



Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan **Creating Connections** 2018 - 2027



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Allen Township
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan:
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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About the plan title: **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS.**

Allen Township hopes to connect our community through the implementation of our Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

One of our major goals is to connect our community through a township wide system of safe places to walk and bicycle.

We also envision connecting our citizens to nature, the Lehigh River, the great outdoors, and with each other through the shared enjoyment of our public parks, recreation facilities, and trails.

Acknowledgements

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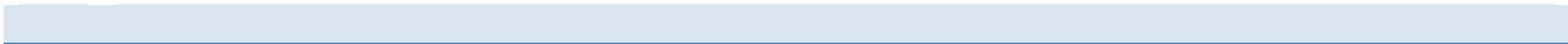
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Executive Summary

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan provides a framework for Allen Township to enhance the quality of life in the community. The conservation of community character, safe places to walk and bicycle, and beautiful parks where people can have fun, get fit, enjoy nature, and socialize with friends, family, and neighbors all make Allen Township a great place in which to live, work, raise a family and retire. The Plan identifies priorities, recommendations and action items that delineate a course of action for the next ten years. The Plan is not a law. It is a guide that elected and appointed officials in Allen Township will use to make informed decisions, set policy, and allocate resources for parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

The **Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** is the culmination of public input, research, field studies, and advice from a group of citizens serving on an advisory committee for the plan for more than a year. Interviews with key stakeholders included citizens, elected and appointed officials, representatives of state, county and community based organizations, and two school districts. Focus groups with senior adults, youth, and sports organizations generated information about the specific interests, concerns, and opportunities of these groups who were identified as having significant needs in parks and recreation. In public meetings, the community came together in a conversation about the priorities of citizens at large. Input from these people and organizations informed the planning process in creating a strategy for the Township to use in achieving its parks, recreation and open space goals with recommendations, and action steps.

Findings

Allen Township has been heavily impacted by recent commercial development. Long-time residents, and even those that have moved into the Township in the last decade still perceive the place as a rural community as evident in the public opinion survey conducted for the **Comprehensive Plan**. The southern half, of Allen Township could be mostly built-out in less than 10 years. The Township still can shape the design and quality of development and, equally importantly, ensure that as each development occurs, it links seamlessly with adjacent neighborhoods, existing or planned. Ultimately, when most build-out occurs, each development should not appear as a discrete and distinct “development” separated from other “developments”, but instead, through an overall framework of transportation and public space (civic) infrastructure, physical and social interaction will occur. The connection of neighborhoods helps to foster a sense of community.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Allen Township is blessed with a combination of parks and recreation facilities that few communities have with a mix of federal, county and local facilities all located here. The Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park, and the Nor-Bath Trail are all within minutes of Allen Township residents. Most significantly, Allen Township owns or leases all the land along the Lehigh River that forms the Township's western boundary.

Allen Township owns or leases 105 acres of public parkland in five parks. The parks include Howertown Park, Kreidersville Park, Covered Bridge Park, and the Allen Township Dog Park. The riverfront park area is the largest area with about 54 undeveloped acres owned or leased by the Township. Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park is county owned with 201 acres as is the Nor-Bath Trail with 23 acres, including two acres leased to the Township.

Open Space

Allen Township's scenic beauty is defined by its agricultural lands, wooded streams, historic villages, farms, and bridges. These are the pieces that combine to make Allen a beautiful place while remaining a working landscape. Township residents have a strong connection with open space and a desire to maintain the beautiful landscape that brings new residents to Allen. Allen Township's officials and staff have led efforts to protect open space and natural resources. About 700 acres of open space is protected under agricultural conservation easement in the northern portion of Allen Township. Many residents have acted as conservationists by protecting their land through conservation or agricultural easement. Other residents have donated trail corridors and helped lead outreach for conservation. One resident has in fact been purchasing land for future greenway linkages. The Township has vetted development plans as well as ordinances to protect natural

resources. In short, community support for conservation efforts is apparent, but a strategic prioritization plan for Township open space is needed as well as funding to achieve those goals.

Programs and Services

Allen Township provides facilities for recreation opportunities that people can enjoy on their own. The Township supports community based recreation organizations such as the sports leagues through the ballfields, support facilities, and maintenance needed to provide community sports. Community organizations also offer special events that people in the community enjoy. Citizens participate in programs and activities in neighboring Northampton Borough such as teen programs, swimming lessons, and activities in the community center and library. The Township should continue to support and facilitate programs and activities offered by community organizations and not provide organized scheduled programs. One of the most important services that Allen Township can provide is timely and current information about parks, recreation facilities, and contact information for community based recreation providers for citizens to pursue their own interests.

Organization and Management

Allen Township operates with a lean, efficient and effective staff. The Township operates within a culture of innovation undertaking such activities in parks such as land acquisition, pollinator gardens, transitioning from grass to meadows. It is vital for this culture to continue given the major growth challenges the Township has. As the Township grows, this small staff cannot be expected to continue to provide the same level of service in years past. The growth in the Township in commercial and residential development, increasing population, escalating traffic, growing citizen demands for services, expanding maintenance requirements, and the addition of park land and recreation facilities mandates increased support. Other park

systems with about 100 acres of parkland would have three to five park maintenance workers. The Township uses outside contractors to provide professional design and planning services, a best management practice that should continue as a cost saving measure.

Financing

Allen Township operates with a high level of fiscal accountability and transparency. The Township has no debt and holds the line on taxes. The operating budget for parks includes \$25,000 in materials and supplies and an estimated \$68,696 in staff time. Workload cost tracking for parks and recreation is not performed as expected in a small community. Typically, park maintenance for active recreation areas in Pennsylvania runs at about \$1,800 to \$3,200 per acre. The national average is about \$6,700 per acre. Passive areas are not maintenance free and require \$300 – \$500 per acre. Passive areas require stewardship, forestry management, removal of invasive species, conservation of wildlife areas, trail and limited facility maintenance. In Allen Township’s case, that would be a range of \$89,406 – \$157,144. It is important to include operations and maintenance requirements in conjunction with the planning and improvement of any new park or major recreation facilities to ensure that it will be successfully maintained over time.

Implications

The resounding finding of this plan is that citizens are deeply concerned about how their community is rapidly developing. They see the conservation of open space, parks, and creation of safe places to walk and bicycle as ways to offset that development and preserve the character of the community and way of life that they value.

The following vision, goals and strategies will guide the implementation of the **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** over the next ten years.

Vision

The vision statement and five themes will guide future planning, development, operation, maintenance, and funding of parks, recreation, and open space via recommendations shown in the Implementation Schedule of the Plan.

Vision Statement

By 2026, Allen Township will have a parks, recreation, open space, and trail system that help to shape the character of our community. The natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources will foster connections to nature, health, fun, learning, and create a strong sense of community. Parks, recreation facilities, and trails will be safe, clean and attractive providing enriching experiences for people of all ages, interests and abilities. In valuing the importance of our resources, the residents will be stewards and supporters of our premier parks, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Themes and Recommendations

In successful parks, recreation and open space planning, big and bold initiatives and small finer-grain moves collectively contribute to how people actually use and value parks, recreation, trails and open space. The **Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** offers a strategy organized around five themes with recommendations varying in scope that will transform and unify Allen Township. The Plan configures the Township as three main

hubs. The hubs include the Lehigh Riverfront Park Hub, the Howertown/Grube/High School/ Dry Run Park Hub, and the Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek Park Hub.

In striving to create a premier parks, recreation and open space system that enhances our quality of life, preserves our community character, and makes our community a great place to live, work raise a family and retire, Allen Township envisions carrying out the following themes to improve the quality of life in our community:

Theme 1

Open space, rivers and streams, and woodlands that shape the rural character of our community.

Theme 2

Lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Theme 3

Community connections with safe places to walk and bicycle and corridors for wildlife and nature.

Theme 4

Recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, stress reduction, social connection, celebration, and personal growth.

Theme 5

Operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

Recommendations

The recommendations in the Plan range from protecting as much open space as possible as soon as possible to increasing public awareness about recreation opportunities. While grand actions are a

challenge that require major investment, other actions are much simpler requiring only staff or volunteer time. Any success, no matter how small, will contribute to achieving Allen Township’s vision. The recommended implementation schedule is included as the last chapter in the **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**. In summary, the top actions include the following:

1. **Engage the citizens.** This is the single most important thing that Allen Township can do now to advance parks, recreation and open space initiatives. Organize the community to tap the expertise, energy, and interests of the citizens to advance parks and recreation. Establish a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board. Empower this board to shepherd the implementation of this plan in an advisory role to the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager.
2. **Preserve the scenic beauty and community character.** Preserve as much open space as possible through a combination of methods such as land use planning, regulations, easements, and acquisition.
3. **Create a premiere parks, recreation, and trail system.** Plan recreation improvements and trails configured in three hubs: Howertown, the Riverfront and the Covered Bridge areas. The Howertown Hub would be the active area and requires another park for sports, socializing, play, fitness, and community events. The Riverfront Hub would be improved to create access to the river: opportunities for boating, fishing, and enjoyment of nature; and conservation of our historic resources. The Covered Bridge Hub would focus on trails and heritage resources.

4. **Add staff commensurate with increasing responsibilities.** Hire additional staff to continue the excellent management of the Township. Focus new staff on community organizing, volunteerism, partnerships, and recreation.
5. **Build partnerships as Allen Township cannot do this all on its own.** Develop, enhance, and sustain partnerships with community-based organizations and neighboring municipalities. Tap grants to benefit from multi-municipal partnerships via staffing.
6. **Provide safe places for citizens to walk and bicycle.** Create pilot projects to expand the township's trail system to connect to the Nor-Bath Trail, the riverfront, the parks, neighborhoods, and other destinations.
7. **Ensure that all public spaces are beautiful, functional, and spark community pride.** Establish a policy that all park improvements will be planned, designed, and constructed through a professional process designed to create and manage great public spaces.
8. **Allocate resources for maximum benefit to the community and to generate widespread support for parks and recreation.** Build a mix of public and private support for parks and recreation including township funding, grants, gifts, donations, fees, charges, rentals, leases, bequests, partnership, sponsorships and other means.
9. **Secure a bond issue or a loan for open space conservation, parkland, recreation facility improvements, and creating safe places to walk and**

bicycle. Use this funding to leverage grants. Retain a professional(s) skilled and experienced in planning, directing and running a voter referendum to approve a bond issue for parks, recreation, trails, conservation, and open space protection. If the referendum would have a better chance of passing by pairing parks and recreation with other community needs that require, that should be considered as part of planning for the referendum and defining the amount of the bond.

10. **Facilitate the provision of recreation programs and services to be provided by others.** Offer facilities for sports, programs, and community events offered by community based organizations. Provide information on the township website and in newsletters for contacts for recreation, sports, and environmental organizations and opportunities. Include expanded information about parks and recreation on the township website.

Introduction

Allen Township residents deeply value the rural scenic character of their community and their way of life here.

Residents often remark that the rural character of Allen Township is essential to their quality of life and to the identity of the community. No matter if the residents lived here all their lives or recently relocated here, they understand that the township's charming character, streams and water bodies, woodlands, trails, and bike paths play an important role in creating a beautiful, livable, and healthy community.

Allen Township has made preserving land and protecting natural and cultural resources a priority to benefit citizens today and for many generations to come. The Township has secured the entire waterfront along the Lehigh River for about 2.4 miles for conservation, river access, and public recreation. Northampton County has located Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park and the Nor-Bath Trail, both highly used by Allen Township residents. Even private citizens have worked over many decades to preserve critical linkages for a future township trail network. The **Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** builds upon this strong foundation. It boldly envisions a sustainable parks and recreation system connected by a network of land and water trails that is integral to the well-being of Allen Township and our residents.

Allen Township has been significantly affected by unprecedented commercial development spawned by the Fed Ex plant. The population increased by 68 percent from 2000- 2014 and may nearly

double by 2040. Development pressures are changing the community quickly through the expansion of major commercial hubs and support facilities along with significant associated traffic. In a township public opinion survey, more than three out of four residents stated that development pressures are the number one challenge facing Allen Township; they are strongly supportive of preserving natural features. However, Allen Township envisions more than just preserving land, but also helping residents connect to nature, the land, and the community through parks, recreation, and trails.

Allen Township has made a commitment to complete a parks, recreation, and open space plan supported in part through grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources along with a Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Supervisors, township management and staff, community organizations, residents, and a professional parks and recreation planning team came together to work on how to shape the Township through parks, recreation, conservation of open space and natural resources, and trails. The vision, goals and strategies put forth in this plan emerged from this collaborative planning process. Setting the course of action for the next ten years, the **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** is the township's commitment to implementing it, establishing a sustainable township wide parks, recreation, open space and trail system that is essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, a vibrant economy, and conservation of our natural resources.

Value of Parks, Recreation and Open Space to Allen Township

- Parks, recreation, and open space unifies the entire system of land, the Lehigh River and the streams, facilities, and programs in a single image that personifies the community character of Allen Township.
- It weaves the township's rich history and cultural heritage into the fabric of the community through recreational and environmental experiences.
- Opportunities in the great outdoors close to home promotes the physical, mental and social well-being of the people who live, work and visit here. Recreation helps to reduce the isolation of senior citizens, engages people otherwise tied to electronic devices, builds strong family bonds, helps youth develop as socially responsible citizens, and creates a strong sense of community.
- Communities with excellent parks and trails have higher property values. They attract retirees, millennials, families, and businesses.

Planning Process

The planning process included four phases: assessment of the Allen Township parks recreation, open space, and trail system; development of conclusions and options; establishment of goals and implementation strategies; and creation of an action plan with a time frame for implementation. The planning process addressed the following components of a public parks and recreation system:

- Community Recreation Needs
- Parkland and Recreation Facilities
- Greenways and Trails
- Programs and Services
- Organization and Management
- Financing

Public Engagement

This plan is rooted in community involvement. It included five components: a study committee, key person interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and public meetings. The plan also incorporated the findings from the public opinion survey conducted for the Township's **Comprehensive Plan**. This process provided valuable information from those in the community who are involved in various parks and recreation related efforts, as well as the general public. Through these components, the needs of both the general citizens and community organizations that provide recreation services were considered.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this plan a law?

No, it is a guide. The elected and appointed officials in Allen Township will use the plan to make informed decisions and set policy relative to parks, recreation, open space and trails.

What will the plan *not* do?

The plan does not mandate or require actions. It does not preclude adding new projects based upon trends, evolving needs, and opportunities. The intent of the plan is to provide an overall framework and guidelines to improve the community through parks, recreation, and open space.

How will the plan be used?

The plan is intended to be a living document that will play a role in the decisions the municipality makes about parks, recreation, open space, trails, programs, financing, management, and related efforts. This plan serves as a reference document and a framework for overall municipal and collaborative planning and management. It is essential that all related township departments, boards, and commissions incorporate this plan into their own planning and operational efforts in related areas including maintenance, facility improvements, land development, open space conservation, trail planning, capital improvement planning, and municipal financing and operations.

What will the plan do?

The **Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** will focus planning on community opportunities and issues that can be addressed through parks, recreation, and open space. It provides a common framework for decision-making and sets forth recommendations and strategies to improve the quality of life in the community.

How will the plan be implemented?

The recommendations will be phased in over the next ten years. Not everything can be accomplished at once. Recommendations range from those that cost little to large projects that would require substantial funding from public and private resources including grants and other sources.

Why is it important to have a public park and recreation system?

Most citizens use township parks and recreation facilities. Those that don't actually use them report that parks and recreation are important for the Township to have. Parks protect our natural resources and provide clean air and water. Parks and recreation increases property values. Recreation is the chief factor in establishing healthy family bonds, the foundation of our society. Recreation deters substance abuse and crime. Recreation adds years to our lives and life to our years. Recreation helps to build a strong sense of community by connecting citizens through enjoyable hours spent together in the pursuit of happiness and

health. Proximity to parks, greenways and trails helps to increase property values¹.

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer², are less in danger from heart disease and stroke³, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer⁴, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and depression⁵. Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. It contributes to personality development and improves psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and stress. Recreation participation increases sense of well-being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others. Recreation plays an important role in promoting a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize, share common interests, and being a major driver of community interaction and pride. Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. They provide a social focus for the community and affect people's perception of their neighborhood. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influences how a community looks, feels, and functions.

Public recreation is considered to be public health. The U.S. Center for Disease Control has enlisted local communities in the fight against diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension by offering easier, plentiful, convenient places and programs that will help citizens to increase physical activity. This will help to reduce national health care costs, one of our country's most pressing challenges.

¹ Blitzer, B., & Netusil, N.R. (2000). The impact of [open spaces](#) on [property values](#) in Portland, Oregon. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 59, 185-193 and Crompton, J.L. (2001). The impact of parks on property values. *Parks and Recreation*, May, 90-95.

² Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. *Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men*. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 273:1093-1098

³ Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. *How much physical activity is good for health?* *Annual Reviews of Public Health*. 13:99-126

⁴ Slattery ML. 1996. *How much physical activity do we need to maintain health prevent disease? Difference diseases –different mechanisms*. *Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport* 67(2):209-212
Slattery ML, Potter J, Caan B et al.

⁵ United States Department of Health and Human Services; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia. Glasgow RE, Ruggerio L, Eakin EG et al.

Vision 2027

The values, vision, goals and strategies serve as the foundation of the **Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**.

Values and Their Application

The qualities valued by the community of Allen Township, as found in the outreach process for this plan, are embodied in the vision and recommendations for parks, recreation, open space, and trails. All policies and actions should be rooted in these values.

- **Natural Resource Conservation** – Woodlands and waterways including Dry Run, Catasauqua, Hokendauqua, and Indian Creeks and the Lehigh River with their fresh water, wildlife, and clean air must be conserved.
- **Community Character and Scenic Beauty** – Allen Township’s agrarian roots, riverfront location, and scenic rural character are the essence of this community.
- **Connections** – Connecting people to nature and helping them to get around the Township and to the regional trail network safely on foot, bicycle, or horseback is important.

- **Health** – The health and wellness of citizens of all ages is paramount. Recreation fosters active healthy lifestyles through facilities, programs, and services.
- **Financial and Environmental Sustainability** – Making the best use of all resources in ways that steward the environment, respect human and financial capacity, and provide a legacy for future generations is vital.
- **Collaboration** – Since Allen Township government operates with a lean budget and small staff, partnerships with other public, community-based, and private sector organizations is vital to the successful establishment and management of the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space System

Allen Township will manage all publicly owned assets as a system that is interconnected by linkages, management, maintenance, operational and funding policies. A network of trails will connect people to parks, the River, neighborhoods, and nature through a continuous web of open space. The Township will collaborate with other related public and private organizations with common interests in parks, recreation, conservation, and nature to advance community goals with respect to maximizing limited financial and human resources.

Best Management Practices

- All parks, recreation facilities, and trails will be developed and improved with professional design support from experienced

parks and recreation planners, landscape architects, and engineers expert in designing public spaces that people enjoy.

- Any park or recreation facility development or improvement will include a Management Impact Statement (shown in Theme 5 of the Plan) to document the requirements for protecting the investment through sound maintenance practices and appropriate funding, labor, and/or partnerships or innovative techniques and programming.
- Allen Township's parks and open space system will be a model of stewardship. The Township will continue to advance such efforts as the meadow and pollinator field on the Nagle property and the development of stewardship plans for all natural areas in the Township.
- Sufficient funding will be generated through Township investment, grants, gifts, donations, and other revenue sources for capital development and operations. The philosophy of township funding will be based upon the township's mandate to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public and the concept that funding parks and recreation is an investment not a cost.
- Partnerships will be the foundation of the township's parks, recreation, open space, and trail system. As a small community with limited resources, budget and staffing, collaboration with others is essential. Allen Township will continue to participate in regional planning and other opportunities such as with Northampton County, the Conservation District, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh County Parks & Recreation Department, the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and

Natural Resources and private non-profit land conservation organizations.

- Communication about parks, recreation, open space, and trails must be ongoing. Keeping elected and appointed officials in the loop, volunteers aware of opportunities, and the public supportive of township efforts to improve parks, recreation open space and trails is key to a successful parks and recreation system.

Vision

The vision statement and five themes will guide future planning, development, operation, maintenance, and funding of parks, recreation, and open space.

Vision Statement

By 2026, Allen Township will have a parks, recreation, open space, and trail system that help to shape the character of our community. The natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources will foster connections to nature, health, fun, learning, and create a strong sense of community. Parks, recreation facilities, and trails will be safe, clean and attractive providing enriching experiences for people of all ages, interests and abilities. In valuing the importance of our resources, the residents will be stewards and supporters of our premier parks, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Themes

By creating a natural resource based parks, recreation, open space and trail system, Allen Township will advance the following:

Theme 1

Open space, rivers and streams, and woodlands that shape the rural character of our community.

Theme 2

Lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Theme 3

Community connections with safe places to walk and bicycle and corridors for wildlife and nature.

Theme 4

Recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, stress reduction, social connection, celebration, and personal growth.

Theme 5

Operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

cost while other will require great investment. Every success, no matter how small, will propel Allen Township forward in creating the parks, recreation, trails, and open space system as the community's treasure. Circumstances change and different funding sources and partners emerge over time. Therefore, readiness to pursue projects is important and will in fact be supported by this plan. While some projects will be more important than others, there are often limited windows of opportunity available that may require acting on one recommendation before another even if it is seemingly less important than others. Time sensitivity might require action sooner than later thereby pushing other recommendations further down on implementation. Readiness is determined by available funding, partnerships, grants, and other factors, changing conditions and emerging opportunities require flexibility in implementing the recommendations of this "living document".

The following sections present the recommendations for action under each theme. The last section of the plan provides the implementation schedule for the recommended actions.

Strategic Recommendations

For Allen Township to achieve the **Vision for 2027**, strategic recommendations are organized around the Five Themes. A detailed strategy for each theme identifies the action items necessary for achieving that particular vision. Since acting upon and achieving these recommendations will require time, labor, and funding, they will be implemented over the next ten years and beyond. Not everything can be accomplished at once. Some projects can be accomplished at little

Theme 1

Allen Township is a river-oriented community that celebrates its rural heritage through linked open spaces, charming villages, and connections to nature.

Our Vision

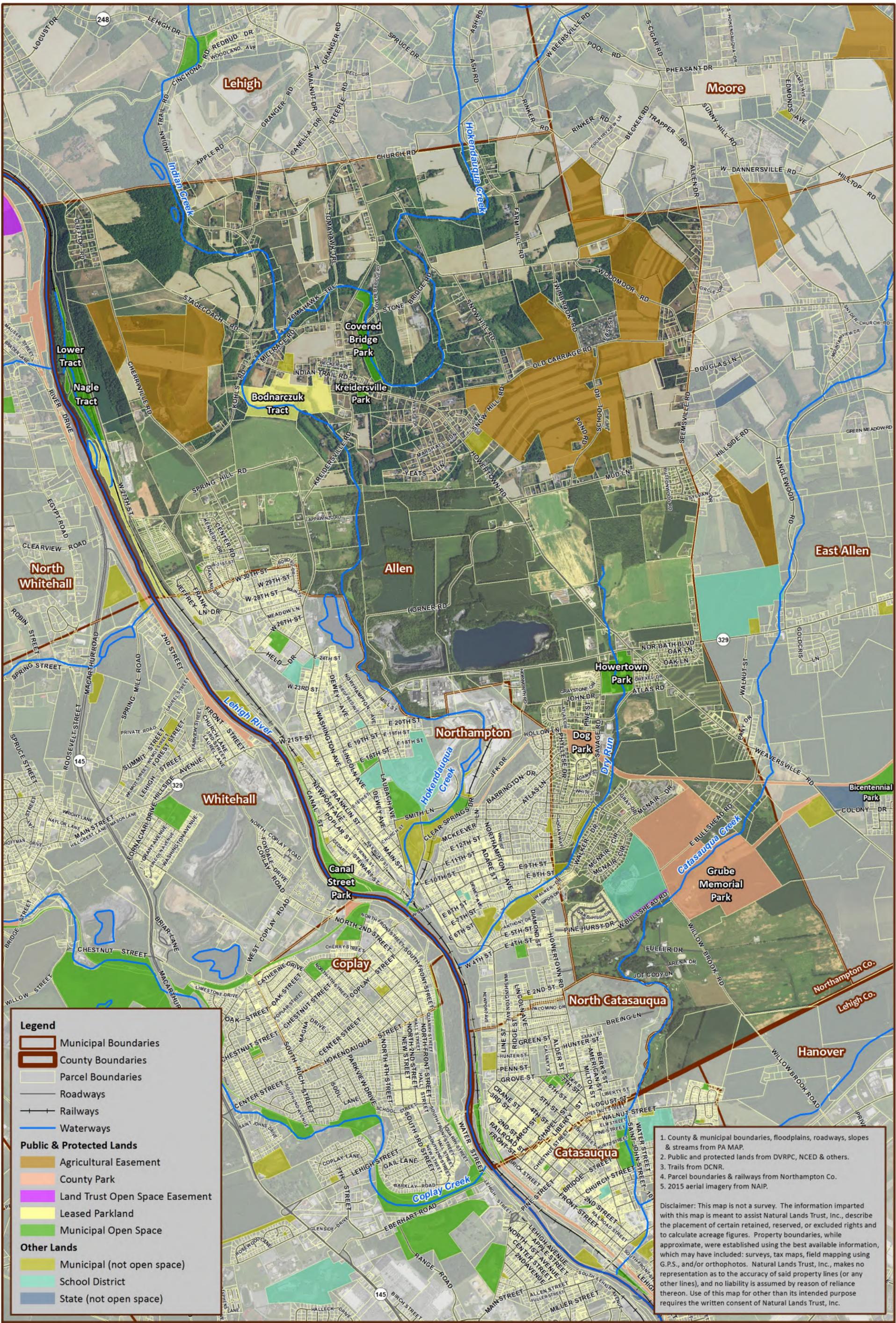
Allen Township's agrarian roots, riverfront location, and scenic rural character are the essence of our community. Our vision is to maintain the rural agrarian roots and scenic, cultural, and historic appeal of Allen Township, while ensuring that sensitive natural resources are protected for future generations. This vision is based on protection of clean air and water through conservation of woodlands, stream and river corridors, and habitat for wildlife. This vision is also based upon a desire to maintain agriculture and the related economy through conservation of lands with high quality soils and agricultural heritage. Through prioritization of open space conservation and protection of natural resources, the Township will retain rural features that are important to our citizens.

Why We Care

Open space and natural resource protections are critical to the quality of life in a community. They allow residents to connect with nature and relieve stress thereby improving physical and mental health. Natural resources such as forests and grasslands, keep water and air clean, and provide many services that cannot be replicated through man made efforts. For instance, woodlands buffer streams, keeping the water cool and clean while providing habitat for local fauna. Wooded stream valleys add contrast, and another layer of beauty, to the township's scenic agricultural landscape.

Additionally, open space is highly important unto itself. Open space consists of forest lands and stream corridors, agricultural working lands, parks, and trails. Open space conservation protects natural resources, provides recreational opportunities where appropriate, and protects a way of life by retaining working agricultural lands, forests and undeveloped areas.

Finally, open space and natural resources protection maintain character of the community. Cemeteries, bridges, farms, and idyllic homesteads scattered throughout the Township are pleasant reminders of Allen Township's history.



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roadways
- Railways
- Waterways

Public & Protected Lands

- Agricultural Easement
- County Park
- Land Trust Open Space Easement
- Leased Parkland
- Municipal Open Space

Other Lands

- Municipal (not open space)
- School District
- State (not open space)

1. County & municipal boundaries, floodplains, roadways, slopes & streams from PA MAP.
 2. Public and protected lands from DVRPC, NCD & others.
 3. Trails from DCNR.
 4. Parcel boundaries & railways from Northampton Co.
 5. 2015 aerial imagery from NAIP.

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance thereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

Allen Township currently retains high levels of open space as shown in the Public and Protected Lands Map on page 11, though only a portion of open space is protected permanently. Many residents have lived in Allen Township and treasure the rural character. Others have moved here because of our rural scenic character. However, as the community becomes more desirable so do the chances of development impacting existing open space and natural resources. Through a comprehensive effort to retain and conserve open space and natural resources, we will be able to successfully maintain our rural agrarian character while meeting the demand for new residents and economic expansion. We will ensure a balanced land use planning approach.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Allen Township’s scenic beauty is defined by its agricultural lands, wooded streams, historic villages, farms, and bridges. These are the elements that combine to make Allen a beautiful place while remaining a working landscape. Township residents have a strong connection with open space and a desire to maintain the beautiful landscape.

Allen Township’s elected officials and the Township Manager have led efforts to protect open space and natural resources. Approximately 1,073 acres of land are publically owned or privately protected in Allen Township. The Township owns or leases 105 acres of parkland. Northampton County owns 224 acres, accessible to the public, comprised of Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park, Nor-Bath Trail, and the Allen Township Dog Park (leased to Allen Township). About 700 acres is protected

under agricultural conservation easement in the northern portion of Allen Township.

Through fee acquisition and indefinite lease agreements, the entire Lehigh River-front is owned or accessible by the Township. Many residents have acted as conservationists by protecting their land through conservation or agricultural easement. Other residents have donated trail corridors and helped lead outreach for conservation. One resident has in fact been purchasing land for future greenway linkages. The Township has vetted development plans as well as ordinances to protect natural resources. Community support for conservation efforts is notable. This support will help to propel the **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan’s** goals of protecting open space as a priority which is a means of preserving the township’s scenic character.

Challenges

Despite impressive efforts by Township officials, the Township Manager, and residents to protect open space landscapes and land for public use, much of Allen Township open space remains vulnerable to development. Currently, most large subdivisions and the bulk of the population is in the southern half of the Township. The northern half is highly rural; however, this is deceptive. As the Township rapidly grows, threats are increasing to existing unprotected open space. More than 150 dwellings were approved for development through 2016 within the Rural District depicted

on page 13. Millions of square feet in warehouse space have been both constructed and proposed. Additional parcels have proposed developments. As a whole, the Rural District is about 3,300 acres and approximately 2,900 acres is unprotected. Of that acreage, about 2,000 is highly developable – for example, not in areas, such as steep slopes, that are constrained for development by the zoning code. Given a one-acre minimum lot size and that about 400 units already exist, the Township can expect another 1,600 houses, at a minimum, if the Rural District is fully developed. This equates to more than 4,000 residents, increasing the population by 86 percent.

Maintaining Agriculture

The basis of challenges to open space is increased development pressure in Allen Township. As the Lehigh Valley continues to grow steadily, Allen Township has grown at more of a fevered pace. As development pressure grows, so do land values making the preservation of farmland difficult when it has a high cash value. Working farms preserve the scenic views, contribute to the local economy, produce locally grown food, and conserve historic structures within their proper context.

Zoning

The Rural District, which consists of much of the northern one-third of the Township, is generally thought of as the priority area for open space. Other zoning districts are highly developed and feature increased densities. The challenge is that zoning does not support land conservation or natural resources protection in the Rural District. The Rural District is zoned for a minimum lot size of one-acre. With this level of by-right development, it is difficult to make the case for conservation as opposed to development, particularly with a lack of dedicated funding for open space conservation. Natural resources are afforded some protection through township ordinances,

particularly trees. For instance, increased lot sizes are required when woodland areas are to be developed, as typical with performance zoning. While resource protection occurs through the development process, that does not mean that land is owned or eased permanently, nor does it mean that open space is interconnected, which is ideal for habitat and wildlife preservation.

Funding

To acquire open space, funding is needed. In some cases, landowners will offer a property to the Township or donate a conservation easement to a local land trust, which does not cost the Township to complete the transaction. However, a township that desires a true open space acquisition program that protects and stewards natural resources cannot rely on donations. Therefore, a dedicated funding mechanism is required, likely for a long duration. The Township does not know when opportunities for conservation may occur and they need to be ready for those opportunities, whether it is from interested landowners or through the development process.

The general fund has been used primarily for acquisition of land by Allen Township. This can work, but the funding is not dedicated to open space and funds may not always be available when needed. The ideal scenario is for a township to have a referendum establishing a bond through increased earned income tax (one half of one percent) to be used for open space and parks funding. Allen Township tried to pass a referendum twice, but there was not enough support. Without the dedicated funding then preserving land at a large scale and gaining interest of landowners will likely be difficult, particularly with all the other responsibilities that township staff and officials have.

Prioritization & Capacity

Township staff and officials do a wonderful job of acquiring and leasing land, as possible, and enforcing ordinances to protect natural resources. However, it is a challenge for staff and officials to establish priorities for open space preservation and administer an open space acquisition program without a dedicated group, such as Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board or an Environmental Advisory Council.

Once land is acquired then the Township, or potentially partners, will need to steward and maintain the property(ies), whether for public use or not. Currently, the Township Public Works Department maintains parkland. While the lone staffer does a wonderful job, capacity is limited to manage what the Township currently holds and is focused on active recreational use and not natural resource management. If more lands are added to the Township portfolio, then maintenance challenges will increase.

Opportunities

Township-Wide Conservation

While much of the remaining undeveloped land is in the northern portion of the Township, it is important that conservation opportunities are met with interest township-wide. All sectors of the Township contain important properties for preservation.

Northern Tier/Rural District/Agricultural District: Nearly all of the northern one-third of Allen Township remains rural. While there is substantial land protected by agricultural conservation easements, most parcels remain unprotected and held in private ownership. Sensitive natural resources are located primarily on the northern tier of the Township as are

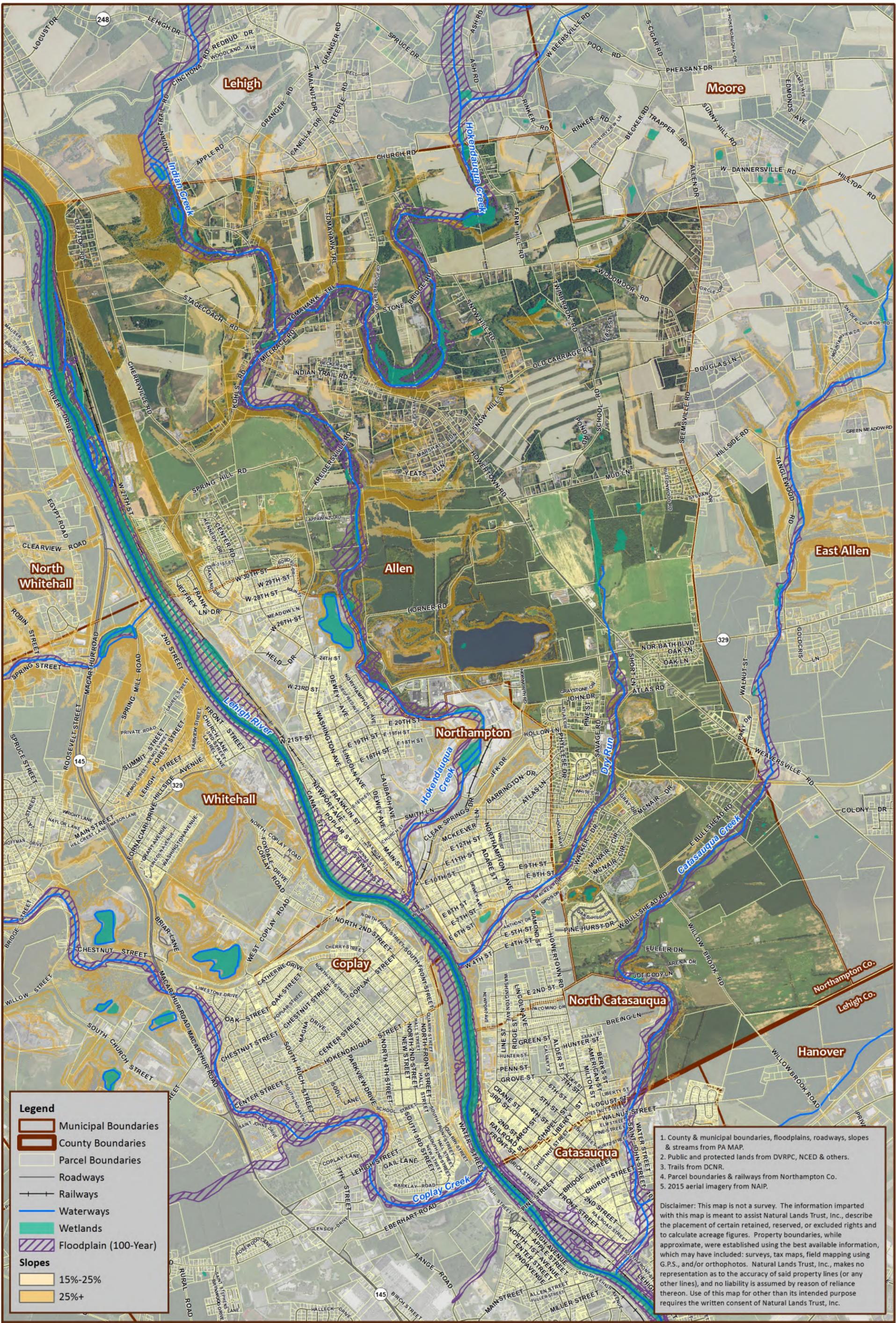
the working lands. Allen Township has the chance to build, maintain, and enhance the Rural District by protecting large amounts of property through easement, acquiring others, and linking through greenway development.

Acquisition along Indian Creek should be a high priority because of sensitive natural resources. Acquisition should also be a priority along the length of Hokendauqua Creek for resource protection well as potential trail development.

All methods of open space protection are valuable in this area. Protection of rural lands in the northern district would provide a greenbelt north of current and proposed development and eliminate the need for costly improvements, such as road and utility expansion, in the future that would be required if developed instead

The Lehigh Riverfront: While the Township has acquired or secured leases on all land directly along the River, there are opportunities to expand and buffer these properties. Fee acquisition and conservation easements would be useful tools. Much of this proposed community recreation hub (see Theme 2) is located within the Rural District.

Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek: Another proposed community recreation hub is near Covered Bridge Park and a large oxbow in Hokendauqua Creek. The surrounding land is entirely Rural District. Opportunities in this hub are centered on greenway development along Hokendauqua Creek that may also spur trail corridors. Fee acquisition of properties, or portion of a property, along the stream would be most valuable.



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roadways
- Railways
- Waterways
- Wetlands
- Floodplain (100-Year)

Slopes

- 15%-25%
- 25%+

1. County & municipal boundaries, floodplains, roadways, slopes & streams from PA MAP.
2. Public and protected lands from DVRPC, NCD & others.
3. Trails from DCNR.
4. Parcel boundaries & railways from Northampton Co.
5. 2015 aerial imagery from NAIP.

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North of 329: This area includes parcels generally between Nor-Bath Boulevard (Route 329) and the Rural District boundary. The area features many large highly developable properties, some of which have already been proposed for development, that are zoned for higher density residential, commercial, or industrial uses. Nonetheless, its central location and the need for connections, as well as nearby open space to future residents, create the need for open space protection in this zone. Except for the Dry Run headwaters, natural resources protection needs are minimal. However, ordinances should create interconnected and public open space whenever possible through the development process. Strategic acquisitions, possibly solely for trail corridors in some cases, would be highly valuable in this corridor.

Howertown/Grube/Catasauqua High School /Dry Run: This proposed community hub serves as the center of Allen Township. Much of the area has been fully developed. Open space protection is highly important in this vicinity for acquisition of strategic parcels along Dry Run to create a greenway from Grube Park/Nor-Bath Trail to Howertown Park. Additional greenway linkages south to Northampton Borough should also be explored. Any further development should require interconnected, public open space.

Prioritize Conservation

The Township is at a critical point with regard to open space conservation. The Township is growing rapidly. The Township has already made open space conservation a priority as evident in the purchase of the Nagle property along the Lehigh River. With a new **Comprehensive Plan** and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan in place, now is the time to put into place code reforms designed to protect open space and

generate funding through a combination of township support, grants, and donations. Ideally, a referendum measure to establish dedicated funds toward land conservation, greenway and trail funding, and parks should be considered. Public input for this plan found support for conservation as a priority. There is compelling momentum for this support stemming from the Fed Ex development, planned along Willowbrook Road, and the resulting traffic and warehouses springing up. Using this momentum strategically would be wise in terms of timing for a referendum on funding for open space conservation.

Prioritize Parcels

In a parallel effort, the Township should determine what the highest priority parcels and landscapes are for preservation in order to initiate protection efforts. To begin this process, the Township should designate a group to develop priorities. This may be a small group of township officials planning commission members and the general citizenry that can then be designated or established as the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board (addressed further in Theme 5). This group should decide what may be the highest priority parcels to protect. See the following section for further details on development of conservation priorities.

Following this analysis, the same group should start reaching out to landowners. This will likely not involve mailings or more traditional methods, but rather relying on “champion” landowners that their neighbors can trust, for direct outreach to specific landowners.

Leverage Financing

Capital for open space acquisition does not have to be provided solely by Allen Township. With the establishment of this plan and determination of open space and greenway priorities, the Township is in a much better position to acquire grant funding to supplement their investment in acquisition activities. Partnerships with agencies such as Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Recreation, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and Northampton County support open space and greenway development through their grant programs.

Use Conservation Easements

In addition to leveraging grant funds, the Township also has an opportunity to expand its use of conservation easements as a protection tool to reduce acquisition cost. The Township has primarily purchased property in fee. However, conservation easements remain in private ownership and can typically be acquired at a reduced cost compared to acquisition in fee that is held by the Township. Not only is the upfront cost reduced, but the Township does not have to maintain the property as they would in a fee purchase scenario.

Conservation easements can deliver a larger bang for the buck and may even make more sense as a tool in some situations. In particular, priority properties that buffer parks, contain working lands, or are high in natural resources value, but simply not able to be acquired for some reason (owner not amenable, cost prohibitive, etc.) are usually strong candidates for conservation easements as opposed to fee acquisition. Some public access may be integrated with a conservation

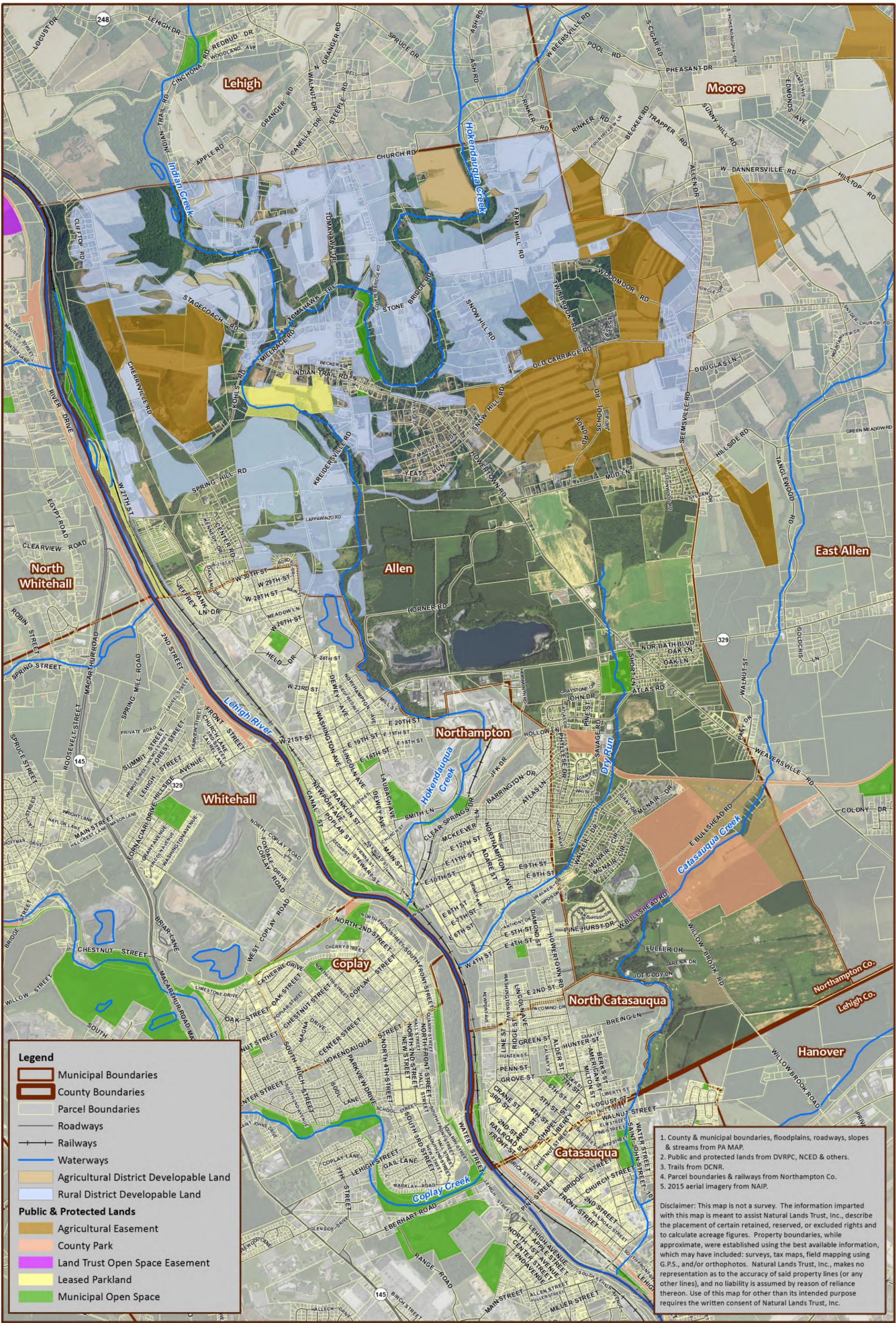
easement as well. The Township should expand its use of conservation easements to more feasibly achieve its open space goals.

Ordinance Amendments

No municipality can buy all of the land they would like to acquire and protect. Therefore, land use planning is vital to any land protection strategy. In Allen Township, ordinances strive to protect forest cover and other natural resources. However, they could do much more to reduce yields on properties where constrained lands are prominent. In addition, current ordinances do not require interconnected open space. The Township has the opportunity to renew their Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. These ordinances support conservation subdivisions that not only requires natural resources to be protected during the development process, but also requires useable open space to be established and connected between developments to ultimately create greenway corridors, potentially featuring trails. While conservation subdivision provisions should be ideally incorporated in all residential zoning districts, it is most pertinent for the Rural District.

Priorities for Open Space Conservation

When choosing parcels to preserve, it is likely that most properties will feature agriculture, wooded streams, or a locally important historic feature. Additional criteria can help in prioritization, including factors such as landowner willingness, parcel size, connectivity to trails and greenways, proximity to the Lehigh River, development pressure, or financial feasibility.



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roadways
- Railways
- Waterways
- Agricultural District Developable Land
- Rural District Developable Land
- Public & Protected Lands**
- Agricultural Easement
- County Park
- Land Trust Open Space Easement
- Leased Parkland
- Municipal Open Space

1. County & municipal boundaries, floodplains, roadways, slopes & streams from PA MAP.
 2. Public and protected lands from DVRPC, NCD & others.
 3. Trails from DCNR.
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Natural Resources Protection

When prioritizing properties for conservation, there should be strong consideration of protecting natural resources. Allen Township has small, but concentrated areas of woodlands and other sensitive habitat, primarily along streams. Indian Creek, in particular, contains sensitive habitat along its reach near the Lehigh Township boundary. Dry Run contains significant wetlands and woodlands near its headwaters. Hokendauqua Creek provides important habitat. Catasaqua Creek is close to large populations and extensive buffers should be maintained/established through the development process.

Given the minimal woodlands in the Township, forests should receive particular attention. Stream corridors may serve dual function as corridors making up greenways for natural habitat, while also providing recreation opportunities, including trails.

Large Parcels

Many large, undeveloped parcels remain. Eighty-five parcels containing ten acres or more exist in the Township that are unprotected. These parcels are the most likely to be developed. They are also the most likely to be eligible for funding for preservation. Of these parcels, six are greater than 100 acres and another eleven are greater than 50 acres. In some cases, the same owner holds multiple large parcels. Many opportunities may remain for large parcel conservation. When large parcels become available, their preservation should become a priority, as they will offer the greatest bang for the preservation buck.

Connectivity to Trails, Greenways, and Preserved Open Space

Preservation of contiguous lands will benefit the township's residents, flora, fauna, and water. By preserving properties

adjacent to one another, trail systems can be expanded, greater natural areas can be protected or revitalized, and streams can be buffered more effectively. Connectivity should be considered when identifying parcels for conservation.

Trails - Few trails currently exist within the Township. However, the community is beginning to value safe places to walk and bicycle as development progresses. Roads are becoming busier with traffic, and less safe for non-motorized travel. Preservation of open space will go hand in hand with expansion of the trail system, so properties adjacent to the existing Nor-Bath Trail, or providing opportunities for additional trails, especially connecting to the Nor-Bath Trail, should be considered as conservation priorities. In most cases, trail easements should be provided alongside agricultural or conservation easements.

Greenways - Greenways are not well established in Allen Township. Greenways provide crucial wildlife habitat and corridors, flood protections, and riparian buffers and should be developed along all stream corridors as possible. A greenway along Hokendauqua Creek would traverse much of the Township and serve as a critical connection for wildlife and potentially people. Development typically fragments greenways, potentially leading to decreased stream health, increased flood risks, and reduced habitat. Trails often follow greenways, as they are one of few uses appropriate for location within floodplains. Conservation of properties that potentially connect greenways or trails should be considered a priority.

When contiguous parcels are preserved, greater opportunities arise for protecting or rehabilitating natural areas on a grander scale. Fragmented forests and small patches of meadows do not serve the local birds and other animals as well as larger

patches. Some birds require vast acreages of contiguous meadow in order to nest. By preserving adjacent parcels, opportunities may arise for creating larger meadows. Where forest is fragmented into many smaller patches, more forest edge exists, which is often the least healthy in terms of biodiversity and native species. Adjacent parcels may offer opportunities to preserve or create larger forest patches, better equipped to serve the local fauna. Additionally, striving to preserve farms in close proximity may provide opportunities for more efficiency for farmers, particularly for those looking to lease large areas of farmland, rather than tending to many smaller farms in different areas. Connectivity should be a high priority when identifying parcels for conservation, whether their ultimate use will be parks, trails, open space, natural areas, or agriculture.

The Lehigh River Waterfront

The Lehigh River forms the township's western boundary, providing 2.4 miles of riverfront. All land along the river is now owned or leased by the Township, with the exception of a small portion along the northern township boundary, where slopes are very steep and the railroad is located on the riverbank. Allen Township should continue to acquire or place easements of additional land adjoining on near the riverfront. Doing so would create greater connectivity and buffer public land.

Building a Land Ethic

The most important criterion for conservation is availability. The Township should focus on properties whose owners are willing to discuss conservation. While eminent domain is a tool available to the Township, it is not recommended for use. Allen Township, and most communities, would be better

served in building a community land ethic. This movement evolves as residents become more aware of their land resources and help to put into place the planning, programmatic, and regulatory mechanisms needed to protect these resources. Building this community land ethic may require the Township to offer more opportunities to learn about their own community and discuss the importance of preserving it.

Funding opportunities are nearly as important as availability, because no municipality can afford to purchase all the land they would like to conserve. Properties that meet many of the priorities of Allen Township are also likely high priority for funders. Properties that have unique opportunities to draw from many funding sources should be capitalized upon, allowing the Township to further leverage their funds.

Methods for Conserving Open Space

Allen Township primarily uses fee simple acquisition as a means to preserve open space. Continued use of fee simple purchase, as well as, use of conservation easements, agricultural easements, and land protection through development, will ensure that the open space system continues grows and meets future needs.

Conservation Easements

In addition to purchasing land outright, townships purchase conservation easements to meet local open space goals. A conservation easement limits certain uses on a property (such as development) in order to advance conservation purposes while keeping the land under private ownership and control. Conservation easements relieve the municipality of the burden of managing the land and the cost of maintaining it.

Conservation easements are often used to preserve farmland, prohibiting future subdivision and enabling the farmer to live on and farm the property. Another use of the conservation easement technique would be to purchase a trail easement, thereby allowing public access in an interconnected trail network. The Township would want to ensure that the easement permits the Township (or group responsible for the trail) to maintain the trail. Because the land remains in private ownership, the cost of purchasing the conservation easement is lower than the cost of purchasing the property in total.

Agricultural Easements

As Allen Township still features many working farms, agricultural easements may also continue to be a viable means of preservation. The Township has contained 730 acres under agricultural easement. The Northampton County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) administers Pennsylvania's Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. Their mission is to assure the preservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy and resources of the county. This body may present funding for preservation of farmland, which may not be available from other sources. However, agricultural easements do not allow trails through a property. Where an agricultural easement may be appropriate for a property, but a trail corridor is needed, a trail easement can be established alongside an agricultural easement. This creates an additional layer of work and can complicate the transaction and funding. However, due to the number of remaining farms, and the impact of the preservation of existing farms under agricultural easements, this tool should continue to be considered as a means of preservation in Allen Township.

Fee-Simple Acquisition

The most common means for a municipality to fully control land is through fee simple acquisition. This means the Township owns the property and manages it as they see fit. Acquisition may be the best solution for Allen Township to provide parkland and recreation facilities that would require maintenance. Acquisition should be considered for parcels suitable for parks and recreation uses or when a parcel can augment an existing facility. Acquisition should also be considered when an adjacent parcel contains a related use, such as a school, a natural area with important features, or an historic site, which would benefit from buffering.

In some cases, fee simple acquisition may be followed by establishment of a conservation easement. The Township may find itself with the opportunity to acquire a parcel that it does not wish to manage, but may be well suited for preservation due to the presence of agriculture. In this case, the Township may wish to acquire the land, place trail and conservation easements on the property, ensuring its protection and contribution to the trails network, and then sell the property to a private owner, or lease the farmable land to a local farmer. If the land can be leased for farming, it would also generate income for the Township and reduce maintenance costs.

Allen Township holds properties in fee simple ownership intended for passive use, including Nagle and Lower tracts, along the Lehigh River, and lands around Covered Bridge Park. The Township may wish to consider placing conservation easements on parks and open spaces, such as these, to prevent their sale for profit during a period of robust development or times of financial struggle for the Township. Easements should only be established after master planning and public input determine the best uses and layout for each park.

Leasing

Leasing a property can also be a useful option for the Township if a more permanent solution is not possible. In this case, the Township would sign an agreement to use the property, typically for a specific purpose or for accessibility. A lease can be budget friendly and in some instances, may cost the Township nothing. The lease may be indefinite or may have a specified term. In either scenario, their permanent utility may be limited as lease agreements may be terminated or a landowner may change causing the lease to terminate. Nonetheless, leases can be useful in certain situations where it is difficult for the Township to acquire an interest in the land.

Allen Township has used this strategy, particularly for Pennsylvania Power & Light (PPL) properties along the Lehigh River, which the Township has acquired an indefinite accessibility easement upon. Previously the Township had a lease for access to the property across from the Township building. This lease has since expired, but may be renewed. In this case, the Township may look at a more permanent solution such as fee acquisition or easement.

Cluster and Open Space Development Options

Zoning ordinances play an important role in preserving open space. Ideally, a conservation subdivision or cluster option will be mandated or available. This option requires 50% of the development site to be preserved as open space. Under this option, developers are still permitted to build as many homes as under the conventional development options after netting out constrained lands. The open spaces preserved within these subdivisions will typically be managed by Homeowners' Associations. Trails and trail easements can also be established through the open spaces, allowing the new development to connect to the expanding township wide trail network while

also providing an amenity for its residents. These development options are not mandatory, but if use of these options continues, they can ensure that open space is preserved, even where properties are developed.

Allen Township currently has a cluster option, but it does not ensure that open space is interconnected and yield is not calculated based on net acreage minus natural resources, though some yield reduction can occur if the property contains constrained lands. With some revisions, the township's Zoning Ordinance could provide additional open space conservation opportunities

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of how Allen Township envisions moving forward with open space protection.

1. **Establish an advisory group for open space for Allen Township.**
 - a. To advise and work with the Board of Supervisors regarding open space protection and define priorities. This may be the advisory committee working on this plan.
 - b. Lead outreach efforts based on priorities and involving the community.
 - c. Consider establishing the committee as the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board.

2. Determine open space priority parcels. Use the following criteria for evaluating open space properties to determine how worthy they are of conservation:

- Contains significant agricultural soils (Prime or of State Importance);
- Is in agricultural production (greater than 50% of the land);
- Protects water quality;
- Is adjacent to a Township water body;
- Contains significant woodlands;
- Is adjacent to, will connect to, or link other protected parcels, including the parks;
- Contributes to a scenic view shed;
- Conserves a documented biodiversity sites
- Expands recreational uses;
- Implements Allen Township Comprehensive Plan 2017 goals;
- Is consistent with county and state planning documents;
- Is of documented historic or cultural significance;
- Is of adequate size, at least ten acres;

3. Permanently conserve privately undeveloped land in the Rural and Agricultural Zoning Districts.

- a. Prioritize lands with significant natural resources. set a goal of preserving a specific amount of acreage or percentage of the land area. Determining how much to preserve as a goal would be a function of the potential Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Committee.

- b. Utilize conservation easements to preserve working lands, buffer park lands, and protect properties with significant natural resources that the Township cannot acquire in fee.
- c. Use agricultural easements to preserve properties where trail corridors are not desired.

4. Protect properties adjoining existing Township-owned land along the Lehigh River.

5. Establish greenways along stream corridors.

- a. Indian Run – top priority. Acquire land if possible to protect sensitive resources, otherwise utilize easements.
- b. Hokendauqua Creek – top priority for entire length, particularly in covered bridge vicinity. Fee acquisition or easements.
- c. Dry Run – acquire property, in fee or easement, between Nor-Bath Trail and Howertown Park and headwaters.
- d. Catasaqua Creek – maintain enhance buffer corridor through the development process.

6. Update zoning ordinance to encourage interconnected open space protection through the development process.

7. Establish conservation subdivision as a mandate in the Rural Zoning District.

- a. Establishment in other residential districts is a lower priority.

8. **Use conservation easements as a more prominent land protection tool in Allen Township.**
9. **Leverage open space funds through grant funding opportunities with federal, state, and county partners**
10. **Undertake a ballot initiative to establish an open space bond for future funding.**
 - a. Develop the information needed to present to the community. Use the findings from the previous referenda to plan for the next one.
 - b. Secure the services of an organization well-versed in organizing successful parks, recreation, and open space referenda.
 - c. Conduct a public information campaign through a citizens' support group working in tandem with outside referenda experts.

Theme 2

Lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Our Vision

Residents that view their communities as vibrant often identify with the fact that they feel that facilities and services needed to support their desired lifestyle are close to home and convenient. In terms of parks and recreation, this does not mean that every type of activity is provided outside each resident's front door, but it does imply that the types of facilities used most often are efficiently integrated into their daily living. This is achieved through the planning and designing of neighborhoods so they include the cohesive and seamless provision of parks and recreation facilities and trails. Through the specific and targeted planning and design of three strategic community "hubs" of recreation, diverse recreation opportunities will be available to all residents of Allen Township and all types of recreational activities can occur from the daily routine of going to the playground or going for a run, to the annual special event or enjoyment of nature.

Why We Care

Long-time residents, and even those that have moved into the Township in the last decade perceive the place as a rural community. The reality is that the Township is experiencing significant development pressure and the southern half could be mostly built-out within the next 10 to 15 years. The Township still can shape the design and quality of development and, equally importantly, ensure that as each development occurs, it links seamlessly with adjacent neighborhoods, existing or planned. Ultimately, when most of the build-out occurs, each development should not appear as a discrete and distinct "development" separated from other "developments", but instead, through an overall framework of transportation and public space (civic) infrastructure, physical and social interaction will occur. The connection of neighborhoods helps to foster a sense of community.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

There is a strong civic value placed on the need for ample and high-quality parks and recreation facilities in the Township. The Township has five parks with a total of 105 acres of park land. This is a parkland standard of 22.8 acres per thousand residents and should remain the standard in the future. The Township has placed an emphasis on creating Howertown as the primary park in the Township. In addition, a long-term strategy of acquiring or obtaining public access easements along the Lehigh Riverfront has resulted in the Township controlling most of the key properties to provide future public access. The Township has benefitted from Northampton County led efforts to develop Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park and the Nor-Bath Trail which serve a regional audience but clearly the Township receives the most direct benefit. Residents in fact perceive Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park as a township park. Parks, recreation, and open space are a township priority as evident in the investment in community parks such as the dog park, play equipment in Howertown Park, and the institution of new maintenance practices such as the creation of meadows and pollinator gardens.

Challenges

Allen Township needs to strategically acquire large parcels within the Howertown area before the opportunity to create ample parks and recreation spaces in the most developed area of the Township is permanently lost. The Township currently is under-served with park facilities based on the existing population, a situation that will be compounded with population increases from approved but yet to be constructed development and future projects.

Howertown Park lacks the qualities and amenities needed to function as a true community park. It is over programmed with active sport facilities, lacks landscaping and shade trees, and has safety compliance issues. The Covered Bridge Park area has great potential to be the beginnings of an inter-connected linear park and trail system along the Hokendauqua Creek, but additional property acquisitions and/or easements will be required. The Lehigh Riverfront area represents an excellent opportunity to create a truly unique township and regional riverfront park passive park and cultural heritage experience. Access to this area is limited and significant investment will be required to make the area user friendly.

Opportunities

Allen Township could focus its resources and efforts to create a few large and truly “balanced” community parks consisting of 100 or more acres, each. We are calling this the community “Park Hub” approach. The proposed Hubs include:

- Howertown/Grube/Catasauqua High School /Dry Run
- Cover Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek
- The Lehigh Riverfront

Each of these Park Hubs would have a different character and approach to the type of parks and recreation experiences offered. The character would be function of its context and location as well as the anticipated role it would serve in meeting the parks and recreation needs of Allen Township’s residents.

The opportunity exists to expand the diversity and quality of facilities through the creation of the Park Hubs. For example, the current ballfield in Howertown Park that conflicts with Atlas Road, could be relocated thus addressing safety issues and freeing-up space in the park to provide a more balanced mix of passive and active facilities to create a true community park.

The Park Hub approach provides the opportunity to plan and design parks in the Township that form a system that is based on the unique physical, environmental and cultural qualities “of the place” that citizens identify as being unique to Allen Township. The quality of the landscape inside parks should be at the forefront and the opportunity exists to create rich and ecologically-based landscape treatments linked to management protocols consistent throughout (including on publically accessible but privately owned) the park system.

The Township has wealth of inter-connectivity opportunities. To maximize the parks and recreation investments made, the facilities need to be highly accessible by the residents, and not only by cars. It is important to remember that children, as well as others, cannot drive a car, so having parks that are safely accessible by walking and bicycling greatly increases their reach within the community.

Capitalizing on Parks as a Component of MS4 Compliance

Portions of the Township are subject to compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4) that requires both special permits for projects within designated areas as well as a permit and approved stormwater management program document (SWMP) that has a written description of the various control measures the permittee will undertake to implement the stormwater management program.

A central tenet for approaching stormwater management, especially in the context of Allen Township is the decentralization of the stormwater management system through a diverse palette of Best Management Practice (BMP) stormwater elements that can capture and treat runoff at different scales. Rather than rely solely on the upsizing of conveyance pipes to deal with additional flow, the goal is to remove as much stormwater as possible from the system before it reaches the conveyance lines. This includes the use of bio-

retention, permeable pavements, and other pre-treatment strategies which can be tailored to fit a wide range of areas and scales.

Maximizing Open Space and Parks as a Solution

Also, tied into this particular strategy of decentralization is maximizing open space and reducing impervious surface coverage wherever possible. Particularly in the context of parks and greenways, the Township has an opportunity to decrease the amount of runoff being generated and conveyed into local streams during storm events through facilities that can also serve as attractive park amenities. In addition to the stormwater management implications, many of the options within a potential palette of BMPs provide opportunities to create aesthetically pleasing open spaces as well as potentially valuable public amenities. Stormwater is often considered a liability that must be “mitigated” but it also can be viewed as a vital asset. The creative storage and reuse of stormwater runoff from buildings and paved surfaces to irrigate civic landscapes, streetscape and park beautification plantings and community gardens should be encouraged. If well designed, stormwater and park facilities can be seamlessly integrated into a park’s fabric so park users view them as an asset, barely aware that they are there and doing their important job.

An important consideration through the implementation of stormwater BMPs is that development projects must satisfy the requirements of state and federal laws as authorized by the Clean Water Act, MS4 SWMP as well as any adopted regional watershed management plans, known as PA Act 167 plans.

How Do We Get There?

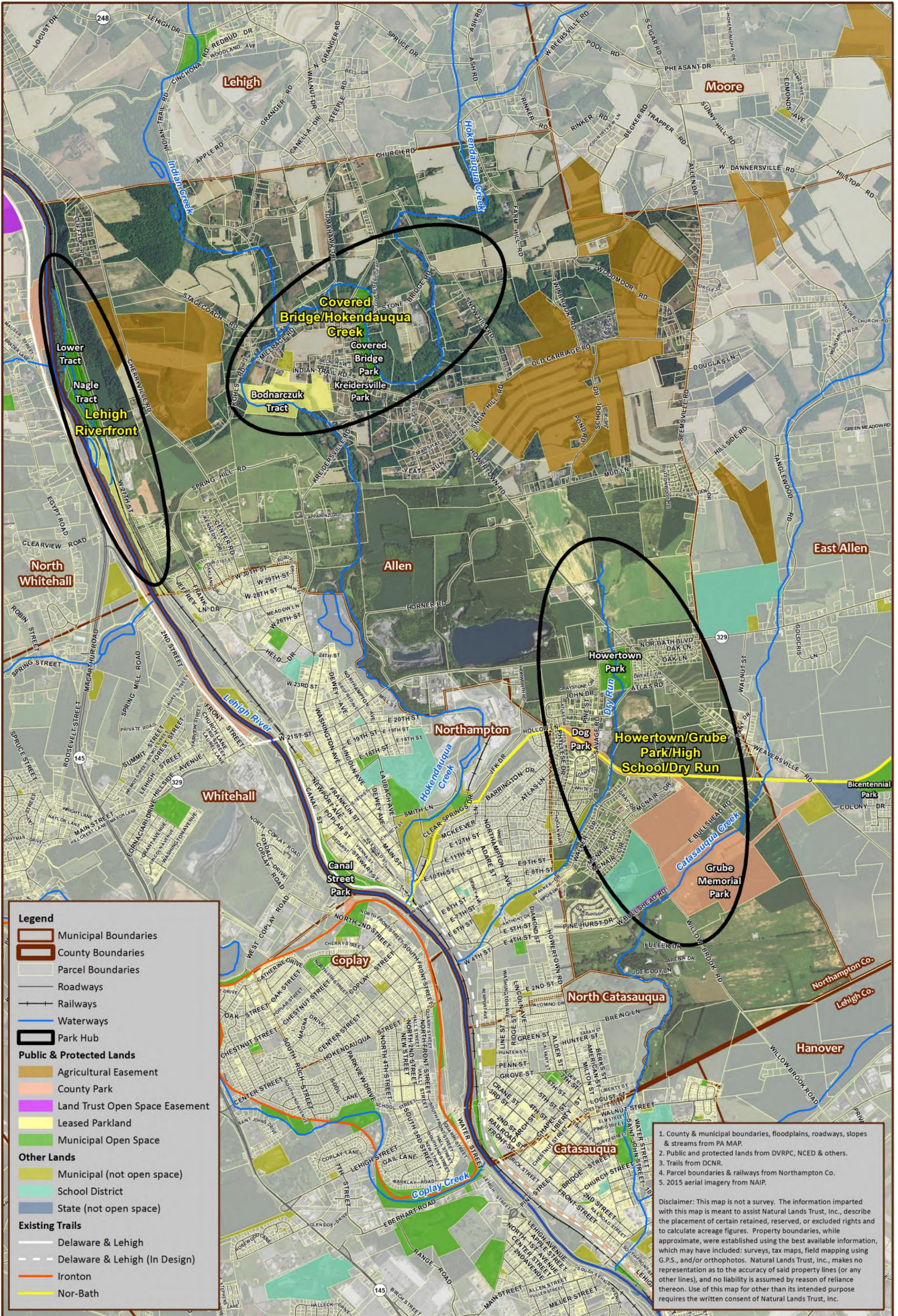
Recommendations

Recommendations for creating lively parks that foster a sense of community fall into three categories:

1. **Create Hubs.** Organize the Township into three hubs that will serve as the organizational basis for parks, recreation and trails. This varies from the typical parks and recreation plan that relies on a park classification system that falls short of serving the community. The three park hubs organize Allen Township into meaningful park and recreation service areas connected with a trail system. The hubs provide a framework for land use planning as well thereby enabling the Township to negotiate for recreational lands and trail linkages as part of the development process.
2. **Take care of what we have.** Revitalize existing parks and recreation facilities. Taking care of what we have is a community priority.
3. **Secure enough parkland to meet future needs.** Acquire an additional 66 to 100 acres of parkland preferably configured as a true community park with a mix of active and passive recreation facilities. Providing for the recreation needs of an

additional 2,431 residents is important. Getting the land before all open space is lost to development requires urgency.

4. Integrate parklands into approved MS4 plan for Township
1. **Create three hubs that will organize Allen Township for optimal recreational service, help to preserve scenic beauty, connect people to nature, and provide a connected trail system. The hubs are the:**
 - A. **Howertown/Grube/Catasaqua High School /Dry Run Park Hub**
 - B. **Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek Park Hub**
 - C. **The Lehigh Riverfront Park Hub**



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roadways
- Railways
- Waterways
- Park Hub

Public & Protected Lands

- Agricultural Easement
- County Park
- Land Trust Open Space Easement
- Leased Parkland
- Municipal Open Space

Other Lands

- Municipal (not open space)
- School District
- State (not open space)

Existing Trails

- Delaware & Lehigh
- Delaware & Lehigh (In Design)
- Ironton
- Nor-Bath

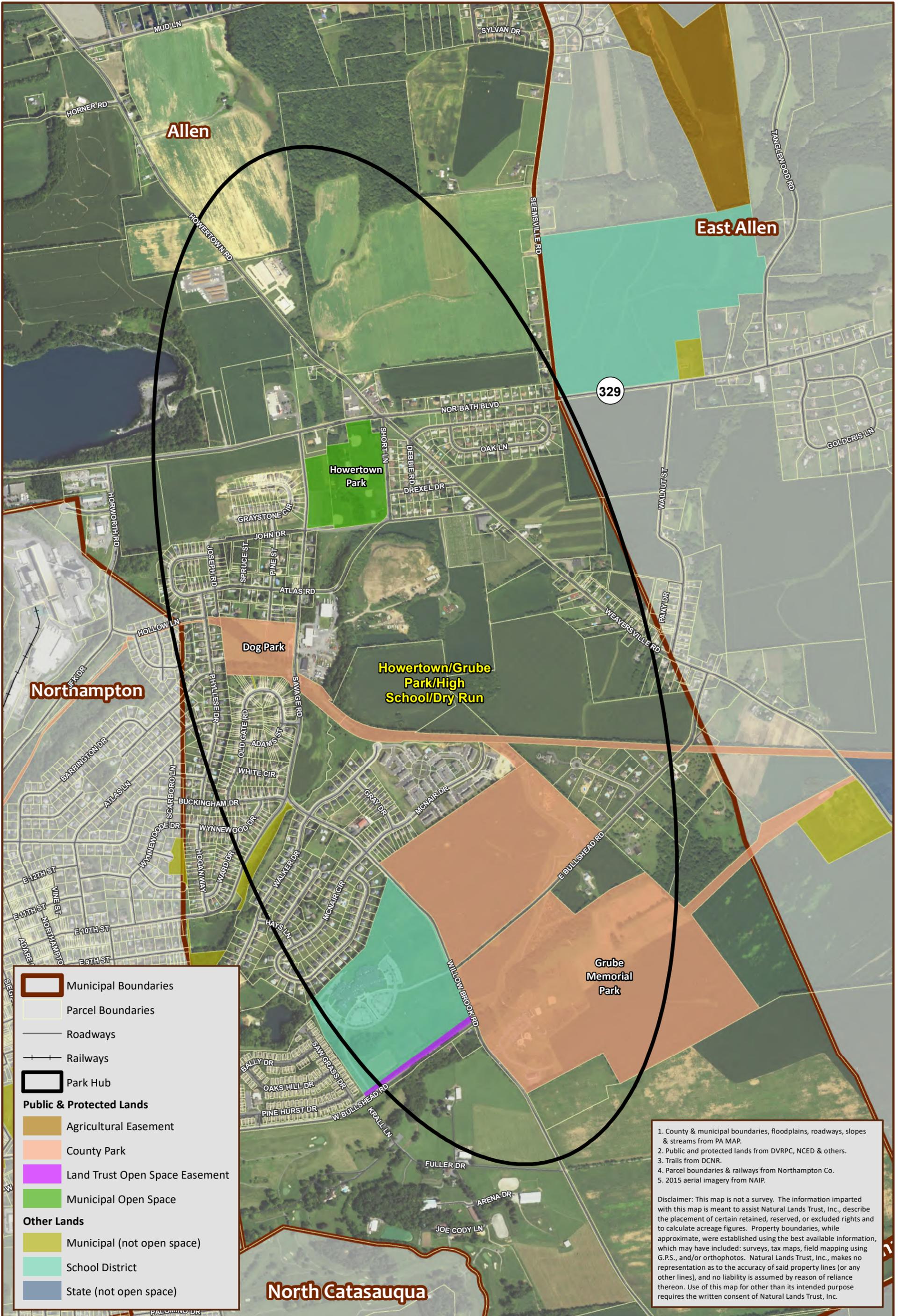
1. County & municipal boundaries, floodplains, roadways, slopes & streams from PA MAP.
 2. Public and protected lands from DVRPC, NCED & others.
 3. Trails from DCNR.
 4. Parcel boundaries & railways from Northampton Co.
 5. 2015 aerial imagery from NAIP.

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A. The Howertown/Grube/Catasauqua High School/Dry Run Park Hub is the primary concentration of traditional parks and recreation facilities in the Township. It

provides a complete package of active and passive recreation facilities in a park-like setting rich in landscaping, shade trees, and other park amenities. Its size and configuration makes it integral and connects to as many neighborhoods within this area of the Township as possible.

1. Make Howertown Park the anchor of the Township main community park complex consisting of a larger, interconnected recreation hub and the framework of the community activity hub of the Township.
2. Create an overall public park and open space master plan for the entire Howertown Park Hub. The plan should delineate specific parcels to be acquired as well as public space that can be created on future land development parcels (private) so that the all the parks and open space ultimately function as one cohesive community facility. This could be achieved through legal mechanisms in the Municipal Planning Code such as a specific plan and/or an Official Map. It should include a framework for the Park Hub on both public and private lands (to be developed and, where possible, the retrofit of existing developments). The Park Hub master plan should include linear greenways and transportation/parkway framework that promotes a traditional multi-point “grid-like” street network that promotes connectivity and ensures that each land development project connects to the adjacent in a seamless manner. In addition, development should be oriented toward the parks and public spaces to make them integral to neighborhood design and not just “left over” area within developments.
3. Upgrade Howertown Park as the anchor park facility in this Park Hub, undertaking a master plan for Howertown Park. Improvements considered should include relocating some active sports fields (to be located on other potential lands within the Park Hub) and upgrading existing facilities with an emphasis on safety improvements, park amenities, landscaping, and aesthetics.
4. Strategically acquire lands to create an overall net parkland area of 100 acres in the Howertown/Grube/Catasauqua High School /Dry Run Park Hub.
5. Develop ordinances which codify the Park Hub master plan and require that developers to construct appropriate portions of the Park Hub master plan, including parks, recreation facilities, trails and other forms of public spaces, such as stormwater management areas that also serve as naturalized park areas.
6. Explore the potential of creating a prominent civic building with the Park Hub as the hub’s anchor. It could include indoor recreation/multi-purpose rooms, senior facilities, as well as other governmental uses such as a library, township administrative offices, etc.
7. Catasauqua High School should provide recreation opportunities for Allen Township. Even though the school district does not serve Allen Township residents, if the community can access the complex, they will use it, even if only as trail connections between neighborhoods and Wayne Grube Park and other regional trail networks.
8. Work with Northampton County to advance future phases of the Wayne A. Grube that relate to township recreation needs, especially trails and pavilions.



	Municipal Boundaries
	Parcel Boundaries
	Roadways
	Railways
	Park Hub
Public & Protected Lands	
	Agricultural Easement
	County Park
	Land Trust Open Space Easement
	Municipal Open Space
Other Lands	
	Municipal (not open space)
	School District
	State (not open space)

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B. The Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek Park Hub is focused on a linear greenway along the Hokendauqua Creek.

The greenway's theme would be a linear trail park with small passive recreation amenities at various points along the corridor. So, this Park Hub is not only linear but also has nodes of park facilities. Due to the winding nature of the creek, opportunities exist to create interconnected trail loops that would also serve as feeder trails and parks, especially in the area of Covered Bridge and Stonebridge Roads. The greenway could also connect to the Kreidersville area with the Howertown Park Hub and the Nor Bath Trail.

1. Expand Covered Bridge Park to include additional park facilities.

- a. There are opportunities to expand Covered Bridge Park within lands already owned by the Township. A formal trail should be developed parallel to the creek. For the park to serve more people, a formal parking area should be developed but buffered so it does not detract from the scenic qualities of the park and the covered bridge. Additional improvements could include picnic pavilions, horseshoe pits, and other low impact facilities as well as support environmental education and outdoors activities such as camping, fishing, and hunting.
- b. **Land that is adjacent to or in close proximity and can easily be connected to Covered Bridge Park should be acquired.** Lands could include property on the opposite side of the creek to create a section of creek frontage that is entirely publically owned.

Upland areas offer the opportunity to add limited active recreation facilities, thereby creating a community-scaled park.

2. Pursue easements and fee simple rights for creek fronting parcels to create a linear trail and trailheads, including parking lots.

- a. Any opportunities to create a trail access along either side of Hokendauqua Creek should be pursued. The priority locations would be those that expand Covered Bridge Park.

3. Expand the impact of the Bodnarczuk Tract by acquiring adjacent lands.

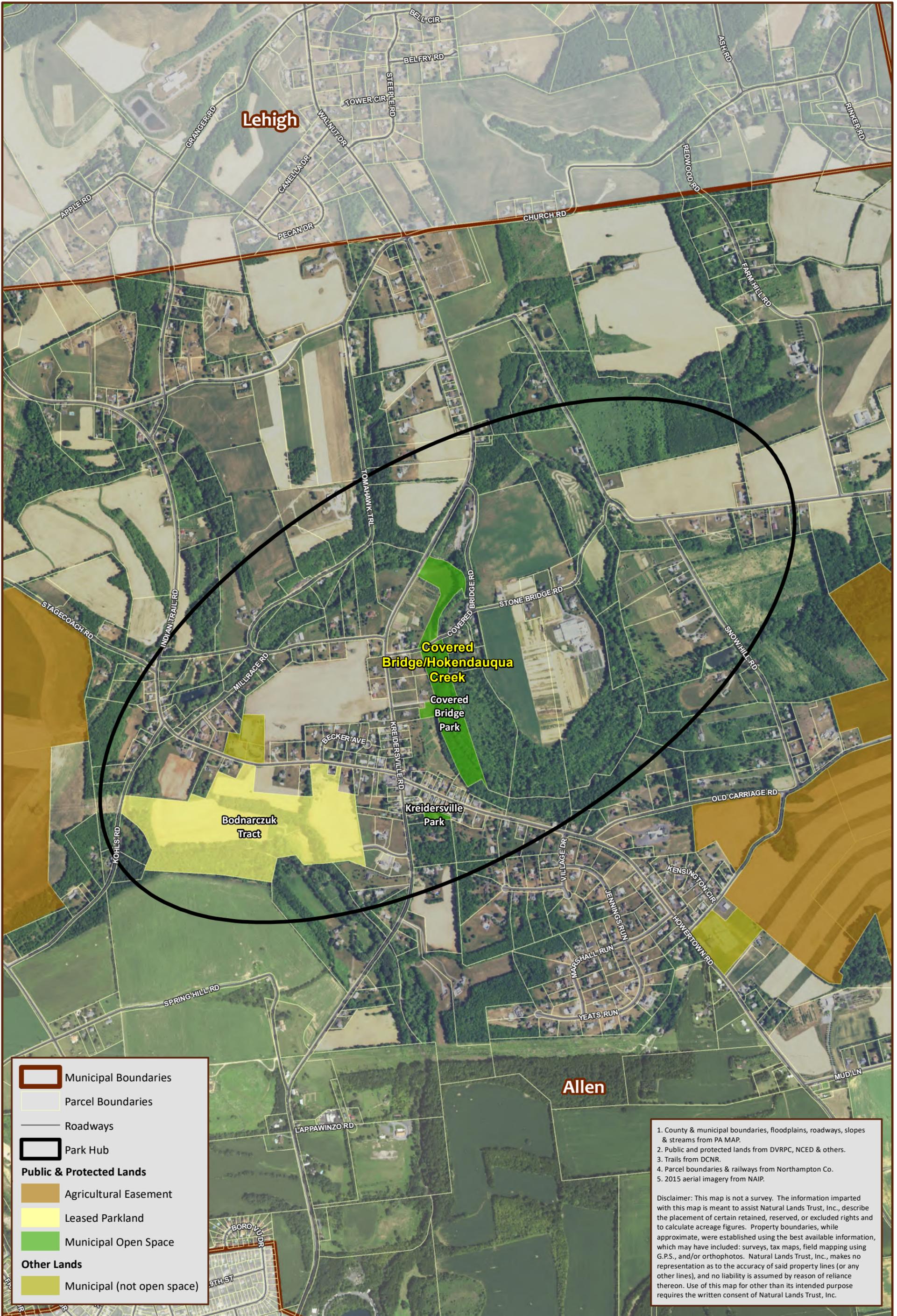
- a. The property was leased to the Township for public use of trails but the lease expired. The lease should be re-negotiated and the tract should be considered for permanent protection.
- b. The Bodnarczuk Tract is a valuable open space resource. Its value could be increased by acquiring adjacent lands to create creek access and add park amenities, trails, and a trailhead with parking, especially off of Kohls Road.

4. Consider the multi-modal safety options for all transportation for roadways that feed to the creek and/or connect to residential areas, especially Kreidersville.

- a. The existing transportation infrastructure in this area remains primarily rural in character, yet with the local and regional development impacts, the volume of

traffic it serves is clearly increasing. The current roadway conditions, including intersections, do not support safe bicycle and pedestrian travel. An important aspect of this Park Hub is the potential to create linkages between various parks and open spaces along or near the Hokendauqua Creek. These connections should include feeder trails from the adjacent areas, especially Kreidersville. In addition, until significant rights-of-way can be acquired for a linear off-road trail, on-road facilities may provide valuable linkages. A plan for upgrading key transportation segments should consider multi-modal improvements. Any incremental improvements planned should be reviewed to ensure that they comply with best practices and comply with PennDOT District 5 requirements.

- b. Trailhead access points from the roadway network will be an important part of the Park Hub to ensure that residents throughout the Township can access the greenway.



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roadways
- Park Hub
- Public & Protected Lands**
- Agricultural Easement
- Leased Parkland
- Municipal Open Space
- Other Lands**
- Municipal (not open space)

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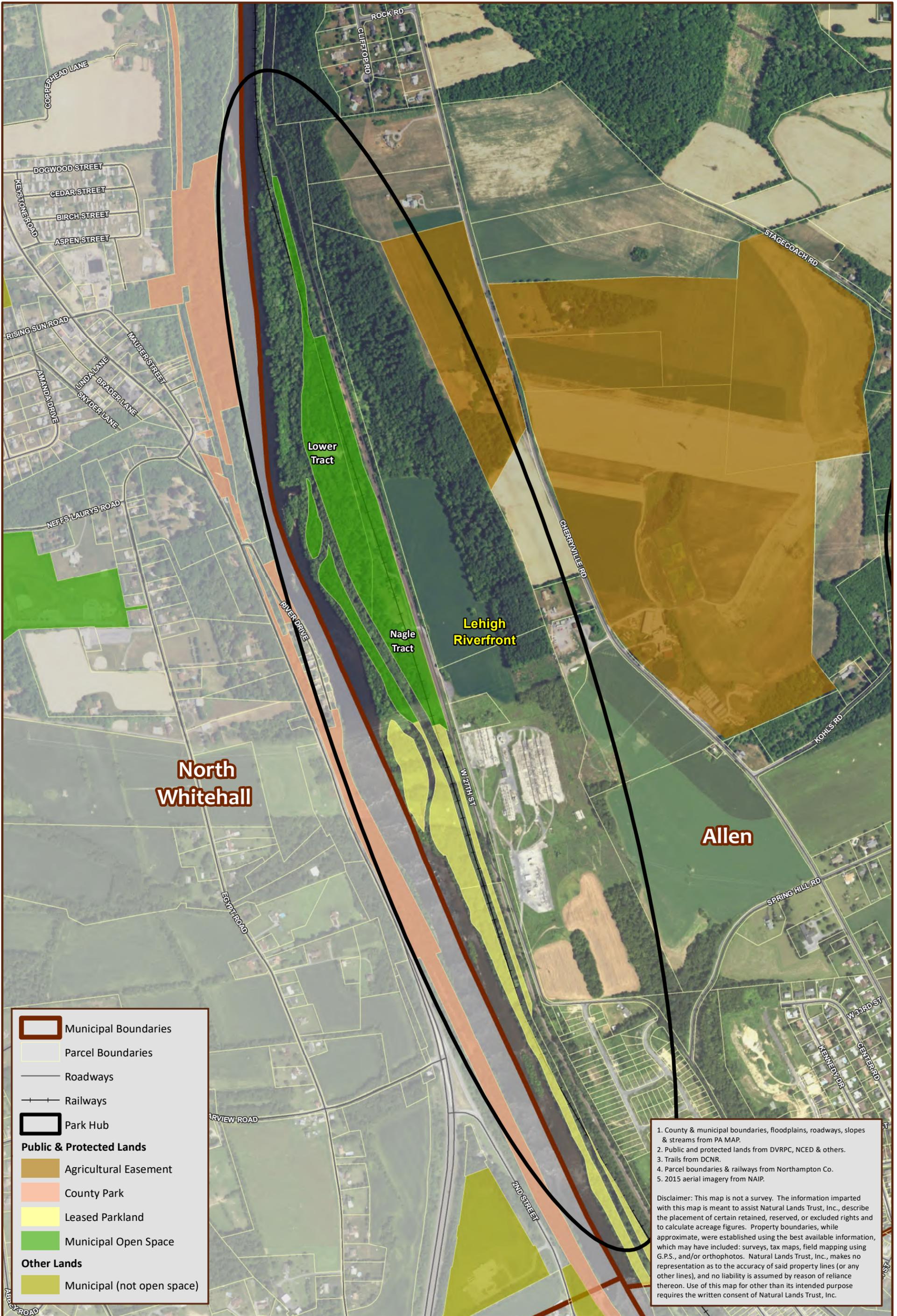
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C. The Lehigh Riverfront Park Hub is focused on the unique aspects of the Lehigh Riverfront in the Township and how it connects as part of a state and national heritage area. The Township has done an excellent job over many years to acquire most of the riverfront property, along with connecting access to those properties not publically owned. This Park Hub would serve as a primarily passive recreation opportunity with an emphasis on the historical and cultural aspects of the artifacts from the Delaware & Lehigh Canal, including a transportation theme that includes horses, the canal barges, the railroads, autos and aviation including the state of the art Fed Ex plant.

1. **Construct base improvements to provide safe public access to the areas.**
 - a. The Lehigh Riverfront area is fairly remote from the core of the Township and currently vehicular access is limited. Opening the area to public access will require serious consideration regarding what base improvements are required and how they will be monitored for safety.
 - b. Parking and circulation improvements will be required to provide public access to the area, along with signing.
 - c. A security plan for the area should be developed and security cameras system should be considered.
2. **Protect, stabilize and evaluate the reuse options for the Nagle House.**
 - a. The Nagle House is an important historical resource located at a visible access point into the Park Hub. Its preservation is important. In addition, the potential of using the property as a site caretaker's residence would provide important daily presence in the area to

- observe activities occurring in the area and to aid in promoting safe use and discourage vandalism, etc.
- b. Emphasis should be placed on occupying the residence as soon as possible to protect against the degradation that can rapidly occur in a vacant property and to secure the facility from vandalism.
- c. Assess the rights of the Township to cross the rail road tracks, including providing for public access to the former Nagle property acquired by the Township for use as a park.
- d. Consult with the township solicitor and insurance carrier regarding the public use of the former Nagle property to ensure that both the property and park visitors are safe and that the township's exposure to liability is within the parameters recommended by the insurance carrier and the solicitor. Take measures to create basic safety improvements to facilitate public access when the property is deemed ready for public use.

3. **Create a formal trail connection to the D&L Canal Trail.**
 - a. Although the D&L Trail travels along the western side of the Lehigh River, the historical canal artifacts located on township-owned property make it a logical and desirable spur. The Township should work with the D&L National Heritage Corridor organization to develop a trail that would connect to the D&L main trail at Canal Street in Northampton Borough and extend north on the east side of the river.
 - b. Formalize the trail easement through the Tri-Boro Sportsman Club located just north of 21st Street.



	Municipal Boundaries
	Parcel Boundaries
	Roadways
	Railways
	Park Hub
Public & Protected Lands	
	Agricultural Easement
	County Park
	Leased Parkland
	Municipal Open Space
Other Lands	
	Municipal (not open space)

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4. **Work with regional entities on the providing a trailhead access point to the Lehigh River Water Trail.**
 - a. The Wildlands Conservancy and Northampton County have been leading this effort to develop a 72-mile water trail from White Haven to Easton. Current the stretch of river including in Allen Township has limited access. Creating an access point for boat launching, as well as land-based facilities, would provide an excellent partnership opportunities that would serve the Township and the region.
 - b. Vehicular access to the area should be evaluated, especially for the ability to support boat trailers and parking.

5. **Consider developing a regional environmental and cultural education/resource center focused on the Lehigh River, the region, its history, and its ecology, as an anchor in the park.**

- a. The opportunity exists to create a regional destination within the Park Hub to support environmental and cultural tourism and education programs. This type of facility would create an anchor attraction in area and provide the ability to greatly expand the interpretation potential of the riverfront.
- b. Based on the size and amount of river frontage that exists, having a central activity facility on-site would serve as the catalyst for greater park use and appreciation. The facility could be a mix of uses that serve both the educational aspects of the site and also expand the overall indoor recreational facility needs in the Township.

6. **Pursue the acquisition of the 60-acre open field property owned by the Nagle family, located east of the Nagle House (east side of the railroad) to support adding traditional sport facilities and amenities, including parking, to the overall Lehigh Riverfront Park Hub.**

Most the lands currently owned by the Township have limited development potential, even for park facilities. They are in the floodway, floodplain, and/or are heavily wooded. Although the eastern tract has topographic constraints, it is an open field that could accommodate traditional recreation facilities such as multi-purpose play fields, events space, and large parking areas needed to make the riverfront a significant park and recreation destination. The use of this property should be determined in conjunction with the development of park master plan. Insert Lehigh Riverfront Park Hub Map

Guiding Principles for Allen Township Parks

- Allen Township has 22.8 acres of land per 1,000 residents. The 22.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents should be the parkland standard for Allen Township. That means for every 1,000 residents moving into the Township, another 22.8 acres of parkland at a minimum should be added or fractions thereof reflective of planner residential developments.
- Parks will be professionally designed as scenic beautiful places that the residents will use for recreation, relaxation, fitness, socialization, and connecting to nature. All parks will have a landscaping plan that includes shade and trees.
- Parks will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Consumer Product Safety Commission standards for playgrounds.
- Connections to parks and other community destinations will be provided via safe places to walk and bicycle.
- Parkland will be added in accordance with the recommendations included in the Community Park Hub Recommendations.
- A township park signage system will be developed to brand the Township as a community with a top-notch parks and recreation system. The professionally designed system will include a logo, a color palette, quality materials with maintenance considerations, and signs for park names, rules and regulations, interpretation, facility names, and wayfinding.

2. Take Care of What We Have

Public sentiment is high on taking care of our existing parks, even though the acquisition of parkland is urgent before it is lost. Each park was viewed during the tour of facilities and subsequent fieldwork. Generally, the parks appear clean. Most of the parks have evolved over time, as needs arose and were not formally master planned, specifically Howertown Park. There is a lack of consistency of site amenities, fixtures, elements, etc. from park to park, eroding the sense of the overall “township brand” for the parks system. The findings of the facility inventory for each site have similarities that relate to accessibility and the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the safety guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and recommendations to enhance the users experience through the addition of convenience facilities such as landscaping, pavilions, benches, picnic tables, restroom facilities, signage, etc.

A. Howertown Park

1. Although Howertown Park is the primary township park, it has a utilitarian aesthetic. This park needs landscape improvements to make it more “park-like” and more enticing. An overall design logic is lacking. A good design could aid in creating a strong civic interaction and pride in this and all the township parks, as well unify the parks into one cohesive system. A master plan is needed that includes developing a defined palette of system-wide site amenities to be deployed in this park first and then throughout all the township’s parks. It should include extensive landscape plantings and a landscape management strategy. The edge of the park is important since it defines the gateway into the park.

The current parking areas dominate the visual aspects of the park and are not visually buffered. There is shade along the creek, but the remainder of the park lacks significant shade trees. Planting regimes which include a target of planting a set number of canopy trees per year will establish a mature canopy and ensure that there is tree size and type diversity for the future. As trees need to be removed, there will always be other maturing trees to provide canopy and shade. Funding is available.

- a. Having high-quality, well designed and uniform fixtures such as benches, lights, signing, etc. is cost effective, efficient, and improves the perception that each park is part of an overall park system. It is a relatively low-cost way to enhance the user experience of parks.
- b. Howertown Park is essentially “packed” with active facilities which create conflicts related to layout, safety, and functionality of the facilities. That compromises the overall aesthetic quality of the park. A master plan for the park would consider which facilities are most appropriate, which facilities might be better located at other locations, and how to balance all aspects and needs (passive and active) to create a high-quality community park.
- c. Existing facilities such as ballfield fencing, etc. do not meet current standards and should be upgraded.
- d. The opportunities to extend the park to lands to the south of the current park should be considered, specifically as described earlier under the Howertown/Grube/Catasauqua High School /Dry Run Park Hub.

B. Dog Park

This park is very popular and a great addition to the mix of park facilities in Allen Township. There are a few improvements that could enhance this facility to make it more park-like.

- a. The entrance areas to the two fenced dog runs should be treated with a durable hardscaping material. Due to the intensity of use these areas are currently heavily compacted and bare earth.
- b. The park needs shade and shade trees should be planted around the perimeter of the fencing and along the street frontage as street trees. The parking lot should have buffer plantings between the lot and Savage Road.
- c. The park needs seating installed throughout the park. It should be installed in locations distant from the entry to encourage people to use the whole park and not congregate at the entrance.
- d. Consistent system-wide signage should be designed and installed including in the Dog Park. This can be done over time as park improvements are made.

C. Kreidersville Park

Kreidersville is an attractive historic node. Opportunities exist to build upon the wonderful character of this village center through economic development, such as walkable dining and retail hub.

Kreidersville Park is a pocket-park mostly consisting of a play equipment. As described with Howertown Park, this park could use:

- a. Site improvements focused on landscaping, seating, signage, and other system-wide consistent components.
- b. Opportunities to link this park with the center of Kreidersville as a village within the Township should be considered.

D. Covered Bridge Park

- a. As described in the Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Creek Park Hub earlier, there are opportunities to expand the reach of this great park setting through the addition of support facilities, specifically parking, pavilions, and creek overlooks.
- b. Acquiring adjacent lands to this park is critically important, especially to create the basis of a greenway trails network along the Hokendauqua Creek.
- c. As with all the parks, a consistent use of system-wide site amenities including seating and signage is important to convey the branding of all township parks.

3. Secure enough parkland to meet the needs of the community in the future before potential property is lost to development.

- a. Adopt 22.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents as Allen Township’s parkland standard. This is the current standard that should prevail in the future.
- b. Acquire a minimum of 66 acres of land, preferably 100 acres to establish a true community parks with a mix of active and passive recreation facilities

4. Integrate park lands with Allen Township’s MS4 Plan.

- a. As site specific master plans are developed for existing or new parks, consider ways to use techniques described in Chapter 7 of PADEP’s *Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual*. Techniques could include playing fields graded to provide increased storage capacity during major storm events, flow through planters, green roofs, bio-retention swales, and micro-pool/terraced wet meadows can be used to intercept and treat water before it enters conveyance systems.
- b. Use engineered soils to filter out pollutants.
- c. Make use of proper plantings to help remove excess nutrients produced by runoff flowing over impervious surfaces

Theme 3

Community connections with safe places to walk and bicycle

Our Vision

Our vision is for all Allen Township residents and visitors to enjoy safe places to walk and bicycle for recreation, fitness, and transportation via an interconnected township-wide trail network. Our goal is to establish trails within ten minutes of every household, making your doorstep and driveway your trailhead. At stake is the well-being and happiness of our citizens—which we now know depends upon regular outdoor physical activity. Safe places to walk and bicycle is the chief form of exercise and recreation in the United States including in Allen Township.

Our interconnected network of trails is designed for a variety of non-motorized uses and will be located within parks, on dedicated road right-of-ways, and on easements where appropriate. The system will build upon the beloved Nor-Bath Trail. Trails and paths will connect to parks, the Catasauqua High School campus, neighborhoods, village centers, the creeks and river, and other community hubs and destinations. The Lehigh River Water Trail will be a distinctive feature of our trail system fostering a deeper appreciation of our connection to the river and our heritage as a river-based community.

Why We Care

Trails and other community connections, such as sidewalks or bike lanes, support the full recreation system and are vital to unifying parks, recreation, and open space as a system. Trails provide recreation opportunities for walkers, runners, cyclists, and others means of non-recreation travel, while offering safe access to parks and other recreation centers. In addition, these facilities can connect different areas of the Township, potentially easing road congestion, while enabling citizens to improve their health and fitness. Finally, trails give access to residents to connect with nature and explore areas that they would not be able to via motorized travel. For example, stream corridors and other greenways as part of the open space system are vital for wildlife movement, but also allow for human exploration if trails are developed in a manner that is sensitive to natural resources. Trails are an attractive amenity, often drawing new residents to a community, while increasing property values for existing residents near trails.

The Nor-Bath Trail is the primary multi-use trail in Allen Township. It is highly used and connects residents in the developed southern portion of the Township to Northampton Borough, Wayne A. Grube

Memorial Park, and the 64-acre Bicentennial Park in nearby East Allen Township. There are also some established connections to the Nor-Bath Trail from adjoining subdivisions, many of which also feature sidewalks. Howertown Park includes minimal paths within the park. Connections to the park are also limited with Stone Ridge being the only adjacent neighborhood that has sidewalk connections to the park and there are not paths within the park that connect to the crosswalk at Savage Road. There are no trails in the northern half of the Township and roads are dangerous to walk or bicycle along as bike lanes or sidewalks are typically not present. As development expands, roads are improved, or open space is acquired within Allen Township, then trails and connections should build upon the existing connections and link resources of the community, particularly the Park Hubs. This will ensure safe access to trails for people who live, work, and visit Allen Township.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Support for trails is uniquely strong in Allen Township. The Township already has a primary multi-use trail corridor that crosses the Township – the county-owned Nor-Bath Trail. Township staff and officials have worked to provide connections to the Nor-Bath Trail and to nearby parks, including the Dog Park and Wayne Grube Park. In addition, the riverfront consists of township-owned or leased land, providing excellent opportunity to establish trails in the future. The Township has the building blocks for an inclusive system of trails and connections.

Several planning efforts are underway and/or being implemented converging focus and support of the riverfront and trail connections including the **Allen Township Comprehensive Plan**, Northampton County’s **Linking Landscapes**, and the **Lehigh River Management Plan** being undertaken by the Wildlands Conservancy. The more those Allen Township efforts are named in plans, the more competitive the Township will be in securing funding for trails and related projects.

Allen Township is fortunate in having significant federal, state, and county agencies interested in helping Allen Township advance its riverfront and trail connections. The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Northampton County, and Wildlands Conservancy are all interested and involved in helping Allen Township with its riverfront presence, trail connections, and historic and cultural heritage efforts.

Township ordinances provide requirements for trail connections as part of open space and recreation lands to be dedicated or paid in-lieu. The Subdivision and Land Development mandates that connections be made between public open spaces and trail connections on adjoining properties. Sidewalks or pathways are required for major subdivisions. Township officials have used the ordinances to establish connections to the Nor Bath Trail and access other corridors through the development process.

Additionally, development patterns have mimicked the gridded and connected design in general, with minimal cul-de-sacs, particularly areas adjacent to Northampton Borough. This has

provided for an extensive sidewalk network with easy and safe non-motorized travel *within* residential developments. According to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Allen Township has more than 15 miles of sidewalks and receives a sidewalk score (population/sidewalk miles*1,000) of 3.41. This score far exceeds most similar rural communities and is comparable with many suburban municipalities.⁶

Finally, the Township has benefitted greatly from interested citizens with vision and commitment to ensure that the community will have safe places to walk close to nature and around the beautiful, scenic, and historic areas of the Township. For example, the “Bodnarczuk Tract” was offered as a 25-year access lease across from the Township Building for the public to enjoy nature on its trails.

Challenges

Aside from the riverfront, there are minimal connected, township-owned open space corridors to establish trail connections upon. While pedestrian movement is generally well established within residential developments, connectivity between developments, open spaces, and to recreational areas is difficult. In some cases, developments were constructed before the current township ordinances were established, which require increased interconnectedness. For instance, gaps between lots to utilize for trail connections were not established or narrow, inaccessible open space strips were acquired that don’t offer utility for residents or wildlife. In other instances, a recreation fee-in-lieu was paid, but has not

been exercised with acquisition or development of public open space facilities near existing development.

Roads can be used as connections, but Allen Township has not used these corridors except for neighborhood streets and roads in the southern portion of the Township, such as Bullshead Lane and portions of Willowbrook Road, which contain extensive sidewalk systems. Many of these sidewalks were established through the development process. It is a challenge to develop sidewalks or multi-use trails along road rights-of-way outside of the development process. However, this leaves much of the central and northern portion of Allen Township without established corridors for trail use.

Additionally, intersections are difficult to navigate in many cases, even in areas where sidewalks and crosswalks are present. The speed of traffic and lack of median space is the primary challenge for residents. Areas of difficulty are around Grube Park along Willowbrook Road and near Howertown Park along Savage Road.

The trail planning process for multi-use corridors is a difficult one for the Township without available corridors to utilize and with difficult road crossings in place. Furthermore, staff capacity is limited for this work. The Township Manager and township officials negotiate developments and establish connections through that process. It is a tedious process and they do a wonderful job; however, it is difficult to also negotiate open space acquisitions and trail corridors outside of the development process. High levels of development pressure add to the challenges of limited staff time. **Opportunities**

⁶ Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. *Walk Lehigh Valley: Regional Sidewalk Inventory*. June 2016 http://lvpc.org/pdf/2016/WalkLV_SidewalkInventory.pdf.

Riverfront

The Township owns or leases nearly all land along the Lehigh River. In Northampton Borough, the Delaware & Lehigh Trail is located along the east side of the River, but it crosses the west side at Canal Park, before entering Allen Township. There is an opportunity to connect the D & L Trail through this property. In order to do so there would need to be a formal agreement with the Tri Boro Sportsmen property in Northampton Borough, preceding Allen Township to the south, before reaching Pennsylvania Power and Light (PPL) properties and the “Nagle” and “Lower” tracts owned by the Township. Pending a master plan process on these properties, the trail would provide a destination for residents of Allen and Northampton on the east side of the Lehigh River. The Township-owned properties would also contain access to the Lehigh River Water Trail. The trail could eventually extend north as well if additional properties are acquired in the future.

Trails Along Stream Corridors

Greenways should be established along stream corridors by acquiring properties in fee or easement. In some cases, it is a prime opportunity to locate trails in these corridors, so long as sensitive natural resources will not be disturbed. A trail easement or lease agreement will need to be acquired if the property is not owned in fee by the Township.

Several stream corridors would provide trail opportunities and enhance connectivity throughout the Township. The highest priorities are located along Dry Run and Hokendauqua Creek.

Dry Run is located between Northampton Borough and its headwaters north of Howertown Park. A trail corridor along the trail is a great opportunity its entire length, but is especially pertinent between Grube Park/Nor Bath Trail and

Howertown Park. Connecting these two facilities is critical to the Township trail system and a trail corridor near Dry Run is a logical location.

Trails along Hokendauqua Creek would provide excellent recreation opportunity near the Covered Bridge Park and a loop may be possible in this area, reinforcing this area as a key Park Hub. Additionally, trails along portions of the Creek from Northampton Borough to the Township building and to the Covered Bridge Park Hub would establish an extensive trail axis on the western side of the Township. The Bodnarczuk Tract, which has permitted public access via lease, contains a large portion of Hokendauqua Creek.

Finally, greenway establishment is a priority along Indian Creek. However, trail corridors would have to be highly vetted because of sensitive resources. Catasauqua Creek should have trail corridors established along it through the development process.

Utility Corridors

The Township has an existing relationship with PPL because of access lease agreements along the Lehigh River. With the plethora of PPL lines that cross the Township, there may be opportunities to establish trail corridors within some rights-of-way. While some corridors are very steep, others cross relatively flat fields. Landowners can farm these areas, but the PPL easements prohibit buildings and some other uses. Therefore, landowners may be open to negotiating a trail access agreement along with PPL where it makes sense for such connections.

Road Corridors

It is difficult to establish multi-use trails along road corridors outside of the development process, as landowners have to agree to an easement on a portion of their property or sell a portion of land to the Township. PennDOT will also be involved in some cases. It is critically important that all transportation improvement projects, including intersections, are thoroughly reviewed during the preliminary and final design phases to ensure that all required pedestrian and bicycle facilities are included into the designs. This process also provides a mechanism to support the funding of critical connections that may otherwise be difficult to achieve. Some roads in the Township would provide the simplest and most logical connections. As opposed to crossing the middle of properties, landowners do not have full use of their property's curtilage along roadways in many cases as it is part of the ultimate right-of-way. Therefore, landowners may be more likely to grant land in easement or fee to the Township. Furthermore, the opportunity is now for the Township. The continued subdivision of land only makes the challenge of acquiring a continuous trail system more difficult.

In regard to priorities, trails along Howertown Road north of Howertown Park should be investigated as a potential connection to the north for the future. Intersection improvements are critical to connecting residents of neighborhoods across Savage Road to Howertown Park. In addition, improvements along roads in the Covered Bridge/Hokendauqua Park Hub vicinity, such as Stonebridge Road and Millrace Road, should be considered. In this case, the improvements may be as simple as a "sharrow" indicating that this is a pedestrian/bike route in addition to auto traffic. Finally, intersection improvements around Wayne Grube Park, using road improvement funds from proposed development

along Willowbrook Road, should be addressed to enhance pedestrian movement

A comprehensive of trail/greenway framework should be developed for the entire Howertown Park Hub area that ensures seamless connectivity between parks, greenways, and existing, new neighborhood developments.

Trail System Infrastructure

The Township has an opportunity to develop a community wide trail system, with facilities in close proximity to nearly all residents as shown on the map on page 43. The Township should integrate trails signage and way-finding into the same design standards as parks.

Trail Classifications

Existing Trails and Paths

Few formal trails currently exist within Allen Township. The primary multi-use trail is the county owned and maintained Nor-Bath Trail, a 5.1-mile path from Northampton to Bath of which just over one-mile is in Allen Township. Completion of a connection with the Delaware & Lehigh Trail in Northampton Borough is expected in 2018. The Nor-Bath Trail traverses the southern portion of the Township, also connecting to the northern extent of Wayne Grube Park and a multi-use trail internal to the Park. Other connectors allow residents to access the Dog Park and Nor-Bath Trail from adjoining neighborhoods.

Primary pedestrian paths exist within Wayne Grube Park and Howertown Park. Nearly all major subdivisions developed in recent years contain sidewalks. A comprehensive network that connects individual neighborhoods to each other and to parks and public spaces within the Howertown Park Hub is needed.

Primary Pedestrian Paths

The Primary Pedestrian Paths are largely recommended to be sidewalks or similar pedestrian paths, retrofit along roads occupied by suburban style development. These paths may be installed within the existing rights-of-way. Many homes front directly on main roads, with driveways directly accessing arterial and connector roads. Multi-use trails are not appropriate here, with so many driveway intersections. Sidewalks or paths are appropriate to serve pedestrians in these neighborhoods looking for safe places to walk for exercise, recreation, or travel. Concrete, typical of sidewalks, macadam, or compacted crushed stone may serve as acceptable materials, at a width of 4’.

Primary Multi-Use Trails

Trails proposed along utility rights-of-way or through large, undeveloped parcels, should be made to accommodate many user groups. These trails are planned to have relatively few intersections with roads, making them suitable for uses beyond walking. Long stretches of these trails may be installed at the same time, potentially establishing them as destinations in themselves, rather than just as connections within the trail system.

These trails should be built to accommodate walkers, runners, dog walkers and recreational bicyclists. Crushed, compacted stone at a width of 8 to 10’ would adequately serve these users. Should the Township also wish to accommodate skateboards

and rollerbladers, the trails would need to be paved. It is anticipated that sports cyclists, who typically ride at high speeds and often in large groups, would prefer to use the surrounding country roads and avoid the township multi-use trails due to their proposed narrow width and potential conflicts with other users. A crushed stone surface would also discourage use by sport cyclists as the surface is not smooth enough.

Secondary Trails

These trails are proposed in the rural districts and serve as connectors to primary trails and other destinations. These areas are more rural in nature, less dense, and have less need for trails than other portions of the Township. Here, many residents believe it is still safe to walk in or along roads. As the Township continues to develop and these areas accommodate more residents, the need for trails will grow. The secondary trails should also complement and complete the proposed trail system after higher priority trails are built. Should the zoning ordinance be revised to permit open space design options in the rural district, as recommended in Theme One of this plan, these trails should be implemented as part of new land developments, following the ordinance requirements for size and materials.

Methods for Acquiring Trail Corridors

Allen Township primarily uses fee simple acquisition to acquire open space. Trails can be developed upon these properties. However, there are methods to acquire trail and greenway corridors without acquiring the entire property.

Trail Easements

Trail easements will allow the Township to establish trails without acquiring entire properties and reduces future maintenance costs. Trail easements can be established alongside conservation and agricultural easements or they can stand on their own. Trail easements can be sold or donated by landowners, but require a willing landowner with which to partner. An example of where this may be possible in expanding the network of trail linkages throughout the Township is along Hokendauqua Creek and near the Covered Bridge Park Hub.

Acquisition or Public Use of Trails Within New Developments

The Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances require sidewalks to be installed in new developments. Interconnected pedestrian paths are required to be developed within dedicated open space on adjoining properties. Where developers are required to install trails and sidewalks, they provide key pieces of the trail network while also providing amenities for the new residents.

Use of PPL Rights-of-Way

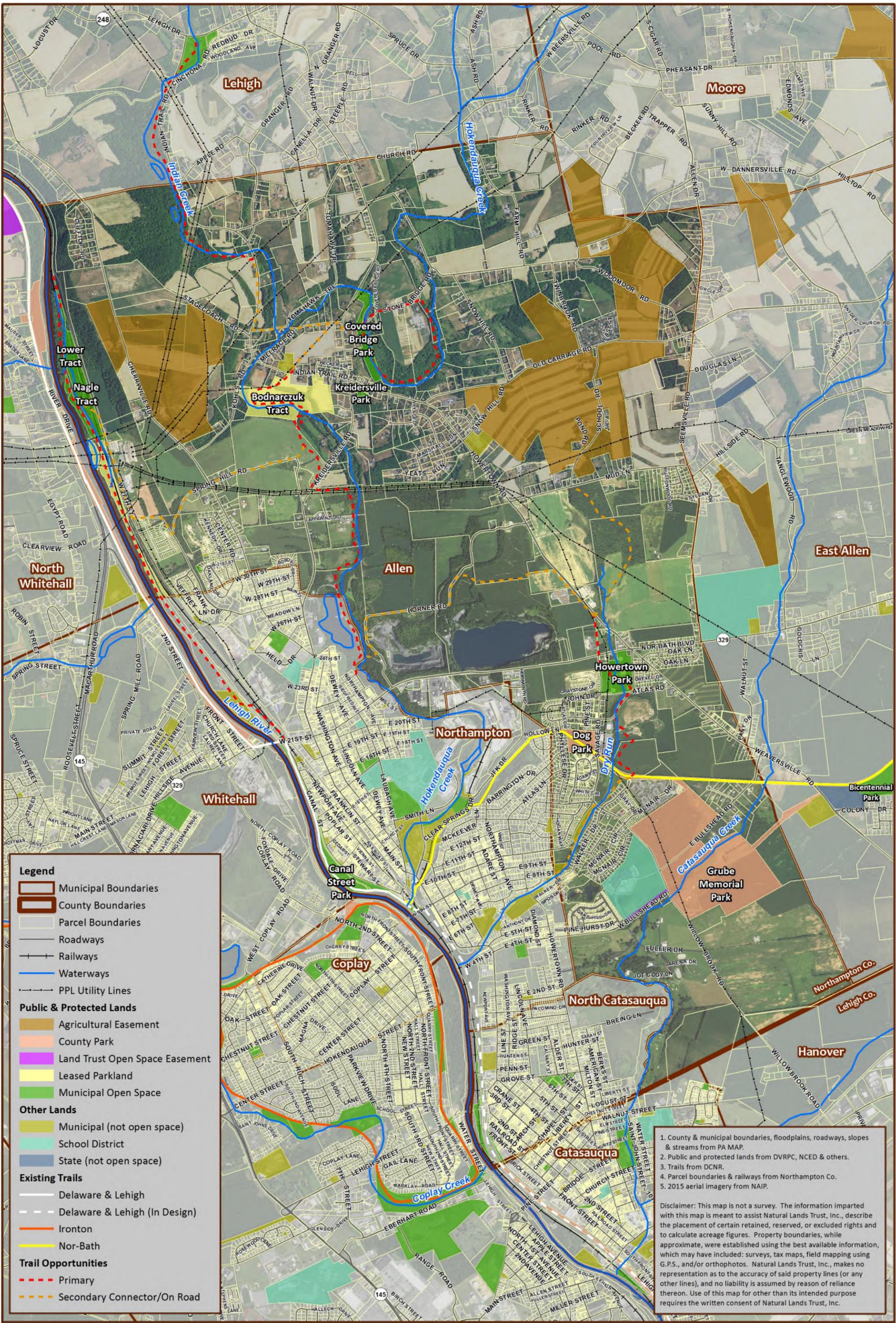
Rights of way and easements, which house utilities, are used as trail corridors in many communities. They provide long stretches of unobstructed land. Pennsylvania Power & Light (PPL) owns rights of way crossing the Township from east to west and north to south. A partnership with PPL should be established to permit trails, to be developed and maintained by the Township, within rights of way.

Use of Road Rights-of-Way

The existing development pattern, with many homes and driveways fronting directly on the main roads, makes it difficult to establish multi-use trails in these areas. This is particularly the case in central and northern portions of the Township. Instead, the installation of sidewalks within Township or PennDOT rights of way may be more appropriate.

Leasing Options

When permanent trail acquisition is not feasible then leasing may be an option for the Township. Leasing provides access to a property or trail for a certain period. Allen Township has used leasing to provide property access on the Bodnarczuk Tract as well as PPL properties along the Lehigh River. In the case of the Bodnarczuk tract the lease provided access for trail corridors to access Hokendauqua Creek.



Map 8: Potential Greenway and Trail Connections

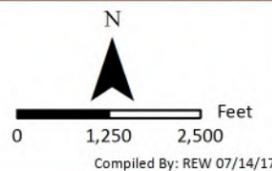
ALLEN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

Allen Township, Northampton County, PA



1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587 | natlands.org



1. County & municipal boundaries, floodplains, roadways, slopes & streams from PA MAP.
2. Public and protected lands from DVRPC, NCD & others.
3. Trails from DCNR.
4. Parcel boundaries & railways from Northampton Co.
5. 2015 aerial imagery from NAIP.

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance thereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of how Allen Township envisions moving forward with trail and community connection development. Recommendations for financing trails are including in Theme 5.

1. **Utilize the proposed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board or other advisory group, such as a Trail Subcommittee, to identify priority trail corridors and promote trail development**
2. **Identify landowners that may be willing to grant trail easements, even if longer connections are not feasible now.**
3. **Institute trail easements on conservation lands acquired in fee or easement.**
4. **Establish trails within Lehigh River Park Hub**
 - a. Create a master plan for the riverfront corridor determining use and location of future amenities, including trails.
 - b. Develop a primary multi-use trail along the Lehigh River that connects to Northampton Borough and the Delaware & Lehigh Trail.
 - c. Develop additional pedestrian paths of a natural surface.
5. **Establish secondary trails within the Covered Bridge Park and acquire additional trail easements to expand the trail system in the Covered Bridge Park Hub.**
 - a. Collaborate with willing landowners.
6. **Connect Howertown Park with the Nor-Bath Trail through the comprehensive Park Hub framework recommended in this Plan.**
 - a. Acquire property for trail easements near Dry Run.
 - b. Utilize road rights-of-way along Savage Road and Atlas Road as necessary.
 - c. Integrate key trail and greenway connections through additional parkland to be acquired by the Township.
7. **Develop trails along stream corridors as part of acquired open space or through trail easements**
 - a. Establish permanent trail access on the Bodnarczuk tract, an important trail connector along Hokendauqua Creek.
8. **Establish trail connections between park hubs**
 - a. Utilize easements across acquired open space or, if not feasible, work with PPL to establish trail easements along utility corridors or PennDOT/Township staff to utilize rights-of-way along roadways as appropriate.
9. **Connect pedestrian paths to commercial, industrial, and other places of employment, including the proposed FedEx facility along Willowbrook Road.**
10. **Continue to connect neighborhoods to the Nor-Bath Trail with pedestrian paths as opportunities arise or through the development process.**
11. **Reconstruct intersections to promote pedestrian and cyclist crossings by installing medians, traffic calming elements, or other measures**

- a. Priority intersections include Willowbrook Rd./W Bullshead Rd., Savage Rd./Nor-Bath Trail, and Savage Rd./Atlas Rd.

12. Establish trail signage that is consistent across the Township and with park signage to provide a uniform branding for the system.

Theme 4

Recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, stress reduction, social connection, celebration, and personal growth.

Our Vision

Allen Township will be a place where people who live, work, and visit have plentiful recreation opportunities year around. The more we expose people to fun, enriching experiences, the more opportunities we create for people to learn, connect, and share. Whether it is taking in the scenery of our beautiful riverfront, feeling the warm sun while on a hike, enjoying the thrill of the game, or immersing oneself in our rich

⁷ Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. *Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men.* **Journal of the American Medical Association.** 273:1093-1098

⁸ Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. *How much physical activity is good for health?* **Annual Reviews of Public Health.** 13:99-126

⁹ Slattery ML. 1996. *How much physical activity do we need to maintain health prevent*

history, we view the creation of these opportunities for personal growth, community building, and connections with nature as a core responsibility.

Why We Care

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer⁷, are less in danger from heart disease and stroke⁸, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer⁹, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma and depression¹⁰. Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. It

disease? Difference diseases –different mechanisms. **Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport** 67(2):209-212 Slattery ML, Potter J, Caan B et al.

¹⁰ United States Department of Health and Human Services; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. **Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.** Atlanta, Georgia. Glasgow RE, Ruggerio L, Eakin EG et al.

contributes to personality development and improves psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and stress. Recreation participation increases sense of well-being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others. Recreation plays an important role in promoting a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize and share common interests. It is a major driver of community interaction and pride.

Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. They provide a social focus for the community and affect people's perception of their neighborhood. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influences how a community looks, feels, and functions.

Public recreation is public health. The U.S. Center for Disease Control enlisted local communities in the fight against diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension by offering easier, plentiful and convenient places and programs that will help citizens to increase physical activity. This will help to reduce national health care costs, one of our country's most pressing challenges.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Allen Township is located in a region with convenient access to a plethora of recreation opportunities. Most recreation occurs as citizens engage in their own interests on their own schedule, such as visiting the Dog Park, walking, bicycling, playing on the playgrounds – and not in organized scheduled programs.

Several venues for organized scheduled activities are available to township residents close to home. These included the sports, special events, and activities in Northampton Borough.

Organized Sports

Volunteer sports leagues operate in the vicinity beyond the borders of any one jurisdiction serving participants from multiple municipalities. Allen Township residents participate in the following organizations with participation numbers where available:

- Allen Township Youth Association
- Bath Youth Club
- East Allen Township Parks & Recreation Baseball
- East Allen Township Parks & Recreation Soccer
- Lehigh Township Athletic Association
- Moore Township Athletic Association
- Northampton Athletic Association – includes baseball, softball, football, cheerleading, basketball and wrestling with about 1200 participants, many from Allen Township.
- Northampton Area Youth Lacrosse – 239 Participants
- Northampton Soccer Club – 100 participants
- TriBoro Youth Soccer – 700 participants

A focus group with youth sports revealed that more flat fields for sports including soccer, lacrosse and field hockey are needed. Because the leagues do not register participants by place of residents, no numbers are available on Allen Township participation rates making field projections a challenge.

Northampton Borough

The recreation facilities in Northampton Borough evoke the traditional pattern of development in rural areas of Pennsylvania. Boroughs were population centers surrounded by large undeveloped areas in outlying townships. With utilities in place, the boroughs were able to establish swimming pools, parks, ballfields, playgrounds, ice rinks, community centers, and other recreation facilities. As the townships developed, residents gravitated to recreation facilities in the boroughs. Northampton Borough has a wonderful municipal complex with a park, swimming pool, community centers and recreation facilities. Allen Township residents use these facilities and participate in recreation activities there.

Northampton Community Library

The Library located in Northampton Borough offers programs, activities and services beyond the traditional lending of books. This is a source of opportunities for children, teens and senior adults.

Special Events

Allen Township citizens band together to hold the Covered Bridge Festival every other year. Volunteers undertake all of the planning, partnerships, activities, and events with the full support of Allen Township.

Challenges

Staffing

Although Allen Township has citizens who volunteer for special events, there is no recreation staff to undertake programming. With a population under 10,000, the Township is too small to warrant having recreation staff on its own.

Absence of Schools in Allen Township

Schools typically serve as community hubs by providing opportunities for citizen of all ages year round during non-school hours. Allen Township's unusual circumstances of having the only school located in the Township belong to another school district and Allen Township residents going to school outside of the Township in the Northampton Area School District creates a disconnect with school opportunities.

Lack of a Parks and Recreation Board

Parks and Recreation Boards often provide limited but targeted recreation programs, events and activities to help build a sense of community. Without such a board, Allen Township is without a vehicle in which volunteers can step up to undertake select activities and help the Township achieve its goals.

Opportunities

Riverfront

With 2.4 miles of riverfront property, Allen Township can become a mecca for waterfront recreation. Once the Nagle property is planned, designed, and access created, citizens will be able to get to and on the river to enjoy nature, see wildlife, fish, canoe, kayak, paddle board and a host of other activities. This will add a new dimension to the quality of life in Allen Township that will make living and visiting here even better.

Environmental Education

The Nagle homestead presents a unique opportunity to provide an environmental education center here. It requires further planning to determine how to undertake such an effort successfully and to identify the resources needed for capital improvements as well as operations. The Township is already undertaking projects with important environmental education opportunities such as constructing the pollinator garden, duck boxes, and collaboration with other environmental organizations such as the D&L National Heritage Corridor, PA DCNR, Wildlands Conservancy, Natural Lands, PA Game Commission, PA Fish & Boat Commission, and regional nature centers. Developing a strategy for making Allen Township a center of environmental education through its parks and recreation facilities will be an important undertaking over the next ten years.

Merging History, Heritage, and Recreation

Allen Township has a fascinating history related to transportation ranging from the mule barges and the railroads in the 19th century to the present day large Fed Ex operation. Local residents have written books about this history and teach

about it in conjunction with the school curriculum. The Township has a great opportunity with the Nagle property to merge heritage and recreation making learning about our heritage fun, exciting, and memorable.

The Arts: Tapping Local Residents

Interviews found that people in the community have unique skills and interests that the Township could tap to enhance community parks and recreation opportunities. Interviews at Willow Green found residents who are interested in the arts and landscaping including getting involved with offering programs and services on these topics.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of how Allen Township envisions managing the parks, recreation, and open space system in the future.

1. Promote parks, recreation facilities and trails.

- a. Continue to use the website to post information about parks, recreation facilities, and trails.
- b. Include articles about parks, recreation, and trails in the newsletters.
- c. Expand in to the use of social media. Consider getting a student intern for this purpose or a core group of student volunteers.

2. **Continue to support the efforts of community volunteers for special events such as the Covered Bridge Festival.**

3. **Follow through with the recommendation to establish the Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board.**

- a. Charge the Board with generating information about regional recreation programs, events, and services to post on the township's website.
- b. Task the Board with planning and offering two to three signature seasonal special events for Allen Township annually.

4. **Consider exploring a partnership with Northampton Borough in parks and recreation.**

- a. Determine if more programs could be offered jointly.
- b. Explore the potential to share recreation staff to serve both municipalities jointly in a regional recreation consortium. If so, contact PA DCNR for potential funding for this effort through PEER and Circuit Rider grants.

5. **Continue to work with area nature centers to explore the potential to establish environmental education and a possible nature center at the Nagle site.**

- a. Consider undertaking an ANCA consultation. ANCA is the Association of Nature Center Administrators. They offer affordable short-term consultations on

nature center planning and operation in charrette format. They include master nature center specialists.

- b. Involve the school district, Northampton County and the D&L National Heritage Corridor in the process.

6. **Acknowledge and plan for Allen Township's role as a facilitator of recreation opportunities.**

- a. Continue to support recreation opportunities that are offered by others such as sports leagues, scouts, and others.
- b. Recognize that facilitating recreation in the community takes staff time, effort, and knowledge. Planning to accommodate the time to do this as the parks, recreation, and trail system grows will be a key to success.
- c. Strive to provide excellent customer service via parks, recreation, and trails. This is the one public service that benefits the largest number of people in a most positive way. It is often the sole source of contact that a citizen has with local government. Making the most of this will benefit the Township for the long term.

Theme 5

Operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a premier parks and recreation system with opportunities for people who live work and visit here to connect with nature, be healthy, enjoy our community, and experience our remarkable history, culture, and heritage. To ensure that we manage and finance our parks and recreation system efficiently and effectively we will integrate professional planning and design, acquisition, facility development, maintenance, and programming fully in a systematic and thoughtful manner. By optimizing design, maintenance and investment, we will ensure that our parks and recreation facilities are safe, clean, and beautiful and that our natural resources and open space are conserved. Our residents will point to Allen Township's parks, recreation and open space with pride.

Why We Care

With 105 acres of municipal parkland, the only covered bridge in Northampton County, 2.4 miles of river front, four developed parks and the undeveloped riverfront park, recreation facilities, buildings, and many future miles of trails, additional recreation facilities and a potential environmental center, we have an important legacy to protect and build upon. Our citizens have told us that they highly value our parks, recreation facilities and open space. We have learned that many people are lifelong residents or have moved here because of our rural scenic character, the way of life and recreational opportunities we offer here. We need to ensure that we are proud and skilled stewards of managing this public trust.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Allen Township's elected and appointed officials have been managing parks, recreation, and open space in an effective,

efficient and dedicated manner. The Township Manager has been particularly innovative in securing land, fostering conservation, and trying new approaches to parkland management rooted in community-based stewardship of parks, partnerships, and alternative funding. The Township has been limited as a small community with an austere budget and a lean but mighty staff. The challenge will be to manage a growing and evolving parks, recreation, and open space system given the current level of resources and staff available. Planning for the operation and maintenance of future parks and recreation facilities must be done in tandem with capital improvements to ensure their long term financial and environmental sustainability.

Many citizens are involved in supporting parks and recreation opportunities. The Kreidersville Bridge Community Association offers a multi-day Covered Bridge festival every two years. Organized sports organizations, including Tri-Boro Soccer, Northampton Athletic Association, Northampton Youth Lacrosse, Northern Valley Youth Soccer League, and Allen Township Youth Sports, serve the community in multi-jurisdictional service area including Allen Township. Bath Youth Club is trying to make a comeback.

Challenges

Staffing

Allen Township has a staff of about ten full-time employees but no parks and recreation department or employees. The functions of parks, recreation and open space are shared by the Township Manager and the Public Works Department Crew Manager who is the only Public Works Department staff member. They are responsible for more than 40 miles of roads,

all township public ground and buildings, contract maintenance for sewers and pumping stations, and all township parks.

Park maintenance is largely focused on mowing, trimming and litter pick up and removal. The crews undertake special projects for park improvements when possible.

Budget

Securing funding for capital development and operations is a challenge for any municipality but especially so for a small community like Allen Township. Allen Township's operating budget of about \$1.79 million includes \$25,000 for parks and recreation expenses plus about \$68,696 estimated for labor costs for the Township Manager Public Works Department representing about 4.6 percent of the Township's operating budget. This exceeds the statewide average of about three percent and is close to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources recommendation of five percent. This equates to about \$19.58 per capita, about 80 percent of statewide average of a \$36 per capita municipal investment in parks and recreation. Nationwide the per capita investment is \$76. This budget is estimated to reflect a \$1,480 maintenance cost per acre of existing parks and recreation facilities. That does not include work on the riverfront properties which do receive maintenance attention nor the time that the Township Manager spend on parks and recreation matters. So, the \$1,480 per acre for maintenance is high. The average per acre cost for park maintenance ranges from about \$2,000 in communities with small systems and limited resources to \$8,400.

Revenues from pavilion rentals total less than \$1,000. Festivals such as the Covered Bridge Festival are provided through

volunteerism and donations. The township has been successful in securing grant funding for parks and recreation over the last five years from Northampton County and PA DCNR. The Township has also secured assistance through partnerships such as the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, and Wildlands Conservancy. As the result of a legal settlement on a toxic waste site, the Township has been able to secure funding for remediation and land acquisition and funds remain in this settlement. This has resulted in the conservation of land along the river that in combination with other properties gives the Township nearly about 2.4 miles of access to the Lehigh River on the township's western border.

Current Approach to Maintenance

Park maintenance is largely rooted in keeping the parks mowed and clean. No formal maintenance management system is in place that would include workload cost tracking, sports turf management, natural resource management, forestry, or playground safety inspections. This is common in parks and recreation systems that are in their infancy. Record keeping regarding costs and tasks performed is essential for optimal allocation of resources and limiting exposure to liability.

Policies and Ordinances

Again, reflective of an emerging parks and recreation systems, the Township operates parks and recreation facilities with limited policies that cover the basic operations now such as field scheduling and reservations of township facilities. With new facilities coming online, certain policies would be important to consider in the short term including naming of

parks and recreation facilities and a policy on donations or gifts.

Allen Township should create and adopt a Mandatory Dedication of parkland Ordinance. This ordinance would include provisions for a developer to offer a fee-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland. The ordinance would provide recommendations for this fee which should be based upon market value of the land. The adoption of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan conforms with the Municipalities Planning Code that requires the establishment of parkland standards. In Allen Township, that standard is 22.8 acres per 1,000 residents.

Opportunities

Maintenance Management in the Future

The Township Manager has been introducing alternative maintenance management strategies such as the establishment of meadows to reduce mowing and projects to benefit wildlife and our food supply through pollinator areas, bird boxes and partnerships with environmental organizations such as the Game Commission, the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, Northampton County Open Space, Delaware & Lehigh Canal Natural Heritage Corridor and land conservancies including the Wildlands Conservancy and Natural Lands. With the riverfront as a major new conservation area that will become a national and, especially a Mid-Atlantic regional destination as part of the national heritage corridor, it will important to continue such innovative planning for natural resource management and weave it into the development of a formal park maintenance management system for Allen Township.

Partnerships

In researching community recreational needs and interests and how people in Allen Township currently engage in recreation activities, it became evident that residents in the area enjoy recreation opportunities beyond their own municipal boundaries. It is also apparent that funding and staffing in the region is a challenge. Consequently, exploring more multi-municipal and school district partnerships may enable the municipalities and the school district to provide more public service at less cost than anyone could possibly do on its own. For example, Allen Township could explore working with Northampton Borough and the Northampton Area School District to determine how to maximize use of existing facilities in the respective jurisdictions while looking at how to create more facilities as a partnership. This would make the best use of existing facilities and services, provide for new facilities and services at less cost and reduce the costs of each provider through cost and resource sharing.

Factors in Excellent Park Systems

There is a great deal of interest in moving Allen Township's promising parks, recreation, and open space system from good to excellent. Building upon the innovation and commitment that the elected and appointed officials have already demonstrated in parks, recreation and conservation, the Township can follow the path to achieving the characteristics that define an excellent park system. Research conducted by the Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Park Association found that there are nine factors that define excellence in public park systems¹¹. They include the following:

1. **The park must rank high on the political agenda to get funded.** Elected officials set policy and invest resources that are vital in establishing public parks and recreation as an essential public service.

The Allen Township Board of Supervisors has been undertaking major opportunities for parks & recreation for the last ten years.

2. **A clear expression of purpose.** The municipality must clearly set forth in writing the purpose of the parks, recreation and open space system. It will serve as a mandate for the Township in defining its parks, recreation and open space mission and core

This plan defines the purpose of Allen Township's parks, recreation and open space system.

¹¹ Harnik, Peter. **The Excellent City Park System: What Makes It Great and How to Get There.** Washington, D.C.: Trust for Public Land. 2003.

services. Having a strong concept of mission and core services can stave off pressures pick up inappropriate tasks or to drop projects or activities.

3. **Ongoing planning and community involvement.**

Community involvement is the foundation of public parks, recreation and open space. To be successful, a park system needs a thoughtful orchestrated planning process for all major improvements and ongoing operations. A plan is more than an intention. It is a document that is built upon a process, demonstrating specific actions, professional expertise, research, and a clear final outcome with specific factors defined. It should be rooted in public participation. Every plan should spell out the implications for the long term management, maintenance and operation of the improvement including staff and financial support including alternative methods of support to tradition township resources. Good planning builds public support and ensures the likelihood that the Township can successfully afford to sustain the project in the future.

Public engagement was the foundation of this plan and will continue through plan implementation.

4. **Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the systems' goals.** While the Allen Township park and recreation system is developing and major accomplishments are in place, additional land and facilities connected by a network of safe places to walk and bicycle are needed to serve present and future generations. Every park and recreation system should have a formalized plan to manage all of its resources sustainably for proper staffing and equipment levels. This requires the tracking of data about workload, costs of tasks and facilities, program participation and trends, and so forth. This information should be written and published in an annual report so that elected and appointed officials, the Township Manager, and staff can make informed decisions and allocate resources and help citizens to understand the limits and allocation of public funding and staffing. Numbers, documentation and information on a timely basis are essential for effective and efficient management. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

This plan recommends an additional 11 - 100 acres of parkland, the development of a formal maintenance system, and creating a management impact statement for all major park projects in order to plan for the resources to sustain the improvement.

5. **Equitable Access.** An excellent park and recreation system is accessible to all residents regardless of place of residence, physical ability or financial circumstances. Increasing barrier-free accessibility in the parks will be an important challenge in meeting ADA requirements. Assuring opportunities for low-income residents will be important when considering any programs or activities that would include fees and charges.

Planning for barrier free park design will be a part of all park improvements in the future.

6. **User satisfaction.** By definition, an excellent park system is well used. High park and recreation facility use validates that the system is meeting people's needs. While it is not possible to have exact counts of all park visitation, selective counts of specific facilities over time can provide Allen Township with some meaningful data about facility use. This will help Allen Township management to know their customers and understand and anticipate their needs to plan for effective public service.

7. **Safety from Physical Hazards and Crime.** The Township works toward eliminating and preventing hazardous conditions in township parks.

Allen Township is safe. It is 87% lower than the national average of crime overall including 99% lower in violent crime and 59% lower in property crime. The more parks are used, the safer they are.

8. **Benefits for the Municipality Beyond the Borders of the Parks.** The value of Allen Township's parks and recreation system extends well beyond the park boundaries. Good parks have been shown to increase property values, clean the air and water, reduce health care costs, attract and retain businesses and residents, reduce the isolation of the elderly, and improve learning opportunities for people of all ages through experience in the great outdoors. Documenting and collecting information about the benefits of the Allen Township park and recreation system would strengthen the importance of parks and recreation as an essential public service in which financial support is an investment rather than a cost.
9. **Collaboration.** Since Allen Township government operates with a lean budget and small staff, partnerships with other public, community-based, and private sector organizations are vital to the successful establishment and operation of the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to inform and engage the Board of Supervisors in making parks, recreation and open space a township priority.**
 - a. Report to them on a regular basis and engage them in the policy and decision-making aspects of parks, recreation, and open space.

- b. Provide the Board with testimonials from the public on the benefits of parks, recreation and open space.
- c. Include parks, recreation and open space in the annual tour of Allen Township by the Board of Supervisors.
- d. Provide an annual report on the accomplishment opportunities and challenges. This could be a responsibility of the future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board.

2. Continue to undertake professional planning of the parks, recreation and open space system.

- a. Include public participation in all major parks, recreation, and open space projects with a value of more than \$10,000.
- b. Retain professional landscape architects, parks and recreation planners, and engineers with expertise in the creation of great public spaces, historic preservation and environmental conservation for respective park and trail master plans.
- c. Include management, maintenance, financing, programming, and partnership planning for all projects more than \$10,000.
- d. Use planning projections and workload cost tracking to determine when additional staff would be needed, whether full time, part time, or seasonal, and how to support their cost.
- e. For any new project or program, use the Management Impact Statement shown on the following page as the

township's planning tool to assess moving forward with new projects and programs that have a value of more than \$10,000. Consideration should be given to delaying the project until resources are available and not abandoning it if it is a worthy project or program.

3. Engage the public in parks, recreation, and open space planning, programming, and stewardship.

- c. Form a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board.
 - 1. Appoint a seven-member advisory board including citizens with a mix of interests, expertise, ages, genders, and place of residence geographically in the Township. Include a school district representative.
 - 2. Appoint a township supervisor to serve as the liaison to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board.
 - 3. Join the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society. Membership will open the door to a wealth of information, technical support, contacts, training, and grants.
 - 4. Consider seeking a RecTAP grant from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society to help set up this important board. This is a \$2500 no match grant available to members of the Society.

MANAGEMENT IMPACT STATEMENT

PURPOSE

1. To assess the impact of a proposed project or program in terms of capital and operating costs, including capital cost, human resources required for operations, maintenance costs including labor, equipment, materials, supplies and cyclic repair, and the effect of on other parks and recreation facilities and services.
2. To use this information to make an informed decision about moving ahead with the proposed project.

METHOD

Determine:

1. Capital cost of proposed project.
2. Operating costs for proposed project or program. Include:
 - a. Number of staff hours required
 - b. Cost of staff hours in salary, wages, benefits and payroll taxes.
 - c. Cost of materials and supplies.
 - d. Utility costs.
 - e. Miscellaneous costs.
3. Impact on other facilities and programs should the proposed project be undertaken.
 - a. Will the project/program require funds needed for other facilities or services?

- b. Will the project/program require staff time needed for other facilities or services?
- c. How will the project impact the quality of services that Allen Township has set as a goal?

4. Revenue sources from Township and other means of support
 - a. Township funds – additional appropriation
 - b. Township funds – within current budget
 - c. Grants
 - d. Gifts or donations
 - e. Non-tax funds to be generated for the project/program through fees, charges, sponsorships, partnerships, and/or other means.
 - f. Will the partner(s) make a commitment to support the project or program for a defined time period? Will they support the project over its life expectancy?

DECISION-MAKING

Based upon the above information, does Allen Township have the resources from any source (public, private or combination of sources) to move ahead with this project or program?

5. Use a variety of means to inform and involve the public including the township newsletter, website, public meetings, and conversations with citizens in the parks and the conduct of township budget. Use email blasts and the township website to solicit public opinion via online commenting.
4. **Provide sufficient land and facilities to ensure that Allen Township has a parks recreation and open space system that is reflective of the caliber of this community.**
- a. Follow the recommendations of this plan for parkland, recreation facilities, open space and natural resource conservation and trails.
 - i. Use a mix of land use planning, the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland, donations, conservation easements, and fee simple purchase to secure enough parkland for present and future generations.
 - ii. Make securing parkland and trail linkages a priority as Allen Township is under great development pressure. Land bank secured parkland until resources are available for improvement for recreation and/or conservation projects.
 - b. Commit to maintaining the parkland, recreation facilities, trails and natural areas to provide memorable experiences by the community, the protection of the

township's natural resources, and reduce the townships exposure to liability.

- i. Develop a formalized maintenance management system for parks and recreation facilities and the stewardship of natural areas. Start with workload cost tracking to begin to assign costs for tasks, parks, and specific facilities. Consider securing a Peer grant from PA DCNR to secure the assistance of a park maintenance professional to help develop this plan. The grant is for \$10,000 with only a \$1,000 match.
- ii. Start with a simple workload cost tracking system such as the cost of mowing and trimming, liter pick up, and restroom maintenance.
- iii. Develop cost centers by park and/or by recreation facility such as ballfields or playgrounds.
- iv. Establish and/or enhance the record keeping system especially for playground safety inspections. Continue to support staff in their training to be accredited as Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI).

The single most important thing that a township can do to prevent or win lawsuits is to have an effective maintenance management system in place.

- v. Develop stewardship plans for natural areas and natural resource based parks. Allocate \$8,000 - 10,000 to retain environmental stewardship training experts to work with township staff on stewardship planning and management.
5. **Provide sufficient financial resources for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of the parks, recreation and open space system. labor, materials, supplies, utilities, and cyclic repairs to ensure that parks, recreation and open space are mainlined in a safe, clean and ready to use condition.**
- a. For capital funding, address the need for a bond issue for parks, recreation, and open space.
 - i. Recognize that the Township's previous referendum was not successful. Work with information gleaned from that experience in tandem with knowledge of the citizenry and information from this plan on psychographics located in the Appendix to plan a new campaign for the next referendum.
 - ii. Retain a consultant skilled in parks, recreation, and open space voter referenda and organizing public information campaigns to advance the effort of a successful vote to secure a bond.
 - b. For the operating budget, use a mix of public and private resources to support parks, recreation and open space. This includes taxes, fees-in-lieu of parkland dedication, grants, gifts, donations, fees and charges, rentals, partnerships and sponsorships
 - i. Phase in additional municipal support of parks and recreation over time as the parks and recreation facilities are developed and improved. Work toward benchmark figures of five percent of the operating budget; \$36 per capita; and about \$3,000 - \$5,000 an acre for park maintenance in current dollars.
6. **Plan for building the capacity of the Township staff to manage the growing parks, recreation and open space system in a way that maximizes township resources, provides excellent public service, and conserves precious natural, cultural, and historic resources.**
- a. Focus on implementing the recommendations of this plan for parks, recreation, trails and open space and the formation of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board. As the recommendations are implemented, use the Management Impact Statement to determine what resources are needed for staffing, budget and partnerships.
 - b. Use the information from workload cost tracking, even if is done at a rudimentary level to begin with, to plan for the efficient and effective maintenance of township parks, recreation facilities and trails,
 - c. Develop an annual work program as shown in this table.

**Allen Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan
2018 ANNUAL Work Program**

Key Action Objectives	Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed	Deliverable /Metric

Implementation Plan

Pragmatic steps to turn vision into reality.

Moving from Planning Into Action

Allen Township has faced unprecedented development pressure. Time is of the essence to secure the vision that the citizens want for their Allen Township: a parks, recreation, open space, and trail system that help to shape the character of our community. Fortunately, Allen Township has a successful track record of seeking out opportunities and securing them with a bias toward action.

Given the pressure for development, the limited time left to achieve the vision of a green and connected community reflecting its important heritage, the implementation plan needs to be strategic and focused with an emphasis on what can be accomplished in the near term. The implementation plan must:

1. Recognize that while there are many important needs, some actions, such as land conservation, are time sensitive given development pressure. Some tasks are urgent and important. Some are important and not urgent, such as park upgrades, because the Township has already secured their protection and further work or improvements can be deferred. Some projects are easily undertaken while others are broad and sweeping

requiring a major investment of time, expertise, funding, and partnerships.

2. Be based upon an organizational framework to propel the implementation of high priority actions. This is a small township with a limited but mighty staff. Focusing on a limited number of high priority actions with a high degree of success is crucial. Securing the assistance of outside experts, whether paid or volunteer, for defined projects when necessary in the short term could help the Township achieve its goals without the need and cost of expanding staff.
3. Clearly specify the tasks that must be undertaken right away to position the Township to secure the land needed for parks, conservation of resources, protection of community character, and linkages for a township wide trail network.
4. Be flexible in continuing to seize opportunities, especially via grant programs. Since grant programs are targeted for specific purposes, a recommendation in this plan might be competitive under a specific grant program that the Township should act upon to secure the funding making the project possible.

Implementation Strategy

Our implementation strategies are consistent with our overarching view of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our residents; maintaining Allen Township's overall community character; enhancing our township's built environment; protecting natural and historic features; providing recreation opportunities for active healthy living and creating a sense of community here; and protecting and improving the quality of life that we all enjoy.

Priorities

The Action Plan is divided into three priorities as follows:

High Priority 1: Projects that are of the highest priority due to urgency, time sensitivity, and potential to lose opportunities due to development pressure that would change the character of the community forever and have a high likelihood of successful accomplishment. They are also focused on building capacity and organizing for plan implementation to achieve the vision established in this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Medium Priority 2: Projects that are important to do but not urgent. They could be successfully undertaken at a later date successfully and their delay would not impact Allen Township negatively over the long term.

Low Priority 3: Projects that would be beneficial and useful to Allen Township but are not urgent and do not rise to the importance of projects identified as high and medium priorities.

Organizing Themes

The priorities are organized around the themes of this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan as follows:

Theme 1

Open space, rivers and streams, and woodlands that shape the rural character of our community.

Theme 2

Lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Theme 3

Community connections with safe places to walk and bicycle and corridors for wildlife and nature.

Theme 4

Recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, stress reduction, social connection, celebration, and personal growth.

Theme 5

Operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

The implementation matrix with actions that follows is organized by priorities and includes responsible parties, completion date, and estimated costs and funding sources.

Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 1	Projects that are of the highest priority due to urgency, time sensitivity, and potential to lose opportunities due to development pressure that would change the character of the community forever and have a high likelihood of successful accomplishment. They are also focused on building capacity and organizing for plan implementation to achieve the vision established in this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.					
Action	Theme	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
ORGANIZING						
Establish a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Recruit members with expertise in areas of the plan.	Volunteer and staff time
Establish an Environmental Advisory Council	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2019	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Recruit members with expertise in conservation.	Volunteer and staff time
Secure a RecTAP grant to help get the board organized and running	5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Township Manager	Recreation professional hired under grant	Submit application to the Pennsylvania Recreation and Society and undertake project	\$2,500 no match grant.
Assign the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board with shepherding PROS Plan Implementation	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 - 2027	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board	Township Manager	PROS Board would advise the Board of Supervisors on plan implementation.	Volunteer and staff time
FINANCING						
Decide upon a voter referendum for a parks and open space bond	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	If moving ahead, retain services of a conservancy skilled in running voter referenda campaigns and securing bonds to provide technical assistance.	\$20,000 – 30,000

Priority 1 Continued						
OPEN SPACE						
Establish open space conservation criteria and determine priority properties.	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2018	Board of Supervisors	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board	Criteria finalized by Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board with recommendations to Board of Supervisors.	Volunteer time, consultant time if GIS mapping desired
Make the case for conservation easements as a standard land conservation tool in Allen Township	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2018	Board of Supervisors	Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Board	PROS Board would advise the Board of Supervisors.	Volunteer time
Update ordinances to strengthen conservation and natural resources protection through the development process, including enhanced conservation subdivision codes.	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2018	Board of Supervisors	Solicitor/ Planning Commission	Focus on interconnected open space. Enhance conservation subdivision codes to meet PROS Plan goals. Write ordinances or hire planner to do so.	Staff time or \$15,000-\$25,000 in consulting services.
Renew agreement on the Bodnarczuk tract and investigate permanent conservation	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources & 3 – Community Connections	2018	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Establish renewed lease. Initiate discussions on permanent conservation easement.	Staff and volunteer time
PARKS						
Secure the Nagle buildings and obtain a tenant for an on-site presence	2 – Lively Parks	2018	Board of Supervisors & Township Manager	Public Works	Obtain a tenant that would advance township goals for security and maintenance.	Negotiate arrangement via rent, maintenance and improvement combination
Resolve the railroad crossing issue on the Nagle property	2 – Lively Parks	2017 - 2018	Township Manager	Railroad right-of-way consultant		\$10,000 - \$15,000
Establish guidelines for safely allowing public access on the Nagle property and riverfront parkland.	2 – Lively Parks	2017 - 2018	Board of Supervisors & Township Manager	Consultation with attorney and insurance carrier		Solicitor hourly rate.

Priority 1 Continued						
Integrate park lands into Allen Township's MS4 Plan.	2 – Lively Parks and 1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2018-2019	Township Manager	Planning Commission	When master planning parks, and implementing MS4 Plan, use park plans to identify how to decrease run-off from storm events via well-designed stormwater management facilities in the parks.	Planning time on MS4 Plan implementation. Investment in park master planning that could be funded with PA DCNR grants.
Undertake a park master plan for the riverfront.	2 – Lively Parks 5 – Operational Excellence	2018-2019	Township Manager	Advisory Group	Appoint an advisory group that includes Friends of the River, Bertsch-Hokendauqua Creek Watershed Association, anglers, Lehigh Gap Nature Center users and others with related interests in the new park.	\$75,000 - \$100,000 with grant assistance for 50%. Use funds from toxic waste settlement if possible.
Begin planning to create the three hub areas as organizing element for township and park system	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources, 2 – Lively Parks & 3 – Community Connections	2018 - 2027	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Strategize outreach to property owners and use the land development process to identify park locations and trail linkages as foundation for future development	Negotiations, staff time, potential planning assistance from outside resources
Adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance consistent with this PROS Plan	2 – Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2019	Board of Supervisors & Township Manager	Solicitor	Write the ordinance or retain the services of a planner to do so.	Staff time or \$8,000 - \$10,000 in consulting services.
Until an additional park is added, maintain the parks as is with no capital improvements. The exception is to undertake naturalizing and tree planting	2 – Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	Ongoing	Township Manager	Public Works and Volunteers	When another community park is added, then master plan Howertown Park to prepare for the transition of active recreation facilities to the new park.	Continued maintenance.

Priority 1 Continued						
Continue program to naturalize areas to reduce mowing	5 – Operational Excellence & 2 – Lively Parks	2018 - 2027	Township Manager	Public Works Director	Consult with Penn State Extension Service or Conservation District.	Staff time
Establish a park tree planting program	2 – Lively Parks & 1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2018 - 2027	Township Manager	Public Works & Volunteers	Purchase tree whips annually for planting	\$5,000 annually. TreeVitalize, Scouts and other supporters.
Secure 66 - 100 acres of parkland to create a community park.	2 – Lively Parks	2018 - 2027	Township Manager	PROS Board	Negotiate with developers and land owners using the land development process to secure additional parkland	Negotiation in land use planning, mandatory dedication of parkland, and acquisition with cost to be determined. Seek grant funding
Develop plan to provide for safe public access to the river at Riverfront Property	2 – Lively Parks & 1 – Open Space and Natural Resources				Use the additional DCNR funding from PROS Plan grant to develop plan. Seek additional county funding for master plan.	\$20,000 including \$10,000 grant
Name the new riverfront park	2 – Lively Parks	2018	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager & PROS Board	Establish a naming policy and then determine how to name the park. Consider a contest.	Staff time
TRAILS						
Add measures to promote safer ped & bike crossing of Willowbrook Rd. at Bullshead Lane	3 – Community Connections	2019	Board of Supervisors	Planning Commission With Township Manager	Coordinate with engineer	Staff time and cost to be determined
Work with the website manager to make parks recreation, and trails prominent on the site	4 – Recreation Opportunities	2019	Website Manager	Township Manager	Describe parks, program sources and contact information for other recreation providers.	Staff time
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES						
Continue to facilitate and promote recreation but not provide programs directly	4 – Recreation Opportunities	Ongoing	PROS Board	Township Manager	Provide facilities and information for the community about recreation opportunities.	Staff and volunteer time

Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 2	Medium Priority 2: Projects that are important to do but not urgent. They could be successfully undertaken later successfully and their delay would not impact Allen Township negatively over the long term.					
Action	Theme	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
ORGANIZING						
Plan for the future maintenance and support of parks and recreation as facilities are added and improved.	5 – Operational Excellence	2020 - 2027	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors/PROS Board	Use the Management Impact Statements to plan for operations, maintenance, allocation of resources and alternatives.	Staff & volunteer time
OPEN SPACE						
Meet with owners of highest priority properties to discuss conservation	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2019 - 2027	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors/PROS Board	In each case, recruit a community “champion”, neighbor, other to open doors to owners. Use a conservancy to help.	Staff & volunteer time, cost for conservancy consulting
For willing landowners, submit grant applications for easements or acquisition.	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2019-2027	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors/PROS Board	Use a conservancy to complete applications as needed. Work with PADCNR, PADCED, Northampton Co., others	Staff time, consulting from conservancy \$1,000-\$4,000 per application
TRAILS						
Apply to secure funds for road improvements at key intersections for safe ped/bike crossing	3 – Community Connections	2020	Board of Supervisors	Township Engineer, Township Manager	Discuss with PennDOT as appropriate.	Staff and volunteer time

PRIORITY 2 Continued						
Analyze feasibility of riverfront trail connection to D & L Trail & Northern Tier Trail.	3 – Community Connections	2020	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors/PROS Board	Complete within or supplemental to riverfront park master plan. Discuss with D & L Heritage Area & Northampton County.	Staff time, funding for riverfront park master plan
Identify pilot trail project based on PROS Plan and undertake feasibility/master plan	3 – Community Connections	2020 – 2022	PROS Board	Endorsement of Board of Supervisors Support from Township Manager	Apply for grant	\$25,000 - \$30,000 grant with equal match
Reach out to landowners along high priority trail corridors	3 – Community Connections	2019	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors, PROS Board	Recruit community “champions” to help make the case.	Staff and volunteer time
Apply for grant funds to acquire trail corridors	3 – Community Connections	2020	Township Manager	Board of Supervisors, PROS Board	Utilize a planner to complete applications as necessary. Work with PA DCNR, PA DCED, Northampton Co., others	Staff time, consulting from planner \$1,000-\$5,000 per application
PARKS						
Coordinate with Northampton County Parks & Recreation Department to advance additional phases of Grube Park Master Plan.	2-Lively Parks	2018 - 2023	Township Manager	PROS Board	Focus on addition of flat fields and pavilions. Provide support to the County to advocate for the installation of additional phase.	Staff and volunteer time
Continue to secure parkland	2-Lively Parks	2020 – 2027	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Outright purchase, bargain sale, donation. Land bank parkland until other priorities are completed along the river. Securing it is key.	To be determined. Priority is land in Howertown Hub and the 60 acre Nagle tract.

PRIORITY 2 Continued						
Develop a township park, open space, and trail signage system and phase in installation with site improvements	2-Lively Parks 1-Open Space 3-Community Connections	2021 - 2022	Township Manager	PROS Board	Retain expert in public park and recreation signage	30,000 – 40,000 plus cost of signs to be determined with design
Develop full master plan for the river park	2-Lively Parks 3-Community Connections	2019 – 2020	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Retain consultants with expertise in conservation, historic preservation and excellence in design of public space.	\$80,000 – 100,000
Create a Park Furnishings Manual	2-Lively Parks 5 – Operational Excellence	2019 -2020	Township Manager	PROS Board	Develop this manual as part of a park master plan and use it to apply to other parks.	\$25,000 - \$30,000
Phase in improvements to the riverfront park	2-Lively Parks	2020 - 2023	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Develop specifications and bid out improvements	Apply for grant funding with a goal of \$300 - 500,000 annually to be matched by the Township
Work with Northampton County to secure a 99-year lease for the Dog Park.	2-Lively Parks	2019 - 2020	Township Manager	Northampton County Officials	Meet with Northampton County to initiate discussions in 2019 working to a new lease.	\$1 per year for the lease.
RECREATION						
Coordinate with Northampton Borough on programs, pool, and community center to explore partnership.	4 – Recreation Opportunities 5-Operational excellence	2019	Township Manager or PROS Board Representative	Board of Supervisors/PROS Board	Contact Borough to discuss collaboration in parks and recreation via borough facilities and township ability to establish additional needed sports facilities	Staff and volunteer time. Could result in cost savings and enhanced recreation opportunities and public service.
Hold annual sports summit with PROS Board	5 – Operational Excellence	2019	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Recruit members with expertise in areas of the plan.	Volunteer and staff time

Allen Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 3	Low Priority 3: Projects that would be beneficial and useful to Allen Township but are not urgent, for which staff time is limited given the project scale, and/or do not rise to the importance of projects identified as high and medium priorities.					
Action	Theme	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
ORGANIZING						
Develop a formalized maintenance management system	5-Operational excellence	2020 - 2021	Township Manager	Public Works	Seek a PEER grant to help develop the system in a way that supports Allen Township uniquely.	\$10,000 grant with \$1,000 match.
Phase in a mix of additional public and private support for parks, recreation and trails.	5-Operational excellence	2023 - 2027	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager, PROS Board	Strive to reach statewide averages in municipal per capita investment and ratio of township operating budget for parks and recreation. Begin a program of sponsorships, partnerships, collaboration and revenue generation to increase non-tax support.	Goal is \$36 per capita and 5% of the operating budget. Cost recovery of 35% from non-tax sources.
Consider forming a multi-municipal parks and recreation partnership with Northampton Borough that could be supported with a four-year state grant.	4 – Recreation Opportunities 5-Operational excellence	2025 - 2027	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager, PROS Board	Adopt collaborative framework for discussions. Consider undertaking a PEER Study that is funded by PA DCNR to explore how the municipalities could collaborate. Pursue additional funding for joint parks and recreation director, Circuit Rider.	PEER Study is a \$10,000 grant with a \$1,000 match. Circuit Rider grants provide funding for the Circuit Rider in decreasing amounts of 100%, 75%, 50%, and 25% with goal of director achieving stable funding through a mix of public and private resources going forward.

PARKS						
Master Plan for new park in the Howertown Hub with relocation of Howertown fields	2-Lively Parks 1-Open Space 5-Operational excellence	2023 - 2025	Township Manager,	PROS Board	Consider undertaking the master plans for the new park and rehabilitation of Howertown Park at one time to save money and provide a holistic way to plan both sites. Include Operations and Maintenance in master plan.	\$50,000 – 80,000
PRIORITY 3 Continued						
Implementation of new park master plan	2-Lively Parks 5-Operational excellence	2025- 2027+	PROS Board	Township Manager	Apply for grants and support with township funding and partnerships such as sports organizations, service clubs, businesses, Friends of the River, and the Bertsch-Hokendauqua Watershed Association.	To be determined
Master Plan for Howertown Park with transition to nature based park	2-Lively Parks 1-Open Space 5-Operational excellence	2023-2025	PROS Board	Township Manager	Same as master plan recommendation above.	\$50,000 – 80,000
Implementation of Park Master Plan for Howertown Park	2-Lively Parks 5-Operational excellence	2025- 2027+	PROS Board	Township Manager	Apply for grants and support with township funding and partnerships	To be determined
Kreidersville Park Improvements	2-Lively Parks 5-Operational excellence	2023 - 2027			Master plan to re-consider site facilities. Playground Replacement. Addition of seating, landscaping and beautification.	\$150,000 - 200,000

PRIORITY 3 Continued						
TRAILS						
Undertake development of trail pilot project	3 – Community Connections	2023 - 2027	PROS Board	Township Manager	Apply for grants	To be determined
Develop the riverfront trail to connect with the D&LNHC and the Northern Tier Trail	3 – Community Connections	2023 - 2027	PROS Board	Township Manager	Coordinate with the D&LNHC and Northampton County. Apply for grants	To be determined
Plan for the establishment of an Environmental Center on the Nagle site	5 - Operational excellence 1 – Open Space and Natural Resources 4 – Recreation Opportunities	2023 - 2025			Undertake and ANCA workshop that would bring in environmental center administrators to spend several days on developing a strategy for the center.	\$5,000 - \$7,000
Continue with open space acquisitions, particularly in Rural District	1 – Open Space and Natural Resources	2023 - 2027	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager, PROS Board	Continue to seek grant funding.	To be determined
Apply for grant funds to develop trail corridors within acquisitions.	3 – Community Connections	2023 – 2027	Township Manager	PROS Board	PA DCNR, PennDOT	To be determined

Appendices

Appendix A – Park Assessments

The purpose of the parks assessment was to determine the functionality, safety, accessibility, and quality of the existing township - owned park facilities.

Each park was viewed during the tour of facilities and subsequent fieldwork. Generally, the parks appear clean. Most of the parks have evolved over time, as needs arose and were not formally master planned. The findings of the facility inventory for each park have similarities that relate to accessibility and the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the safety guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and recommendations to enhance the users experience through the addition of convenience facilities such as landscaping, signing, improved or expanded facilities. Specific findings of site observations and recreation opportunities include the conditions of turf, equipment, signing, and structures, as well as the overall functionality of the parks. Some conditions increase park maintenance requirements. Park master planning and consideration of any changes in facilities need to have substantial input from the township maintenance team. The following are the key observations related to park conditions.

Allen Township is committed to its parks and recreation system.

The recent acquisition of the Nagle property and the township’s securing of the properties along the river for conservation and public parks is visionary and defines Allen Township as a unique community that celebrates its heritage and natural resources. Still a nascent system,

the Township undertook this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan to develop an action program for improving its parks and recreation facilities to reflect the caliber of recreation opportunities desired by the citizens.

Moving from “utilitarian” to “Park-Like” Settings is needed.

Most of the developed portions of the township’s parks have a utilitarian aesthetic. All of the parks need landscape improvements to make them more “park-like.” Each park has issues related to the layout and the functionality of facilities. Overall design logic is lacking, and good design could aid in creating strong civic interaction and pride in the parks, as well unifying the parks into one cohesive system. This initiative should also include developing a System-Wide Design Standards and Landscape Management Manual. Having high-quality, well designed and uniform fixtures such as benches, lights, signing, etc. is cost effective, efficient, and improves the perception of an overall park system. Uniform standards all provide greater efficiency in long term maintenance and management. In the end, it is most important that the Township ensures that all its parks are safe, well-maintained, and meet uniform high-quality standards. This aspect of facility maintenance and management is directly related to having functional, well-planned and designed, and attractive parks. Considering maintenance and operation during the planning stages is the best way to achieve a great park that best meets the needs of the community and achieve a highly level of maintenance and management sustainability, including cost.

Allen Township Parks & Recreation Facilities Inventory

Parks	Allen Township-Owned or Leased					Northampton County-Owned		Totals
	Howertown	Covered Bridge	Kreidersville	Allen Twp. Dog Park & Trail Spur	Riverfront Park	Nor-Bath Trail	Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park	
Acres	21.59	15.92	.63	12.68 leased	31.41 owned 22.15 leased	12.06	201.12	
Total Acres	70.08 acres owned by Allen Township and 34.90 acres leased = 104.98 acres					213.18 acres		318.06
Active Recreation Facilities								
Baseball – 60'								0
Baseball – 90'								0
Softball	4						1	5
Soccer – full	1							1
Practice Area							1	1
Volley Ball							1	1
Basketball	1	1	1					3
Horseshoe								0
Playground	2	1	1				2	6
Exercise Trail	1					1	1	3
Concession	1							1
Bicycle Trail						1	1	2
Passive Recreation Facilities								
Picnic Tables	12						30	42
Pavilions	2						3	5
Grills							3	3
Benches	5	1	1				8	15
Paths	X					X	X	X
Support Facilities								
Drinking Fountain	2			2 dog & human				4
Shed	1						2	3
Restrooms	1						2	3
Trash Cans	1	1	1			1	6	10
Parking Spaces	240 + 6 HC*	Gravel	Gravel			34	104 + 5 HC*	378 + 11 HC*

*Handicapped

Howertown Park

Size: 21.22 acres

Features:

- Baseball Field – 90'
- Diamond Fields (3)
- Soccer Field
- Basketball – Full Court
- Playgrounds (2 – by age group)
- Exercise Trail
- Loop Walking Path
- Concession Stand
- Pavilions (2)
- Restroom Facility
- Equipment Building
- Parking Lots (240 spaces on and off street)

Issues/Constraints:

- The park overall appears to be well-kept and maintained. Turf especially always appears well manicured.
- A major emphasis should be placed on increasing the amount of canopy trees dispersed throughout the park. The tree canopy should consist of a diverse mix of species to ensure healthy and longevity. The entire perimeter of the park should be planted with large canopy street trees to establish a formal edge to the park.
- Engage the landscape of the stream with the programming and landscape design of the park.
- Park boundaries with direct contact with adjacent parcels should be buffered with landscaping.
- A continuous loop multi-use trail/sidewalk system should be created along the entire perimeter of the park.

- Park is heavily programmed with active facilities and sports fields resulting in a park that functions more like an athletic complex than a true community park with a balance of active and passive facilities to serve a wide range of age and interest groups.
- The park has a highly utilitarian aesthetic. Parking lots and entry areas into the park are especially devoid of character and lack appeal. The park is essentially a wide-open turf area with a stream running through the middle.
- The park has entirely too much mowed turf.
- There are compliance issues related to field facilities that should be addressed.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Address safety issues associated with field location and field fencing.
- The opportunity exists to create a more attractive and functional park by establishing a comprehensive design logic for the park. This level of organization can only be achieved through the execution of master site planning process.
- At least one of the ballfields, most likely the one closest to Atlas Road which current is a safety hazard, should be relocated to another area outside of the park.
- Key sidewalk connections and intersection crosswalks should be created to safely connect the park to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- A comprehensive signing system should be implemented that includes arrival signs, kiosks, regulatory, and environmental interpretive signing.
- The play areas should be redesigned to be a destination oriented play area unique to Allen Township and not basic out-of-catalog equipment.
- Consider relocating the maintenance building off-site or to a less prominent location within the center of the park.

Howertown Park – Context Analysis



Howertown Park – Site Analysis

Park lacks canopy tree shade cover in the highest activity and gathering locations.

Stream course is a focal point but is essentially ignored as a landscape amenity.

Play areas are very basic as the key play areas in the Township.

ADA parking conflicts pedestrian circulation.

Park is underserved with pavilions.



Major visual front to park with signage and landscaping

Park facilities lack an organization logic and overall design framework creating a clutter appearance.

Ballfield facilities are not compliant with current codes and safety standards.

Park signing is inconsistent and very utilitarian throughout the park.

Parking lots are barren open areas lacking canopy trees and landscaping.

Lack of pedestrian walkways results in visitors walking through parking lots to reach existing walkways.



Overall perimeter of park lacks visual definition or sense of entry. Very utilitarian aesthetic and lacks sense of entry or arrival.

Lack of shade around play fields.

Overall perimeter of park lacks visual definition or sense of entry. Very utilitarian aesthetic and lacks sense of entry or arrival.



Soil erosion and lack of stormwater management of impervious run-off throughout the park.

Lack of pedestrian walkways results in visitors walking through parking lots to reach existing walkways.



Overall perimeter of park lacks visual definition or sense of entry. Very utilitarian aesthetic and lacks sense of entry or arrival.

Overall perimeter of park lacks visual definition or sense of entry. Very utilitarian aesthetic and lacks sense of entry or arrival.

Major safety conflicts between ballfield (foul balls) and Atlas Road.



Lack of perimeter pedestrian walkways and connections to surrounding residential areas.



Safety hazard due to the lack of guardrail at the top of culvert



Parking areas and stormwater management are very utilitarian.



Overall engineered approach to stormwater management.



The park lacks tree canopy and landscape plantings to define zones and buffer parking.

The park is wall-to-wall mowed turf including stormwater swales.



The stream through the park is an untapped asset.



The walking path through the park is popular even in the winter. It should be extended around the entire perimeter.



Howertown Park is the premiere township park yet the existing play areas are basic and could be much larger to meet community needs.



Signing is inconsistent and ad-hoc throughout the park.



Walking paths do not connect to all parking areas.

Ballfield safety fencing should be replaced to meet current regulations.



The maintenance building uses valuable space in a prominent location at the core of the park.

Covered Bridge Park

Size: 16.67 acres

Features:

- Historic covered bridge
- Gazebo
- Walking Path
- Bench

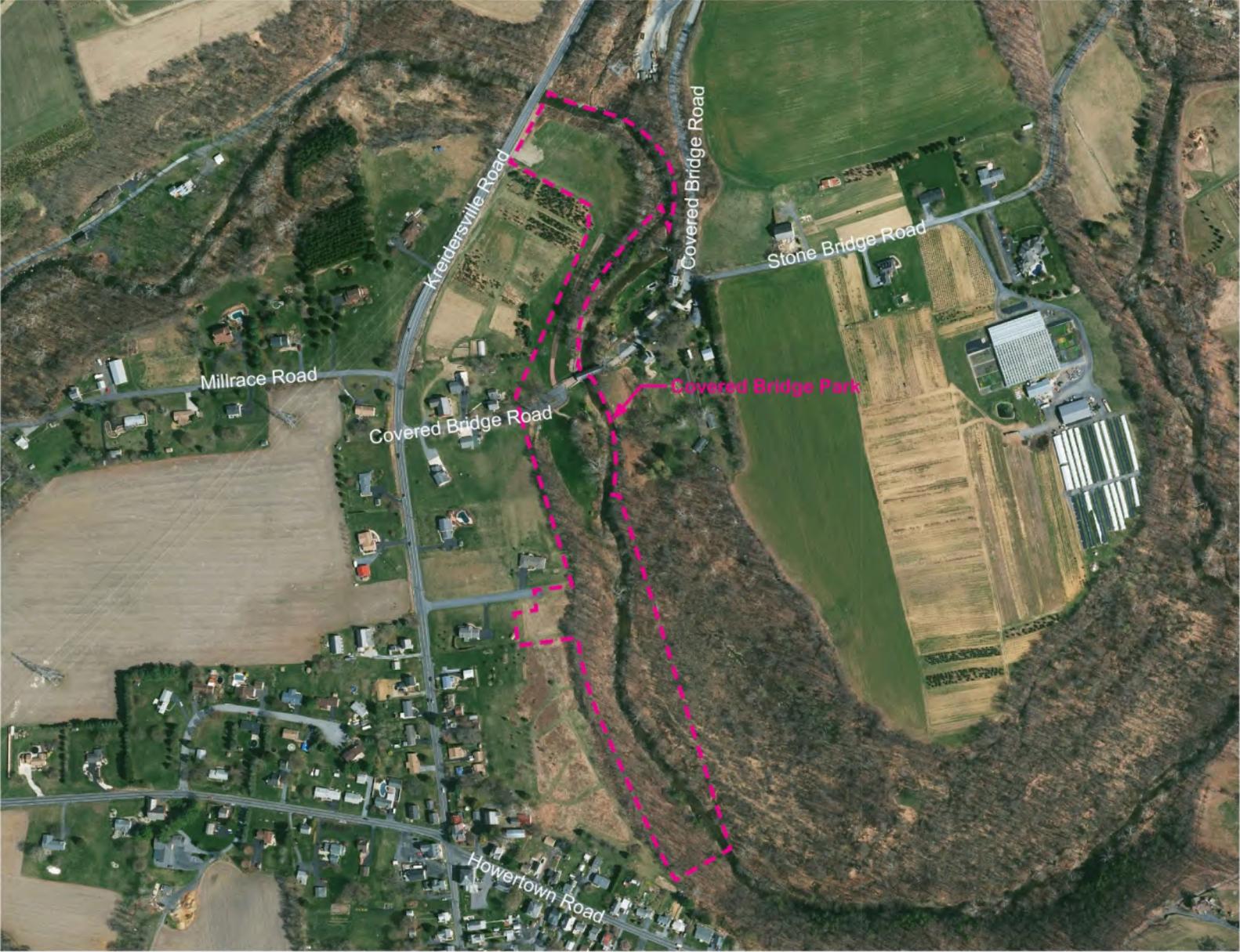
Issues/Constraints:

- This cultural resource oriented park is a unique asset within the Township.
- The park overall appears to be well-kept and maintained.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- The improvements made to the park present it as an attractive and tranquil park opportunity.
- Some of the improvements made are not of a quality of public park and are residential in character. Split faced concrete wall units are not consistent with the historical character of the site and the landscape plantings are not civic in character.
- There is additional Township owned land that could provide the ability to expand the size of the park. Formal on-site parking is especially important.
- This park has the opportunity to be an important trailhead for a trail and greenway along the Hokendauqua Creek.

Covered Bridge Park





Memorial area.



View of permeable drive with additional Township-owned land in the distance.



Gazebo – Note the facility is not ADA accessible.



Landscape – Materials and planting not over a “civic” quality or appropriate for the history of the site.

Dog Park

Size: Approximately 2 acres (leased from the County)

Features:

- Large Dog Run
- Small Dog Run
- Parking Lot (16 Spaces)
- Benches (2)
- Direct connection to Nor-Bath Trail

Issues/Constraints:

- The Dog Park is a great addition to the Township's park system and is heavily used. Although functional it needs to be enhanced with additional park amenities to make it more attractive places for people and dogs.
- The entry areas into the fenced dog runs is heavily compacted due to the concentration of foot traffic. This creates a mudding and unappealing entrance into the facility.
- There is a lack of shade.
- The park needs more seating.
- The parking area lacks plantings and buffering.

- Dog parks are about dogs and people. The social aspects of dog owners meeting and talking with each other, i.e. creating attractive people gathering areas, is as important as the dog focused facilities.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Hardscape the entry areas into each fenced dog run.
- Add a second set of the entry gates on the neighborhood side of the park.
- Add seating.
- Create shade (canopy trees and/or shade structures) in and near the perimeter of the dog runs.
- Add street trees and landscape buffer plantings along Savage Road frontage.
- Add canopy trees along the entire perimeter of the park property and buffer adjacent properties.
- Provide consistent signage including destination signing at the parking lot entrance and the neighborhood trail entrance.
- Explore opportunities to add additional park facilities on the undeveloped portions west and southwest of the dog run. Work with the County on a cooperative agreement to best utilizes these areas using the dog park agreement as the model.
- Master planning the rear portions of the site and tying that effort into establishing a cohesive landscape planting strategy will ensure that all elements work cohesively together.

Dog Park – Context Analysis

Park expansion potential.

Park expansion potential.



Dog Park – Site Analysis





Panoramic view of the Dog Park showing the lack of canopy trees. Potential park expansion area to left of view.



Park lacks formal seating and shade.



Compaction and erosion at point of entry into fenced areas.

Kreidersville Park

Size: 0.78 acres

Features:

- Playground
- Basketball court (full)
- Bench

Issues/Constraints:

- This is a small pocket park in a village-like setting within the Township. Although small it has the opportunity to be a value asset to the local neighborhood and the Township.
- As a small park, strategically laying out facilities becomes especially important to maximize the site potential. The current

facilities appear to be randomly placed on the site with little consideration of an overall efficient or site maximization.

- The park is hidden behind adjacent properties. Destination signing as a part of Township-wide system, would aid in promoting the park as a community facility.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- This park's target audience is the local neighborhood. Opportunities to create a sidewalk system that promoted Kreidersville as a walkable hub within the Township, would create greater local accessibility to the park. In essence, the park could serve as a small community "green" for the neighborhood. This might be tied to economic development goals for Kreidersville as a village-like, mixed-use community hub.
- Opportunities should be explored to acquire additional lands to the south and towards Kreidersville Road to create a large park with more passive park amenities.

Kreidersville Park

Although in a walkable village cluster, no sidewalks or paths exist to connect to the park.

Lack of visible destination signing to promote park.

Limited and poor configuration of parking.

Layout of facilities is efficient and cluttered.





The location of facilities within the park is random and lacks a cohesive design logic



Although a small pocket park, Kreidersville Park could serve an important recreation need for the local neighborhood. Amenities are limited.

Appendix B – Allen Township

Demographics

It is important for Allen Township to understand the people who live in the community. Knowledge about the residents helps with a wide variety of tasks from projecting the correct amount of parkland to undertaking an effort to pass a voter referendum. Traditionally plans include the number of residents, population projections, age, race, income, education, levels of poverty, and housing information.

While these numbers alone are important, they need to be interpreted to be useful. Further research into the psychographics of the community provides the most useful information in terms of providing the types of community service the residents desire, predicting behavior and preferences, Psychographics measure the attitudes and interests of people rather than “objective” demographic criteria. Psychographics include attitudes, personality, values, interests and lifestyles. Research into psychographics can provide deep insight that complements what we learn from demographics. It provides information on the kinds of services that people in our community specifically want.

Allen Township by the Numbers

- Population: 4,630, up by 8% since 2010

- Race: 87.1% White. 5.6% African American. 5.2% Asian. 2.1% Hispanic.
- Median Age: 43.8, down from 44.1 in 2010
- Percentage younger than 19: 23.4%, up from 21.1% in 2010
- Percentage 62 and older: 23.1%, up from 21.1% in 2010
- Educational Attainment: 23.1% of people 25 years of age and older have Bachelor’s degrees and 9.0% have advanced degrees
- Median Household Income: \$78,750
- Poverty: 1.3%

By the numbers, Allen Township is a relatively affluent, well-educated community that is by and large Caucasian with growing diversity composed primarily of African Americans, Asians and Hispanics. While the Township is home to a large retired population, the number of children is increasing too. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission projects that the population of Allen Township will increase to 7,061 residents by the year 2040, a 32.3 percent over the next 25 years This new residential growth will have a tremendous impact on municipal services including parks and recreation areas as well as open space.

What the Market Research Tells Us¹²

Profiles of communities are divided into 67 “lifestyle” types of categories based upon interests, activities, values, purchases and research gleaned from consumer behavior. These profiles help you to understand your residents’ lifestyle choices, what they buy, how they spent their time and what is important to them. Allen Township Allen Township has three main lifestyle segmentations including:

- Green Acres
- Parks and Recreation
- Retirement Communities

The Green Acres Segment: 44% of the Allen Township Market

The Green Acres Segment features country living and self-reliance. They are avid do-it-yourselfers. Maintaining their homes and gardening are priorities. Outdoor living features a variety of sports including hunting, fishing, motorcycling, hiking, and camping. Self-described conservative, Green Acres people remain pessimistic about the near future yet remain heavily invested in it.

They are mostly an older market in rural enclaves, mainly without children. About 60 percent are college educated and derive their income from salaries and wages but mostly from retirement and investments. They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability. While they profess pessimism about the economy, they are comfortable with debt. They are largely white (91%) with a median income of \$72,000 and a median age of 43. Their spending on recreation is 28% higher than the national average. They pursue physical fitness vigorously and are active in their communities and a variety of social organizations.

¹² ESRI (2017) Discover Community Lifestyle and Demographic Information. <http://webapps-cdn.esri.com/Apps/location-strategy-for-business/#/insights?graphs=Median-Income,Population-Density,Median-Age>

The Parks and Recreation Segment: 13% of the Allen Township Market

The Parks and Recreation Segment includes practical suburbanites who have achieved their dream of home ownerships having purchase mainly and older home in a well-established neighborhood. They are mainly white (81%), two-income married people with a median income of \$55,000 and are approaching retirement but not planning on doing so any time soon. Because the neighborhoods are well-established with many fine amenities that their now grown children once used and enjoyed, these neighborhoods are being viewed by young families with children as desirable locations to live and are attracting new generation of homeowners. They are primarily older and well-educated and diverse in occupation including professional, skilled workers, education and retail. They are shrewd about purchases.

They pass time at home watching documentaries on Animal Planet, Discovery or the History Channel. For an outing, they choose to dine out in family style restaurants and see a movie. They enjoy games of chance. For recreation, they take advantage of local parks and recreational activities. Their fitness is home based, a visit to a local community gym or a run, swim, or jog on their own.

The Retirement Communities Segment: 9% of the Allen Township Market

The people who fall into the Retirement Communities Segment mostly live in multi-unit housing, mainly with a lease. About 81 percent are white with a median income of \$35,000. Many live alone. This group enjoys watching cable television and stays up to date reading magazines

and newspapers. They take pride in fiscal responsibility and keep a close eye on their finances. Although their net worth is below the national average, they take vacations, dine out, golf and enjoy the theater. One in five of these households has no vehicle. They are very health conscious.

They enjoy hard cover books, book clubs, crossword puzzle and Sudoku. They contribute to political organizations and other groups. On television they watch QVC, golf, sports and CNN. They like to travel and shop at large department stores for convenience.

Implications for Allen Township in Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

About 65 percent of Allen Township's population falls within one of these three lifestyle segments with the majority falling into the Green Acres Segment. The information presented by the market research perfectly mirrors the demographic characteristics of this community as well as the findings of the public participation process. Based on this research and plan findings, the implications for planning parks, recreation and open space include the following:

- Provide outdoor recreation opportunities including places for walking, bicycling, hiking and water based recreation.
- Make these facilities attractive for health-conscious people to live active healthy lifestyles that include fitness.
- Tap into their interests for involvement in their communities and in social groups
- Recognize that they are interested in politics as evident in their contributions
- Understand that they are mostly well-educated, conservative, while tend to be pessimistic about the future are willing to be engaged and participate in things that they view as important and of high quality.

- Recreation is important to them and they are willing to pay for it as evident in spending 28 percent more than the average nationally on recreation. Hunting, fishing, dining out, movies, book clubs, working out, and well-developed community facilities that are important to families are all of importance to most of them.
- Use this information in planning facilities, programs, developing a volunteer program and tapping into retirement communities especially and in planning any future voter referenda.
- With how quickly social issues change, the pace of research and easy access to timely information, the Township should monitor psychographic trends annually and especially when planning any major public engagement process such as a voter referendum, park master plan or similar civic engagement efforts.

Appendix C – Public Participation Process

The foundation of the Allen Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was public participation process. The information gleaned from the public formed the core of the formation of recommendations and the action plan.

Five Part Process

The public participation process included a Plan Advisory Committee, key person interviews, focus groups, public meetings, and coordination with the Allen Township Comprehensive Plan 2017 Public Opinion Survey.

Plan Advisory Committee

Twelve members served on the Advisory Committee. They represented diverse interest reflective of the community including sports, civic organizations, planning commission, the county open space coordinator, neighborhoods, conservation, elected officials, township management, and the general citizenry.

Focus Groups and Work Sessions

Sports Forum - Allen Township area sports organizations sent representatives to the sports forum. Findings: flat fields are needed.

High school is looking for feeders to its high school sports teams. The sports teams do not track participation or player residence because they operate throughout the Lehigh Valley. The sports fields in Wayne Grube Park would be important and the leagues are looking forward to the County implementing future phases of the park master plan. All the sports leagues and the municipalities operate independently but consensus was that if they worked together, facilities and management of leagues could work better.

Youth Forum - A group of 12 children ages 10 and 11 (including special needs) and one parent met to discuss things they like to do and their ideas for parks and recreation. They like the library and the Northampton Municipal Complex with the pool and the park. Although they enjoy sports, they mainly discussed how much they enjoy nature and playing in the great outdoors. They would like to have a great playground in Allen Township with big play structures for sliding, swinging and climbing and this should include trees for climbing, shade and playing.

Senior Adults Forum (Two) – Willow Green. About 40 people participated in each of the two sessions. Their priorities included: preservation of open space, the scenic beauty, and rural nature of the Township; safe places to walk and bicycle; clean, safe, beautiful and well-maintained parks that people want to spend time in and attract adults to use; friendly and social public spaces that help create a sense of community; and preserving wildlife.

The participants expressed their desire to be more involved with the community. They were upset at the Fed Ex development with its traffic impact and the change in character of the community. Several participants mentioned expertise they have in things like landscape

architecture and the arts that they would like to share on township projects or provide programs for.

Federal, State, County and Township Work Session

Participants included representatives of Allen Township, PA DCNR, Northampton County Open Space, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Wildlands Conservancy, Natural Lands, Stromberg/Garrigan Associates, and Toole Recreation Planning. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate a unified approach to planning. Allen Township's riverfront park and coordinate trail planning and multi-agency efforts.

Morning Call, newspaper of the Lehigh Valley

Township manager and planning team members held an on-site field session on the riverfront property in Allen Township to increase public awareness about the township's accomplishments in securing land along 3.2 miles along the Lehigh River.

Lehigh Gap Nature Center

Team met with the Director to explore the potential of establishing a nature center in Allen Township based upon the history and lessons learned in the establishing of the Lehigh Gap Nature Center.

Key Person Interviews

The Plan Advisory Committee and township officials recommended key stakeholders in the community to interview. They Included:

- Northampton Area School District (two)
- Catasqua Area School District (two)
- Northampton Library (two)

- Northampton County – Open Space and Parks and Recreation
- Board of Supervisors (five)
- Township Manager
- Planning Commission (one)
- Covered Bridge Association (six)
- Trail Donor and builder (one)
- Sports Leagues (eight)
- Nagle Family property owners
- Fire Company members
- Intercept interviews at the Covered Bridge Festival (29)
- Dog Park visitors (four)
- Nor-Bath Trail Users (two)
- Senior Adult and community advocate

Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held in the Fire Hall. The most important priority of the participants was to retain the rural character of the community, protect open space, and provide safe places to walk and bicycle. Clearly the participants thought that Wayne Grube Park was a township park. They wanted the park to be more fully developed including the addition of more pavilions and ballfields.

Comprehensive Plan Survey

A public opinion survey for the Township's Comprehensive Plan generated 763 responses. The survey includes questions on parks, recreation and open space. The findings were as follows:

- 74 percent strongly support the preservation of natural features in Allen Township

- The three most important natural and recreational features to which respondents were streams (80%), woods (64%) and trails and bike paths (57%)

Summary of Findings

The Fed Ex Development had a major influence on public opinion. The residents love the Township and either have lived here for a long time or moved here because of the beautiful scenic character of the community. The highest priority was the preservation of open space and protection of the scenic beauty and character of the Township. Other priorities include:

- Safe places to walk and bicycle
- More pavilions and playgrounds
- Completion of Wayne Grube Park which they view as a township facility.
- Extension of the Nor-Bath Trail
- Maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities
- Getting to the river (once they heard that the Township's riverfront is in public ownership or control)
- Creation of a sense of community through parks and recreation with facilities for socializing and special events like the Covered Bridge Festival.
- More information about parks, recreation and events that is timely, convenient to access and with widespread public knowledge about it.

Referendum and Public Awareness - Of concern was the Township's previous failed voter referenda for open space bonds. These were related to public perception related to land preservation that is or is not open to the public and who benefits from land preservation funding. To move forward with another referendum, a major public information and awareness campaign would be needed to be waged.

Independent Planning and Provision of Public Services - It was apparent throughout the public process that organizations and individuals plan and operate separately. This is not a surprise as Allen Township is a small rural community with limited resources. Most past efforts and accomplishment were boot strap efforts. As the Township obtained the services of a professional township manager, effective and efficient management practices were put into place for township operations. But things like community sports, schools, municipalities and other community based organizations operate by themselves. Consensus was that collaboration would be beneficial but someone would need to orchestrate. Allen Township has a small staff that is recognized as excellent and at capacity or beyond in workload. Looking into regional parks and recreation operations with Northampton Borough and the School District and other municipalities in the School District would have the benefit of a higher level of public services, shared facilities and management that could help to reduce costs while expanding public services in recreation.

Appendix D – Financing and Organization

Allen Township has a budget philosophy rooted in a deep sense of responsibility to the taxpayers and a strong commitment to excellent public service. The Township supports parks, recreation, and open space in accordance with the residents’ desire for establishing a system that provides recreational opportunities, connects people to nature, builds a sense of community, and enables people to live active healthy lifestyles by using parks and trails.

Allen Township’s economic climate is very strong as evident in the significant commercial development in recent years.

The purpose of the financing and management assessment is to review how the operational aspects of parks and recreation are supported, managed, and directed toward meeting community goals and with respect to the Township’s resources.

Financing: Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program

The two major areas to be considered in financing are operations and capital improvements.

Capital Improvement Budget

The *capital improvement budget* is used for improvements that cost more than \$10,000 and last more than five years. The Township invested \$71,502 in capital construction in the parks between 2013 and 2017. During that time, the Township developed a new dog park and

acquired the Nagle Tract which was funded under another township budget category.

Allen Township by the Numbers

Population: 4,630

Population Projection: 7,061 by 2040

Size: 11.2 square miles

Township Budget (General, Recreation and Non-Uniformed Pensions): \$1,952,392

Parks and Recreation Budget: \$25,000 in operating funds + labor from Public Works Employees and Township Manager estimated to be \$90,696 in 2017.

Parks & Recreation Revenue: Taxes and less than \$1,000 in pavillion rental fees.

Revenues

Since 2013, the Township has received \$285,805 in Developers' Open Space Fees. The Township also received a grant from Northampton County Open Space Program for \$42,871 and a DCNR grant of \$39,000. Fees received for parks and recreation are less than \$1,000 annually for pavilion rentals. Events such as the Covered Bridge Festival are funded through volunteer efforts that raise money to support it.

Operating Budget

The *operating budget* supports the daily operation of parks and recreation. The Allen Township parks and recreation line item budget includes all expenditures except for staffing. The Public Works Department provides labor with expenses shown under the Highway Maintenance budget. The Township Manager provides time to manage parks and recreation functions such as planning, coordination and oversight of park maintenance through the Public Work Department. As expected and customary in a small rural municipality with limited staff, there is no workload/cost tracking. While the Township budget shows \$25,000 for Parks and Recreation in 2017, the actual investment in parks and recreation is significantly higher when staff time is considered. For purposes of this plan, the time is estimated at 10 percent of the Township Manager's. Based upon salary and wages totaling \$470,721 and benefits and payroll taxes equaling \$216,248, the benefit rate is 46%. Using 10 percent of wages, salaries, and benefits as an estimate of time spent on parks and recreation, the projection for the current investment of township funds in personnel working on parks and recreation is \$68,696 in 2017. That amount can be adjusted in accordance with staff estimates of time spent for the entire year.

Allen Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2013 - 2017					
Item	2103 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Budget	2017 Budget
Wages estimated for 2017					\$68,696
Youth Association Contributions	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Supplies	6869	7230	10,330	10,000	5,000
Park Propane	895	636	485	2500	1,000
Electricity	3396	2788	3050	3000	3000
Repair & Maintenance	7108	7344	12161	10000	10000
Contributions to Societies	401	1353	578	0	0
TOTAL	\$21,669	\$22,351	\$29,604	\$28,500	\$90,696
	Without wage estimate for 2013 - 2016				With wage estimate

Organization and Staffing

Allen Township is a Township of the Second Class. The five-member Board of Supervisors is elected to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. They set policy. The Township Manager is a professional who carries out policy, advises the Board of Supervisors, manages daily operations, and focuses on planning. The Public Works Department has a total of four workers. There is no parks and recreation department, staff or advisory board. The Township Manager

serves in the de facto capacity of managing parks, recreation, and open space.

Analysis

Budget

Over the last five years, the budget for parks and recreation has been stable for materials, supplies, equipment, utilities and contributions.

Parks and Recreation operating funds are supported by general fund taxes. Non-tax revenues are minimal due to the nature of the facilities and the limitations of a small staff in developing revenue generating methods. Less than \$1,000 per year is generated through non-tax revenue sources.

Developers' fees have generated \$285,805 since 2013. With the establishment of this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, Allen Township should adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance. This ordinance would include provisions for developers to offer Fees-In-Lieu of the dedication of parkland. These fees should be based upon the current market value of the land at the time of development. Determining the value of the land is the responsibility of the developer in terms of paying the costs associated with the valuation by a certified real estate appraiser. If the Township disagrees, officials could challenge the appraisal valuation of the land and the developer would be required to pay for the additional appraisal work. Once the fees come in, they must be placed in an interest-bearing account and used within three years for parks and recreation purposes. Consideration should be given to developing the Mandatory Dedication Ordinance for both residential and commercial development.

Benchmarks

Comparisons enable communities to assess where they stand with investing in parks and recreation. Benchmarks provide information that is neutral – that is the comparisons are neither right nor wrong, nor good nor bad. All they are is information to help Allen Township gauge

where it wants to go in investing in parks and recreation. Investments is a key word as parks and recreation should be viewed as an investment not a cost. Parks and recreation helps to increase property values, keep air and water clean, reduce health care costs, prevent expensive crime and incarceration, deters addiction which is currently the number one health care problem in our country. Allen Township's budget comparisons include the following based upon the 2017 budget and estimates for salaries, wages and benefits:

- Parks and recreation is about 4.6% of the township's \$1,952,392 operating budget at an estimated \$90,696. This is favorable as PA DCNR recommends 5%.
- The Township's per capita investment in parks and recreation is \$19.58. This is less than the statewide average of \$36.
- The disparity in comparisons using the ratio of the township budget for parks and recreation (which is on target) and the annual per capita investment (which is 54% of the statewide average) illustrates that the township's overall budget is austere.
- The Fed Ex plant is expected to increase township revenues.
- Using the 2017 estimated budget of \$90,696 and 41 acres of parkland for Howertown, Covered Bridge, and Kreidersville Parks and the Dog Park, a rough estimate of maintenance is about \$1,480. \$1,480 per acre is on the high side because some of the salary and time of the Township Manager is on planning not maintenance. If the new riverfront property is included as that has been requiring some rudimentary maintenance to keep property and people safe. Strive to phase in maintenance budget of at least \$3,000 per acre for active recreation areas and \$500 per acre for natural areas. The equivalent of two to three full-time employees at a minimum are needed for Allen Township's parks and recreation system when the riverfront park is developed. When additional parkland is added, consider using a standard of 20 acres per full-time equivalent

maintenance employee for developed recreation areas. Adjust this accordingly when workload/cost tracking is in place.

Organization and Staffing

With a population of about 4,700 projected to increase to about 7,000+ by 2040, the Township is too small to have its own parks and recreation director. However, given the workload generated by the current growth and development of the parks and recreation system, public needs for services, recruiting and managing volunteers for which there appears to be an unrecognized pool of readily available and interested people, some additional staff is needed.

The other need is for the establishment of a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board. The purpose of the Board would be to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors about parks, recreation and open space. They could also undertake a very limited number of programs or events annually (one to three). The Board should be composed of a diverse group of citizens representing varied interests and expertise. This can include park planning, the arts, conservation, school district, programs, special needs, different neighborhoods and age groups, both males and females.

A Resource-Maximizing Alternative

Since the Township is small, rural and located in the area with other small municipalities, multi-municipal recreation is an option. PA DCNR offers a \$10,000 PEER grant to enable willing municipalities to explore organizing multi-municipal parks and recreation. School Districts can also participate as a partner. The grant requires only a \$1,000 match that can be split among the participating communities. Should the study bear out that the partners would like to work together on public parks and recreation and how they would do that, PA DCNR offers a Circuit Rider grant. The Circuit Rider grant provides funding for the salary of essentially a professional parks and recreation director in decreasing amounts over four years from 100% to 75% to 50% to

25%. During that time, the partnering municipalities match the grant and provide benefits and a seed-money budget to get started. The goal is that the Circuit Rider would by year five have established a sustainable parks and recreation organization supported with a mix of public and private revenue sources. Sharing staff, operations and facilities enables small municipalities to pool their resources to get expanded and improved public services in a way which would be impossible on their own.

Implications

- Plan to phase in maintenance investment over time as parks and recreation facilities are improved.
- Add part-time staff to help with parks and recreation, organizing volunteers, coordinating with the proposed parks, recreation and open space board, managing the website to provide timely information about parks and recreation to the public.
- Establish the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board. Join the Pennsylvania Parks and Recreation Society. Secure a \$2500 no-match grant to retain a parks and recreation professional to help set up the Board and get them going with a mission, roles, responsibilities and work program for the first year.
- Explore the potential for multi-municipal parks and recreation. Start with discussions with Northampton Borough and then branch out to adjoining municipalities and those in the Northampton Area School District. If moving forward to discuss this fully is agreeable with willing partners, then apply for a PEER grant to undertake the year long process of exploring the purpose, objectives, staffing, and funding of the future partnership in multi-municipal parks and recreation.

Appendix E – Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Funding Sources

Funding sources change frequently in terms of type, grant amount and the priorities of the funding organization. The following list is presented as links to the current online resources.

State and Federal Funding

Recreation, Parks, Trails, and Conservation

- [Finding the Green: A Guide to State Funding Opportunities for Conservation, Recreation & Preservation Projects](#)
- [Growing Greener Environmental Stewardship Fund: Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants \(PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources\), Watershed and Environmental Education Grants \(PA Department of Agriculture\), Drinking Water/Sewer Infrastructure Grants \(PA Infrastructure Investment Authority\)](#)
- [Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund: Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants \(PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources\), Historic Preservation Grants \(PA Historical and Museum Commission\), Library Grants \(PA Department of Education\)](#)
- [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#): LWCF funding is intended to protect national parks, areas around rivers and lakes, national forests and national wildlife refuges from development, and to provide matching grants for state and local parks and recreation projects. [LWCF Success in Pennsylvania](#)
- [PA Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program](#)
- [PA Council on the Arts: Arts and Culture Grants](#)
- [PA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#)
- [PA Department of Community and Economic Development](#) Variety of technical assistance programs and funding opportunities including: Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program and Watershed Restoration and Protection Program, Multimodal Transportation Fund, Flood Mitigation Program (FMP), H20 PA (Flood Control Projects, Unsafe Dam Project and Storm Water Projects), Sewage Facilities Program (SFP)

- [PA Department of Transportation: Transportation Grants](#)
- [PA Fish and Boat Commission: Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Resource Conservation Grants](#)
- [PA Land Trust Association: Conservation Easement Assistance Program](#)
- [The Center for Rural Pennsylvania: Research Grants](#)

Athletic Grants and Foundations

- [Finish Line Youth Foundation: Program Development, Facility Improvement and Emergency Assistance Grants](#)
- [National Football League Grassroots Program: Capital Field Improvement Grants](#)
- [Target: Youth Soccer Program Development Grants](#)
- [Tony Hawk Foundation: Skatepark Grants](#)
- [United States Golf Association: Junior Program Development Grants](#)
- [US Soccer Foundation: Program Development and Field Improvement Grants](#)
- [National Gardening Association: School and Youth Garden Program Development Grants](#)

Other Grant Funders and Foundations

- [Council on Foundations](#)
- [Foundation Center](#)
- [GovSpot](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Grantsmanship Center](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [PA Community Foundations](#)

Accessibility – Sources of Information

- [PRPS Inclusion Task Force](#)
- [Model Aquatic Health Code \(MAHC\): An All-inclusive Model Public Swimming Pool and Spa Code](#)
- [National Center on Accessibility](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association: Embracing Access & Inclusion to Succeed](#)
- [Temple University Collaborative: Community Inclusion Resources](#)

Benefits of Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

Fosters community pride. Protects scenic beauty. Makes our communities special places in which to live. Conserves natural resources. Creative play. Improves physical, cognitive, social and emotional functioning of people with special needs. Reduces the isolation of the elderly. Facilitates active healthy lifestyles. Enhances property values. Reduces stormwater management costs. Fortifies economic development. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Creates lively public spaces. Prevents drug abuse. Deters crime. Builds strong families. Keeps kids safe. Reduces pollution and carbon footprint. Promotes healthy food production and choices. Connects people to nature. Builds a sense of community. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Buffers extremes of draught and flooding. Workforce preparation. Teen mentoring. Improves student performance. Administers nutrition programs. Increases community safety. Improves air quality. Enhances access to socio-cultural goods. Promotes diversity. Generates \$140 billion in economic activity in our country annually. Serves as civic repository of social capital and community wellbeing. Protects trees and beautiful landscapes. Interprets our cultural heritage. Celebrates our history. Reduces health care costs. Creates multi-modal transportation. Provides a forum for the arts. Fosters team building and leadership. Creates memories. Protects wildlife.

Adds life to your years and years to your life.