



## A G E N D A

### **PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMITTEE WORKSHOP PRPC-14** June 27, 2018

1. East Pikeland PC Comments – Greenways on Land Use Plan
2. Demographic Analysis – Note on population/employment projections per Charlestown
3. Land Use Plan – Revisions per Charlestown comments
  - a. Future Land Use map description
  - b. Vertically mixed use buildings
4. Housing Plan – Minor clarifications per Charlestown comments
5. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan – Revisions per PRPC-13
  - a. Scenic/heritage viewsheds as protected open space
6. Transportation Plan – Revisions per PRPC-13
  - a. Pass-through traffic
  - b. Complete Streets
  - c. Scenic/heritage viewsheds
  - d. Alternative modes of downtown transit
  - e. Map 9 - Add Pickering Road as Scenic
7. Cultural Resources Plan – Initial Review
  - a. Goals and Objectives
  - b. Historical Resources
  - c. Heritage Areas and Scenic Resources
  - d. Arts and Cultural Centers
  - e. Community Events and Venues
  - f. Cultural Tourism and Identity
  - g. Implementation Strategies
  - h. Map 10 – Cultural Resources
8. Announce Next Workshop –July 25, 2018 – Review and Prepare for Public Workshop #2
9. Adjournment



Ed Theurkauf <ed@theurkauf.com>

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## Zoning Amendments

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**Ed Theurkauf** <ed@theurkauf.com>  
To: Zoning <zoning@eastpikeland.org>

Fri, Jun 15, 2018 at 1:21 PM

Hi, Kisha-

Here's what I have for EPT PC comments on PRPC:

1. EPT PC would like to see municipal outreach to expand the Regional Planning group to advance "big picture" planning. Investigate adding East Vincent and Spring City. (I don't view this as a Comp Plan issue, but it is certainly something PRPC could explore.)
2. Create additional green areas on Future Land Use Plan - Add Cromby and Krauss properties, Black Rock Sanctuary to green areas. Create a green belt between Stoney Run and the Schuylkill River and running along the Schuylkill River.
3. Consider showing conservation/greenway/ trail corridors on Future Land Use Plan

Hope this is helpful. Do you have anything else that I missed?

Thnaks,  
Ed

Edward A. Theurkauf, RLA, ASLA, APA  
**Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC**  
*Landscape Architecture and Planning in Community with Nature*  
1240 Elbow Lane | Chester Springs, PA 19425 | 484-888-5574  
[www.theurkauf.com](http://www.theurkauf.com)

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### DVRPC Population Forecast

Municipality	U.S. Census		2015 DVRPC Est.	Population Forecasts						2015 - 2045 Absolute Change	2015 - 2045 Percent (%) Change
	2000	2010		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045		
Charlestown Township	4,051	5,671	5,690	6,198	6,703	7,217	7,661	8,026	8,336	2,646	46.50%
East Pikeland Township	6,551	7,079	7,359	7,932	8,502	9,081	9,583	9,995	10,344	2,985	40.56%
Phoenixville Borough	14,788	16,440	16,658	18,696	20,725	22,481	24,002	25,051	25,710	9,052	54.34%
Schuylkill Township	6,960	8,516	8,576	8,922	9,265	9,615	9,917	10,165	10,376	1,800	20.99%
West Vincent Township	3,170	4,567	5,038	5,230	5,422	5,616	5,784	5,923	6,040	1,002	19.89%
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>35,520</b>	<b>42,273</b>	<b>43,321</b>	<b>46,978</b>	<b>50,617</b>	<b>54,010</b>	<b>56,947</b>	<b>59,160</b>	<b>60,806</b>	<b>17,485</b>	<b>40.36%</b>

**Figure 3: DVRPC Population Forecast through 2045**

\* Population projections through 2030 are of relevance to this Regional Comprehensive Plan. Although DVRPC projections run through 2045, projections over extended time become progressively more speculative. Further, a municipality's capacity to absorb projected population may be affected by factors not accounted for in projections, such as environmental constraints, zoning or infrastructure limitations, or increased land preservation.

#### Age

The Regional age breakdown of 2000 and 2010 is shown in Chart 2 and the Regional Age Breakdown table. The Regional population over this time period followed a generally similar distribution pattern with the exception of the age group between 35 and 44, where the population decreased from 2000 to 2010. Most notably, by 2010 there has been a marked increase in the number of preschool, school age, and later working age people as opposed to other cohorts.

Charlestown Township	2,454	3,134	3,309	3,483	3,661	3,818	3,947	4,050	916	29.23%
East Pikeland Township	2,570	2,836	3,040	3,268	3,499	3,687	3,845	4,025	1,189	41.93%
Phoenixville Borough	6,781	6,835	7,419	8,119	8,823	9,378	9,835	10,456	3,621	52.98%
Schuylkill Township	3,837	4,530	4,706	4,840	4,977	5,124	5,197	5,247	717	15.83%
West Vincent Township	1,263	1,476	1,552	1,623	1,695	1,759	1,816	1,846	370	25.07%
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>16,905</b>	<b>18,811</b>	<b>20,026</b>	<b>21,333</b>	<b>22,655</b>	<b>23,766</b>	<b>24,640</b>	<b>25,624</b>	<b>6,813</b>	<b>36.22%</b>

Figure 17: Regional Employment Forecast

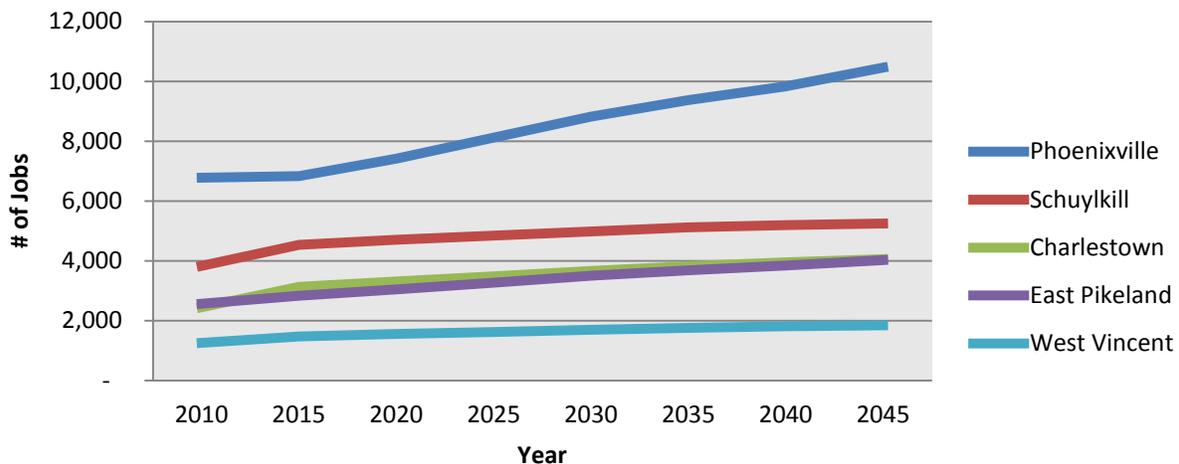


Figure 18: Regional Employment Forecast

\* Population and employment projections through 2030 are of relevance to this Regional Comprehensive Plan. Although DVRPC projections run through 2045, projections over extended time become progressively more speculative. Further, a municipality's capacity to absorb projected population may be affected by factors not accounted for in projections, such as environmental constraints, zoning or infrastructure limitations, or increased land preservation.

### Income

The following chart and table show estimated household income for the Region and the individual municipalities within the Region for the period ending 2015. Concentrations of wealth are evident in the high income households present in Charlestown, Schuylkill, and West

infrastructure, including any anticipated extensions of that infrastructure. Redevelopment is an important part of the plan's development strategy, and includes context appropriate adaptive re-use, infill and expansion of existing urban, commercial, and village settlements. Residential uses are proposed at appropriate density depending on adjacency to existing development and supporting infrastructure.

The future land use pattern for the Region is based on preserving the rural areas and improving the quality of the built environment in the areas with existing development and infrastructure. The Borough of Phoenixville will continue in its role as the Region's economic and residential hub. Although Phoenixville has little remaining vacant land, investments in the existing infrastructure and redevelopment parcels will continue to strengthen the Borough and regional economy while providing opportunities for desirable infill development. Other favorable locations for commercial and mixed use development and redevelopment include the 724 corridor in East Pikeland, Ludwigs Corner in West Vincent, and Devault in Charlestown. Smaller village areas exist in Kimberton, Wilmer, Birchrunville, Charlestown, and Valley Forge, offering opportunities for appropriate small scale uses within a historic resource preservation context.

Overall, the future land use policy strives to conserve the rural character and natural and historic resources of the Region. The goal of this plan is to direct growth away from the rural areas and into traditional economic centers such as Phoenixville and the supporting villages and commercial centers, each with its unique character and cultural and economic vibrancy.

### 3.5 FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Future land uses are expressed in generalized categories to reflect the essential qualities of designated areas in terms of allowable uses, intensity, aesthetics, etc. Within each category, a number of different uses could occur, provided that they support the landscape character of the category and do not create conflicts. Due to the scale of mapping and the scope of this plan, not all possible land uses are specifically called out in the descriptions, but this does not mean that they are prohibited. For example, public and institutional uses such as parks, schools, government assets, and community facilities may occur within any land use category, provided they comply with municipal-regional planning objectives and municipal zoning. Map 2 illustrates future land uses and intensities as follows:

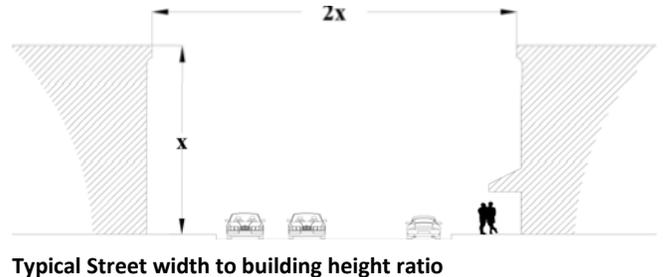
#### Mixed Use

Mixed Use areas include existing commercial development areas and adjacent lands where those uses may expand in the future. These areas may be developed as commercial retail, service, light industrial/ small-scale start-up businesses or office uses, and may include a residential component as integral to the majority commercial use. They are within urbanized areas or oriented along major roadways and coordinated with supporting sewer and water infrastructure. Mixed use developments shall be walkable with well-integrated uses and interconnections between adjacent lots to ameliorate auto dependency and traffic congestion within the mixed use area. Design standards shall be incorporated to enhance the pedestrian friendly feel of these landscapes, while promoting environmentally sustainable techniques where practicable. These areas may include zoning provisions to enable adaptive re-use of existing underutilized buildings and developed sites as blight remediation and revitalization, which is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Intensity of development within mixed use areas shall depend on proximity within or adjacent to urbanized areas, so that commercial uses are adequately

supported by residential neighbors. Infill development within mixed use areas shall adhere to design standards that promote compatibility with neighborhood context, particularly within historic settings.

In terms of design, the following attributes characterize appropriate infill and new development in mixed use areas:

- Buildings arranged to reinforce pedestrian scale streetscape
- Combinations of single use and multi-use buildings, including buildings with both residential and non-residential uses. Buildings may be vertically integrated with residential use on upper floors and commercial or office use on the ground floor.
- Pedestrian links between sidewalks and building entrances
- Surface parking lots located to the side or rear of buildings, or screened from street
- Complete Street design that accommodates motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, mass transportation, and environmental functions
- Front yard parking no greater than one or two bays deep
- Landscaped areas in parking areas for microclimatic, stormwater, and aesthetic benefits
- Traffic calming measures on streets to promote pedestrian comfort and safety
- Building entrances oriented to the streetscape
- Outdoor landscaped pedestrian areas that serve as gathering spaces and spots for temporary commercial activities.
- Façade and roofline variations to diminish the apparent scale of buildings
- Interior and exterior architectural treatments that create interrelationships between the private indoor realm and the public realm of the sidewalk and street



Complete Street

The use and intensity characteristics of mixed use areas are:

Uses: Retail, Service, Eateries, Office, Cultural/Entertainment, Sports/Fitness, Innovative Practices and Technologies, etc.  
Multifamily Residential permitted as a component of broader Commercial use.

Intensity: Urban – 75-100% impervious  
Exurban – 40-65% impervious

Industrial

Industrial areas are those areas with businesses that typically produce, manufacture or otherwise

## **CHAPTER SIX – HOUSING PLAN**

The plan for housing helps to maintain and shape the type of community the Region will have. Housing policy influences who lives in the community in terms of ethnicity and economic characteristics. It also affects economic viability by prioritizing a workforce appropriate to local and regional centers of employment. It works in concert with the Land Use Plan to create vibrant settlements while protecting rural and natural areas. The Housing Plan is thus an essential part of establishing and sustaining a healthy and dynamic, Regional community of neighborhoods.

### **6.1 HOUSING PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

Provide a range of housing opportunities in appropriate areas to meet the needs of all Phoenixville Area residents, regardless of household size, age and/or income. This goal is to be advanced through the pursuit of the following specific objectives:

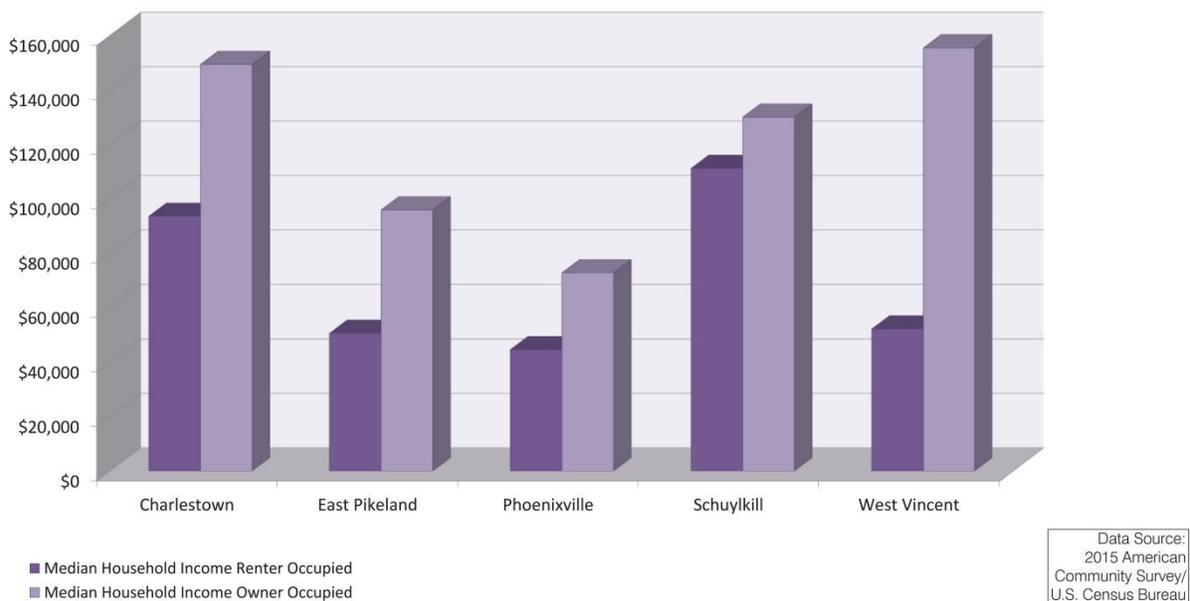
1. Manage new housing through a balanced pattern of development that preserves and enhances existing communities and the natural and scenic landscapes of the Region.
2. Encourage clustering of housing and village-style mixed-use development, and discourage sprawling development patterns that consume existing open space.
3. Provide a diversity of housing options for residents throughout the Region.
4. Maintain, preserve, and revitalize the Phoenixville Region’s existing neighborhoods, particularly its older housing stock, and create new residential opportunities that make it a community of choice for homeowners and renters.
5. Support the revitalization of existing residential areas in older communities and neighborhoods through effective code enforcement and the preservation of the housing stock.
6. Ensure opportunities for affordable housing throughout the Phoenixville Region.
7. ~~Prioritize~~ Identify and prioritize housing opportunities for seniors and families.
8. Encourage home ownership opportunities in areas of the Region where owner-occupancy rates are much lower than the majority of the Region.

### **6.2 EXISTING HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND CURRENT TRENDS**

The PRPC Region includes housing patterns in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Although the majority of housing units are single family detached, over 40% of the Region’s dwellings are in attached or multifamily buildings – a percentage that will likely increase in accordance with post-recession trends. There is a good availability of rental housing for a diverse and transitional workforce, although the emphasis of new development on an upscale, rental market is having an impact on affordability and the proportion of single-family detached housing stock.

#### **Current Housing Data**

##### **Housing Unit Types**



**Figure 6.2-6: Median Income of Renter Occupied vs Owner Occupied Households across PRPC Member Municipalities**

incomes (\$28,195), but a high number of rental units (45.1% of available housing), likely indicating less of a discrepancy in quality of accommodation between owned and rented units.

Impact of the Great Recession

The Great Recession of 2007-~~2008~~-2009 dramatically altered the nature of housing growth in the Region. Prior to that time, small to large developments of single family detached houses on suburban lots was the dominant paradigm, and tracts of agricultural and natural lands were transformed at an alarming rate. Very little development occurred during the Great Recession of 2007-2008. Then, as the economy recovered, development patterns shifted toward revitalizing areas of Phoenixville and toward higher density and mixed use communities in the surrounding Townships. Large lot subdivisions have for now at least given way to small lot, attached, and multifamily developments, and there has been a recent dramatic increase in the construction of rental apartments.

According to Chester County Planning Commission data, overall County-wide housing sales numbers and median prices by 2014 had recovered to approximately pre-recession levels, although numbers of new, non-apartment units are still significantly lower. In addition, construction of new owner occupied housing was slowed dramatically by the recession, but rental units are still being built in all of the Region’s municipalities at a significant rate.

- 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.

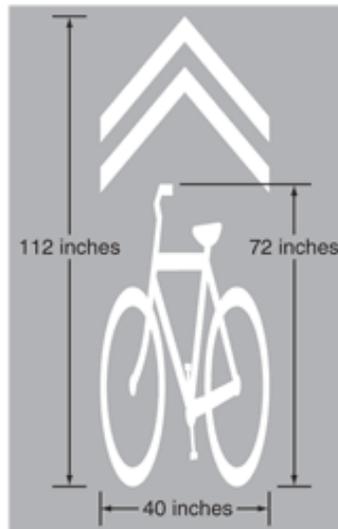


Figure 9.6-1 Sharrow Marking

## 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, including scenic vistas or viewsheds. Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plans adopted by Regional municipalities include the following:

- **Charlestown Township** has a 2012 Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan, adopted as an addendum to the 2001 municipal Comprehensive Plan.

- **East Pikeland Township** has a 2013 Plan for Open Space and Economic Development, adopted as a supplement to the municipal Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Township is a member of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, which has its own PROS Plan.
- **Phoenixville Borough** has a 2015 Comprehensive Parks Plan, plus master plans for a number of the municipal parks.
- **West Vincent Township** has a 1992 Open Space and Recreation Plan. In addition, the Township is a member of the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, which has its own PROS Plan.

Open space and recreational facilities should be required in all new developments 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, agricultural lands, historic structures and landscapes, scenic or heritage 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.

## **CHAPTER TEN – TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Land use, economic development, viable housing, recreation, and environmental resource protection are all dependent on a functional and efficient multi-modal transportation network. This element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan advances strategies to efficiently move goods and people, to maintain a high quality of life, and to promote environmental and energy sustainability, and is intended to supplement the *Phoenixville Region Multimodal Transportation Plan*.

### 10.1 TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Encourage the expansion a variety of transportation opportunities in the region to reduce congestion and dependency on automobiles while improving interconnectedness. This goal is to be advanced through the pursuit of the following specific objectives:

1. ~~Encourage the prioritization of~~ Prioritize roadway improvements that lessen congestion, direct pass-through traffic, and improve roadway safety in the region.
2. Identify scenic corridors of regional significance and develop regional policies and design standards for them.
3. Develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian connection plan to identify and prioritize missing alternative transportation linkages for interconnections of residential areas, villages and commercial and employment centers.
4. Work with SEPTA, Chester County and the Transportation Management Associations to develop additional affordable public transportation service within the Region.
5. Develop strategies to provide an adequate parking supply that will sustain revitalization efforts in downtown Phoenixville, villages and economic activity centers.
6. Promote and advocate for passenger rail service to the Region.

### 10.2 PHOENIXVILLE REGION MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In response to projections for substantial population growth and development, the Chester County Planning Commission has prepared a *2018 Phoenixville Region Multimodal Plan* (PRMP) that identifies transportation goals, objectives, issues and priorities, and is incorporated by reference as part of the Transportation Element of this Regional Comprehensive Plan. The PRMP includes the five municipalities of the Phoenixville Region plus Upper Providence Township in Montgomery County and emphasizes the following:

- Safety;
- Access for all users;
- Regional connections;
- Mobility within the growth center of Phoenixville Borough;
- Planning policies and programs;
- Promotion of walking and biking; and

As vehicular congestion continues to challenge many parts of the Region, opportunities to maximize other modes of transportation within the existing rights-of-way and improve efficiency come to the forefront. The phrase 'Complete Streets' has been developed to encourage a change of approach to developing rights-of-way. Rather than focusing primarily on the roadway for the movement of motor vehicles, the Complete Streets concept encourages communities to prioritize the full use of the right-of-way with improvements that enable safe access for all users, including pedestrian, bicycles, and transit users, in addition to motorists. Complete Streets emphasizes safe circulation for all users of all abilities. The Phoenixville Region Multimodal Plan identifies priority projects within the Region that, once completed, will help to implement the Complete Streets concept by improving key areas with significant transportation deficiencies.

Although Complete Streets are intended to fill multiple transportation purposes, context is of critical import in the actual design. A Complete Street in a low volume rural setting can look very different from one in a suburban or urban setting, while still addressing accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, and public transit where available. A Complete Street in a highly developed area may have bike lanes, sidewalks, on-street parking, pull-offs for bus stops with shelters, and a vegetated median with stormwater management and water quality functions. In a country setting, a Complete Street may simply have "share the road" signs or markings, and in the suburbs a Complete Street may feature a multi-use path located outside the vehicle cartway. The common objective is enhanced multi-modal accessibility, but the design approaches to meet the objective are highly variable.

By municipalities adopting Complete Streets policies, it provides each community with more leverage when reviewing new development and encourages community representatives to think about improvements beyond the roadway. Given that much of the roadway system in the Region is developed, Complete Streets within the regional context needs to emphasize opportunities to improve existing segments of right-of-way that are lacking critically needed infrastructure.

#### Regional Policy for street layout, interconnections

Municipalities within the Phoenixville Region have made great strides emphasizing interconnections and Complete Streets in the last several years resulting in quality developments such as Weatherstone in West Vincent that emphasize interconnectedness and Complete Streets. Municipalities should regularly revisit ordinances to ensure that requirements associated with street layout and interconnectedness maximize the Complete Street policy.

#### 10.4 SCENIC ROADWAY CORRIDORS

Outside of Phoenixville and the more heavily developed adjacent areas, the Region's road network is largely comprised of country roads and two lane rural highways. The preservation of visual quality along these roads is essential to maintaining the rural aesthetic that is treasured by residents and visitors, and the Region is remarkable for its scenic heritage viewsheds and vistas. Therefore, this plan identifies scenic roads to be protected by effective use and design requirements.

Given the visual resources of the Region, one could conceivably describe nearly all of the roadways as scenic. However, designating all roads as scenic could lead to ordinance challenges that the rigorous design standards and restrictions are too broadly applied. Therefore, this Comprehensive Plan designates only those roads exhibiting the very best of the Region's visual qualities as scenic, based on the following characteristics, alone or in combination:

**Brandywine Trail**, which will link Ludwigs Corner to the Horse-Shoe Trail to the east, and Upper Uwchlan trails leading to the Struble Trail to the west.

**Schuylkill River Trail** is the Region's primary multimodal trail, which currently links the Region from Parker Ford to the Perkiomen Trail in Montgomery County, Valley Forge National Historic Park, and Philadelphia. Upon Completion, the trail will extend to Pottstown and beyond to Reading and Pottsville, and will include connections to the Chester Valley and other important trails in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. An improved dedicated crossing of the Route 29 bridge from Phoenixville to Mont Clare is scheduled for construction in 2018-2019. In order to accommodate broader and heavier use while reducing ongoing maintenance costs, it is recommended that gravel surfaces between Phoenixville and Parker Ford be paved in asphalt.

- **Bicycle Routes** – On-road bicycle routes should be designated with signs and/or sharrow markings as described in Chapter 9, section 9.6. If the Region elects to use signage, a uniform Regional design should be developed, which could include information on destinations and route difficulty (e.g. beginner, intermediate, advanced).

## 10.6 PASS-THROUGH TRAFFIC

When residential streets become preferred routes for traffic passing through, there can be a negative impact on safety and quality of life in those neighborhoods. In order to address this, the Region should plan which roads are to be preferred commuter routes and take appropriate approaches with respect to design, improvements, and maintenance of those roads so that they are the preferred routes for traffic passing through the area. At the same time, traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods can discourage pass-through traffic and enhance safety on the streets and pedestrian ways of those communities.

Measures to promote use of planned commuter routes include:

- Capacity improvements of primary roads and intersections.
- Keeping up with maintenance schedules. Where roads are under State jurisdiction, work with PennDOT to assure that primary commuter roads receive high priority.
- Development of a robust multi-modal capacity to reduce single occupancy vehicle traffic.
- Promote ride sharing to reduce traffic volumes.

Measures to reduce or calm through traffic on residential streets include:

- On street parking where appropriate.
- Narrow pavement cartways.
- Curb "bulbouts" to constrict travel lanes.
- Stop signs at all intersections.
- One-way access.
- Rush hour through traffic prohibitions.
- Speed tables or speed humps.
- Reduced speed limits.
- Pavement changes to demark pedestrian crossings.
- Signal timing to delay through traffic.

Ridesharing or carpooling consists of two or more people with similar work schedules riding together to a similar area. Carpooling/ridesharing is typically done in a private vehicle and arrangements can vary from taking turns driving a private car, to compensating a driver for providing a ride. Challenges associated with carpooling/ridesharing including finding another person from your area with a similar commuting pattern and finding safe and secure meeting places from which to travel. Within the Region there are currently no park-and-ride parking lots to encourage ridesharing. Consideration should be given to identifying locations for park-and-ride lots in the Region to better improve opportunities for shared rides. Ridesharing websites exist, but without a better understanding by the general public how such an arrangement could work for them, it is often difficult for people to be willing to try such an alternative.

As technology and innovation continue to advance, municipalities within the Region should support and encourage alternative transportation options. Companies such as Uber and Lyft that function as a taxi cab service ~~that is~~ operated by drivers in their private vehicles can reduce the need for parking because people can easily and affordably get to their destination without having to drive their own vehicle.

Car sharing can also become an option for people who do not need to commute for work. Private car rental options are beginning to appear, where people rent their car during times when they do not need access to it. As Phoenixville downtown and the villages continue to be successful, ~~opportunities for rickshaws to get people around these areas could be another option~~ innovation will create other options for moving people ~~with needing~~ without vehicles.

#### 10.89 TRENDS/FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Recent technologies are altering work and lifestyles, and transportation systems are changing as a result. The Energy Plan (Chapter 5) describes advances in electric vehicles (EVs), public transportation including passenger rail, ride sharing, non-motorized transportation, and telecommuting. All of these have tremendous potential to reduce single occupancy vehicle traffic on roadways, while minimizing reliance on finite and polluting oil reserves that are subject to wild price fluctuations and geopolitical instability. If the Region becomes a leading edge proponent and adopter of these nascent transportation technologies and practices, it will be well positioned for economic success and high quality of life into the future.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are increasingly popular as batteries improve and costs decrease. According to Bloomberg New Energy Finance, EV passenger car sales are expected to increase from 3% in 2020 to 25% in 2030, and to comprise over half of US new car sales by 2040. New models are coming onto the market at an increasing rate, including some for \$30,000 or less, and government and PECO rebates can reduce this cost even further. Still, even a higher purchase price for EVs can be more than offset by operating and maintenance costs that are approximately half that of petroleum fueled vehicles. EV range on a full charge is from 80 to 250 miles or more, which makes them increasingly practical alternatives for most drivers. A 2018 study by Volta Charging found that over 80% of Americans currently live within five miles of an EV charging station, and the network of charging stations (called EVSEs) will certainly become more robust, with commercial centers, workplaces, and municipalities providing them. Municipalities in the Region should promote EVs with charging stations at municipal buildings, parking facilities, and at downtown curbsides. In addition, parking ordinances could require the provision of EVSEs for new developments.

EVs are not confined to passenger vehicle applications. SEPTA intends to operate 90% of its bus fleet with hybrid-electric vehicles by 2021, and recently added 25 full electric buses to its fleet as part of a pilot program. Local, regional, and long haul electric trucks are also being developed, and Walmart and UPS have already made pre-orders for Tesla models due out in 2019. This is a critical development, since US trucking accounts for approximately 5% of vehicle traffic and nearly 25% of emissions.

The self-driving vehicle is another existing technology with the capacity to dramatically and favorably change transportation. Personal vehicles could return home after dropping off a work commuter, for use by another family member. Driverless cab services could alleviate the need for or use of personal vehicles, while reducing public risks posed by inattentive or impaired drivers. Electric self-driving buses could operate in tandem or series like a road-based train, bringing rail type passenger service without the heavy and expensive infrastructure. All of these together would greatly reduce the area requirements for parking lots, resulting in greener and more sustainable residential, office, and commercial centers.

#### 10.910 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

**T-1 Undertake studies relating to the improvement of the regional transportation network.**

Support the priorities and policies of the *Phoenixville Region Multimodal Transportation Plan*.

**T-2 Coordinate regional transportation improvements with FHWA, PennDOT and DVRPC to better achieve common goals. Coordinate on a municipal and regional basis for funding opportunities.**

Support the priorities and policies of the *Phoenixville Region Multimodal Transportation Plan*.

Utilize Municipal Act 209 Studies to identify necessary transportation improvements and secure developer funding ~~for necessary transportation improvements~~.

**T-3 Develop traffic calming plans in residential areas, villages and economic centers to discourage pass-through traffic, improve safety, and promote non-motorized travel.**

Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit safety through complete streets and design measures that slow traffic and create safe ways and crossing points for non-motorized access.

Ensure that proposed transportation improvements support the Complete Streets policy.

**T-4 Improve missing pedestrian and bicycle access linkages.**

Pursue funding on a Regional basis to identify critical connections, and design and construct necessary improvements. Require all new developments to include pedestrian accessibility, with bicycle provisions where appropriate, and include offsite and Regional connections.

Encourage SEPTA to reestablish service between Phoenixville, the Great Valley Corporate Center and the Paoli Rail Station.

Encourage SEPTA to establish a bus route along Route 100 in West Vincent connecting Ludwigs Corner to the Exton train station.

Consider improved amenities such as protected shelters and bicycle parking at bus stops.

To increase ridership, encourage SEPTA to improve the bus riding experience by adding wifi on the buses and consider having more comfortable seating. Some amenities could be sponsored by the local municipality and/or businesses.

**T-11** Advocate for Reestablishment ~~reestablishment~~ of rail service to the Phoenixville Region ~~should be advocated~~ to help alleviate traffic congestion and promote long term economic vitality.

As a region, advocate for funding to be dedicated to the re-establishment of rail service to Phoenixville.

**T-12** **Support and encourage alternative forms of transportation.**

Encourage public/private partnerships between Rover Community Transportation and major employers in the Region to offer shuttle services between population and employment centers.

Encourage park-and-ride opportunities by designating potential areas for establishment of park-and-ride lots in the Region and support/facilitate the development of ridesharing websites.

Establish designated areas near downtown Phoenixville and possibly the villages for taxi cabs, Uber, and rickshaw service to encourage designated pick-up and drop-off locations for alternative forms of transportation to the Region's commercial centers.

**T-13** **Support a regional policy emphasizing Complete Streets.**

Ensure that new development and projects upgrading existing infrastructure include improvements that address all modes of transportation.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN – CULTURAL RESOURCES PLAN**

Cultural resources include those places, events, and activities that define the Phoenixville Region as distinct from others. Recognition and protection of these essential resources sustains the high quality of life of the Region, while creating opportunity for economic growth and development that strengthens rather than undermines those attributes.

### 11.1 CULTURAL RESOURCES PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Preserve and enhance the historic and cultural attributes that help define the Region’s unique character.

1. Promote the preservation of and appropriate adaptive re-use of historic sites and properties consistent with their historic and cultural significance.
2. Encourage flexibility in use and renovation standards to preserve historic resources that otherwise would be abandoned or demolished.
3. Promote context appropriate development and design standards for historic villages and neighborhoods.
4. Identify and preserve heritage landscapes.
5. Advance cultural richness through venues for studio and performing arts and civic/community events.
6. Promote cultural tourism by inventorying and advertizing historic and cultural attributes that create a Regional identity and heritage.
7. Consider the creation of a regional cultural center.

### 11.2 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

#### National Register Sites

The National Register of Historic Places is the Federal official list of historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. To be considered eligible for National Historic Registry, the location or property must:

- Be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and still retaining much of its original appearance; and
- Be associated with historically significant people, activities, events, or developments, be significant in terms of historic landscapes, architecture, or engineering, or have the potential to yield significant archaeological information.

Nomination for the Register is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), and properties can be nominated by property owners, historical societies, preservation groups, government agencies, or others. However, individual properties cannot be listed over the owner's objection. Nominated properties that are not listed may be referred to the National Park Service for a Determination of Eligibility.

Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places puts a property into a National database, establishes eligibility for preservation grants, allows for certain building and safety code flexibility, and includes certain tax benefits. The listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting.

National Historic Districts (NHDs) and National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are designations given to places listed in the National Register.

- National Historic Districts (NHDs) are geographically defined areas “possessing a significant concentration” of historically significant places. Their historical significance may be local, regional, or national.
- National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) may be districts, properties, or objects, and are given special recognition – on top of listing in the National Register – for their exceptional significance to the nation's history. NHLs are under the administration of the NPS's National Historic Landmarks Program. There are approximately 2,500 National Historic Landmarks; the Valley Forge NHL is one of the few under Federal ownership.

Sites on the National Register may also include buildings, properties, structures, or objects.

The Phoenixville Region includes seven (7) National Register Historic Districts, one (1) National Register Historic Landmark, and (22) National Historic Register Sites (see Map 10).

### Historic Villages

The Region's historic villages include **Birchrunville, Charlestown, Kimberton, Valley Forge, and Wilmer**, and all but Wilmer are designated National Historic Districts. Each is characterized as a historical crossroads settlement growing around a local industry, business, and/or rail station with associated housing. The historic villages of the Region are small in scale with residential and commercial buildings located close to the street. All but Wilmer contain one or more National Historic Register or Register Eligible buildings. Section 3.5 in the Land Use Plan chapter describes appropriate standards for infill development, renovation, and other improvement of historic villages, including:

- Modest scale buildings
- Design standards in keeping with historical context
- Limitations on non-residential uses
- Emphasis on pedestrian accessibility and traffic calming

Village character can be retained and enhanced through village specific zoning provisions, context sensitive public improvements, and roadway design to discourage high volume pass-through traffic. In

addition, pedestrian and multi-modal trails should be routed to access villages, thus enhancing their role as community focal points and linking them to the regional trail system. Civic events or festivals centered on villages can showcase their unique character while strengthening local identity and sense of community.

**Birchrunville** is a crossroads settlement within the West Vincent Highlands Historic District at the intersections of Hollow Road, Flowing Springs Road, and School House Lane in West Vincent Township. It is anchored by a neighborhood post office, an upscale restaurant, and a bakery/café. The roads are very lightly traveled and carry nearly as much pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian traffic as automobile traffic. From 1976 through 2006, Birchrunville had an informal Fourth of July parade featuring local residents on foot, bicycles, tractors, horses, and antique cars that celebrated the village's unique and quirky character.

**Charlestown** village lies at the edge of the Middle Pickering Rural Historic District and includes 21 contributing buildings, the most remarkable of which is the recently restored Charlestown Woolen Mill, built between 1861 and 1865. Charlestown is a crossroads settlement at the intersection of Charlestown, Church, and Pickering Dam Roads in an agricultural landscape and includes the former Town Hall and multiple other National Historic Register and eligible buildings. Much of the village is walkable, as Church Road and Pickering Dam Road are low volume roads, and although Charlestown Road is busy, it has wide paved shoulders. The Pickering Trail terminates at Charlestown Village, providing opportunity as a cultural destination and trailhead.

**Kimberton** village originally developed as a crossroads settlement around a mill, store, and inn and is still the physical and cultural nexus of East Pikeland Township. The Township's greatest concentration of historic resources that are still in use is in Kimberton, and the mixed use and visual character of the village are still largely intact. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a railroad connected Kimberton with other agricultural communities along the Pickering Creek, and with Phoenixville, where the Reading Railroad connected Reading and Philadelphia. Ongoing initiatives undertaken by the Township and civic groups strive to create a pedestrian friendly village by extending sidewalks along the length of Kimberton Road and implementing traffic calming and streetscape enhancements. The Township Trail Plan builds on this ambition with proposed pedestrian and bike paths connecting all parts of the Township to Kimberton. The village is also incorporated in a National Register Historic District.

**Valley Forge** village grew around an iron forge near the confluence of Valley Creek and the Schuylkill River in the period prior to the American Revolution. The Forge and part of the village were burned by the British Army in 1777, prior to occupation by George Washington's Continental Army in the winter of 1777-78. Today the village consists of residences and businesses at the gateway to Valley Forge National Historic Park. The village is included within the Valley Forge National Historic District and the Valley Forge National Historic Landmark, and parts of the village are on National Park Service lands. The proposed Schuylkill Freedom Trail would link the village of Valley Forge with Phoenixville and other Regional trails.

**Wilmer** is a small crossroads community at the intersection of Pothouse and Charlestown Roads in Schuylkill Township, developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today it consists primarily of the original single family residences on narrow streets and alleys, and there is a church as well. The former Devault Line railroad passed directly adjacent to the village. If developed into a multi-use trail as proposed, Wilmer would serve as a logical trailhead and destination.

### Certified Historic Districts and Landmarks

The Phoenixville Region includes seven (7) National Register Historic Districts (NHDs) and one (1) National Register Historic Landmark (NHL). The National Register of Historic Places defines a historic district as "a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. In addition, historic districts consist of contributing and non-contributing properties. Historic districts possess a concentration, linkage or continuity of the other four types of properties. Objects, structures, buildings and sites within a historic district are usually thematically linked by architectural style or designer, date of development, distinctive urban plan, and/or historic associations." Some historic districts are further designated as National Historic Landmarks, and termed National Historic Landmark Districts. National Historic Districts cannot be registered if the majority of affected owners object to the designation.

A contributing property within a historic district is a building, structure, object or site that reflects the significance of the district as a whole because of historic associations, historic architectural qualities, and/or archaeological features. Another key aspect of the contributing property is historic integrity. Significant alterations to a property can damage its physical connections with the past, and thus reduce its historic integrity.

The Regional National Historic Districts and National Historic Landmarks are as follows:

**Birchrunville NHD** encompasses the buildings and surrounding landscapes surrounding the village of Birchrunville. This district is included in West Vincent Township's Birchrunville Village zoning district.

**Charlestown NHD** is a collection of post-colonial residential, government, and commercial buildings comprising Charlestown Village that was once the business and civic center of Charlestown Township, including parts of the Pickering Creek and surrounding landscapes. The Township has included this NHD and additional surrounding lands as the Charlestown Historic District.

**Kimberton NHD** includes historic buildings from the 18<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> century and associated landscapes that comprise Kimberton Village. East Pikeland Township has included this NHD and additional surrounding lands into three Kimberton zoning districts with density, design, and accessibility standards in keeping with the character of the historic village.

The **Middle Pickering Rural NHD** includes land and structures along the Pickering Creek in Charlestown, East Pikeland and West Pikeland Townships, and is comprised of farms, mills, churches, woodlands, swamps, and meadows. This NHD is characterized by long and scenic vistas over a picturesque rolling landscape.

**Phoenixville NHD** comprises areas of downtown Phoenixville developed between the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the steel boom extending to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The area includes the commercial downtown area along Bridge Street, as well as much of the residential community in neighborhoods south of Bridge Street. The Borough has a local historic zoning district that includes the NHD and lands north of Bridge Street and French Creek that were occupied by Phoenix Steel and are now undergoing redevelopment. The Schuylkill River Trail extends through this NHD, making it an important trail head and destination.

**Valley Forge NHD and NHL** include National Park Service lands that make up Valley Forge National Historic Park, plus some adjacent private properties with residential and business uses. The 3,500 acre Park includes historic monuments and structures that commemorate the American Revolutionary War and serves as a destination and trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail and Horse-Shoe Trail. It will also connect with the proposed Schuylkill Freedom Trail when constructed.

The **West Vincent Highlands NHD** includes (147) contributing buildings, seven (7) contributing sites, and six (6) contributing structures in the rural landscape of West Vincent Township. This NHD features farmhouses, barns, residences, mills and other outbuildings dating from the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Horse-Shoe Trail passes through this landscape, as will the proposed Brandywine Trail when constructed.

### HARB and Historic Commissions

In order to protect historic resources, municipalities can utilize Historic Architecture Review Boards (HARBs) and Historical Commissions. HARBs are given authority under zoning ordinances to advise on development and architectural standards within historic zoning districts. Historical Commissions can serve an advisory function in applications for building, land development, or demolition on properties with historic buildings and other resources.

**Charlestown Township** has a Charlestown Village Historic Zoning District and a combined HARB/Historical Commission. The HARB/Historical Commission maintains a survey of historic resources and advises the Board of Supervisors and other Township boards/commissions on the preservation of historic resources. As the HARB, they advise the Board of Supervisors on lands development, building, additions, or demolition in the Charlestown Village Historic Zoning District.

**East Pikeland Township** has historic resource protection standards incorporated within the zoning ordinance, as well as a combined Historic Commission and HARB. The Historic Commission/HARB serves to identify historic resources and advise on their protection, including review of ordinances that have bearing on historic resource protection. As a HARB, they advise the Board of Supervisors and Zoning Officer on building, development, and demolition in Certified Historic Districts, including Kimberton Village.

**Phoenixville Borough** has a HARB that advises on the protection of the architectural and cultural heritage of the Downtown Phoenixville NHD, specifically with regard to the outward appearance of buildings.

**Schuylkill Township** has a historic resources protection chapter in the zoning ordinance that covers development, expansion, demolition and rehabilitation of historic resources, as well as a Historic Commission. The Historic Commission advises on the protection of historic resources, including maintaining of lists, nominations for National Registry, and certification for new National Historic Districts.

**West Vincent Township** has a Historic Resources Overlay Zoning District and a Historic Resources Subcommittee that maintains the list of historic resources and advises on applications pertaining to them. In addition to designated historic resources and certified National Historic Districts, West Vincent recognizes an Underground Railroad Zone consisting of sites that were instrumental in securing the freedom of escaped slaves.

### Regional Zoning Policy for Historic Resources and Districts

All of the Phoenixville Region's municipalities have policies, boards, and/or zoning to promote the preservation of historic resources, which are seen as vital elements of the culture and character of the area. Invariably, historic resource policy and regulation hinges on maintaining period specific aesthetic appearances of old buildings and other structures. In keeping with this purpose, design standards for rehabilitation, addition, or other alterations of historic resources should address the following:

- Form and massing of buildings
- Architectural style
- Fenestration
- Roof lines
- Surface treatments
- Entrances
- Site and/or neighborhood context

Often times, historical resource ordinances will incorporate incentives in order to offset the increased costs of maintaining buildings in an appropriate historical design vocabulary. This can include density/intensity incentives or flexibility to accommodate uses not typically allowed by zoning.

While architectural standards are important to the historical integrity of buildings, in cases other than museum exhibit monuments, a historic building must accommodate contemporary uses in order to maintain viability. Just as colonial era farmhouses were typically altered and enlarged throughout their history to meet the varying needs of different occupants over time, we must accommodate current realities in the modification or rehabilitation of historic buildings today. In addition, review and permitting processes should be such that undue costs and delays are not placed on those trying to sustain historic resources by improving their functionality and performance. Thus, local regulations and policies for preservation/adaptation of historic resources should include the following considerations in addition to the primary focus on a historically appropriate aesthetic:

- Listing of resources should be based on defined objective criteria in the historic resources protection ordinance.
- Prior to adding a site or structure to a list of historic resources, research and documentation should conclusively demonstrate its historic significance. The documentation should be shared with the property owner prior to listing.
- Where appropriate, historic resources should receive added flexibility in terms of use, density/intensity of use, bulk/area/setback, building codes, parking, etc.
- Historic resource requirements should not unduly increase the costs of routine maintenance projects (e.g. roofing, painting, window replacement).
- Review fees and permit processing time should be generally consistent with similar applications not involving historic resources.
- Ordinances should make reasonable allowances for additions and improvements typical of those customary to a building's current allowable use.
- Ordinances should not prohibit or unreasonably restrict improvements that decrease energy consumption or otherwise advance sustainability objectives.

Within historic districts and neighborhoods, local ordinances should establish guidelines for infill and new development that is consistent with the overall setting and does not degrade the neighborhood historic context. For new and infill construction, the same basic parameters of form, massing, surface treatment, fenestration, rooflines, and entrance quality that apply to historic buildings would pertain, but there can be different approaches to maintaining the desired aesthetic. In other words, new and infill construction can be widely different from its historical neighbors, so long as it is compatible. In order for new building to achieve compatibility with a historic district or neighborhood, the following guiding principles are useful:

- Ensure that historic buildings remain the central focus of the district.
- Discourage false historicism or conjectural history.
- Consider contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details.

Today, many preservation authorities have shifted their focus to the differentiation of new and old construction as a means of preventing confusion in the public’s perceptions of the historic building and its site. Thus, it is possible to have a range of compatibility of styles that retains the integrity of the historic neighborhood. Architect and author Steven W. Semes has identified four strategies for new building or addition in historic context:

**1. Literal Replication**

- Prioritizes compatibility & minimizes differentiation.
- Copies existing architecture.
- Often used to complete an intended but unrealized design.
- Deemed NOT APPROPRIATE by the National Park Service since it might confuse the public’s perception of new construction as distinct from historic fabric.



Photo credit: Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation PA

**2. Invention within a Style**

- Weighted in favor of compatibility over differentiation.
- Adds new elements in either the same or a closely related style, sustaining a sense of continuity in architectural language.



Photo credit: Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation PA

### 3. Abstract Reference

- Weighted in favor of differentiation over compatibility.
- Makes reference to the historic setting while consciously avoiding literal resemblance or working in a historic style.
- Typically incorporates notably reduced, simplified or abstracted details suggestive of historic architecture.
- Appropriate scale, massing and materials.
- Requires skill and artistry in design and construction to be well executed.



Photo credit: Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation PA

### 4. Intentional Opposition

- Differentiation at the expense of compatibility.
- Can lead to the erosion of historic character of the district.



Photo credit: Erin Hammerstedt, Preservation PA

Of the four approaches, context appropriateness is most easily attainable through **Invention within a Style or Abstract Reference**. Whatever approach is used, paying careful attention to the attributes that define the historic character of a neighborhood or setting establishes the framework for successful addition or new development.

## 11.3 HERITAGE AREAS AND SCENIC RESOURCES

All Phoenixville Region municipalities but Charlestown are part of the **Schuylkill Highlands**, a designated area of special natural, historical, recreational, and economic importance that extends from Valley Forge to Reading PA. The Schuylkill Highlands is one of seven **Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI)** regions in Pennsylvania and includes the majority of the Schuylkill River Watershed, the southeastern most section of the Pennsylvania Highlands and the Hopewell Big Woods - the largest remaining unbroken forest in southeastern Pennsylvania. The Schuylkill Highlands is the overlap of two landscapes identified

for protection: the Highlands Region designated by the U.S. Congress; and the Schuylkill River watershed, which is the subject of resource protection planning by PA DCNR, PA DEP, and the Philadelphia Water Department. Its importance stems from the need for water quality protection, habitat conservation, and recreational significance in an area expected to absorb significant growth and development in the coming years.

The Schuylkill Highlands CLI integrates the goals, policies, and actions of partnering local, county, and state governments, land trusts, and nonprofits to protect this critical regional landscape and thereby enable a vibrant and sustainable economic future. The Schuylkill Highlands CLI supplies technical support as well as grants to advance the priorities of natural resource-based conservation and nature-based tourism, with actions guided by the following goals:

- **Create an Interconnected Regional Trail Network** to destinations and gateways to increase recreational opportunities and connect residents and visitors to the outdoors and regional heritage sites of the Schuylkill Highlands landscape.
- **Encourage Sustainable Development** that respects the cultural, historic, recreational, and natural resources of the Schuylkill Highlands.
- **Conserve, Protect, Restore, and Steward** land, waterways, greenways, and habitats.

The **Schuylkill River** and **French Creek** are PA designated Scenic Rivers according to criteria established by the Pennsylvania Scenic Rivers Act. According to the Act, Pennsylvania Scenic Rivers fall into one of five classifications, depending on the amount of development along the shore, access to the river, and diversion of flow:

- **Wild** rivers are rivers or sections of rivers that are not impounded and are usually not accessible except by trail. Their watersheds and shorelines are essentially primitive and the waters unpolluted.
- **Scenic** rivers are rivers or sections of rivers that are not impounded. Their shorelines or watersheds are largely primitive and undeveloped but they are accessible in places by roads.
- **Pastoral** rivers are those that are not impounded except for historic or restored mill dams. There may be diversions or withdrawals to support agricultural activities, for example agricultural ponds. Their shorelines or watersheds may support a variety of farm or farm-related activities, but these activities may not interfere with the pastoral nature of the landscape.
- **Recreational** rivers or sections of rivers are easily accessible, may have some development along their shorelines, and may have been impounded or diverted in the past.
- **Modified recreational** rivers (or sections of rivers) are those in which the flow may be regulated by upstream control devices. Low dams are permitted as long as they do not increase the river beyond bankfull width. These rivers are designated for human activities which do not interfere with public use of the streams or enjoyment of their surroundings.

Within the Phoenixville Region, the Schuylkill River is classified as Modified Recreational, and the French Creek is classified as Scenic.

At the local level, scenic resource protection is at the heart of many planning initiatives:

- Charlestown Township's 2001 Comprehensive Plan identified Special Heritage Landscape Protection zones to preserve the Township's signature rural landscape of rolling agricultural

hills. The Township Open Space Commission advises on securing easements on properties to protect scenic and natural resources.

- East Pikeland's 2013 Comprehensive Plan addendum, *Plan for Open Space and Economic Development* incorporates the protection of scenic roads and landscapes as a basis for open space designation. The Township's Open Space Committee works with specific properties to advance this goal.
- Phoenixville's 2011 Comprehensive Plan and resultant zoning ordinance emphasize the character of streetscapes in order to assure the compatibility of infill development with the scenic qualities of existing neighborhoods.
- Schuylkill Township's 2005 Comprehensive Plan addendum utilizes a construct based on density of development and design standards in order to create aesthetic character zones. The Township Open Space Commission works to protect scenically rich properties from development.
- West Vincent has an Open Space Advisory Board that recommends on protection of open space, including the vast scenic agricultural and natural landscapes of the Township. The Township's involvement in the protection of Bryn Coed Farms represents an immensely significant achievement in this regard.

The scenic resources of the Phoenixville Region and beyond help to for the area's essential character and are worthy of protection. The Land Use, Natural Resources, and Open Space elements of this Comprehensive Plan all support preservation of the unique scenic quality of the Region. The PRPC Region should continue to aggressively pursue strategies and seek support on the local, regional, state, and federal levels to advance this goal.

#### 11.4 ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTERS

The Phoenixville Region is home to a variety of arts and cultural centers, which together contribute to a vibrant and unique community. The following information provides a brief overview of the major art and cultural resources within the Phoenixville Region.

##### **Colonial Theater**

The Colonial Theatre was built in 1903 as a Vaudeville House and was featured in the 1958 science fiction classic, *The Blob*. Over the years the theater experienced great success and great challenges, including the low-point when the theater closed in the mid-1990's for a short period of time until Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation (PAEDC) purchased the property and created the Association for the Colonial Theatre (ACT) in 1996, which began the long process of restoring the theater and reestablishing this building as a cultural centerpiece of the Region. The ACT has work diligently to restore, operate, and expand the theater since their inception. Following an impressive fundraising process, ACT purchased the adjacent vacant historic 1924 National Bank of Phoenixville building in 2011 and in 2017 ACT opened two additional theaters and an expanded lobby and concession stand in the former National Bank of Phoenixville building.

The Colonial's programming includes art and independent films seven nights a week, classic films, programs for young audiences, live concerts, and community events.

##### **Kimberton Arts Alliance**

The Kimberton Arts Alliance (KA2) was formed in 2010 as a nonprofit organization to promote the performing and visual arts in Kimberton by hosting professional and community arts events, developing

venues for performing arts, and providing arts education. KA2 locally hosts approximately 15 events annually including:

- The Kimberton Summer Arts Series encompassing Theatre in the Park, the Kimberton Village Chamber Music Series (5-6 chamber and vocal music concerts),
- The Kimberton Community Block Party (which KA2 co-promotes with Kimberton Whole Foods); the Le Jazz Hot Super Club Vocal Jazz Series; and Home for the Holidays, a vocal concert featuring locally raised or resident performers.

### **The Schuylkill River Heritage Center**

The Schuylkill River Heritage Center is an interpretive center located in the restored Phoenixville Foundry Building in the heart of Phoenixville. The Center includes an interpretive center exhibiting the history, artifacts and legacy of the Phoenix Iron and Steel Company, as well as resources that highlight the Schuylkill River's resources from Pottsville to Philadelphia. The Center also provides information about places of interest to visit throughout the County and hosts several historical presentations per year that are free to the public.

### **Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area**

The Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area was organized in 1977 from a Bicentennial planning group and acquired the former Central Lutheran Church at Main & Church Streets in Phoenixville in 1980. The Museum opened on November 1, 1980 and remains the home of the Society. The building houses the administrative offices, Museum, and social hall at the Church Street level with additional storage upstairs. The property is also host to the annual Strawberry Festival.

### **Community Arts Phoenixville (Formerly Phoenix Village Art Center)**

The Community Arts Phoenixville (CAP) is an arts organization located in downtown Phoenixville that provides art classes, workshops, programs, events, and exhibitions. The facility is part of the organization Camphill Soltane, which has the mission of creating more choices and opportunities for young adults with special needs.

### **The Art Gallery at Franklin Commons**

The Art Gallery at Franklin Commons offers a unique setting for the display of art throughout the common areas of Franklin Commons. The Art Gallery maintains rotating displays art work, independent artist shows, and group shows. The Art Gallery emphasizes art from local artists and provides an opportunity for the community to support local artists.

### **Forge Theatre**

Forge Theatre is a local venue for high-quality, year-round live theatrical entertainment in the Phoenixville community. Located at 241 First Avenue in Phoenixville, Forge offers six productions a year with an ongoing mission to enrich and entertain the community through a unique theater experience.

### **Facetime Theatre**

Facetime Theatre was established in 2009 emphasizing theater opportunities in the Phoenixville Region. The organization offers Summer Stage, youth summer camps, adult theatre, community events, as well as educational classes, workshops and vocal and instrumental lessons for children and adults.

### **Firebird Theater**

Firebird Theatre is a non-profit organization dedicated to youth theater. Their mission is to help today's youth experience, enjoy, and perform in the theatre arts; develop lasting and creative friendships; and enrich and entertain the community.

### **Feet First Center for Contemporary & Classical Dance**

Feet First Center for Contemporary & Classical Dance is a dance studio that has recently created the Footage Youth Dance Company that provides young dancers with the opportunity to experience a professional dance atmosphere. The Footage Youth Dance Company typically has three performances per year.

### **Kimberton Dance Academy**

Kimberton Dance Academy (KDA) is a dance school in Phoenixville offering dance training for both children and adults.

## **11.5 COMMUNITY EVENTS AND VENUES**

A variety of recurring and one-time community events can be found throughout the Phoenixville Region. Major events and venues are summarized by municipality as follows.

### **East Pikeland**

In East Pikeland, Kimberton Park serves as the host to many community events including movie nights, the spring Easter Egg Hunt, and the Kimberton Arts Alliance Theatre in the Park. Additionally, the Kimberton Fair takes place for six days every July at the Kimberton Fire Company Fairgrounds adjacent to Kimberton Park serving as the premiere community event and major fundraiser for the Kimberton Volunteer Fire Company.

The Kimberton Fairgrounds also serves as the location for a variety of privately sponsored events throughout the year, including dog and cat shows, a regional car show, and antiques shows.

### **Charlestown Township**

The Charlestown Parks and Recreation Board hosts Charlestown Day, which is an annual community event held at the Charlestown Township Park typically in September. The free community event includes live music, food trucks, vendors, entertainment, and kids' activities.

### **West Vincent**

West Vincent Township hosts an annual community day event in June at Evans Park, now referred to as *Festival in the Park*. The event is organized by an Ad Hoc committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission and in 2018 included a car show, goat race, pet parade, artist demonstrations, music, and food. West Vincent Township also hosts a summer in the park music series on the third Thursday of the month June through August, also in Evans Park.

One of the largest annual events in the Region, known as Ludwigs Corner Horse Show and Country Fair, occurs Labor Day weekend. In 2018, the Ludwigs Corner Horse Show and Country Fair has expanded to include a music festival known as Country Spirit USA Music Festival, which draws national Country music performers and as many as 15,000 spectators.

Ludwigs Corner Horse Show Grounds is a unique 33-acre community resource on the corner of Routes 100 and 401 in Glenmoore, PA dedicated primarily to horse events. The facility is privately owned and operated and the facility has a unique history.

### **Phoenixville**

Over the past several years Phoenixville has become a focal point for a wide range of community events. Beginning in late spring and continuing into October it is not uncommon to find multiple outdoor events in any given month. The following is a summary and brief summary of long-standing events and festivals within the Borough.

- **Phoenixville Farmers Market-** The Phoenixville Farmers Market began in 2002 and is located under the Veterans Memorial Gay Street Bridge near the Foundry building. The main market season is from April through mid-November with hours from 9am to 1pm. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas the Farmers Market is open every Saturday, but with reduced hours from 10 am to noon. During the winter months the Farmers Market is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 10am to noon
- **First Fridays-** The Downtown Phoenixville street festival is held the first Friday of each month May through October. Community organizations and vendors set up booths along downtown streets, live musical acts are located throughout the downtown area, and children activities are scattered throughout the event area.
- **Dogwood Festival-** This annual event in May includes the Dogwood Parade, a carnival at Reeves Park, and a variety of other activities.
- **Food Truck Festival-** Twice a year this event is located along Bridge Street in Phoenixville featuring a wide range of food trucks from throughout the Greater Philadelphia Region. Local eating establishments have also used this event as an opportunity to showcase their food as well.
- **Summer Music Series-** Friday nights June through August in downtown Phoenixville featuring musical performers throughout the downtown area.
- **Strawberry Festival-** This early June event is hosted by the Historical Society as a fundraiser at the corner of Church and Main Streets. The event includes a flea market as well as a wide variety of strawberry treats.
- **Blues Festival-** A day-long event at Reeves Park in September featuring a variety of Blues performers.
- **Independence Day Celebration-** A fireworks display at Friendship Field in Phoenixville with funding provided by a variety of sources, including community donations.
- **Blobfest-** Annual festival in July to commemorate the 1958 cult horror classic, The Blob, that was filmed partially in Phoenixville, and the Colonial Theatre.
- **Pumpkin Fest-** An annual fall festival in October with a variety of activities and contests relating to pumpkins, including pumpkin races.
- **Halloween Parade-** An annual community parade that takes place just before Halloween. Children are given the opportunity to wear their costumes and be part of the parade.

- **Firebird Festival** is an annual community-initiated celebration of arts and culture that began in 2003. The event has taken place in a variety of locations throughout the Borough and in 2018 is anticipated to be relocated to yet another new location. In recent years the event has included craft and food vendors and features a parade of spectators walking from downtown to Friendship Field, where the event has taken place.
- **Christmas Parade**- In early December the Borough has a small parade along Bridge Street that culminates with Santa lighting the community Christmas tree.

Several buildings and parks within Phoenixville are available as venues for a variety of private and community events. Particularly noteworthy, is the Foundry Building in downtown Phoenixville that is owned by the Hankin Group and rented throughout the year for weddings and other private events. Additional venues include, the Columbia Station, the Colonial Theatre, and Franklin Commons.

#### 11.6 CULTURAL TOURISM AND IDENTITY

With its unique wealth of historic, natural, recreational, and cultural attributes, the Phoenixville Region is well positioned to benefit economically from cultural or heritage tourism. The Schuylkill Highlands CLI devotes considerable effort to promoting the region's signature sites, places, and activities, including seasonal events and festivals. The PRPC municipalities should advance these efforts and promote similar local heritage activities to advance citizen support of preservation efforts while stimulating the regional economy. This includes support of Regional organizations and activities such as the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, the Chester County Town Tours and Village Walks, Phoenixville First Fridays, municipal community events, specialty farms and CSAs, bicycle tours, craft brew fests, car shows, street and community fairs, and the numerous cultural, dining and entertainment venues in and around the Region.

A Phoenixville Regional Cultural Center could be created to promote the arts, civics, and history of the Region, either as a physical structure or as an online virtual presence that educates and informs on events, venues, and cultural matters of Regional interest. It may be also effective to establish micro-localized identities (based on place names, unique attributes, etc.) within the Region to promote tourism, development, and especially redevelopment of revitalization areas.

#### 11.7 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following policy recommendations will implement the goals and objectives of the Cultural Resources Plan:

- CR-1 Create and sustain zoning provisions for historic villages and National Historic Districts that is responsive to the critical context of these areas.**
- CR-2 Assure that Historic Resource Protection Zoning maintains the contextual attributes of historic resources without subjecting property owners to unreasonable restrictions to use or inordinate expense.**
- CR-3 Support designation of natural, historic, scenic, and cultural heritage landscapes and adopt local regulations consistent with their protection.**

- CR-4 Advance cultural and heritage tourism by promoting places, events, and organizations that establish Regional and local identity.**
- CR-5 Develop a Phoenixville Regional Cultural Center to promote events, venues, and other matters of Regional interest.**
- CR-6 Support the growth of community arts and cultural centers when opportunities arise.**