



A G E N D A

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMITTEE WORKSHOP PRPC-18 March 27, 2019

1. PPW-3 Summary Narrative for Appendix B
2. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan Revisions per Public Workshop 3
 - a. Corrected Black Rock Sanctuary narrative to remove boat launch – not part of park
 - b. Added Black Rock Boat Launch to narrative as a recreational asset in Phoenixville Borough
 - c. Added Schuylkill River Water Trail to narrative on Regional Trails
3. Map Revisions per Public Workshop 3
 - a. All maps – added road names to orient viewers
 - b. Map 6 – Saint Stephens Greene water treatment plant in West Vincent owned by BCWSA
 - c. Map 7 – Saint Stephens Greene open space parcel owned by West Vincent Township
 - d. Map 10 – removed Vincent Baptist Church in West Vincent (no longer in operation)
4. Motion to submit for County/Municipal VPP and Act 247 Reviews
5. Adjournment

Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee

February 27, 2019 Public Policy Comment Workshop Notes

Public Participation Workshop #3 took place at Phoenixville Borough Hall. Approximately 70 members of the public and PRPC representatives attended to review and comment on PRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan draft.

The event started at 7:00 pm with an open house that featured large scale maps of Current & Future Land Use, Natural Resources, Forests and Prime Agricultural Soils, Community Institutions and Infrastructure, Open Space/Recreation, Bicycle Routes, Transportation, and Cultural Resources. These components of the regional comprehensive plan were divided into three stations, with respective maps and Implementation Strategy materials for public review:

Station 1: Land Use Plan; Economic Development Plan; and Housing Plan

Station 2: Energy Conservation and Sustainability Plan; Transportation Plan; Community Facilities Plan

Station 3: Environmental Resources Plan; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan; Cultural Resources Plan

Each station was staffed by the planning consultants to field comments and answer questions. Throughout the open house, a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation on the comprehensive plan elements played on a continuous loop. Following the open house, PRPC Planning consultants led a formal session during which workshop participants could ask questions and offer suggestions. The following is a summary of public questions and comments pertaining to each plan element:

Land Use Plan

- Map 1 - Parcels in Ludwig's Corner currently shown as vacant have an approved commercial development plan.
- LU-8 – Concern that current minimum parking requirements for high density residential developments in Phoenixville are not adequate. Parking is needed for users of the Phoenixville Business District, exclusive of apartment residents.
- Objectives – Recommend adding a 6th objective that increases designated green space in the region.
- Recommend zoning incentives for sustainable development

Environmental Resources Plan

- Interest in stormwater management practices such as rain gardens and riparian buffers.

Energy Conservation and Sustainability Plan

- How community solar could be implemented to offer clean energy opportunities to regional residents that cannot install systems on their own properties.
 - During the Q&A session, the Phoenixville Clean Energy Team recommended the following:
 - Consider following West Chester’s example of establishing a Council of Governments (COG)
 - Promote community solar beyond advocating for state legislation (Implementation Strategy EC-11) –legislation (H.B. 531) is moving in Harrisburg to support community solar
 - Advocate native meadow/pollinator habitat be established under solar arrays instead of lawn, to increase the property’s environmental benefit.
 - Develop a model ordinance for solar energy.
 - Include recommendation that the region’s municipal Environmental Advisory Councils (EACs) work together on regional issues.
- A participant said solar arrays should not be considered impervious in zoning regulations during the Q&A, or else given pervious credit. Planning consultants acknowledged the need to reduce disincentives to solar PV system installation, but that there is a need to mitigate panel runoff before it impacts the health of surface and ground water.
- Advocate schools and municipalities to update their vehicle fleets to electric vehicles (EVs). Using these in tandem with renewable energy systems amplifies the environmental benefit. EVs can be promoted to communities and to fleet managers at regional targeted “Ride/Drive” events, some of which can be sponsored by local EV dealerships.
- Could private eased open space be used to accommodate community solar arrays? Consultants answered that there are legal hurdles that would need to be overcome, including State-level legislation. In addition, the language of each easement would have to be reviewed for use prohibitions.

Housing Plan

- H-6 – Ensure that existing affordable housing is protected and maintained, and not replaced with high-end or luxury residential during redevelopment.
- Recommend increasing density to enable more affordable/work force housing

Economic Development Plan

There were no comments on the Economic Development Plan.

Community Facilities Plan

- Map 5 – Recommend revising the map to make the streets easier to read
- Map 6 – West Vincent Township confirmed ownership of St. Stephen’s Greene water treatment plant has been transferred to Bucks County Sewer and Water Authority.

- Question whether/how schools could participate in the PRPC and recommend extending this invitation to teacher unions as a more direct way to engage the school community, and to introduce students to the political process.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan

- Significant interest concerning the Schuylkill River as a recreational resource:
 - Recommend revising the plan narrative to discuss the Schuylkill River Water Trail in more depth.
 - PRO-7 – Recommend a new riverfront park in Schuylkill Township, at a location with significant historic and cultural importance due to the recovery of a number of artifacts from the Lenape Native American people. This site is adjacent to an island owned by Schuylkill Township, and is likely the only site in the Township with feasible water access.
 - An improved portage location is planned above and below the dam, which should be included in the narrative and shown on Map 7. Chester County will have more information regarding the portage. This will also be an access location for first responders.
 - The narrative should reflect that Black Rock Park does not contain a boat launch. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Black Rock Access is owned and maintained separately.
 - Recommend that the confluence of French Creek and the Schuylkill River be identified as a potential riverfront park, with trail connection to downtown Phoenixville and the Black Rock Bird Sanctuary. The land is currently owned by the County, contains remnants of the historic Chester County Branch Canal, and could be a landing point for kayakers.
 - Schuylkill Canal Lock 59 has been partially uncovered near Cromby. This may be an opportunity for a small riverfront park.

Transportation Plan

- Significant participant interest in returning passenger rail to the region.
- Interest in complete streets.
- Recommend implementing the Devault Trail to increase safe bicycle/pedestrian connections, decrease traffic congestion, and create an attractive new recreational amenity for the region.
- Map 9 – Recommended extending corridors shown on map into West Pikeland Township.
- Recommend adding bicyclist-specific traffic lights at appropriate intersections.
- T-10: Current bus routes do not adequately serve riders; for example, there is a need for direct bus routes from Phoenixville to West Chester (as the County seat), and from Phoenixville to career centers in Exton. New bus riders should be encouraged.

Cultural Resources Plan

- Map 10 – A place of worship identified in West Vincent Township is no longer in operation and should be removed.
- CR-2 and CR-3 – A participant recommended that the Schuylkill Township riverfront site with Lenape heritage significance (identified in the PROS Plan comments above) be considered for these implementation strategies.

Other Comments:

- A participant from West Pikeland Township expressed interest in asking their township to join the PRPC.
- There was a question regarding the next step for the comprehensive plan as it is considered by the member municipalities for adoption.

The workshop concluded at approximately 8:30 pm.

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.
- Owned by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, the **Black Rock Boat Launch** provides boat access to the Schuylkill River. It is located less than a half mile north of the entrance to Black Rock Sanctuary on Black Rock Road.



Black Rock Sanctuary. Credit: Chester County

- 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 separate homeowner’s associations (HOA) totals approximately 94 acres and is summarized as follows:

Borough of Phoenixville 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 Township

County Park system and is identified in *Linking Landscapes* as the Schuylkill Regional Recreation Corridor.

- **The Schuylkill River Water Trail** is a federally designated National Recreation Trail, a distinction that recognizes its recreational significance to the region, and includes it in the national trails system. The trail runs the 147-mile length of the Schuylkill River, from the headwaters in Schuylkill County to the confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. The Phoenixville Region contains approximately 14 miles of the water trail, and two access points for boats: the state maintains the Black Rock Boat Launch for motorized and non-motorized craft, and Chester County provides a portage point for canoes and kayaks to be carried on land around the Black Rock Dam. Canoes and kayaks may also access the river at Schuylkill Canal Park and Upper Schuylkill Valley Park in adjacent Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County.

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

Charlestown Township

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:



Paved trail in HOA open space.

- **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 Township

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.

Community Facilities - Infrastructure

Existing Utilities

Pipelines

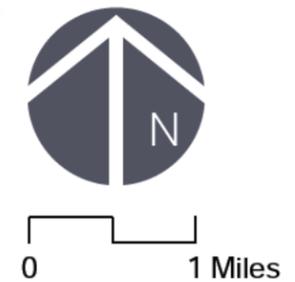
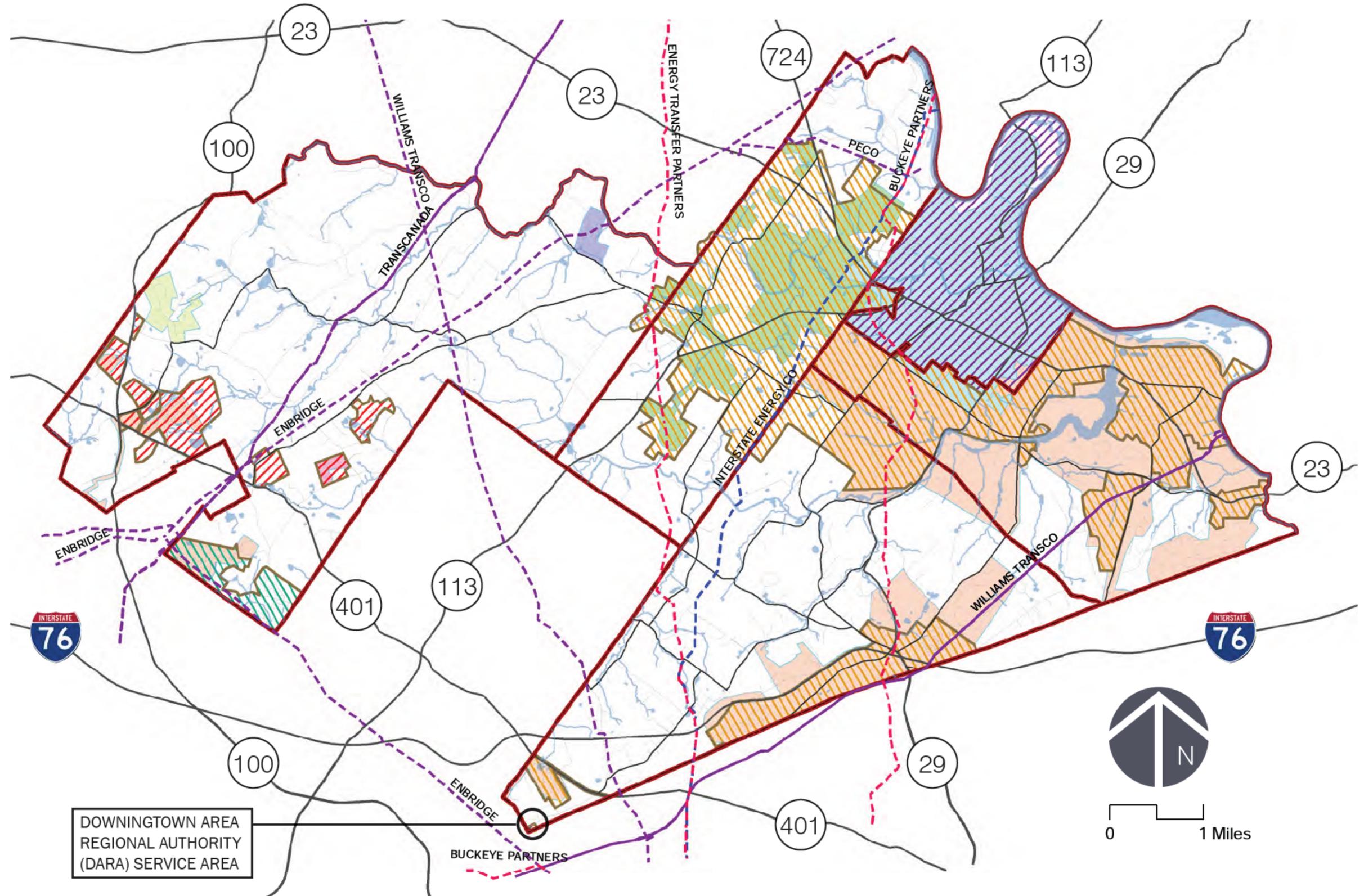
- NATURAL GAS
- - - NON-HIGHLY VOLATILE LIQUIDS (HVL)
- - - OIL

Public Sewer Service Areas

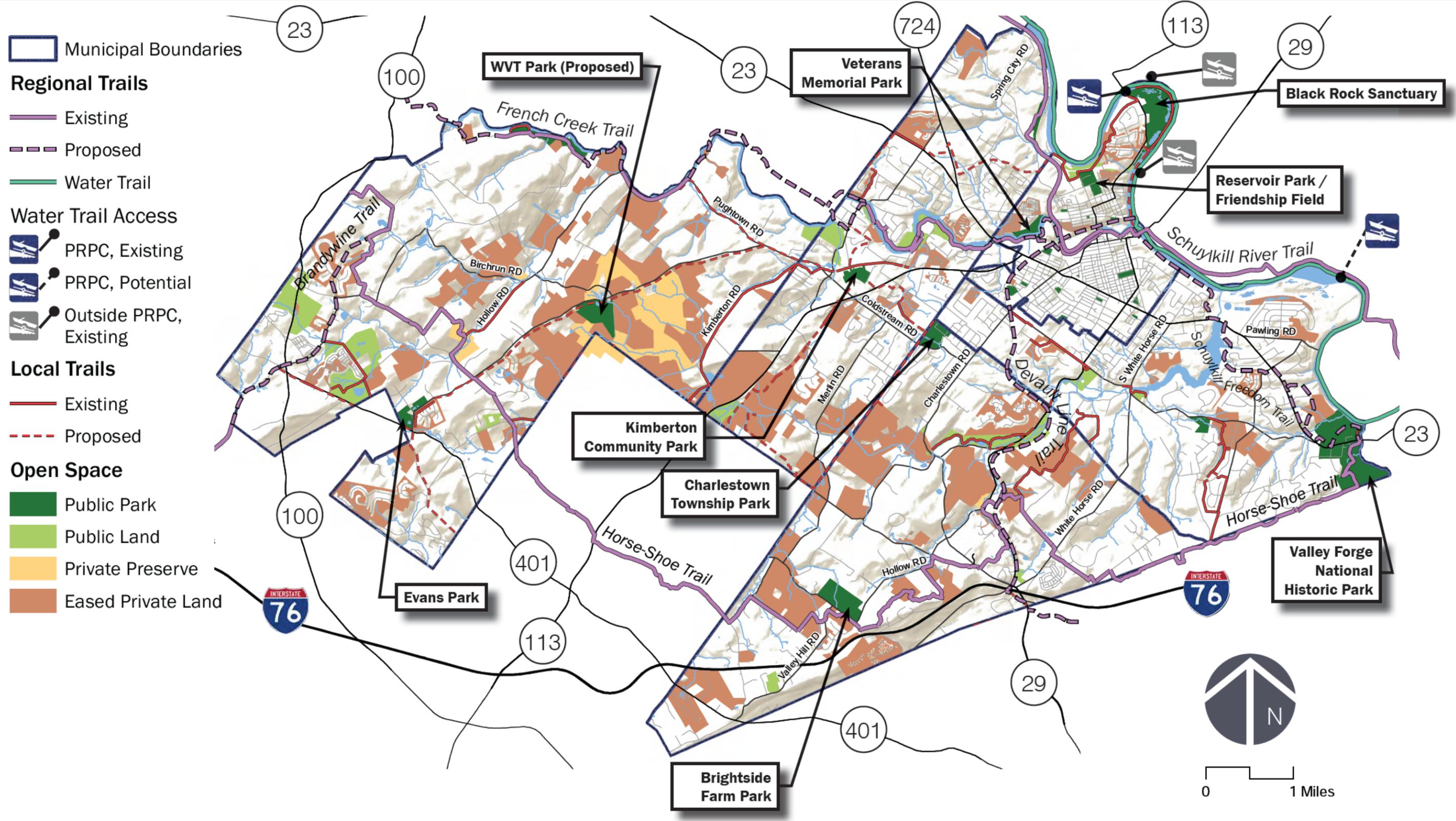
- PHOENIXVILLE BOROUGH PUBLIC WORKS
- VALLEY FORGE SEWER AUTHORITY
- BUCKS COUNTY WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY (BCWSA)
- UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

Public Water Service Areas

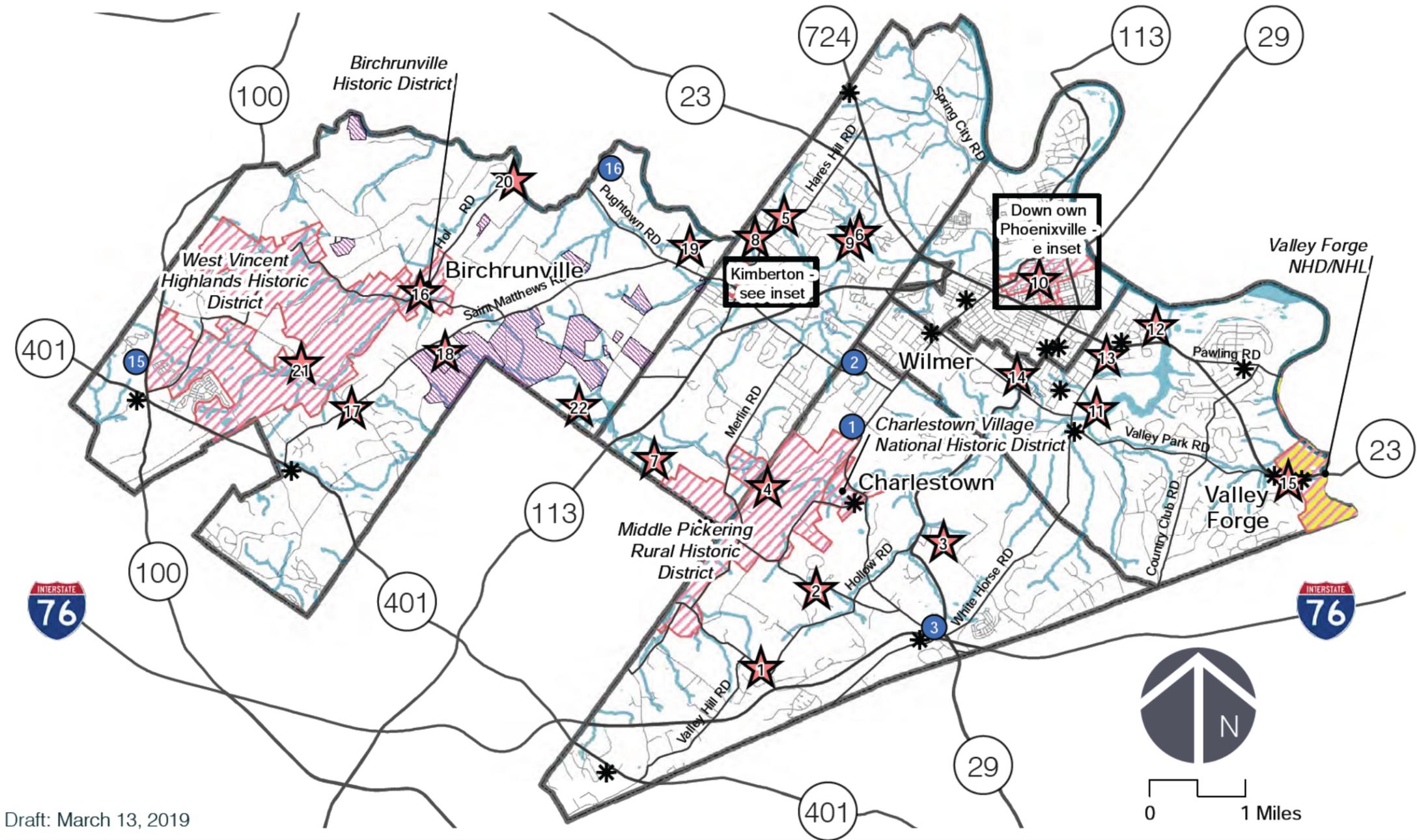
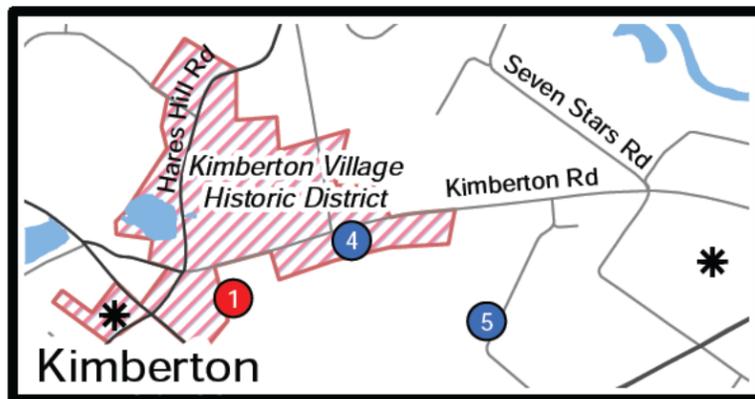
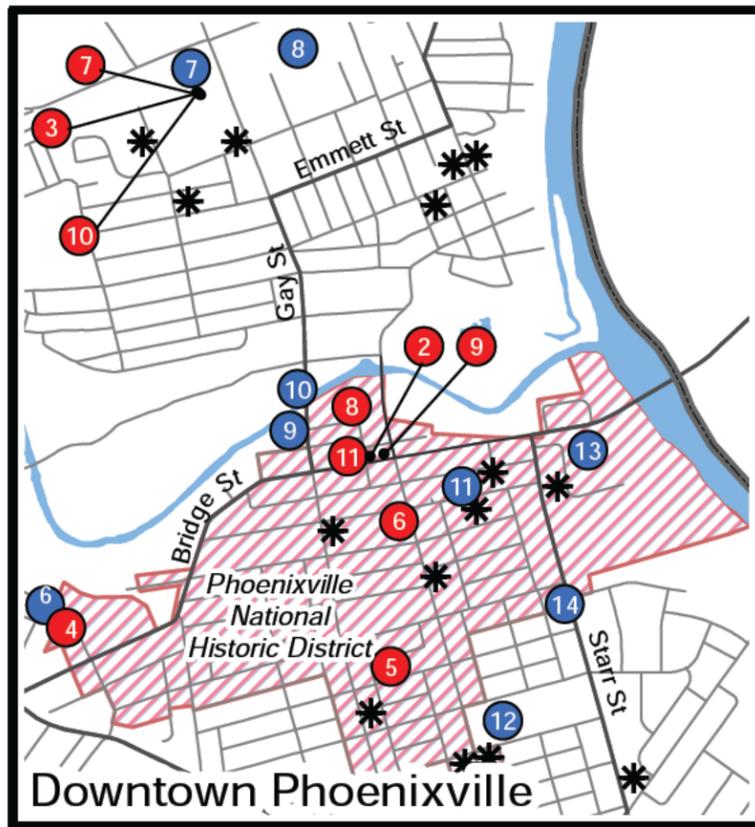
- AQUA PA
- BUCKS COUNTY WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY (BCWSA)
- CAMPHILL VILLAGE USA INC
- PA AMERICAN WATER
- PHOENIXVILLE WATER DEPT
- WETHERILL ESTATES HOA



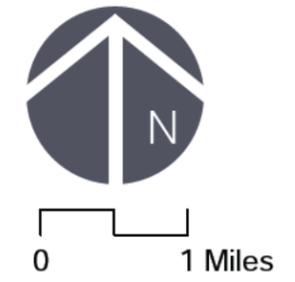
Open Space and Recreation



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National Historic District (NHD)	Underground Railroad Zones
National Historic Landmark (NHL)	Arts & Cultural Centers
National Register Site	Venues / Community Amenities
	Place of Worship

<p>National Register Sites</p> <p><u>Charlestown Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wisner House 2. Martin-Little House 3. Williams Farm 4. Stonorov House <p><u>East Pikeland Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Hare's Hill Rd Bridge 6. Rapp's Covered Bridge 7. Hartman House 8. Prizer's Mill Complex 9. Continental Powder Works <p><u>West Vincent Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Birchrunville General Store 17. East House 18. Strickland-Roberts 	<p><u>Phoenixville Borough</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Gay St. School <p><u>Schuylkill Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Pennypacker Farm 12. Moore Hall 13. White Horse Farm 14. Coates Farm 15. General Von Steuben Headquarters <p><u>East Pikeland Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kimberton Park Amphitheater 2. Community Arts Phoenixville 3. Facetime Theatre <p><u>Phoenixville Borough</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Feet First Center for Contemporary & Classical Dance 5. Forge Theatre 6. Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area 7. Kimberton Dance Academy 8. Schuylkill River Heritage Center 9. Steel City Coffeehouse 10. The Art Gallery at Franklin Commons <p><u>Phoenixville Borough</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. French Creek Farm 20. Halls Covered Bridge 21. Rooke House 22. Deery Family Homestead 	<p><u>Charlestown Township</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charlestown Farm CSA 2. Charlestown Park 3. Chester Valley Grange 4. Kimberton Arts Building 5. Kimberton Fair Grounds 6. American Legion Post 482 7. Franklin Commons <p><u>Phoenixville Borough</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Friendship Field 9. Phoenixville Farmers Market 10. Phoenixville Foundry 11. Phoenixville Senior Center 12. Reeves Park 13. The Columbia Station 14. Veterans of Foreign Wars 15. Ludwig's Corner Horse Show Grounds 16. Sankanac CSA
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