-sufficiency, provides emergency support for basic needs including food, housing and utilities. Through an information and referral program, PACS is able to provide more comprehensive services to clients by providing support and follow-up for those clients seeking help by providing guidance on courses of action, intervening in crisis situations and acting as advocates to help assure clients get the help needed.

#### Orion Communities

Orion Communities is a social service organization located in Phoenixville that provides assistance in an effort to fill in the gaps of services provided by other agencies by providing the following services.

- Interim Case Management- assistance to people by identifying resources and developing a plan of action to move forward,
- Technology Resource Center- computer availability to allow people to prepare resumes, conduct housing and job searches, complete on-line job applications,
- Community Emergency Fund- make funds available for those in need of assistance with utilities, rent or food,
- Community Outreach- strives to make connections in the community, raise awareness, identify needs for services and collaboratively address systematic service gaps in the community.

#### [Alianzas de Phoenixville](#)

Alianzas de Phoenixville was founded by Anita Guzman in 2010, to address the needs of Phoenixville's Latino population and its potential to become an even greater contributor to the community's cultural and economic development. Alianzas was established to promote collaboration among Phoenixville community leaders and volunteers to equip and enhance the Latino/Hispanic Community with improved access to local resources, and build intercultural exchanges between the Latino/Hispanic population and the broader community.

#### Phoenixville YMCA

The Phoenixville YMCA is a nonprofit organization focused on strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The Phoenixville YMCA is located in Schuylkill Township and offers a wide range of programs for children and teens including swim lessons, sports, fitness, karate and day camps, as well as programs for adults and seniors, including personal training, a variety of group exercise classes, water aerobics and babysitting services. The YMCA offers discounted membership and fees for those who qualify.

#### Phoenixville Area Senior Center

The Phoenixville Area Senior Center is a multi-purpose center serving residents 60 years and older of the PRPC municipalities, plus East Vincent, Spring City, and West Pikeland. The Senior Center provides breakfast and lunch, exercise classes, art classes, computer classes, a Tech support group, tax preparation, trips, health screening, and social and recreational activities. It is located at 153 Church Street in Phoenixville.

### 8.8 PIPELINES

The PRPC Region is crossed by eight different pipelines that transport natural gas and petroleum products. These are inventoried on Chester County's Pipeline Information Center (PIC), and are mapped by their alignments and a 100 foot "consultation zone" extending to each side of the center line. To prevent adverse impacts, development activities within the consultation zone should be discussed with the pipeline operator prior to initiation. In addition, municipalities can undertake measures to promote public safety in the vicinity of pipelines.

#### Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) Pipeline Safety Policy

In 2014, CCPC produced recommended draft language pertaining to municipal rights and responsibilities as pertains to pipelines. In accordance with this recommendation, the PRPC recognizes the existence of a number of pipelines running through portions of the Region and acknowledges the potential for additional pipelines running concurrently with existing pipelines or in other areas. Such transmission pipelines are intended to meet the energy demands of the Atlantic seaboard but also pose tremendous risk for those communities potentially affected should a pipeline failure occur. Where emergencies such as failures do occur, varied threats to public health, safety and welfare can be significant, from direct impacts such as resident injury or death, severe property damage, debris management, contaminated soils and groundwater pollution to indirect impacts associated with cleanup (expanded access points, groundwater recovery and remediation facilities, expanded soil disturbance, etc.). As such, the municipalities of the Region should monitor existing and future pipeline activity and enact, where feasible, regulations complimentary to the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act, as amended, Pennsylvania case

law, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission designed to protect the public health, safety and welfare and regulate land uses in conformance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, as amended.

Among the needs to address are those surface land uses affiliated with transmission pipelines, appropriate access provisions for pipeline rights-of-way, and buffering and setback standards appropriate to reduce adverse impacts to residents of new development should a pipeline failure occur. In addition to buffers and setbacks, PRPC member municipalities should communicate with pipeline operators, particularly as related to new development proposals within proximity of transmission pipelines, and investigate measures to protect new land uses with high on-site populations. Regulations should also comply with other applicable policies of this plan, Chester County's Landscapes<sup>3</sup>, and applicable statewide planning goals designed to meet the needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. PRPC municipalities should also coordinate their activities with those of the County and State when and if new pipelines are proposed and applications proceed through the permit review and construction phases.

#### Municipal Pipeline Ordinances

In recognition of municipal authority as regards aspects of environmental protection, the [Pennsylvania Pipeline Safety Coalition \(PSC\)](#) has ~~advocated~~ developed a model municipal pipeline ordinance to complement applicable statewide regulations. Municipal authority over these matters was confirmed when in 2014, the PA Commonwealth Court ruled that any challenge to municipal pipeline ordinances must go before the municipal zoning board and not the PA Public Utility Commission. The PSC model ordinance includes a four prong municipal regulatory approach that addresses the following:

1. Surface land uses affiliated with pipelines (uses not otherwise permitted in most ordinances),
2. Street opening standards (regulation of street openings, installations and driveways),
3. Standards for new development in proximity to pipelines, and
4. Revisions to municipal comprehensive plans (providing the rational nexus between the comprehensive plan and code of ordinances).

Ordinances pertaining to surface land uses (e.g. pump stations) can contain requirements for use restrictions in certain zoning districts, setbacks, aesthetics, sound abatement, odors, lighting, parking, and landscaping. Setbacks should be based on safety standards consistent with a Potential Impact Radius (PIR) that is dependent on pipeline size and pressure.

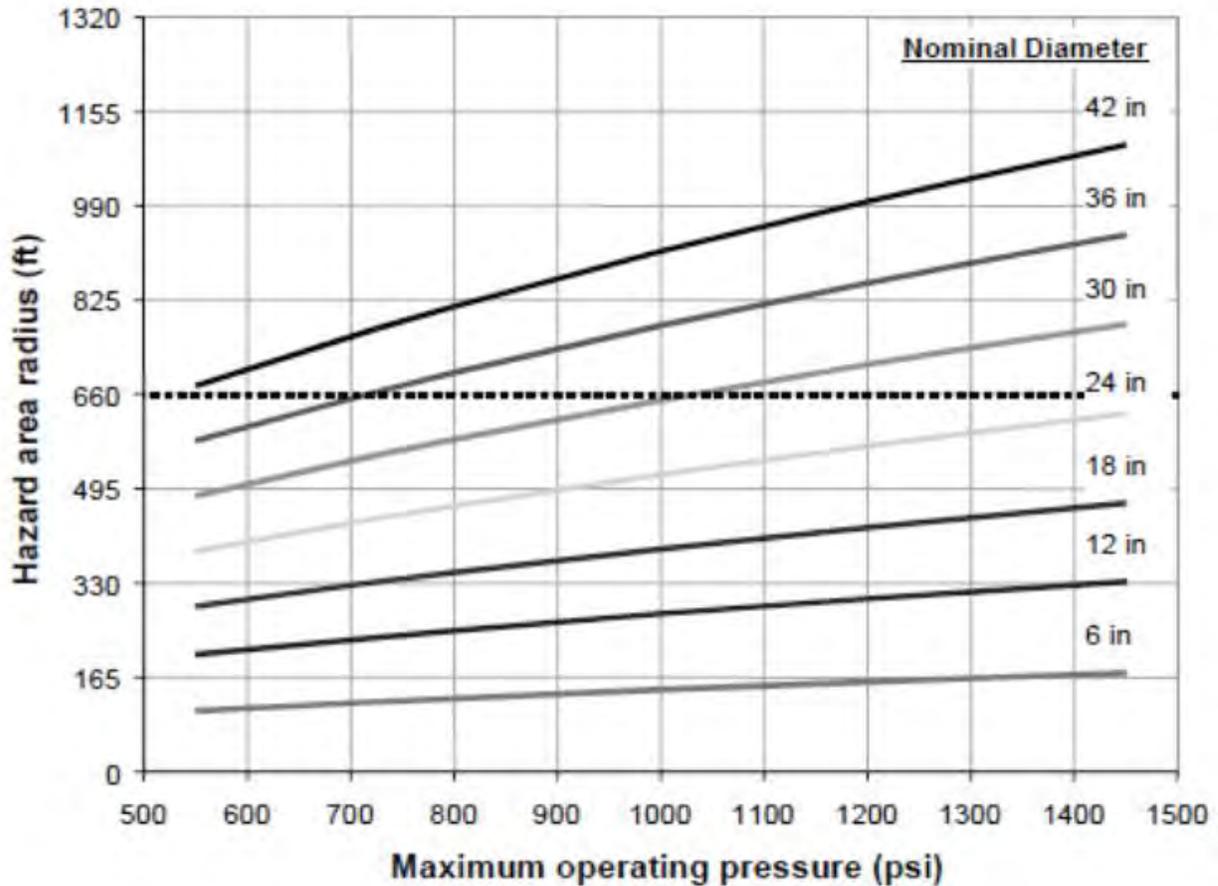


Figure 8.8-1 – Potential Impact Radius (Source: “A Model for Sizing High Consequence Areas Associated With Natural Gas Pipelines”, Gas Research Institute and C-FER Technologies, 2000.)

New development standards can also utilize PIR standards to assure that new subdivisions and land developments maintain safe distances from pipelines and pipeline facilities. These standards can also include landscaping and aesthetic requirements. In addition, emergency mitigation measures such as evacuation procedures for high occupancy uses may be required.

Street opening requirements can include procedures to assure continuous operation of thoroughfares, as well as restrictions against trenching as opposed to tunneling/horizontal boring beneath roadways. In addition, the ordinance can prescribe backfill, repaving, and detour procedures related to pipeline road cuts.

## 8.9 ELECTRIC AND COMMUNICATIONS UTILITIES

Advances in communications technology have dramatically altered the way people live and work, and with these advances an entirely new infrastructure has developed. Analog broadcast and cable networks have been replaced by digital fiber optics and wireless internet (Wi-Fi), and land line telephones have been largely replaced by cellular phones. The physical systems that support these technologies have accessibility, safety, and aesthetic implications that the Regions must take into account in policy and regulation.

High speed internet has become indispensable for business, education, domestic, and entertainment purposes. As the number of users and the volume/complexity of web content have increased, service providers have created higher capacity lines and improved wireless systems to keep up. It is reasonable to expect that there will be universal high speed internet service throughout the region in the not distant future. These technologies have physical manifestations including cables, antennae, and electronics that must be dispersed throughout the community.

#### Overhead Utilities

With increasingly extreme weather, it makes more sense to route electric and communications utilities underground and out of harm's way. Although new developments are required to place utilities underground, there is as yet no system to modernize existing above-ground systems. Thus, power and communications interruptions occur in the Region with a disturbing frequency, and vast sums of capital are expended clearing trees and patching the antiquated system until the inevitable next emergency. It is recommended that the Region work with utilities, state level regulators, and elected officials to devise the means to modernize and retrofit the electric and communications grid for greater resiliency.

#### Distributed Antenna Systems

With cellular communications, there has also been development and change in the physical infrastructure. In the region, the network of large cellular communications towers has been built out, but there are still pockets of poor or no service that providers will likely seek to fill. This and the increasing volume carried by wireless data networks has led to the emergence of so-called "mini cell towers", which are smaller, more targeted, and more numerous than the traditional cell tower, to form a Distributed Antenna System (DAS). Most often these are placed along public rights-of-way, and without local regulation, these can occur in undesirable locations, such as residential front yards.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 states that local governments cannot "prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting wireless facilities," but also preserves local zoning authority over the "placement, construction, and modification of wireless facilities." Thus, PRPC municipalities have the ability to assure that installation of an effective wireless data/communications network does not have undue aesthetic or safety impact on the community. In order to do this, PRPC members should review current cellular communications ordinances and make changes as appropriate to:

- Apply to new wireless technologies, such as DAS networks
- Incorporate judicial and regulatory changes in federal and state law
- Include separate requirements for "tower-based" and "non-tower based" facilities
- Include separate requirements for wireless facilities inside and outside the ROWs
- Address co-location and other "second generation" facilities
- Protect residential neighborhoods
- Preserve the visual character of the community
- Establish or update zoning process for approval or denial of facility applications

#### 8.10 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following policy recommendations will implement the goals and objectives of the Community Facilities Plan:

**CF-1 Coordinate municipal sewer and water service areas with the land use plan and economic development areas, and to address environmental resource protection needs.**

Assure that sewer/water utilities do not extend into rural/conservation areas, and extend public water service to any area that is served by public sewers.

**CF-2 Establish municipal policies for regular inspection and maintenance on private on-lot septic systems and wells.**

**CF-3 Advance municipal recycling and composting programs to serve the entire Region.**

Consider forming a Regional yard waste composting program.

[Consider developing a food waste recycling program within the Region.](#)

**CF-4 Improve Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) with ordinances, monitoring, restoration/remediation, and community outreach/education.**

Enact stormwater management regulations and programs at the municipal level to maximize protection of surface and groundwater resources.

**CF-5 Utilize PRPC and member municipal resources to promote emergency services available in the Region, and encourage partnerships to achieve the maximum benefit of resources.**

Encourage residents of the Region to consider volunteering with the local fire companies.

Promote community outreach programs and activities on the part of emergency service providers.

**CF-6 Enhance the role of public and private schools and institutions as a community assets.**

Invite school district representatives to participate in the PRPC and municipal meetings and provide updates on special projects that could affect student population.

[Foster interactions between public schools, private schools, and institutions such as the YMCA to share resources and programs for mutual benefit.](#)

Encourage educational projects that address community needs.

Promote use of school facilities for community functions and encourage community use of exterior school facilities during non-school hours.

[Foster relationships between school districts and municipalities to conduct assessments of neighborhoods surrounding school campuses for pedestrian connections to encourage walking and encourage the development of walking bus and other unique programs to reduce the need for bussing and increase healthy alternatives.](#)

**CF-7 Enhance public knowledge and support of libraries as a vital community resource.**

Utilize PRPC and member municipal resources to promote library services and facilities for use by the public.

Encourage enhanced municipal and public financial support of community libraries.

**CF-8 Promote public accessibility to health care and healthy lifestyles in the Region.**

Update municipal websites links and contact information for social services organizations available in the Region.

Provide information on social services to those in need of assistance, and advertise volunteer opportunities to those able to help.

Coordinate municipal efforts with health care providers such as Phoenixville Hospital, medical offices, and urgent care centers to promote awareness and healthy living.

**CF-9 Adopt municipal pipeline ordinances consistent with the model ordinance by the Pipeline Safety Coalition.**

Municipal regulations should cover use restrictions, setbacks, aesthetics, road and public way crossings, sound abatement, odors, lighting, parking, and landscaping.

**CF-10 Promote universal high speed internet access throughout the Region with municipal standards for Distributed Antenna Systems.**

Promote public safety and consistency with community aesthetics with locational criteria and design standards for the new generation of wireless communications facilities.

**CF-11 Work with utilities, state level regulators, and elected officials to devise the means to modernize and retrofit the electric and communications grid for greater resiliency.**

Include standards and policies to replace existing overhead utilities with more durable in-ground services.

## **CHAPTER NINE – PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

Interconnected and accessible parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities support environmental protection, agricultural preservation, public health, and the high quality of life enjoyed by residents of the Region. This element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan strives to meet the recreational needs of a diverse community while advancing its environmental protection and community development objectives.

### 9.1 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Preserve and enhance park and recreational facilities in the Region to serve the diverse population, protect environmental resources, and encourage an interconnected network of park and recreational facilities. This goal is to be advanced through the pursuit of the following specific objectives:

1. Promote a comprehensive, highly functional, and integrated network of Regional Open Spaces.
2. Coordinate regional recreation facilities and programs.
3. Develop the regional and local trail network, with a diversity of trail types utilizing a variety of surface materials.
4. Assure that the Regional recreation system accommodates a broad diversity of interests, ages, and abilities.

### 9.2 PARK AND OPEN SPACE ASSETS

Regional park and open space assets include public parks, publicly owned open space, private preserves, and deed restricted private lands. Public parks in the Region are generally municipally owned, but also include part of Valley Forge National Historic Park, and the County owned Black Rock Sanctuary. Private preserves are owned by conservation organizations including Natural Lands and the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Deed restricted private lands include open space owned by community or homeowners associations (HOAs), and private property subject to conservation or agricultural easement. Regional park and open space lands are described below:

#### Charlestown

Charlestown Township has two municipal parks, a large swath of public open space along the Pickering Creek, and numerous smaller open space and historic parcels scattered throughout the Township. In addition, Charlestown has worked closely with landowners in the last 20 years to secure conservation easements on private agricultural lands and natural areas. Private open space also includes community association owned lands in residential developments. The Township has a Park and Recreation Board that advises on and manages public open space. Prominent park and open space assets in Charlestown include the following:

- Charlestown Park is a 44.5 acre community park with (7) sports fields, a basketball court, a volleyball court, horseshoe pitches, a stones course, natural areas, picnic and playground facilities, a paved 1.2 mile walking trail, parking, and two buildings utilized by youth sports organizations.

- The Pickering Preserve is a 100 acre band of open space extending along the Pickering Creek from Charlestown Road and including lands on the east side of State Road (PA Route 29). The site includes trails with informal trailhead parking and a historic dam ruin formerly used for recreation and ice harvesting.
- Brightside Farm Park is a 75.6 acre former dairy farm that includes community vegetable gardens, a historic farm complex, a parking lot, meadows, and a 1 mile paved walking trail. The Horse-Shoe Trail crosses through part of the site, and hay is harvested from some of the fields. There is also an approximately 3.5 acre cow pasture near the barn complex.

Charlestown Township actively engages owners of large tracts of land to enter into conservation easements, and has had remarkable success in this regard.

### East Pikeland

East Pikeland Township has one municipal park, a public open space along the French Creek, public open space along the Pickering Creek in the southwestern end of the Township, and another significant public open space area extending north from Kimberton Village. Privately held open space is scattered across the Township, and is about evenly divided between eased community association lands and other conservation or agricultural easements. The Township has an Open Space Committee and a Park and Recreation Board to advise on and manage parks and open spaces. Prominent park and open space assets in East Pikeland are summarized as follows:

- Kimberton Park is a 16.4 acre municipal park with (5) baseball fields (three on grounds of Kimberton Fire Co.), (3) tennis courts, a street hockey rink, basketball court, picnic and playground facilities, a paved half mile walking trail, parking, and an amphitheater.
- A 100+ acre band of Township open space extends along the French Creek from Township Line Road west to Hares Hill Road. The site includes the 2.1 mile long French Creek Trail, the Municipal Complex, and the historic Revolutionary Continental Powder Works site.

### Phoenixville

Within the Borough of Phoenixville a variety of park and open space facilities are available, with the majority of these properties owned and maintained by the Borough. In 2015 the Borough prepared a Comprehensive Park Plan outlining existing amenities and recommended improvements to municipally owned parks, which is summarized in the following table. The Kiwanis Children's Plaza is located downtown along the 200 block of Bridge Street within the Bank Street right-of-way. This space represents a partnership between the Borough and the Kiwanis, who provided funding for the improvements while the Borough maintains the space. The Kiwanis sponsor children's programs during the summer in this space.

The Borough also maintains a small recreational program where a variety of classes and family programs are offered to residents of the Borough and the Region. Classes are typically offered at the Civic Center located near downtown Phoenixville.

| <b>Borough of Phoenixville</b>  |                             |                |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| <b>Park Amenities &amp; Recommended Improvements</b>  |                             |                |  |  |
| <b>Park</b>   | <b>Location</b>             | <b>Acreege</b> | <b>Existing Amenities</b>  | <b>Recommended Improvements</b>  |
| Manavon Park Fisher Courts<br>(Amanda Nicole DiGirolomo Memorial Playground installed 2017) | <b>50 Tyson Street</b>      | 1.53 ac        | 4 tennis courts, Basketball court, Handball court, Playground, Pavilion, 6 benches         | Signage, Restroom, Bike rack   |
| Reeves Park   | <b>401 Main Street</b>      | 6.6 ac         | Playground, Small Ball Field, Band Pavilion, 2 Gazebos, Historic Monuments, 15 benches     | Signage, Lighting, Repairs, ADA playground, Bike rack Art sculpture, Picnic tables   |
| Morris Street Park  | <b>310 Morris Street</b>    | 1.39 ac        | Basketball Court w/bleacher, Pavilion, Swings, Tot lot/climber, Softball field, 3 benches  | Signage, Repairs, Trees, Bike Rack   |
| Lane Avenue Park  | <b>1220 Lane Avenue</b>     | 2.9 ac         | Swing set, Climber, 2 benches  | Signage, Tot lot, Pavilion   |
| Virginia Avenue Park  | <b>540 Virginia Avenue</b>  | 1.1 ac         | ½ court basketball court   | Signage, Picnic tables   |
| Cascaden Park   | <b>1101 Paradise Street</b> | 1.6 ac         | Swings and tot lot, 2 spring rockers, 8 benches Basketball Court- w/2 lights and bleachers | Signage, Softball field- small, Picnic benches, Upgrades                             |
| Carey Street Playground   | <b>250 Carey Street</b>     | .28 ac         | Small Playground, Swing set, 1 bench, 11 parking spaces                                    | Signage, Benches or picnic table   |
| Civic Center  | <b>123 Main Street</b>      | .35 ac         | Gymnasium, Boxing ring Tot lot   | Signage, Parking, Air conditioning, Cameras, Bathroom upgrades                       |
| Balder Park   | <b>126 Bridge Street</b>    | .1 ac          | Bench, Stage   | Fence removal, Tiered seating Bike rack, Art sculpture                               |
| Andre Thornton Park   | <b>55 N. Main Street</b>    | .72 ac         | Courtyard, Tot lot, Slides 6 benches   | Repairs, Bike rack, Pedestrian connection to C' Jons Park, Spray Park, Art Sculpture |
| C Jon Saunders Memorial Park  | <b>7 Richards Ln</b>        | .68 ac         | Basketball court with two bleachers and 4 benches Scoreboard                               | Signage, Repair, Parking, Pedestrian connection to Andre Thorpe                      |
| Joe Rowan Park  | <b>435 W. High Street</b>   | .68 ac         | Tennis Court, Street Hockey Area, Tot lot, 6 benches                                       | Signage, Repairs, Bike rack  |
| Taylor Street Park  | <b>650 Taylor Street</b>    | 1.2 ac         | Basketball Court with 2 light poles, 1 bench   | Tot lot, Fencing, Signage, Pavilion, Repairs   |
| Veterans Memorial Park  | <b>100-132 High St</b>      | 27.3           | 2 Softball Fields  | Signage, Lights, Parking lot New backstop  |
| Friendship Field  | <b>Fillmore St</b>          | 7.4 ac         | Softball Field bleachers Multi-purpose Field   | Signage, Field lights, Sidewalk to field   |
| Reservoir/Dog Park Reservoir Park   | 601 Frankin Ave             | 18.4 ac        | Playground, Swings, Pavilion, Picnic Area, Basketball court, Dog park                      | Signage, Mini disc golf course, Restrooms, Upgrades, Bike rack, Picnic benches       |

Since the development of the 2015 Comprehensive Park Plan municipal park improvements include the following:

- The Amanda Nicole DiGirolomo Memorial Playground was installed in 2017 at Manavon Park.
- Signage has been added to all the parks.
- New lights have been installed in Reeves Park.
- A tot lot has been added to Lane Avenue Park.
- Signage and cameras have been added to the Civic Center.
- A tot lot was added and fence repairs made to Taylor Street Park.

In addition to the parks and open space owned and maintained by the Borough, the following prominent park and open space assets exist within the Borough.

- Black Rock Sanctuary is a 119-acre site dedicated to wildlife habitat and public use. The site includes meadow and wetland areas, a boat launch on the Schuylkill River, a picnic area, and approximately 3.75 miles of trail including a 0.8 mile ADA accessible paved trail.
- A paved segment of the Schuylkill River Trail extends through the Borough along French Creek providing pedestrian linkages to the canal in Mont Clare and Spring City.
- A trail segment referred to as Phase I of the Mont Clare Bridge to Taylor Alley located along the north side of French Creek was recently constructed in association with the Riverworks apartment development. This trail is linked to the downtown via a pedestrian bridge over French Creek.
- Private open space maintained by seven (7) separate homeowner’s associations (HOA) totals approximately 94 acres and is summarized as follows:

| Borough of Phoenixville<br>Summary of Homeowner’s Association Open Space |             |
|--|-------------|
| French Creek Townhomes HOA   | 12.65 acres |
| Ledges HOA   | 22.1 acres  |
| Heritage Square HOA  | 0.46 acres  |
| Riverwalk HOA  | 19.7 acres  |
| Riverside HOA  | 3.47 acres  |
| Northridge HOA   | 6 acres     |
| Westridge HOA  | 29.4 acres  |

Schuylkill

Schuylkill Township has three municipal open space properties that are available for passive recreational opportunities. While the Township does not maintain active recreational facilities, Township residents have access to other recreational facilities within the Township such as the Phoenixville YMCA, Valley Forge National Historic Park, and two public school campuses. Additionally, municipal parks within the Borough of Phoenixville are in relatively close proximity to many Schuylkill Township residents. The three open-space/park parcels owned by Schuylkill Township include:

- Valley Park, which is a 15.75 acre parcel located along Valley Park Road,
- Schuylkill Township Park which is 2.4 acres of passive open space surrounding the municipal building, and
- Pickering Preserve located along Route 29 adjacent to the Phoenixville YMCA property, which contains 25 acres preserved as a natural area.

Within the Township is 206 acres of Valley Forge Natural Historic Park. This National and Regional asset provides a variety of recreational opportunities as discussed later in this chapter.

Privately held open space maintained by homeowner’s associations can be found in six developments located throughout the Township. The combined total acreage of open space associated with homeowner’s associations is 175 acres with the distribution shown in the in the following table.

| Schuylkill Township Homeowner’s Association Open Space |             |
|--|-------------|
| Pickering Glen HOA                                     | 16 acres    |
| Valley Park HOA  | 8.21 acres  |
| Dogwood HOA  | 19 acres    |
| Valley Forge Meadows HOA                               | 51.40 acres |
| Fernleigh HOA  | 54.60 acres |
| Potters Pond HOA                                       | 25.90 acres |

A third category of open space in Schuylkill Township is open space easements that are monitored by a land trust. In 2006 the Township residents passed an earned income tax increase of .25 percent to acquire open space easements. These funds have been used to purchase easements on multiple properties within the township. The Schuylkill Township Open Space Commission works to identify properties suitable for preservation and whose owners are willing to sell development rights. Approximately 113 acres have been preserved through open space easements, including the Phoenixville Country Club property.

Finally, within Schuylkill Township several educational campuses exist that provide recreational opportunities during non-school hours.

- Phoenixville Early Learning Center/Manavon School - this recently developed campus has a variety of playground equipment, a trail and athletic fields.
- Schuylkill Elementary has playgrounds and open fields
- The Technical College High School Pickering Campus makes its fields available for use by the Phoenixville Area Soccer Club.

### West Vincent

West Vincent Township has one municipal park and another one proposed as part of the conservation plan for Bryn Coed Farms. There are also significant areas of public open space in the vicinity of Ludwigs Corner. Privately held open space is scattered across the Township, consisting mostly of properties with conservation or agricultural easements. The Township has an Open Space Advisory Committee to advise

on identification and protection of priority open spaces. In addition, the Township has a park and recreation Commission that advises on equipping, maintaining, and operating recreation facilities. Prominent park and open space assets in West Vincent are summarized as follows:

- Evans Park is a 12.9 acre facility that includes sports fields, a pavilion, playground, basketball, parking, and an approximately ½ mile paved walking path.
- Cooks Glen Park, a 54 acre wooded piece along French Creek, has hiking and horseback trails, and is used for fishing.
- School House Park is a 2 acre wooded site on Flowing Springs Road in Birchrunville.
- Wilsons Corner Park is a 4 acre wooded park along French Creek and adjacent to French Creek Road. It is a favored destination for fishing.
- The most substantial Township open space achievement is the recent preservation of the 1,500 acre Bryn Coed Farms in conjunction with Natural Lands (formerly Natural Lands Trust). The conservation plan includes (39) large deed restricted conservation lots, a 520 acre Natural Lands Preserve, and a 72 acre future Township Park, with a 10.5 mile trail system connecting the park and preserve areas with some of the lots and to trailheads on the perimeter roads.
- West Vincent lands along the French Creek accommodate a portion of the French Creek Trail.

#### Regional Park and Recreation Assets that serve the PRPC Municipalities

In addition to local resources, the PRPC Region has nearby access to a number of federal, state, and county public parks providing a broad diversity of outdoor recreational and educational activities.

- Valley Forge National Historic Park is a 3,500 acre historic site of the 1777-78 encampment of the Continental Army. It attracts over 1.2 million visitors annually to learn about history, enjoy the 5 mile paved fitness loop, and hike or bike the 26 miles of trails. The site also has riparian access, meadows, and woods for horseback riding, canoeing/kayaking, picnicking, nature study, sledding, and cross country skiing.
- Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site encompasses nearly 850 acres in northern Chester County and includes historic structures and a working iron furnace that illustrate the technology and lifestyle of late 18<sup>th</sup> century America. Most of the site is wooded and includes trails that connect to the Horse-Shoe Trail and that trail network at French Creek State Park.
- French Creek State Park is a 7,526 acre wooded natural park with camping, fishing, hunting, Frisbee golf, boating, picnicking, swimming, and over 35 miles of trails for hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, trail runners, and orienteering.
- Marsh Creek State Park is a 1,705 acre mostly wooded park that includes a 535 acre lake. The park includes a swimming pool, day use area for picnicking, etc., approximately 12 miles of trails, and boat docks. Popular activities include boating, fishing, hiking, hunting, ice sports, sailing, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

- Warwick County Park includes 535 mostly wooded acres and offers fishing, biking, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, birding, a playground, outdoor games, Horse-Shoe Trail access, and scenic views of the French Creek. The park has nearly 10 miles of trail for hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and equestrian use.
- Lock 60 at Schuylkill Canal Park in Mont Clare/Port Providence is owned by Montgomery County and operated by The Schuylkill Canal Association. The site includes a towpath and other trails linking historic canal structures and facilitates hiking, running, rollerblading, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, biking, and nature study.

### 9.3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT - ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

As described in the previous section, the PRPC Region has an abundant and diverse system of open spaces and recreational lands. Within the open spaces and parks, active recreation facilities and programs must meet the needs of the community in order to maintain public health and quality of life for all residents. Over time, numerous methods have been employed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) to assist communities in assessing needs and planning for recreational facilities. In addition, the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) utilizes its own standards for open space and recreation planning. The Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan provides aspects of all of these methodologies in assessing and planning for open space and recreational facilities. These methods are then viewed in light of input provided by municipal parks and open space officials and advisors to form a more complete picture of Regional needs and uses.

Most fundamental is the aspect of acreage devoted to parks and other open space. In accordance with the PROS methodology, parks should be provided at the rate of 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents, and parks and open space together should amount to 28 acres per 1,000 residents. Thus, Regional current and future demand is as follows:

| <b>Year</b>        | <b>Population</b> | <b>Minimum Required Park Acreage</b> | <b>Minimum Required Park and OS Acreage</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2010 (US Census)   | 42273             | 444                                  | 1184  |
| 2020 (DVRPC proj.) | 46978             | 493                                  | 1315  |
| 2030 (DVRPC proj.) | 54010             | 567                                  | 1512  |

Table 9.3-1 Regional Park and Open Space Land Requirements (Northern Fed PROS Plan)

Regional parks and open space provided exceed the existing and projected demand and consist of the following:

| Description  | Area in Acres |
|--|---------------|
| Public Park (National, County, and Municipal)            | 803           |
| Public Open Space (Municipal)                            | 661           |
| Private Preserve (Owned by Conservation Organizations)   | 489           |
| Private Open Space (HOA and Other Deed Restricted Lands) | 4911          |
|  |               |
| <b>TOTAL PRPC OPEN SPACE AREA</b>                        | <b>6864</b>   |

Table 9.3-2 PRPC Regional Open Space Assets

Park facilities are classified by size and service areas, and include Regional Parks, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Mini Parks.

- **Regional Parks** are large scale parks of 1,000 acres or more serving a broad geographic area. Because of their size and regional significance, such parks are usually owned and operated by federal or state governments. They provide a variety of active and passive outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly those requiring large land or water areas. Regional Parks emphasize heritage and/or resource protection and recreation opportunities beyond the scope of those typically provided at local parks, including camping, hiking, mountain biking, boating, hunting and fishing. Regional Parks serving the Region include Valley Forge National Historical Park and Marsh Creek State Park.
- **Sub-Regional Parks** are 400 to 1,000 acres in size that provide functions similar to Regional Parks, with intended service areas of an approximately 7.5 mile radius. Warwick County Park and Exton Park are examples of sub-regional parks that serve the PRPC area.
- **Community Parks** are primarily for active recreation serving the needs of residents within a two to three mile radius. These parks usually have various sports facilities, paved walking trails, picnic and game areas, and they may have outdoor performance venues. Often, Community Parks have interpretive natural and/or historic preservation components. Community Parks are 20 to 400 acres in size. Charlestown Park is an example of a Community Park.
- **Neighborhood Parks** are one half acre to 20 acres in size and are intended to address the recreational needs within a 15 minute walk. Evans Park and Kimberton Park are examples of Neighborhood Parks.
- **Mini Parks** are smaller than one half acre with a service radius of a quarter mile. They are typically placed in urban settings are designed to meet the needs of a local community, with playgrounds, sitting areas, paths, gardens, fountains, small structures, interpretive features, etc. Children’s Plaza and Renaissance Park in Phoenixville are examples of Mini Parks.

The Chester County’s *Linking Landscapes* open space plan establishes a population based methodology for determining the need for acreages of different types of parks. Needs are also determined by whether a municipality is high density/urban (3,265 population/square mile), medium density (376-3264 pop/sq. mi.), or low density (<375 pop./sq. mi.). Based on DVRPC population projections for 2030, Regional park demand will be as follows:

| Projected Regional Park Demand |                 |                  |                    |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Municipality                   | 2030 Population | Required Acreage |                    |                 |
|                                |                 | Mini Parks       | Neighborhood Parks | Community Parks |
| Charlestown                    | 7,217           | 0                | 25                 | 32              |
| East Pikeland                  | 9,081           | 0                | 32                 | 41              |
| Phoenixville                   | 22,481          | 5.5              | 56                 | 67              |
| Schuylkill                     | 9,615           | 0                | 34                 | 43              |
| West Vincent                   | 5,616           | 0                | 0                  | 34              |
|                                |                 |                  |                    |                 |
| PRPC Region                    | 54,010          | 5.5              | 147                | 217             |

Table 9.3-3 Future Regional Park Demand Analysis

Population based methodologies for determining the need for recreational facilities (sports fields, playgrounds, picnic area, etc.) have been advanced by DVRPC (1977), Chester County Open Space and Recreation Survey (CCOSRS, 1982), and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA, 1995). However, experience with non-urban communities has shown that actual demand for facilities is based on specific local circumstances and does not lend itself well to arithmetic calculations. In addition, the demographic multiplier methods are dated, as popular recreation habits have changed over time. Moreover, demographic factors such as age cohort size, ethnicity, and socioeconomic conditions can have significant influence on recreational preferences and facility demand. And, as we can see from the table below, different methodologies produce quite disparate results. For these reasons, statistical methods should be used only to generate a rough estimate of demand, with a more precise determination made by the municipal park and recreation departments or boards and the area sports/recreation organizations more directly attuned to local needs.

Projected future Regional demand for recreational facilities according to various population-based statistical methodologies is as follows:

| Recreational Facility Type | Number of Facilities Required |               |              |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                            | NRPA (1995)                   | CCOSRS (1982) | DVRPC (1977) |
| Baseball/Softball Fields   | 10                            | 27            | 18           |
| Soccer/Football Fields     | 5                             | 27            | 36           |
| Hockey/Lacrosse Fields     | 3                             | -             | 36           |
| Tennis Courts              | 27                            | 27            | 54           |
| Volleyball Courts          | 10                            | 16            | 54           |
| Basketball Courts          | 10                            | 22            | 108          |
| Picnic Areas               | -                             | -             | 9            |
| Play Apparatus             | -                             | -             | 27           |
| Swimming Pool              | -                             | -             | 10           |

Table 9.3-4 Projected 2030 Recreational Facilities Demand per Demographic Multiplier Methodologies

### Charlestown Township

Charlestown’s 225 plus acres of parks and public open space are more than adequate from an area perspective. According to the Township Park and Recreation Board Chairman, sports field use is currently near capacity, and there is a long term plan to provide more fields in the Township.

Youth athletic leagues are supported by the Phoenixville Area Soccer Club (PASC), and the Phoenixville Marian Youth Club (PMYC), which organizes football, flag football, lacrosse, field hockey, cheerleading, and basketball. Both of these organizations serve the entire PRPC Region.

Charlestown Park has undergone a substantial restoration of its picnic and playground area, and now includes a youth playground, a tot lot, swings, sand area, six pavilions of varying sizes with barbecue facilities and electricity, a bathroom and maintenance building, and new and refurbished parking areas with rain gardens. The pavilions can be reserved by groups for parties and special events. All of these facilities get regular moderate to heavy use by residents of Charlestown and surrounding communities.

### East Pikeland

East Pikeland has over 120 acres of public recreation space, including Kimberton Park, open space and trails along French Creek, and sports fields at the former East Pikeland Elementary School (EPES).

Kimberton Park is the Township's primary recreational resource, with a roller hockey rink, a basketball court, two baseball/softball fields, three tennis courts, a youth playground, a tot lot, sand area, swings, a picnic pavilion, paved walking trail, bathrooms, and a gazebo. The pavilion can be reserved for private parties and other events. An amphitheater for theatrical and musical performance will be completed in 2018.

A recreation demand analysis was conducted as part of the Township's 2013 *Open Space and Economic Development Plan*. In accordance with this Plan, East Pikeland has sufficient sports fields to meet Township needs, with two rectangular fields and five diamond fields at Kimberton Park and EPES. However, parks are not well distributed among all developed areas of the Township, so accessibility is less than optimal. In addition, a need for additional recreation amenities for senior citizens was identified.

Youth athletics are supported by the Kimberton Youth Athletic League (KYAL), which operates t-ball, baseball, and softball leagues at a variety of skill levels. Because KYAL draws from a broad geographic area, as of 2013 there were 32 baseball teams and 14 softball teams vying for use of six fields. Thus, the need for two to five additional fields was determined by the Township's 2013 *Open Space and Economic Development Plan*.

### Phoenixville

Phoenixville has more than 72 acres of municipally owned land dedicated to park and open space scattered throughout the Borough, which is in addition to the 119 acres associated with Black Rock Sanctuary. Additional recreational opportunities are also available at local schools and along the trails along French Creek. When considering the overall acreage of municipal and County parks within the Borough of Phoenixville there appears to be adequate acreage to meet the demands for projected 2030 population. However, a more detailed analysis of facilities required to serve the population should be conducted as part of the upcoming update of the Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan relative to parks and the Civic Center planned by the Borough.

Given the traditionally urban form of Phoenixville, smaller parks have functioned as community and neighborhood parks. In particular, Reeves Park at just 6.6 acres, well below the 20 acres identified as

the minimum for community parks, serves as the recreational center of the Borough. With its central location, variety of passive and active activity opportunities, and band pavilion, Reeves Park functionally serves as the community park for the Borough. Plans are underway to install a new sidewalk in Reeves Park in 2018.

Neighborhood parks are distributed throughout Phoenixville offering localized recreational opportunities. These parks typically have small playgrounds for families with young children, benches and varying additional facilities. Neighborhood parks in Phoenixville are typically walkable to the surrounding community. As part of the update of the Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan for Parks, an assessment should be conducted to determine if there are areas of the Borough that are deficient in neighborhood parks and facilities.

As identified in the Borough of Phoenixville Park Amenities & Recommended Improvements table, signage was a priority in nearly all the Borough parks and has been installed since the preparation of the 2015 Park Plan. As the Phoenixville population increases and the demographics change, opportunities for additional park facilities within the existing parks should continue to be revisited.

During the community visioning process associated with the Regional Comprehensive Plan Update, participants revealed a desire for a park facility in downtown Phoenixville and the creation of additional trail linkages between downtown Phoenixville and other villages in the Region.

#### Schuylkill

With a combined area of 43.15 acres between three parcels owned by Schuylkill Township, the Township has fewer municipally-owned acres than called for by demand projections. However, Schuylkill Township's location adjacent to Phoenixville Borough with its variety of municipal parks, the Phoenixville YMCA, and Valley Forge National Historic Park provide substantial recreational and open space access for residents. Considering the relatively low density of the Township and the close proximity to recreational facilities, the Township appears to be adequately served.

In addition to the municipally owned parcels and Valley Forge National Historic Park, the higher density developments within the Township also have open space maintained by homeowner's associations. The YMCA maintains athletic fields for a variety of sports offered through their organization.

#### West Vincent

West Vincent's existing recreational attributes are Evans Park, three natural parks, and trails in the western end of the municipality and along French Creek. Evans Park includes a soccer field, a baseball field, a pavilion, playground, basketball, parking, bathrooms, and a paved walking path. Currently, the Township has a deficit of active recreation facilities. Using the methodology of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities in their 2012 *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*, the Township currently needs one more baseball/softball field, and by 2030 will need an additional soccer field.

Youth athletics for West Vincent Residents are supported by the Glenmoore-Eagle Youth Association (GEYA) for baseball, softball, and soccer, and Kimberton Youth Athletic League (KYAL) for baseball and softball.

Complementing the municipal park lands, the Ludwig's Corner Horse Show Grounds is a private facility with limited public accessibility for events.

With the preservation of Bryn Coed Farms, the Township has acquired 72 additional acres of park land along Saint Matthews Road. Programming for this park could include new recreation facilities as needed.

#### 9.4 TRAILS

Trails are critical components of the recreational system that promote public health, intermodal accessibility, environmental awareness, and sustainability. Hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, and special needs people of all ages use trails for recreation, commuting, and to experience the natural and historic heritage of the Region. In addition, trails are essential in generating public support of open space preservation efforts, by giving citizens accessibility to the open space preservation that taxes and municipal policies and plans enable. Public opinion surveys repeatedly demonstrate that trails are the most broadly popular of all open space and recreation assets.

The PRPC Region has a well developed network of formal and informal trails. These include trails that extend through and beyond the Region, such as the Horse-Shoe Trail and the Schuylkill River Trail. The PRPC and its member municipalities have signed Official Resolutions in support of The Circuit, an ongoing project to construct a 750 mile system of trails throughout the Philadelphia metropolitan region, including the Schuylkill River Trail and the proposed Devault Rail Trail. In addition, Charlestown, East Pikeland, Schuylkill and West Vincent Townships each have trail plans and policies to protect and expand the network of public trails and informal unimproved trails. Phoenixville recently undertook completing the extension of the Schuylkill River Trail from Mont Clare to the Cromby trailhead in East Pikeland.

Significant Regional Trails with connections beyond the PRPC area are shown on Map 8 and include the following:

- **Brandywine Trail**, a proposed hiking and biking link from the Horse-Shoe trail and developments near Ludwigs Corner into Upper Uwchlan and eventually to the Struble Trail and Downingtown.
- **The Devault Line Trail** is a proposed multi-modal extension of The Circuit extending from the Schuylkill River Trail in Phoenixville/Mont Clare to Devault in Charlestown Township. From there, future connections through East Whiteland and Tredyffrin Townships will eventually link to the Chester Valley Trail, which now extends from King of Prussia to Exton. This trail was the subject of a 2015 Feasibility Study.
- **The French Creek Trail** is a generally unimproved surface trail that on completion will extend from Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River Trail northwest to Warwick County Park and the Horse-Shoe Trail. The French Creek Trail is part of the Sow Belly-French Creek Regional Recreation Corridor, as identified in Chester County's *Linking Landscapes* open space plan. French Creek Trail includes a quarter mile paved ADA accessible trail in the vicinity of the historic Continental Powder Works at Snyders Mill and the Rapps Dam covered bridge. The parts of the trail within East Pikeland and West Vincent Townships are largely complete, except for areas where access still needs to be acquired by the municipalities working with French and

Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Trail access in Schuylkill Township and through Phoenixville is also yet to be obtained.

- **Horse-Shoe Trail** is a 140 mile hiking and equestrian trail extending from Valley Forge Park to the Appalachian Trail in Dauphin County. The Trail is unimproved and crosses over mostly private lands by agreement with the property owners. Within the PRPC Region, the Horse-Shoe Trail crosses Charlestown and West Vincent Townships, at times sharing an alignment with public roads. The Trail is managed and maintained by volunteer members of the Horse-Shoe Trail Club, who work with landowners and municipal officials to preserve and expand the extent to which it stays off road. The Horse-Shoe Regional Recreation Corridor is recognized by the *Linking Landscapes* plan.
- **The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT)** currently connects from South Philadelphia to Parker Ford north of Spring City, and is the Philadelphia metropolitan area's premier and most heavily used trail. Upon completion, it will extend 100 miles from Philadelphia northwest to Pottsville in Schuylkill County, with an extension from Parker Ford to Pottstown proposed in the next phase of construction. The SRT is paved from Philadelphia to Cromby, and Chester County intends to pave the remaining gravel sections in the future. Within Chester County, the SRT is part of the County Park system and is identified in *Linking Landscapes* as the Schuylkill Regional Recreation Corridor.

The PRPC municipalities have each pursued plans and initiatives to promote the development of trail networks.

#### Charlestown

Charlestown Township maintains a high priority trails map that shows existing and planned trails that are to be coordinated in plans for public and private eased open space plans and in development plans for private properties. In addition, the Park and Recreation Board promotes connections of trails on public open space with those on HOA and other eased/deed restricted lands. Significant local trails in Charlestown include:

- **Pickering Trail**, an unimproved trail extending over 1 mile from the historic Woolen Mill at Charlestown Road to the Ice Dam at Route 29.
- **McDevitt Trail**, an unimproved approximately half mile looped nature trail near the intersection of Bodine and valley Hill Road.
- **Thompson Trail**, an unimproved trail approximately 1.5 miles long extending from the Horse-Shoe Trail and Union Hill Road to Tinker Hill Road in Schuylkill Township.

#### East Pikeland

East Pikeland Township has a 2013 Municipal Trail Plan that is reinforced and supported by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Supplement, the *Plan for Open Space and Economic Development*. These documents plan for a Township-wide system of primary corridors and loops that connect neighborhoods and community assets with regional trails and local trails in adjacent municipalities. Certain high priority

trail corridors are to have improved surface to promote multi-modal trail use. Significant planned local trails include:

- **Cromby Trail**, a proposed improved trail connecting the Route 23 corridor and associated development with the Schuylkill River Trail.
- **Pickering Valley Railroad Trail**, a proposed improved trail connecting Kimberton and the French Creek Trail westward to the Bridge to Bridge trail in West Pikeland Township.

### Phoenixville

Phoenixville undertook the layout and construction of the Schuylkill River Trail in 2015 within the Borough boundaries. In addition, the Phoenix Iron Canal and Trail Association has been working with the Borough, Norfolk-Southern Railroad, and landowners to establish a formal trail along the Schuylkill River and canal that would connect the Borough and the Schuylkill River Trail with Black Rock Sanctuary.

### Schuylkill

In 2017, Schuylkill Township adopted a Multi-Modal Map showing existing and proposed bicycle routes, trails, and sidewalks. A primary purpose of the plan is to promote the pedestrian interconnection of mostly existing neighborhoods to one another and with the Borough of Phoenixville. In addition, the Plan indicates a proposed trail connection from Valley Forge National Historic Park through the Township to Phoenixville.

### West Vincent

In 2014, West Vincent adopted a Multi-Modal Study showing existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian routes connecting cultural destinations, open spaces, and neighborhoods. Significant proposed trails include:

- A proposed multi-use trail along Saint Matthews Road.
- Completion of the French Creek Trail.
- Improved surface trails around Ludwigs Corner and Weatherstone, including the Brandywine Trail.

## 9.5 SENIORS AND SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

As the population ages and communities recognize the importance of having recreational amenities for special needs population, opportunities should be pursued to incorporate ADA accessible facilities into the park system including trails that are wheelchair accessible and well-maintained to avoid tripping hazards such as cracks in pavement.

With the growing senior/retired population in the Region and Nationally, consideration should be given to expanded programming at existing senior and recreation centers. Programs focused on the senior population offer social opportunities as well as a variety of recreational, wellness and fitness classes. Partnerships with other community facilities should be considered for senior programs such as

municipal buildings, school facilities, libraries and churches to maximize the opportunities for senior activities throughout the Region. Programming and amenities should be tailored to current demand of the senior population, which is expected to shift over time.

In addition to expanding the programs and amenities for the senior population, amenities accessible to residents with other special needs should be considered. Installation of playground equipment that offers recreational opportunities for children who are physically disabled also enhances the use of the park spaces by a wider variety of residents. Efforts are currently underway to install an all-abilities playground at Reeves Park to provide additional recreational opportunities. Additional opportunities for installation of all abilities play equipment should be pursued throughout the Region in existing parks to maximize usage opportunities. Installing ADA ramps at intersections helps to make park more accessible for those with physical limitations.

## 9.6 BIKE ROUTES

Bicycle accessibility is critical to multi-modal accessibility, and the PRPC Region is in a good position to maximize the benefits of this. Recreational bicycling is a popular activity in and beyond the Region, and many roads are well suited to this activity. In addition, The Circuit and local trail initiatives are expanding the network for accessibility beyond the road system. With development of supporting roadway facilities, the health and sustainability benefits of bicycle recreation and commuting can be greatly enhanced.

In order to maximize safety and enjoyment, Map 9 indicates bike routes classified in terms of the comfort level of riders of different skill levels.

- **Bike Trails** are paved surfaces not shared with motor vehicles. As such, they are the safest of bike routes, conducive to novice cyclists and families with younger children. Bicyclists must observe basic rules of etiquette to safely navigate among walkers, inline skaters, and less experienced cyclists. The Schuylkill River Trail is the Region's most significant bike trail, and the proposed Devault Rail Line Trail will complement it.
- **Beginner Routes** are low traffic volume roads with flat or gently rolling terrain suitable for recreational riders of modest experience or skill.
- **Intermediate Routes** have low to moderate traffic volumes and speeds, and generally occupy more challenging terrain. Riders should have a reasonable level of fitness and be comfortable riding in intermittent traffic in order to enjoy these routes.
- **Advanced/Commuter Routes** include roads with moderate to high traffic volumes, and higher velocity traffic. Higher volume/velocity commuter routes have shoulders so that cyclists can coexist with cars and trucks. These routes require fitness and skill to be enjoyable.

Bicycle routes can be made safer through multi-modal street design. In many cases, existing roads can at minimal expense be made into safer bicycle routes through installation of signs and/or pavement markings. Specific strategies to create safe bicycle routes include:

- Complete Streets, which are designed with specific accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public/mass transportation, as well as traffic calming measures. These are covered in detail in Chapter 10.
- Where conditions permit, an existing paved shoulder can be designated as a bicycle lane.
- Bike route signage can consist of share the road signs, and/or could contain specific local or regional route information (e.g. PA Bicycle Route S signage).
- Bicycle “sharrow” markings are painted symbols on roadways that indicate that travel lanes are shared by motorists and cyclists.

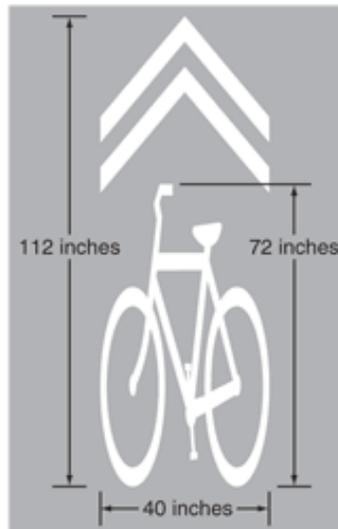


Figure 9.6-1 Sharrow Marking

## 9.7 OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Regional and municipal open space planning should strive to achieve all objectives and maintain balance where multiple goals are in apparent conflict. This requires the setting of priorities in determining how open space objectives are to be met. For example, East Pikeland’s Open Space Plan establishes organizing principles based on riparian greenway corridors, high quality mature forests, and agricultural lands that in turn define locations for trails. Charlestown and West Vincent have identified critical large properties upon which to focus efforts to secure conservation easements. Schuylkill Township and Phoenixville seek to connect existing and developing communities with trails linking important cultural destinations. Other priorities may include the need for recreational facilities or the identification of critical environmental or historical resources.

Open space and recreational facilities should be required in all new development to accommodate the growing population. When new open space and recreational facilities are not feasible, require fees in lieu to expand existing park facilities.

Open space programming should include agricultural preservation. This includes facilitation of agricultural preservation grants and easements for productive lands. In addition, public and other open

spaces could be used for agricultural and horticultural recreation programs, including CSAs and Community Gardens.

Planning should also include allocation of resources to assure that open space and recreational resources are monitored and maintained. Charlestown Township conducts biannual monitoring inspections of public and eased private open space and recreation resources to assure safety, to mitigate any environmental/management concerns, and to prevent illegal or hazardous/nuisance use of open space.

## 9.8 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following policy recommendations will implement the goals and objectives of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan:

### **PRO-1 Evaluate local and regional resources in need of open space designation to promote their protection.**

Critical resources to protect as open space may include environmentally sensitive areas, valuable habitats, historic structures and landscapes, viewsheds, desired trail connections and greenways, and farms.

### **PRO-2 Assess municipal needs and provisions for recreational facilities for everyone.**

Assure adequacy of recreational resources for children, adults, senior citizens, and those with special needs.

Encourage senior programs at a variety of community facilities such as municipal buildings, school facilities, libraries and churches.

Encourage the inclusion of all-abilities playground equipment in existing parks to expand use opportunities.

### **PRO-3 Promote Regional cooperation of youth sports organizations and PRPC member municipalities to address local deficiencies.**

This may include provision of facilities in one municipality where a different municipality has a deficit, or to address the regional need for facilities serving a smaller niche market. An example of the latter would be the stones course at Charlestown Township Park.

Encourage the use of existing open space areas associated with existing development such as churches and businesses for low-impact sports.

### **PRO-4 Implement Regional and Municipal Trail Plans.**

Establish trail corridors through permanent open space or by easement, and construct a comprehensive network of multi-use and unimproved surface trails that connect neighborhoods, open spaces, cultural resources, and other trails within and beyond the Region.

Consider opportunities for improved pedestrian connections from surrounding neighborhoods to downtown Phoenixville and to surrounding villages in the Region.

**PRO-5 Develop a Regional network of on road and trail bicycle routes.**

Evaluate bike routes for safety and improve as necessary. Coordinate routes with cultural landmarks and destinations, The Circuit trail plan, and bicycle routes beyond the PRPC Region.

Identify bicycling and walking connections that link neighborhoods to nearby commercial centers to encourage bicycling and walking for shopping and other commercial trips.

Identify improved pedestrian access opportunities from Phoenixville Borough to the Phoenixville YMCA.

**PRO-6 Monitor and maintain the condition of all public recreation and open space facilities and resources.**

Compile regular reports on the safety and functionality of recreational facilities, and budget adequately for maintenance, repair, and replacement as appropriate. Monitor and report on open space resources, specifically for trail conditions, invasive species, erosion, illegal use, dumping, and hazards to human safety or health, and assure that necessary maintenance and restorative actions are taken.

**PRO-7 Consider a municipal Official Map to identify critical open space resources for future acquisition or easement.**

Official map designation should be utilized only when the municipality is certain in its desire to designate a property as open space, and should not be used as a provisional placeholder where no such certainty exists.

**PRO-8 Obtain funding for open space through grants and conservation partnerships.**

Work with State and County grant agencies, foundations, and conservation organizations for funding and technical support on open space initiatives. Include agricultural easements and grants, and encourage activities such as CSAs and community gardens that can provide funding streams and/or labor pools to maintain productive open space.

**PRO-9 Assure that municipal ordinances provide for open space and recreation accommodation in all new developments.**

Establish fee-in lieu provisions for developments that do not make such accommodation.

**PRO-10 Ensure that park facilities adequately serve the population of the Region, particularly those areas with higher-densities of development.**

Update the Phoenixville Comprehensive Plan relating to parks and the Civic Center. Include an assessment of walking distance of parks from neighborhoods and adequacy of park facilities.

Consider opportunities to develop a neighborhood or mini-park in the downtown area of Phoenixville. A possible location could be adjacent to the farmer's market.

**PRO-11 Improve signage and mapping for trail connections.**

As the trail system is expanded, develop a signage program that identifies points of entry and includes maps showing linkages.