

Comprehensive Plan for
Whitpain Township

Whitpain 2035
4 Villages within a Community

Township Vision

Whitpain Township is a community that embraces the future while cherishing our heritage. We will continue to be recognized for our diversity, fiscal responsibility, and leadership in resource conservation. We shall never waver in our collective commitment to ensuring public safety and enhancing the quality of life of all our fellow citizens.

Town Hall Meeting #4
Recreational Factors
Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 7:00 pm

Agenda

1. Welcome – Fred Conner, Supervisor, Whitpain Township
2. Keynote Speaker – Drew Gilchrist, Regional Advisor, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Southeast Regional Office
3. General Introduction to Trail and Park planning
4. West Ambler Village
 - Existing conditions, Characteristics, Challenges
 - 2013 Neighborhood Revitalization & Action Plan - Recap and progress updates
5. Your Comments, Opinions, Ideas, and Suggestions

Drew Gilchrist

**Regional Advisor, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation,
Southeast Regional Office**

Project Consultants

Simone Collins Landscape Architecture

Planners and Landscape Architects

Peter Simone

psimone@simonecollins.com

610-239-7601

Jared Lowman

jlowman@simonecollins.com

610-239-7601

McMahon Associates

Transportation Planning

Sandy Koza

skoza@mcmahonassociates.com

215-283-9444

Urban Partners

Economic Market Research and Analysis

Chris Lankenau

clankenau@urbanpartners.us

Township Contact

Jim Blanch, Township Engineer

jblanch@whitpaintownship.org

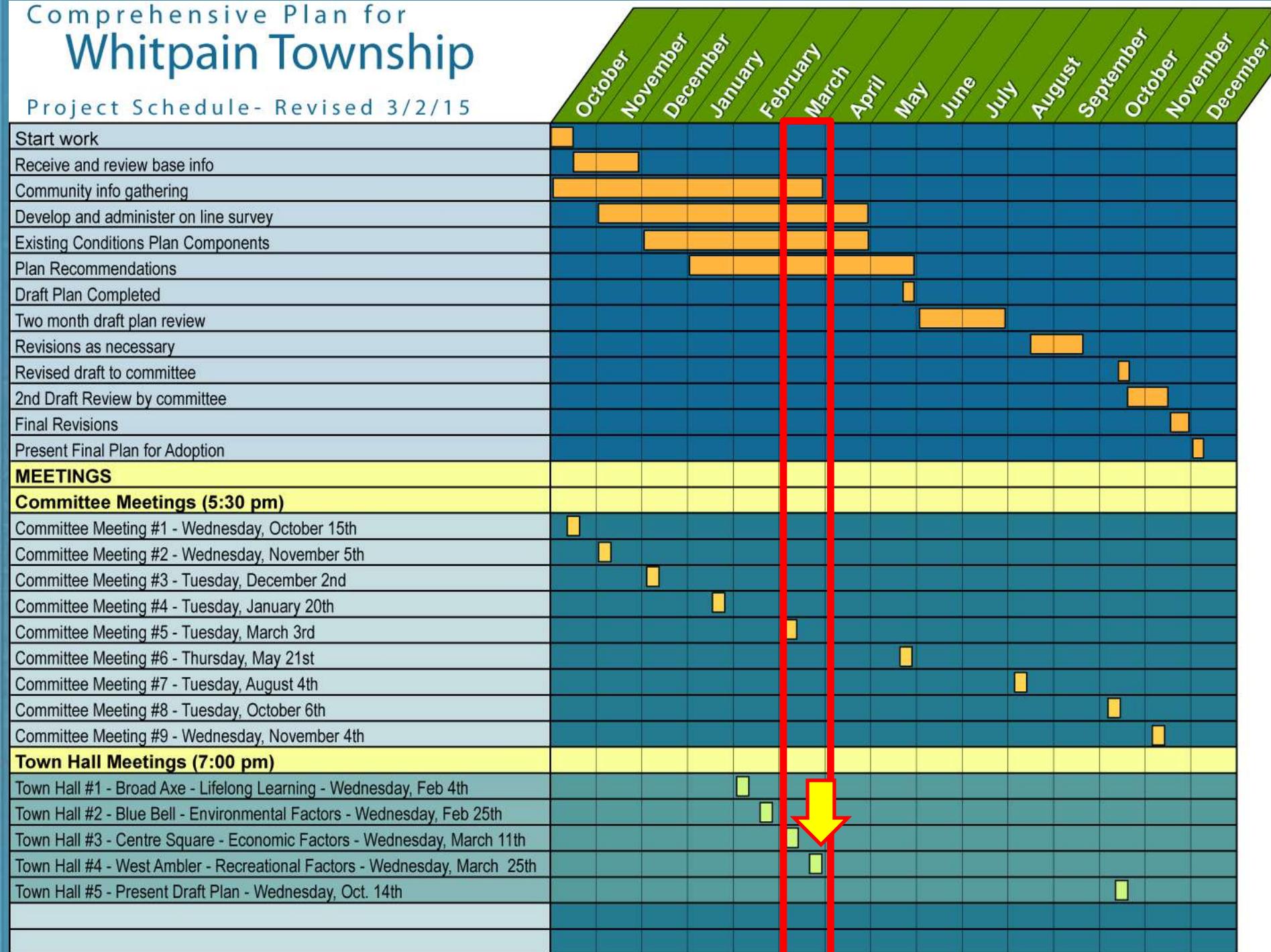
610-277-2400

Project Committee Members

Jim Blanch	Township Engineer
Fred Conner	Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Ken Corti	Chairman, Planning Commission
Jaime Garrido	Associate Vice President of Facilities & Construction, Montgomery County Community College
Dillon Horwitz	Wissahickon High School Student
Greg Klucharich	Assistant Engineer / Sustainability Coordinator
Joan Knies	Vice-Chair, Shade Tree Commission
Ed Lane	Chairman, Zoning Hearing Board
Bill Lutz, Jr.	Chairman, Board of Appeals
Cathy McGowan	Business Community Perspective
David Mrochko	Assistant Township Manager
Susan Mudambi	Chairperson, Park & Open Space Board
Melissa Murphy Weber	Board of Supervisors
Roman Pronczak	Township Manager
Robert Whittock	Historical Perspective

Comprehensive Plan for Whitpain Township

Project Schedule- Revised 3/2/15



Meeting Schedule

(9) Committee Meetings (All meetings to be held at 5:30pm)

- Wednesday October 15th
- Wednesday, November 5th
- Tuesday, December 2nd
- Tuesday, January 20th
- Tuesday, March 3rd
- Thursday, May 21st
- Tuesday, August 4th
- Tuesday, October 6th
- Wednesday, November 4th

(5) Town Hall Meetings (All meetings to be held at 7:00pm)

- Wednesday, Feb. 4th - Town Hall #1 – Broad Axe – Lifelong Learning
- Wednesday, Feb. 25th – Town Hall #2 – Blue Bell – Environmental Factors
- Wednesday, March 11th – Town Hall #3 – Centre Square – Economic Factors
- **Wednesday, March 25th – Town Hall #4 – West Ambler – Recreational Factors**
- Wednesday, October 14th – Town Hall #5 – Draft Plan Presentation



Five (5) Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall #1 - February 4th - Lifelong Learning

- Village Focus – Broad Axe Village
- Keynote Speaker – Tom Hylton

Town Hall #2 – February 25th – Environmental Factors (Cultural & Natural Factors)

- Village Focus – Blue Bell Village
- Keynote Speaker - Dr. Jeff Featherstone, Professor of Community & Regional Planning, Temple University – Ambler Campus

Town Hall #3 – March 11th – Economic Factors

- Village Focus – Centre Square Village
- Keynote Panel –
 - Victor Meitner, Jr., P.C., Attorney at Law, Victory Builders, LLC, Meitner Homes, LP
 - John Zaharchuk, Summit Realty Advisors, LLC

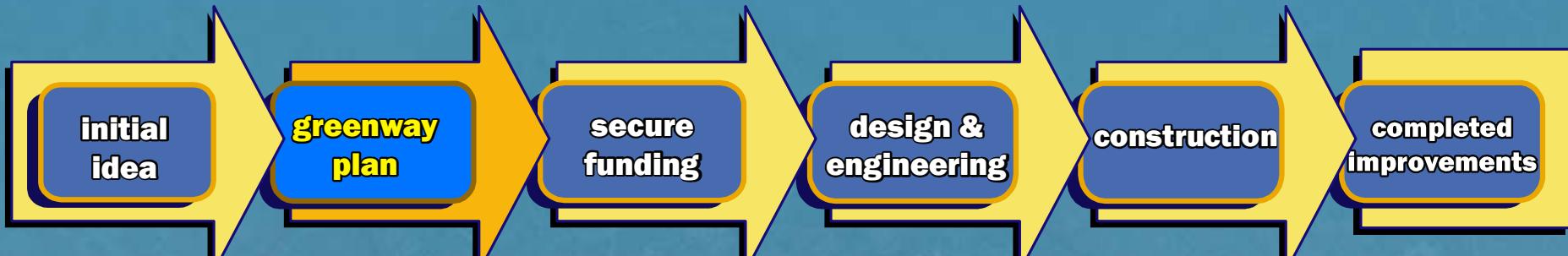
Town Hall #4 – March 25th – Recreational Factors

- Village Focus – West Ambler Village
- Keynote Speaker – Drew Gilchrist, Southeast Regional Advisor, DCNR - Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

Town Hall #5 – Oct. 14th – Present Draft Comprehensive Plan

Trails 101

Trail Planning and Implementation Process



Most Trail Planning and Design Projects are multi-phase, multi-year, sometimes multi-generational projects that require vision, patience, and a good master plan that will keep changing governing bodies on track year after year after year.

Trail Types

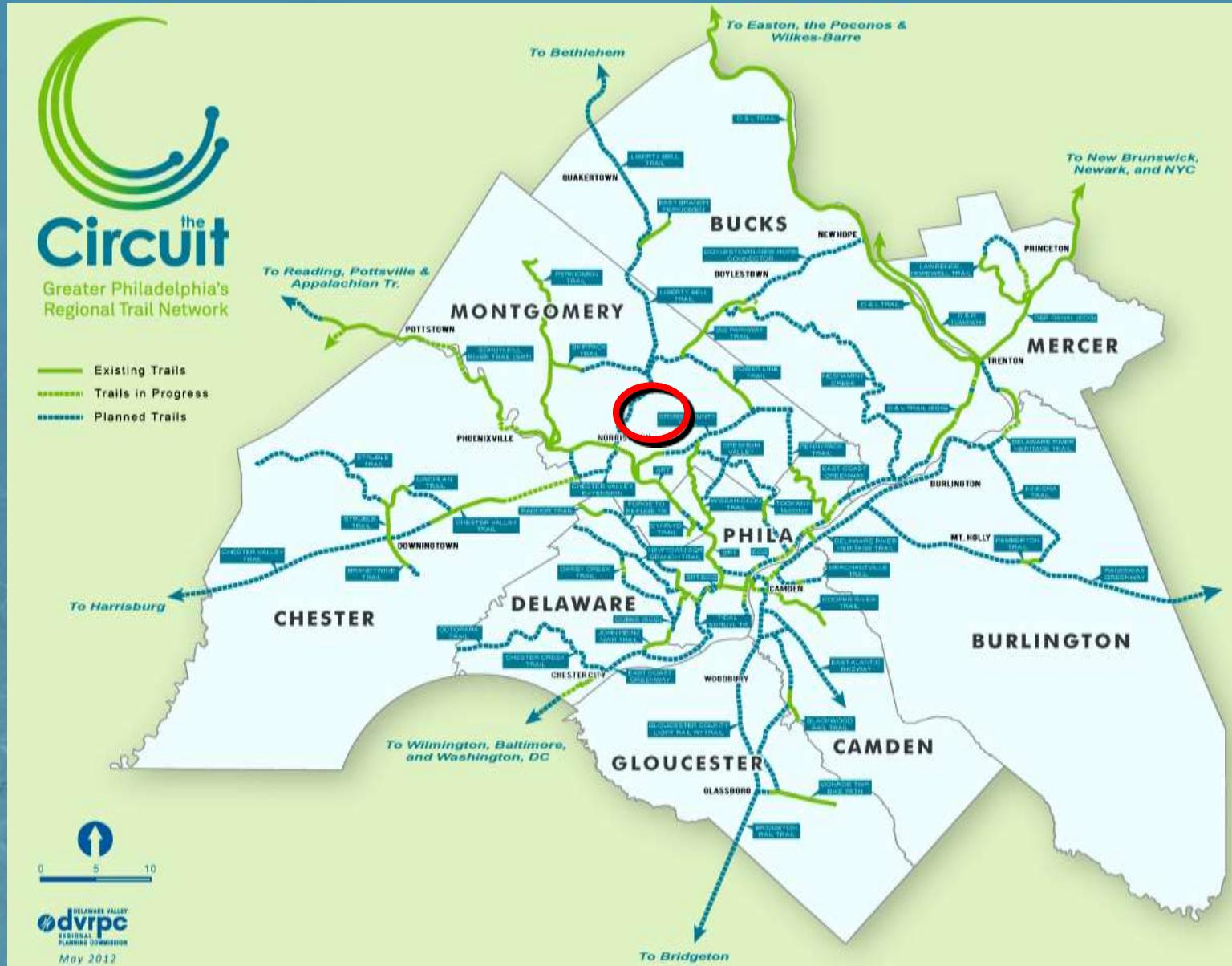
- Land Trails and Water Trails



Trail Systems

- Municipal (single jurisdiction)
- Multi-municipal – (stronger funding applications)
- County
- Multi-County
- Regional – The Circuit
- State Bike Routes - Alphabet Soup

THE CIRCUIT



Current opportunity for funding Design & Engineering

THE CIRCUIT



Current opportunity for funding Design & Engineering

Land Trail User Groups (cyclists)

Adult Cyclists

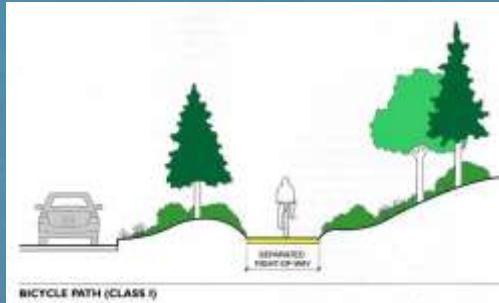


- ***Experienced and Confident (Advanced Bicyclists)*** - Generally use their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle.
- ***Casual / Less Confident (Basic Bicyclists)*** – Less confident adult riders may also be using their bicycles for transportation purposes, but prefer to avoid roads with fast and busy motor vehicle traffic.

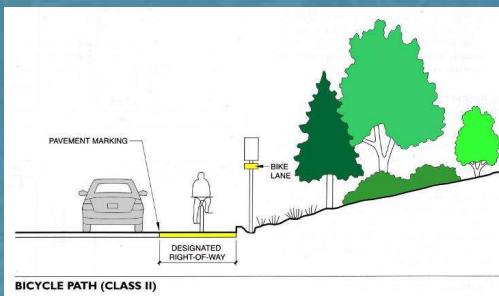


Child Cyclists – Riding on their own or with their parents, Child Cyclists may not travel as fast as their adult counterparts but still require access to key destinations in their community.

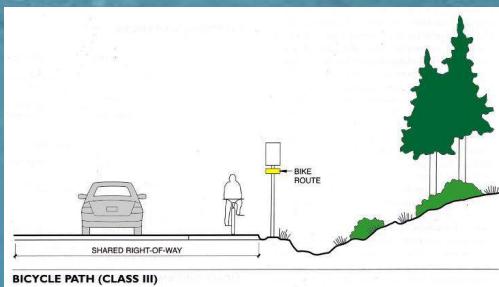
Bicycle Pathway Classifications



- **Class 1** – Completely separated from the roadway. Also known as 'off-road trails', 'greenways', 'shared use paths', and/or 'multi-use paths'.

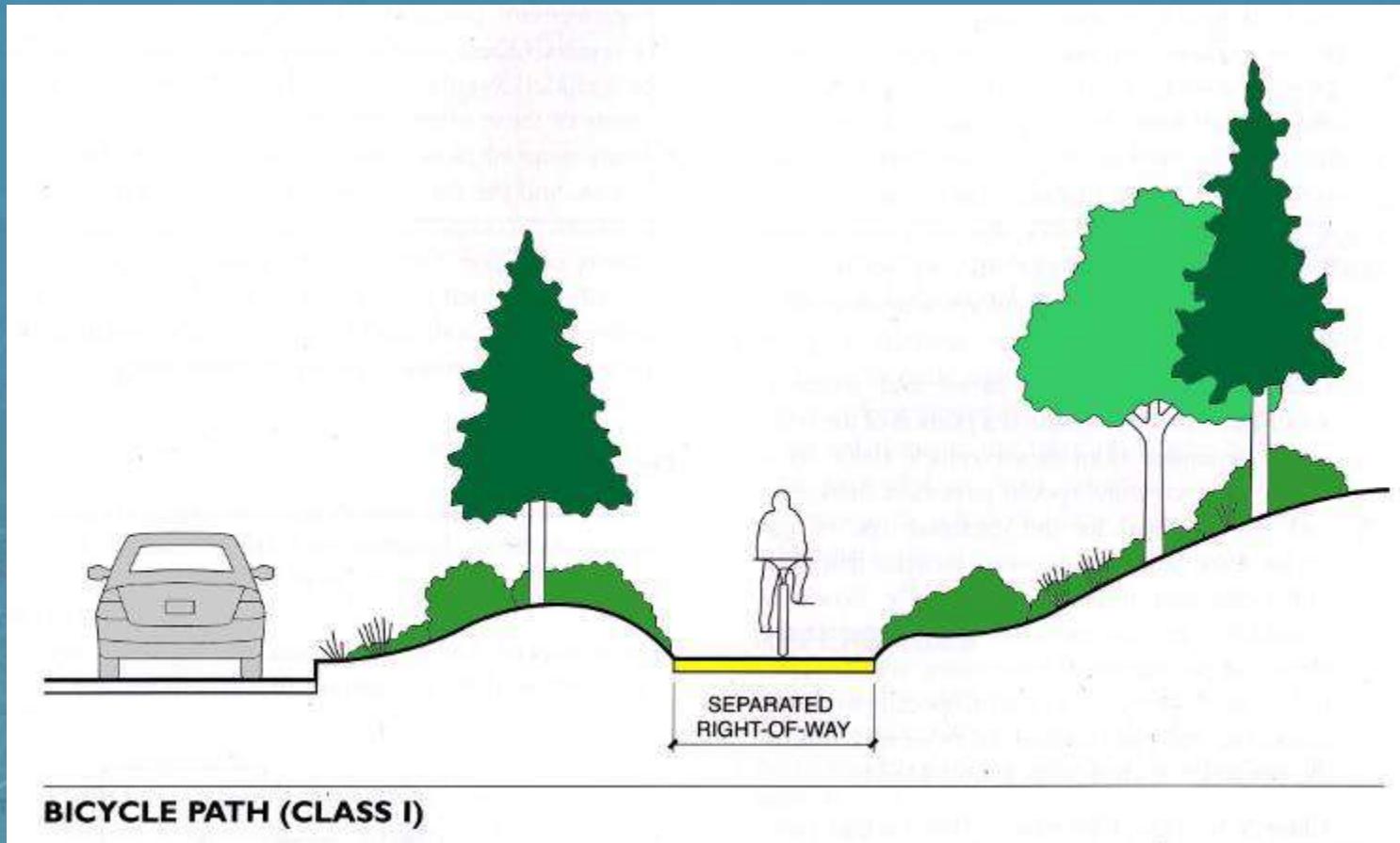


- **Class 2** – Designated bicycle lanes within a roadway for exclusive use of the cyclist. Contains special pavement markings and signage. Bike lanes are one-way flowing in the direction of motor vehicle traffic.



- **Class 3** – Bike Routes. Contains no special accommodation for the cyclist. Signs are used to define the route and the cyclist shares the roadway with vehicular traffic.

Multi-Use Trail – Off Road



- **Class 1** – Completely separated from the roadway.
Also known as 'off-road trails', 'greenways', 'shared use paths', and/or 'multi-use paths'.

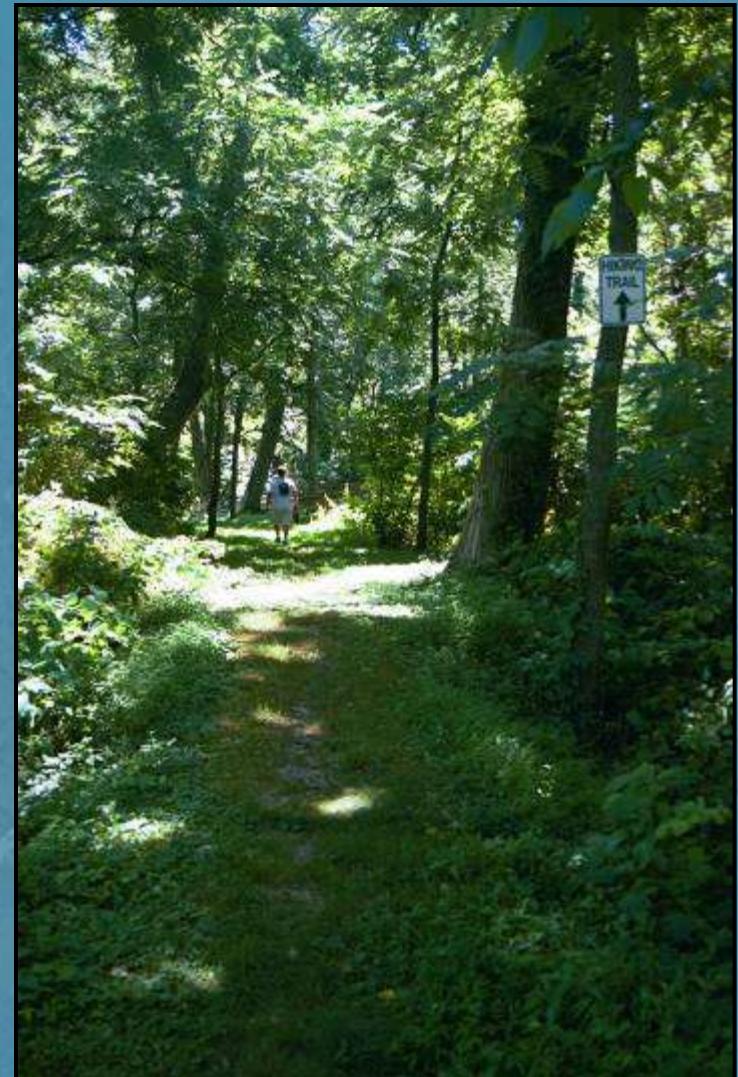
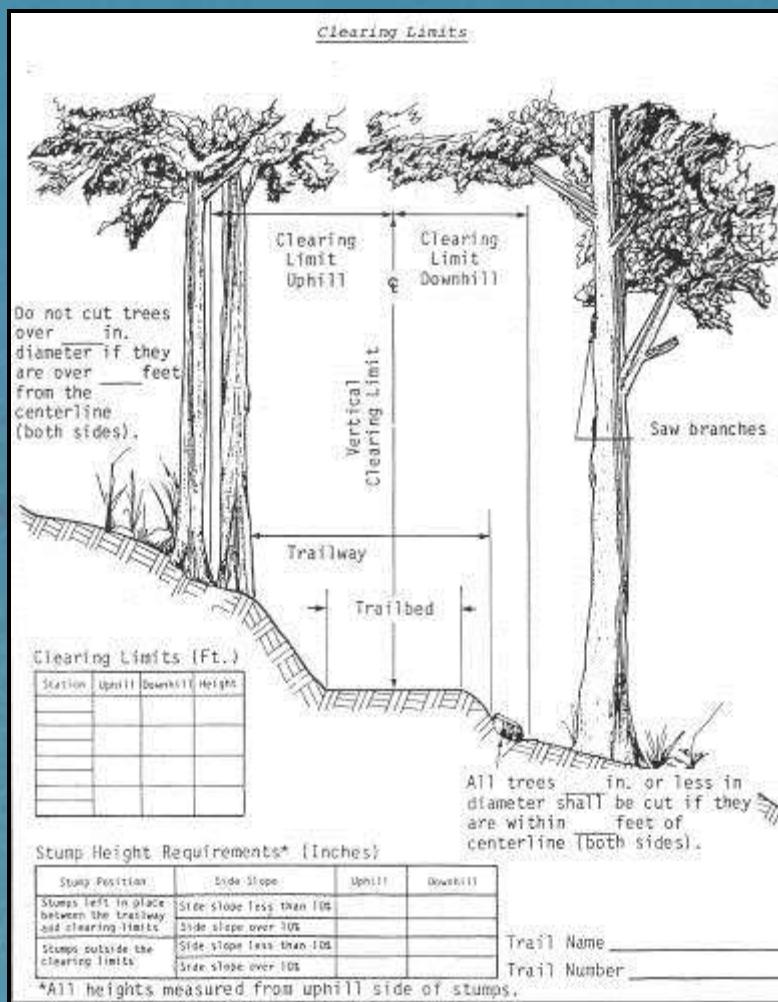
BIKEWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

Multi-Use Trail (Class 1: A,B,C)



Radnor Township Rail Trail

Hiking Trails



Trail Surfaces



- **Asphalt (impervious / porous)**
 - **Pavers / Concrete**
- **Stone Dust / Stone screenings**
 - **Rubberized Surfaces**
 - **Compact Earth**
- **Mulch / Boardwalks (wetlands)**

Greenways

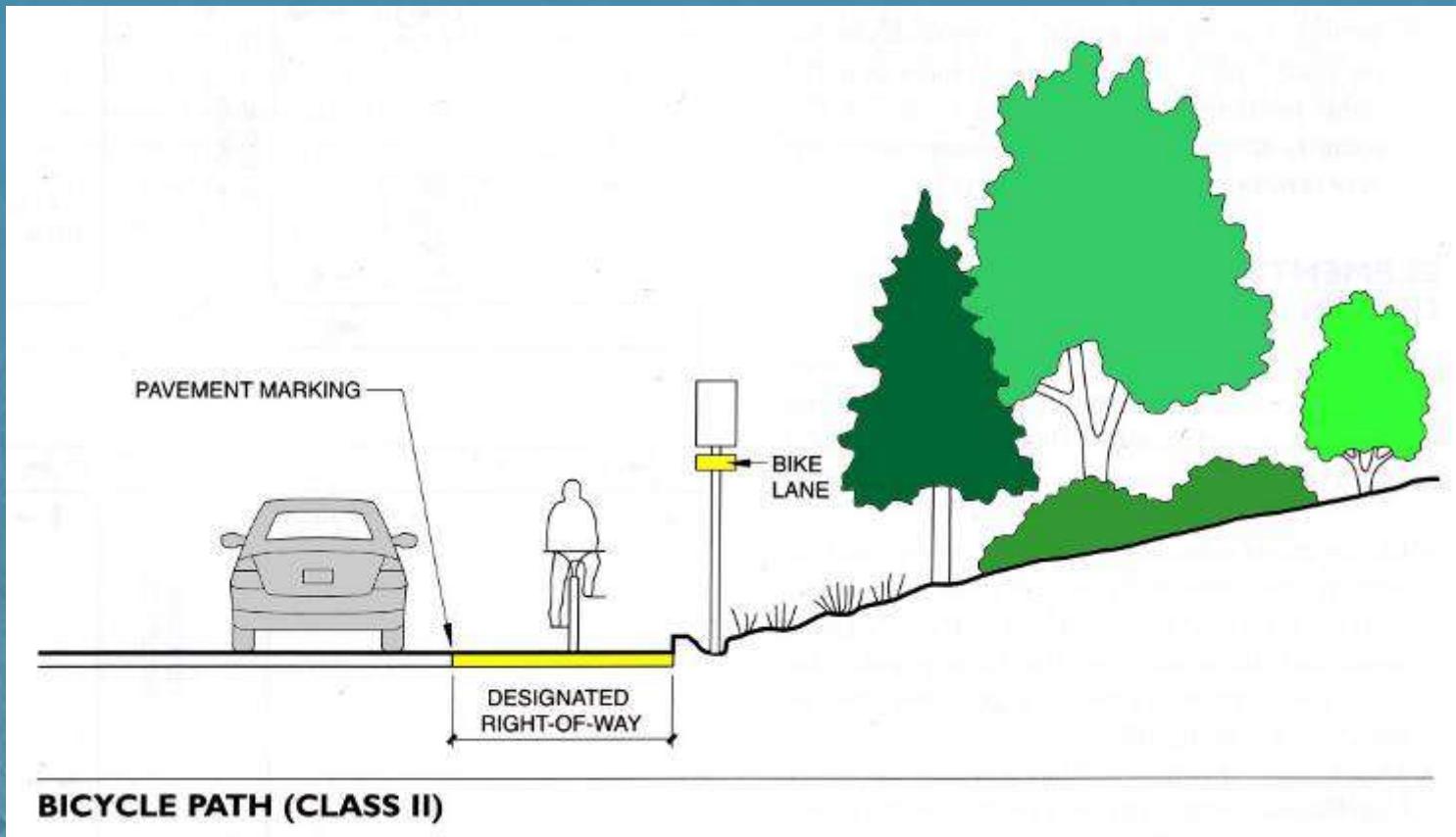
Greenways are corridors of land preserved for recreational use, bicycle or pedestrian, or natural resource protection.



1. Trails
2. No Access
(Riparian Corridor Protection)



Bike Lanes

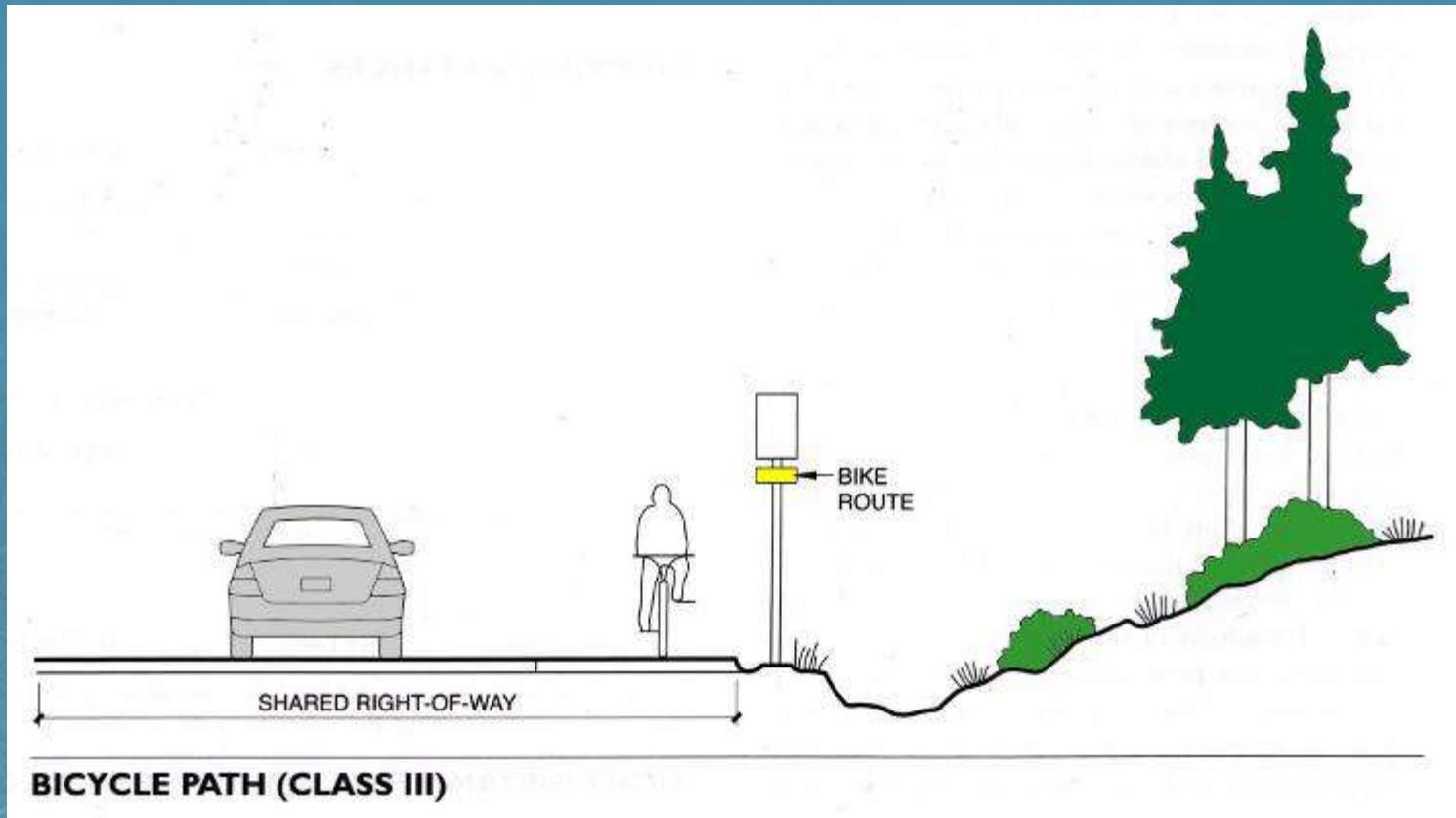


- **Class 2 –** Designated bicycle lanes within a roadway for exclusive use of the cyclist. Contains special pavement markings and signage. Bike lanes are one-way flowing in the direction of motor vehicle traffic.

Bike Lanes (Class 2: A&B)



Bike Routes

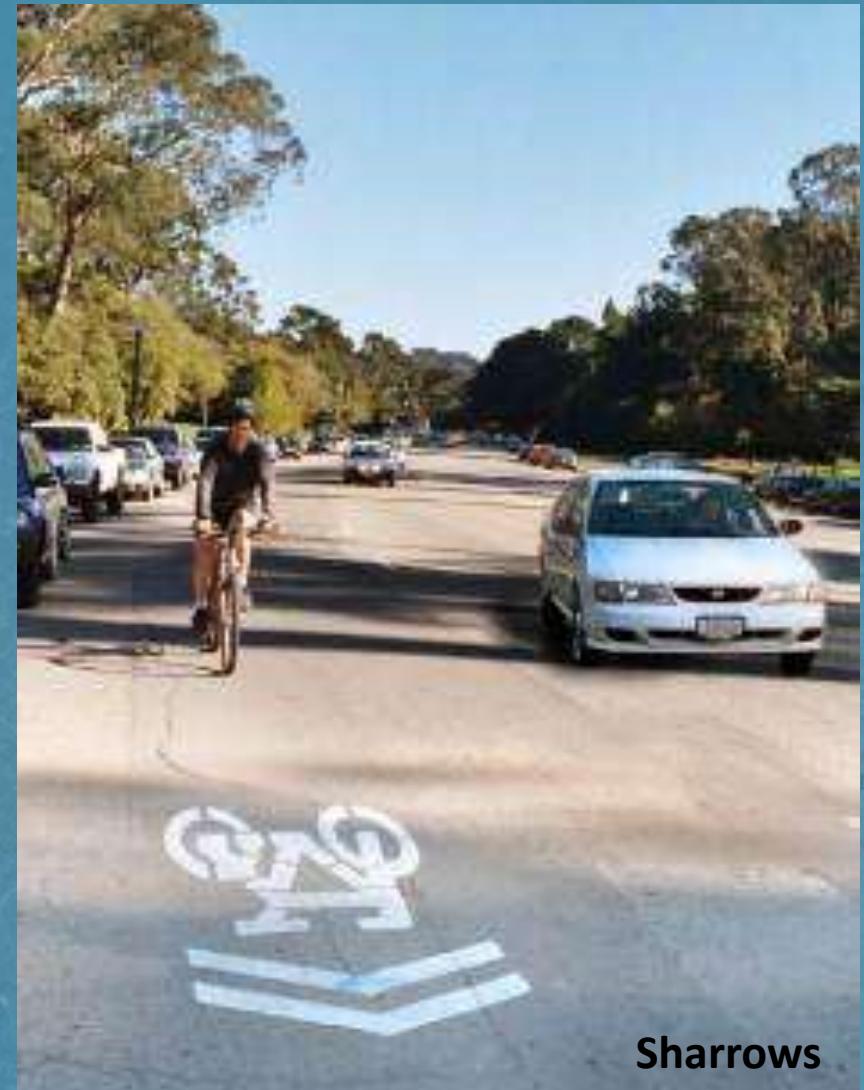


- **Class 3 – Bike Routes.** Contains no special accommodation for the cyclist. Signs are used to define the route and the cyclist shares the roadway with vehicular traffic.

Bike Routes (Class 3: A)



Improved Shoulder



Sharrows

Trail Infrastructure

Infrastructure is typically required where trails face linkage obstacles to itself or other community and neighborhood features.

Infrastructure needs can be simple or complex.

TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE



“Simple” infrastructure can include boardwalks and trail-head parking lots. Easy & relatively quick. .

Types of complex infrastructure

for trail & pedestrian facilities

- At-grade crossings
- Bridges
- Tunnels
- Underpasses
- Roadway reductions



Why Trails and Parks?

What has led to an increased demand for better and safer bicycle and pedestrian connections?

- Development patterns & sedentary lifestyles have created a fitness and obesity epidemic. Access to and use of Trails and pathways can help make us healthier physically and mentally.
- Increased productivity / fewer sick days & decreased health care costs
- Can improve the quality of the environment & protect and enhance natural resources
- Attract and keep residents and businesses in a community
- These are “Quality of Life” amenities that many people want.
- PennDOT now has a multi-modal mandate for all of their projects
- Some contend that multi-modal infrastructure has gone from “nice” to “essential”



Why Trails and Parks?

Are bicycle and pedestrian trails a “fad” or are they important transportation and recreational facilities that are here to stay? **

Nationwide

- 1,785 rail-trails that cover 21,239 miles
- Another 643 planned rail-trails that will traverse another 7,515 miles

Pennsylvania

- 167 rail-trails that cover 1,611 miles



*** according to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*

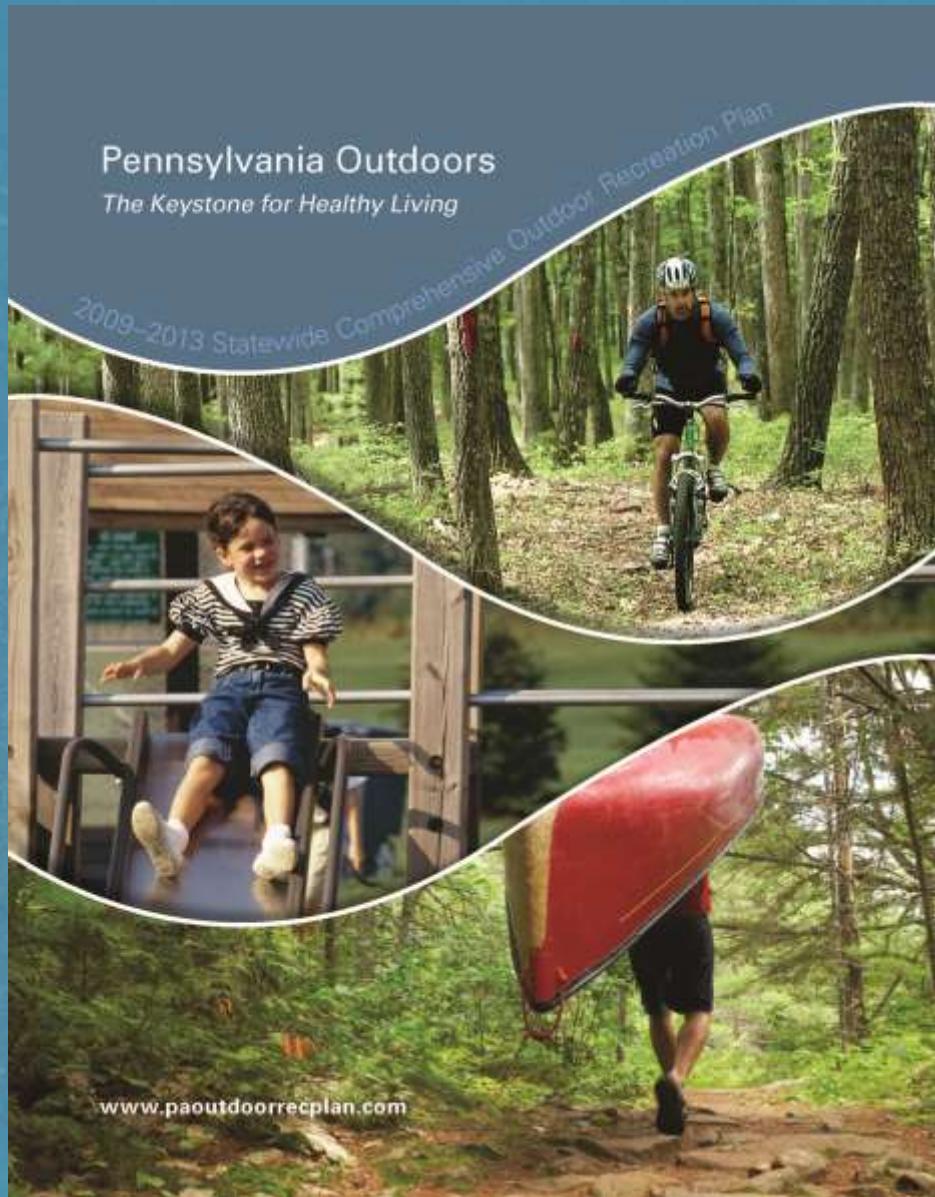
Why Trails and Parks?

2009 PA Recreation Plan

Trails - #1 most wanted recreation facilities

Walking - #1 most popular outdoor activity

Cycling – One of the most popular outdoor activities



Park and Open Space Facilities

Many facility types, sizes and activities



Active Recreation

- Soccer
- Football
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Softball
- Field Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Volleyball
- Rugby
- Etc...



Passive Recreation

- Walking / Dog walking
- Dog parks
- Hiking
- Jogging
- Biking
- Boating
- Swimming
- Fishing
- Bird watching
- Gardening
- Playgrounds
- Nature based playgrounds
- Picnicking
- Community events
- Civic spaces
- Etc...



Other types of park / open space facilities and benefits

- Nature preserves
- Wildlife habitats
- Stormwater management areas
- Greenways
- Riparian corridor protection
- Flood protection
- Erosion control
- Enhanced viewsheds / aesthetics
- Gateways
- Etc...



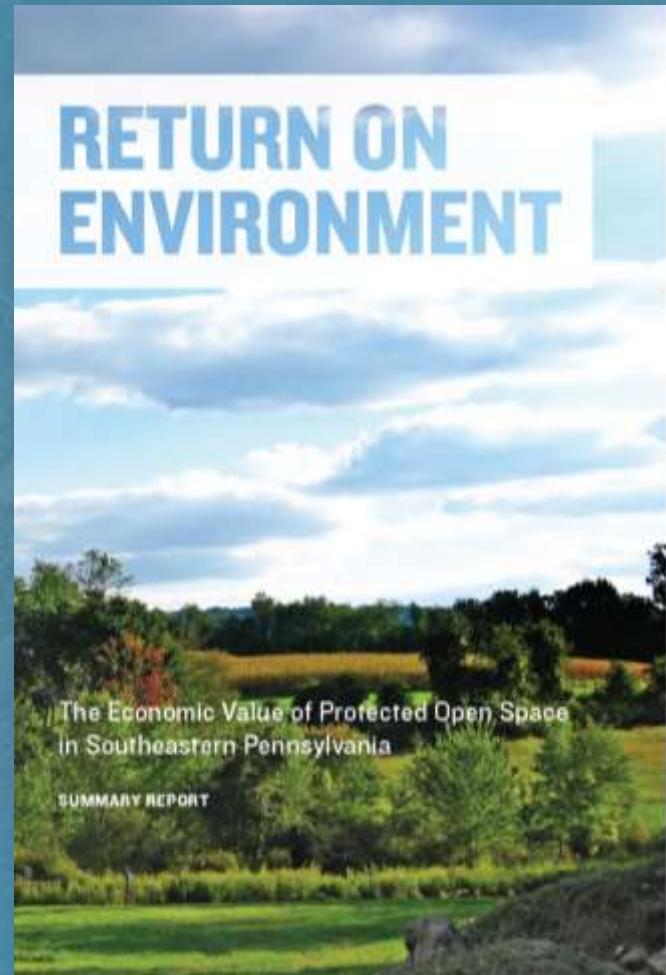
Why Trails and Parks?

Economic Value of Open Space & Parks

Source: *Return on Environment, The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania* by DVRPC, 2011

1. Open space enhances home values

- Open space adds \$16.3 billion to the value of southeastern Pennsylvania's housing stock.
- Protected open space generates \$240 million annually in property tax revenues to support county and municipal governments and local school districts.



Why Trails and Parks?

Economic Value of Open Space & Parks

Source: Return on Environment, The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania by DVRPC, 2011

2. Open space protects property, filters drinking water, and cleans the air

- Southeastern Pennsylvania realizes nearly **\$61 million** in annual cost savings from protected open spaces' ability to naturally filter out pollutants and replenish water supply.
- The total annual benefit generated by natural flood mitigation services is more than **\$37 million**.
- Trees on protected open space are estimated to provide **\$17 million** in annual air pollution removal and carbon sequestration services.

Why Trails and Parks?

Economic Value of Open Space & Parks

Source: Return on Environment, The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania by DVRPC, 2011

3. Open space furnishes low or no cost recreation that saves money and improves health

- Responses to the 2009 statewide outdoor recreation survey indicate that, on average, **41%** of moderate or strenuous physical exercise is performed in a park or on a trail.
- Each household in the region saves **\$392** per year by having open space available for recreation and exercise.
- The health-related cost savings resulting from physical activity on protected open space amount to **\$1.3 billion** per year including avoided workers' compensation costs and avoided productivity losses.
- **\$795 million** of those health-related cost savings are medical cost savings.

Why Trails and Parks?

Economic Value of Open Space & Parks

Source: *Return on Environment, The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania* by DVRPC, 2011

4. Open space creates jobs and attracts people who spend in our communities

- Economic activity associated with protected open space in southeastern Pennsylvania results in more than 6,900 jobs and \$299 million in annual earnings.
- Economic activity associated with protected open space generates \$30 million per year in state and local tax revenue.

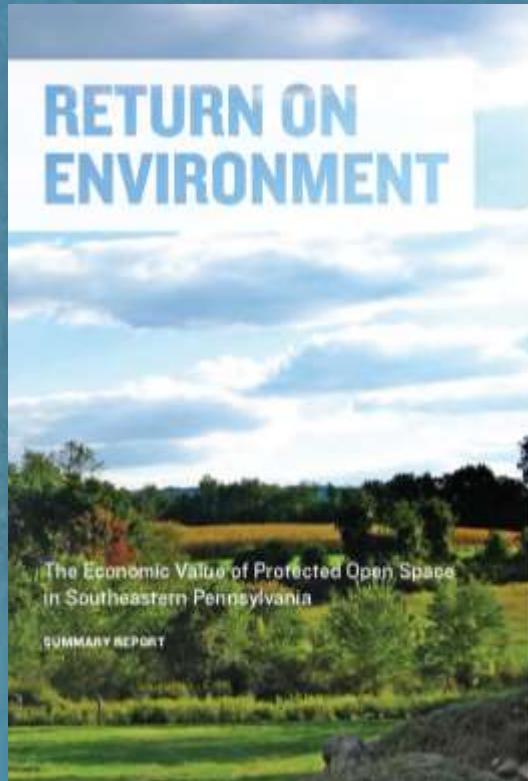
Why Trails and Parks?

Economic Value of Open Space & Parks

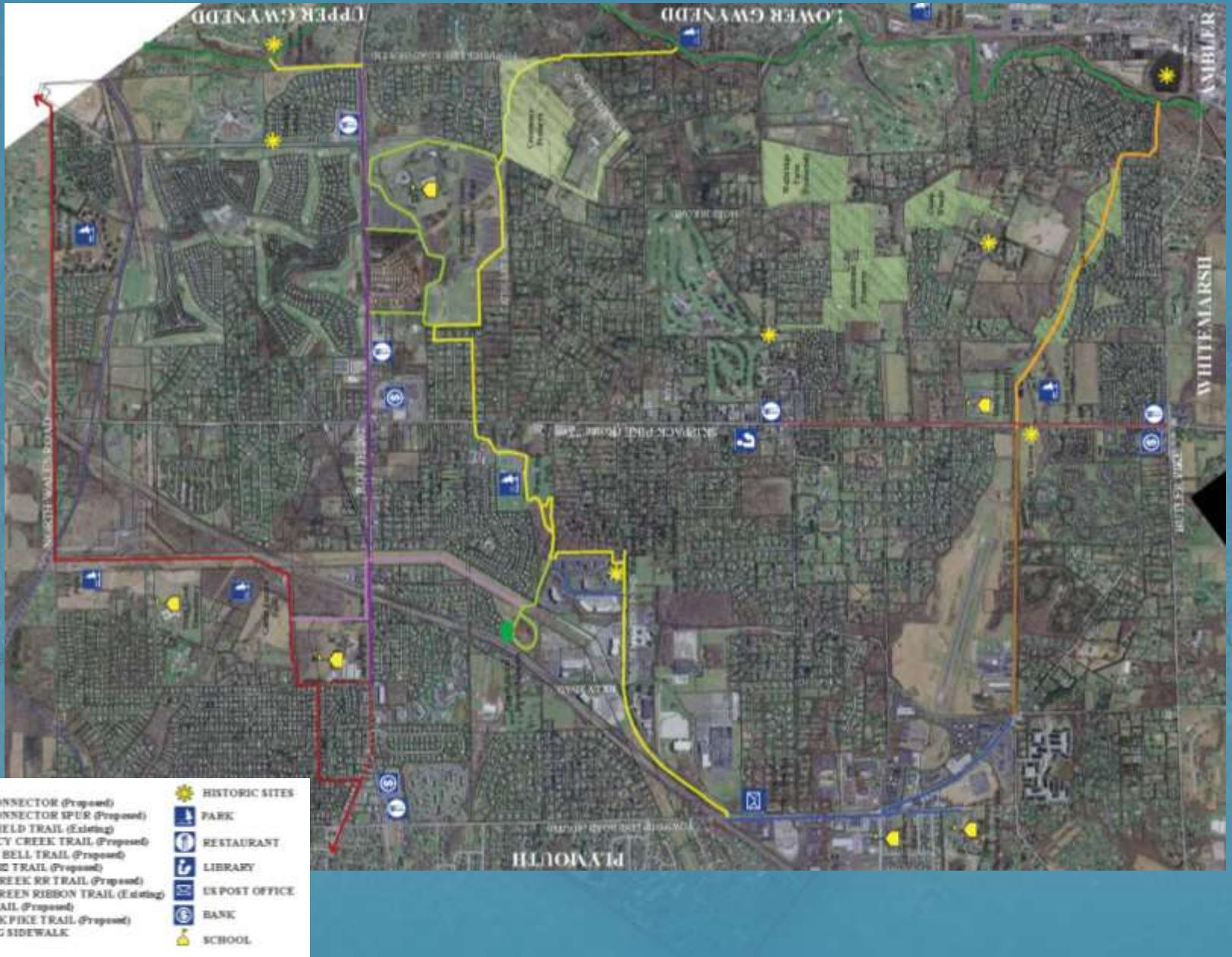
Source: *Return on Environment, The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania* by DVRPC, 2011

For more information on the study:

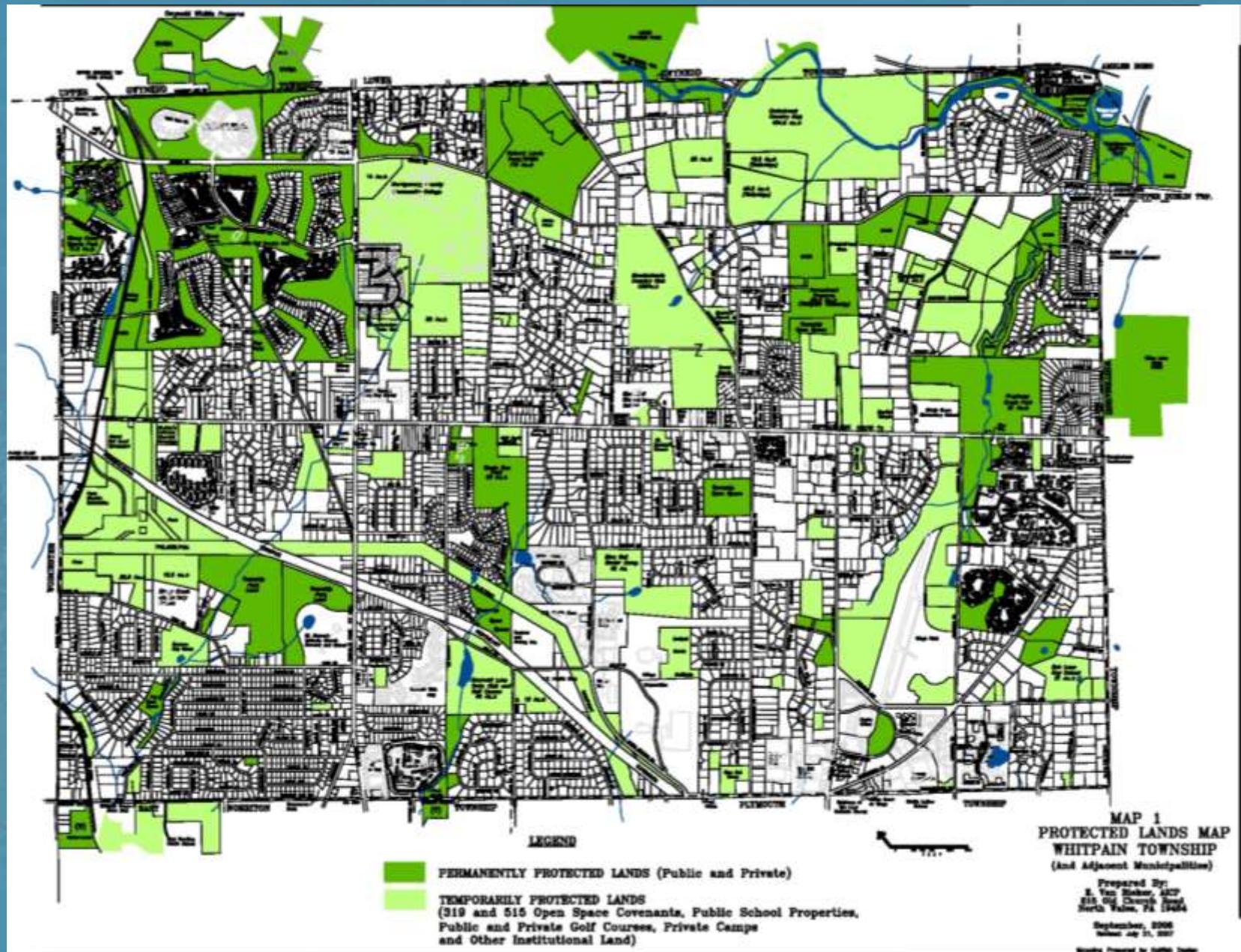
www.greenspacealliance.org or www.dvRPC.org/openspace/value/



Current Whitpain Trails Plan.....Good Starting Point



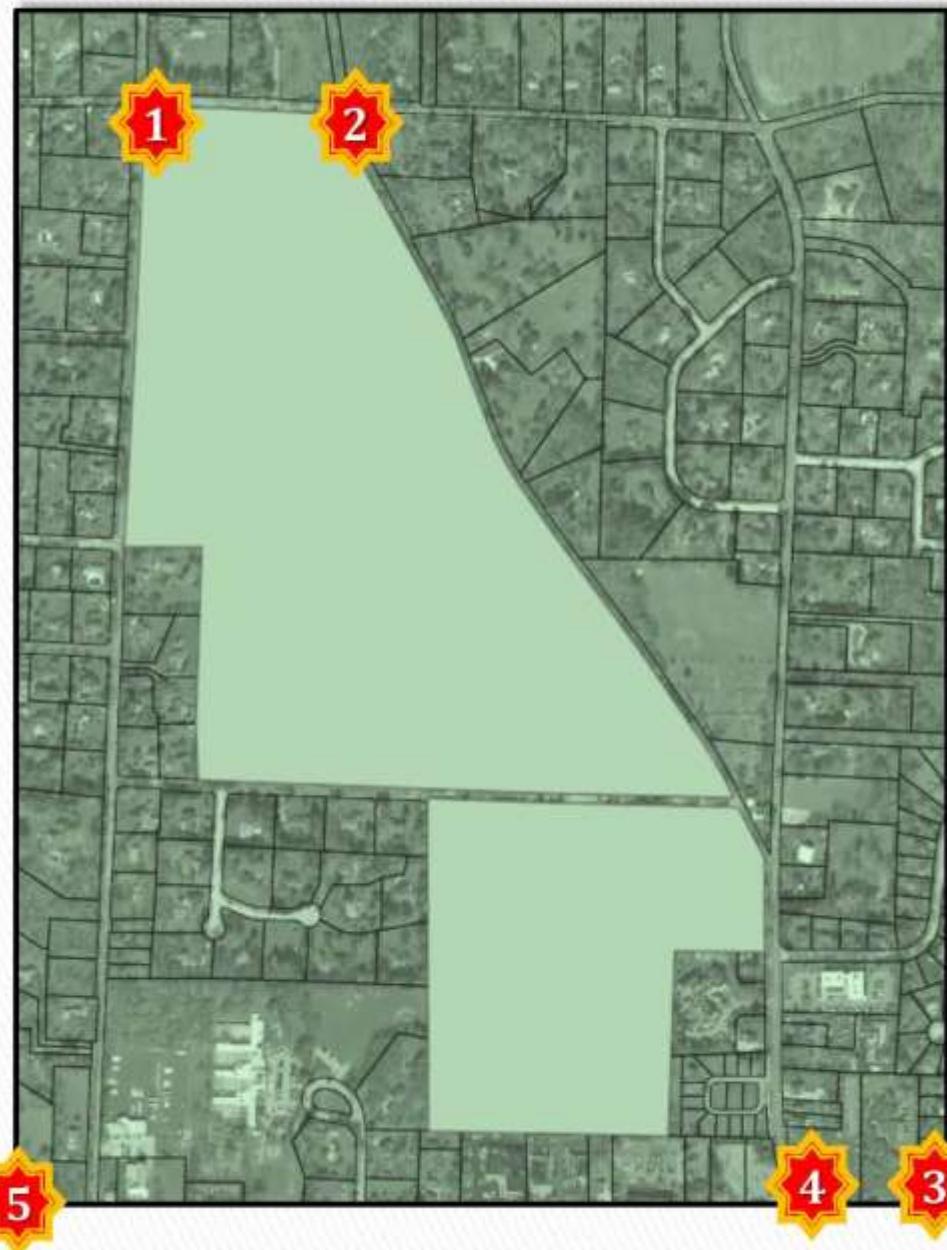
Current Whitpain Park & Open Space Plan



Meadowlands Tract

- ▶ Meadowlands CC is a 125-acre tract in the heart of Blue Bell that is zoned as "Park and Recreation"
- ▶ Scenic woodland habitat and viewsheds that contribute significant value to all nearby properties and the wider community
- ▶ Headwaters of Willow Run, an important tributary to the Wissahickon Creek
- ▶ Historically significant buildings next to and near (*i.e. Boehm's Church & cemetery and Blue Bell Inn*)
- ▶ Traffic gridlock daily at each of the surrounding intersections and beyond

- ① Morris Rd/School Rd (*Rated "F"*)
- ② Morris Rd/Plymouth Rd (*Rated "F"*)
- ③ Skippack Pk/Walton Rd (*Rated "F"*)
- ④ Skippack Pk/PBB Pk (*Rated "F"*)
- ⑤ Skippack Pike/Union Mtg Rd (*Rated "F"*)

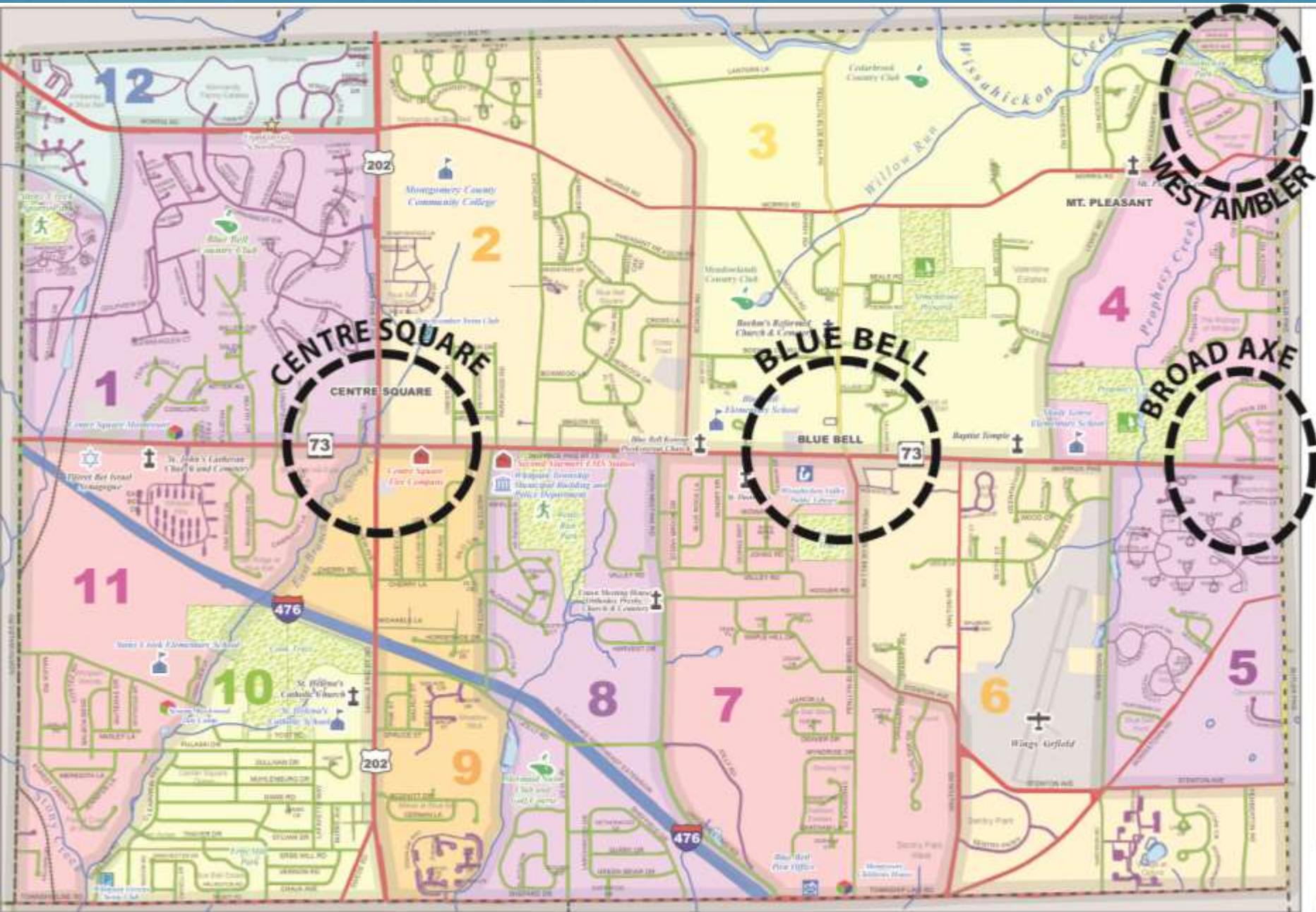




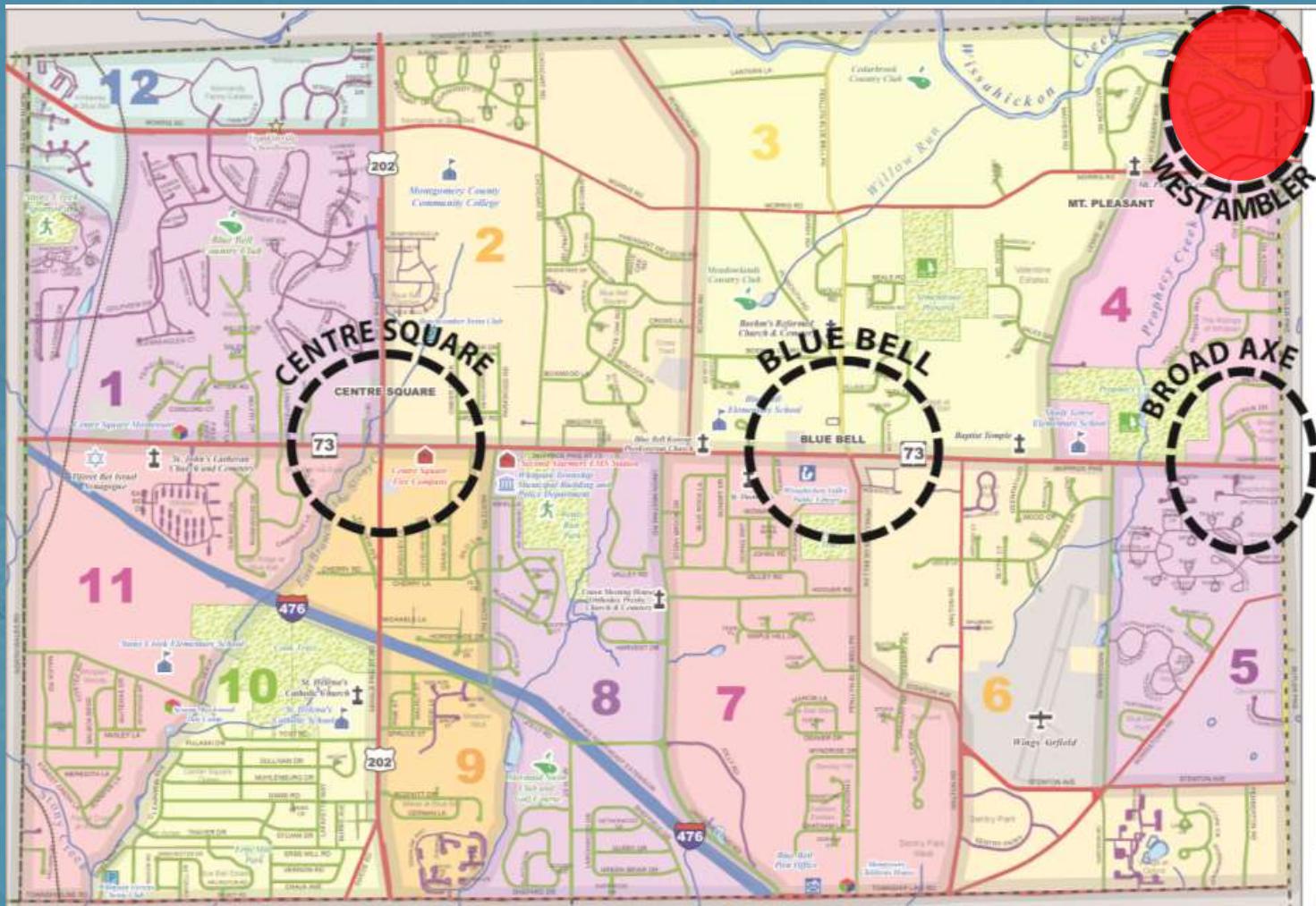
WHITPAIN 2035

4 VILLAGES WITHIN A COMMUNITY

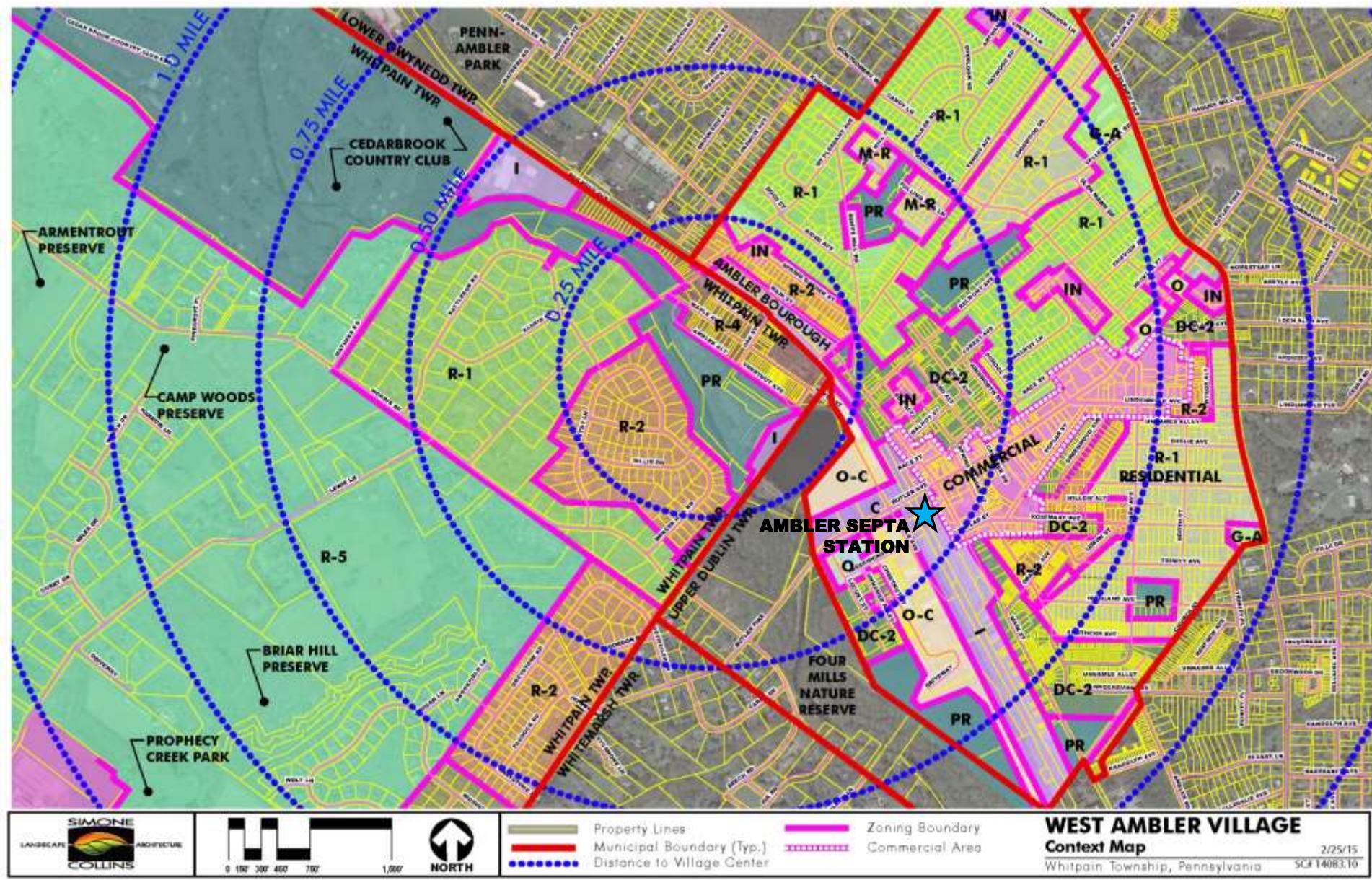
Whitpain Township's 4 Villages



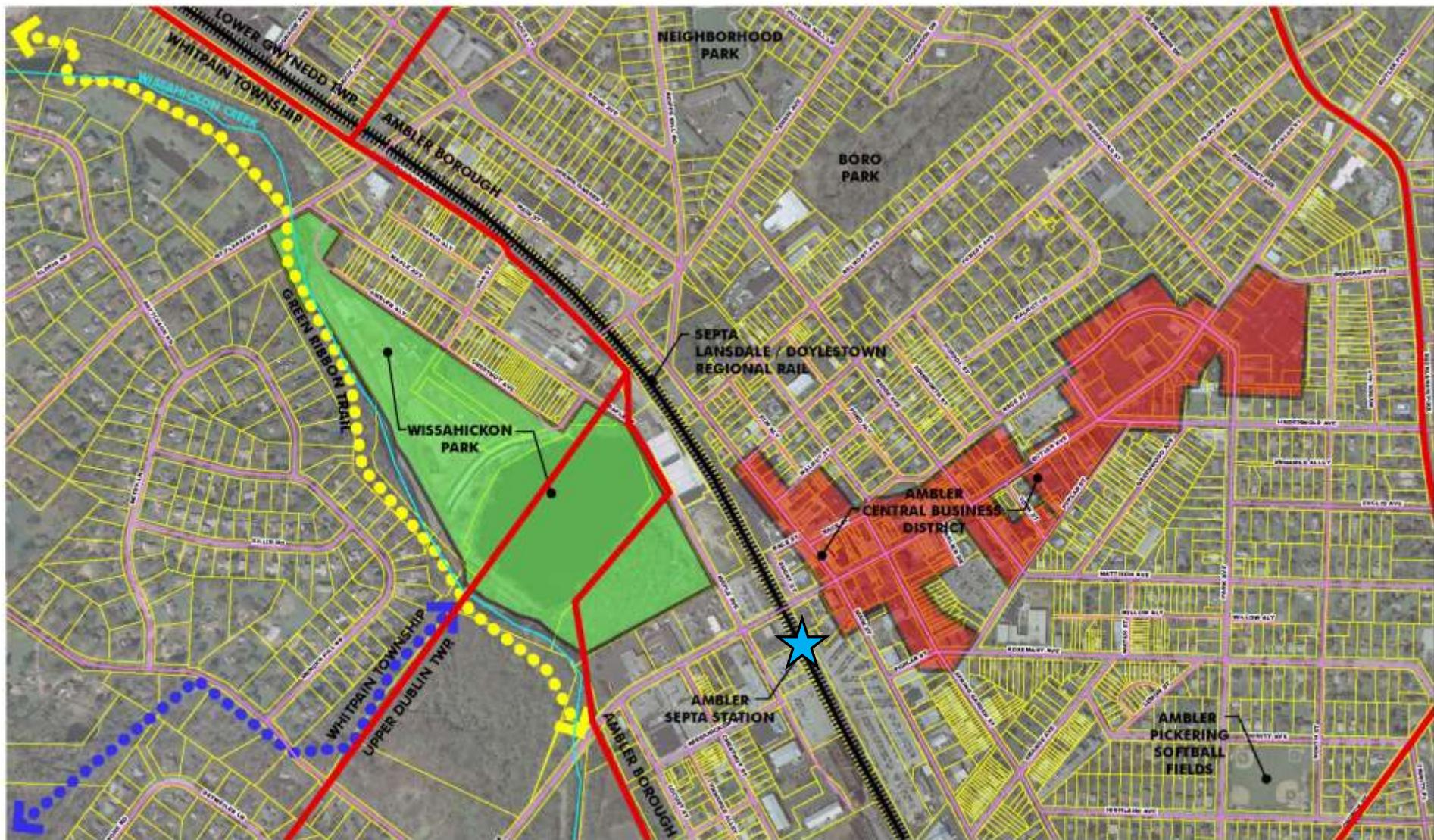
VILLAGE FOCUS: WEST AMBLER VILLAGE



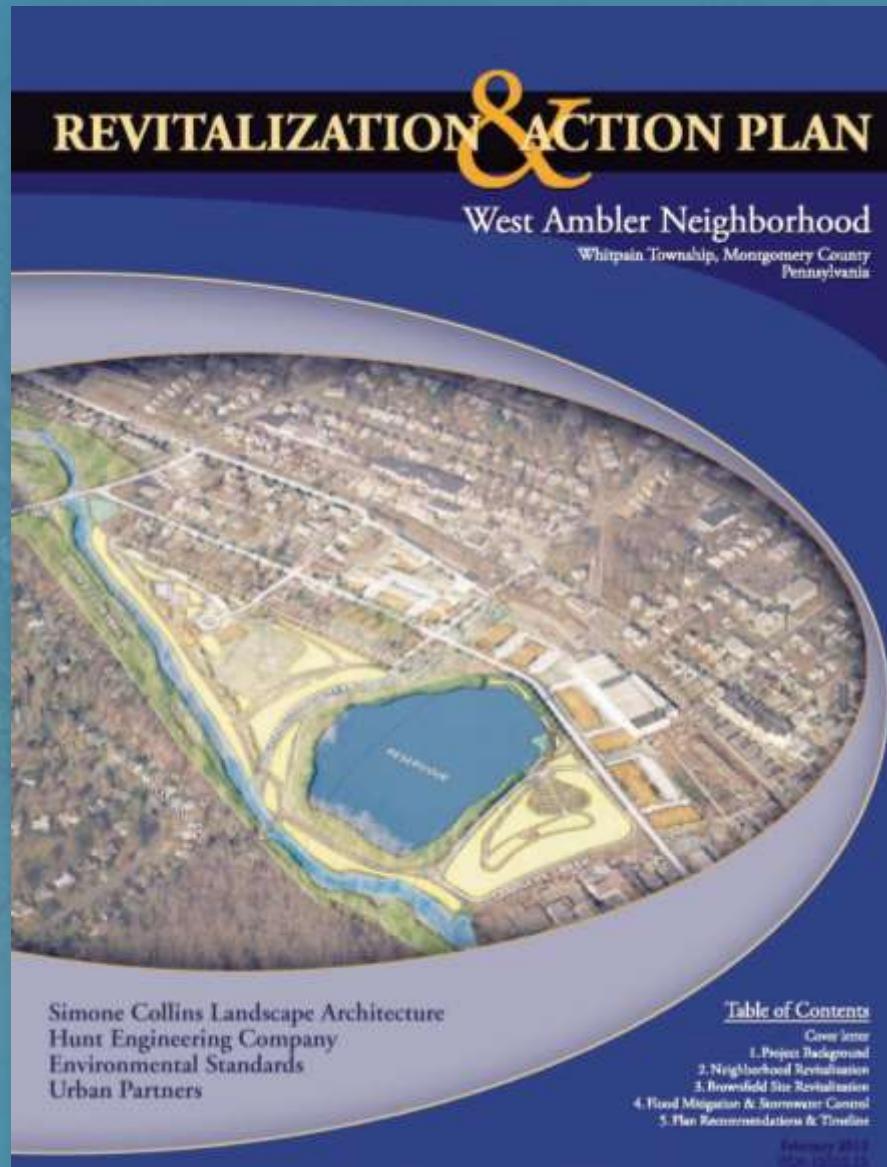
West Ambler Village - Distances to Village Center



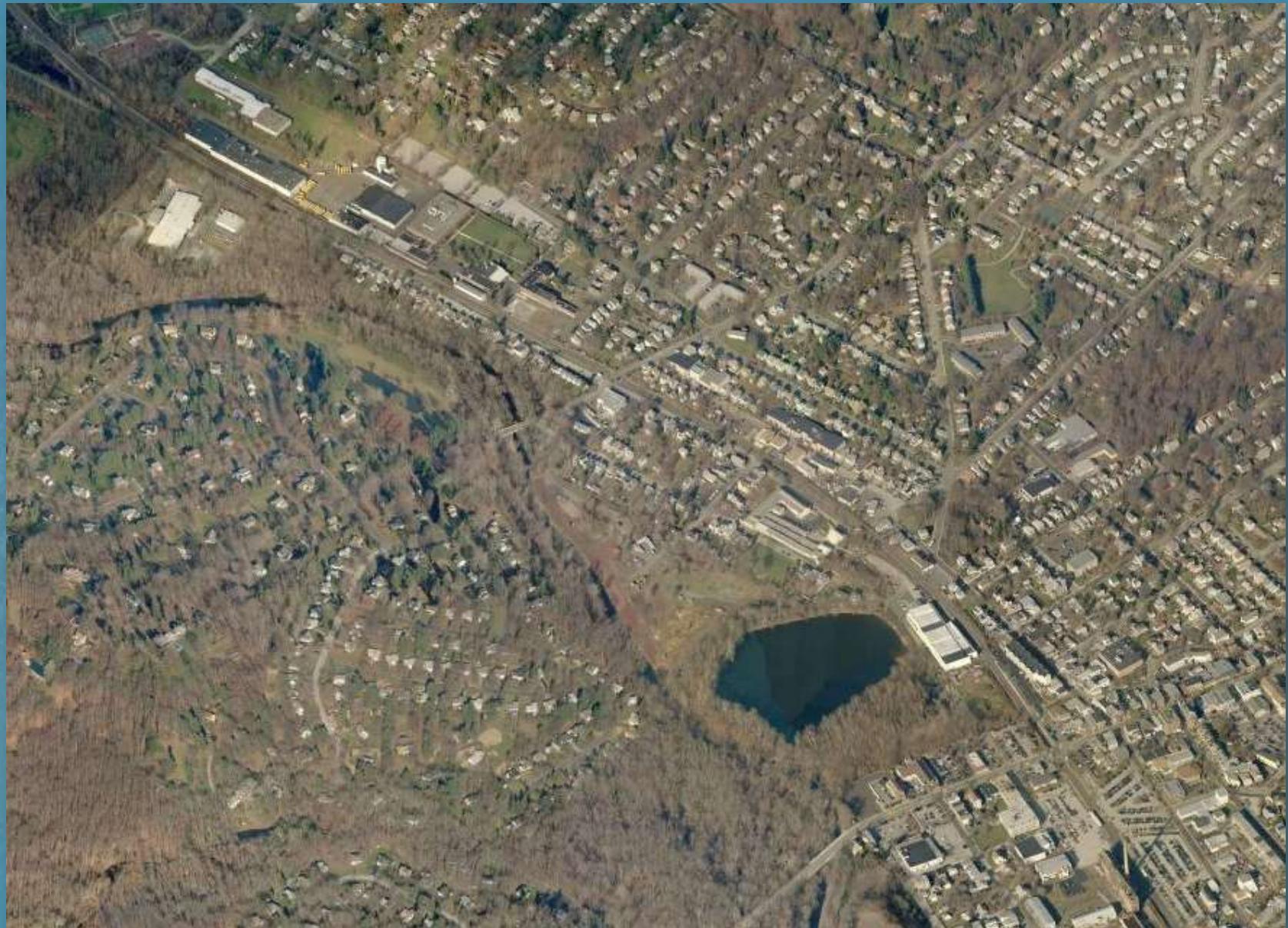
West Ambler Village - Zoning & Land Use



West Ambler Village Revitalization & Action Plan – 2013



West Ambler Village



West Ambler Village



Railroad Ave looking east



E. Mount Pleasant Ave looking south



W. Maple Ave at Mt. Pleasant Ave



W. Maple Ave looking east

West Ambler Village



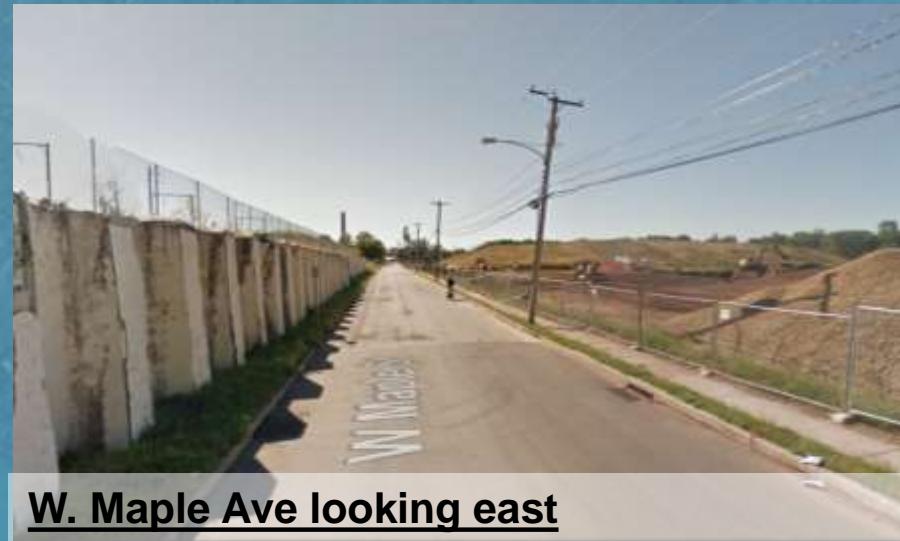
Ambler Ave looking west



Oak St. looking south



Butler Pike at Maple St. looking north



W. Maple Ave looking east

West Ambler Village - BoRit Superfund site



Bo-Rit Superfund site



Wissahickon Creek at Bo-Rit Superfund site



Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve



“The Pile”

Concept Plan

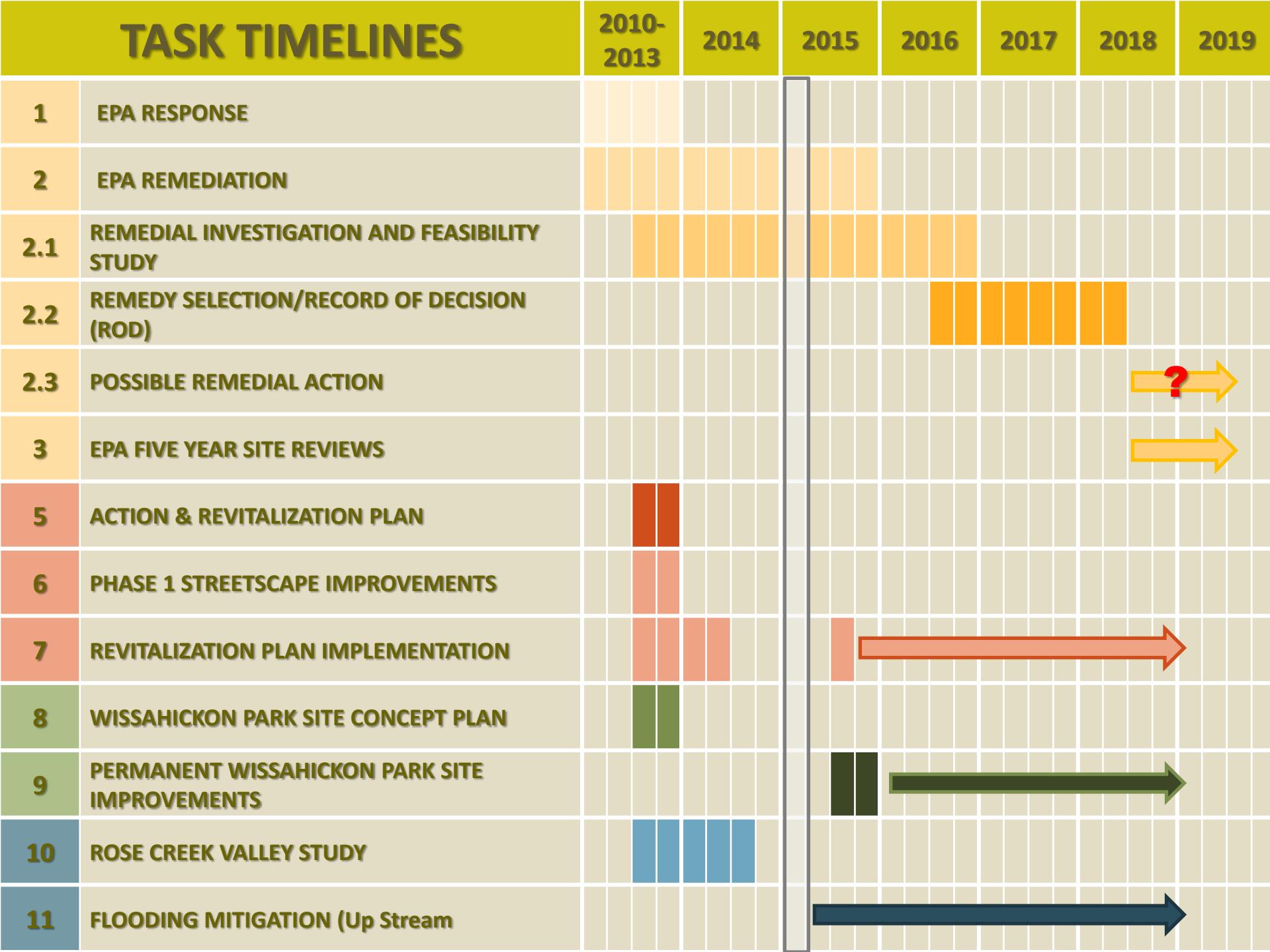


Plan Recommendations

<u>RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS</u>	<u>ACCOUNTABLE ENTITY</u>	<u>APPROXIMATE COST</u>	<u>SHORT (1-2 YRS)</u> <u>MEDIUM TERM (3-6 YRS)</u> <u>LONG TERM (7-10 YRS)</u>
Traffic and Stop Signs	Whitpain Township	\$12,000	Short Term ✓
Add Road, Trail, Stormwater Management and Infrastructure Improvements to Township Official Map	Whitpain Township	\$2,000	Short Term
Possible Temporary Park Improvements	Whitpain Township	\$200,000	Short Team
Evaluate and Revise Zoning	Whitpain Township	\$5,000.00	Short Term
Streetscape Improvements	Whitpain Township	\$2.0 million	Short, Medium, Long Term Phase 1 ✓
Beech Alley Extension	Whitpain Township	TBD	Medium & Long Term
Park Master Plan for Entire Superfund Site	Whitpain Township	\$50,000	Short Team
Roadway Directional and other changes (some part of streetscape)	Whitpain Township	\$10,000	Short & Medium Term ✓
Storm sewer Infrastructure	Whitpain Township	\$246,900	Medium Term
Additional Earthen embankments around reservoir perimeters for long-term tree replanting	EPA, Wissahickon Waterfowl Association	TBD	Medium to Long Term ✓ In process

Plan Recommendations

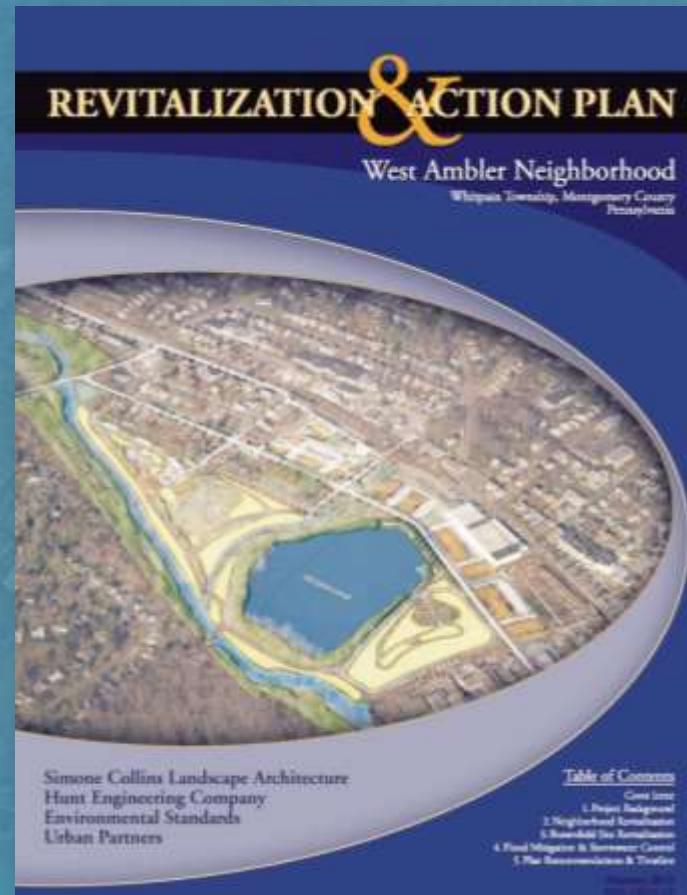
<u>RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS</u>	<u>ACCOUNTABLE ENTITY</u>	<u>APPROXIMATE COST</u>	<u>SHORT (1-2 YRS)</u> <u>MEDIUM TERM (3-6 YRS)</u> <u>LONG TERM (7-10 YRS)</u>
Wissahickon Park Improvements (approximate cost includes community building)	Whitpain Township	\$2.6 million	Medium Term & Long Term
Wildlife Preserve Improvements	Wissahickon Waterfowl Association,	\$82,000	Medium & Long Term
Flood Mitigation & Flood Claims Assistance	Whitpain Township, FEMA, PEMA,	TBD	Medium & Long Term
Residential Infill Development	Private Sector Whitpain Township	Unknown	New project started: Medium & Long Term 4 units at 319 W. Maple Ave
Improvements at The Pile	TBD	\$323,000	Medium & Long Term
Boys and Girls Club (possible)	Ambler Area Boys & Girls Club Committee	\$5 million	Long Term Probably not



West Ambler Village Revitalization & Action Plan – 2013

For more information on the plan please visit:

http://whitpaintownship.net/pages/news_westambler.php



West Ambler Village Opportunities and Challenges

- Completion of EPA remediation
- Improvements of Wissahickon Park / Wildlife Preserve / “The Pile”
- Tennis Avenue extension / Streetscape improvements
- Stormwater management / flood mitigation improvements (upstream)
- Residential infill development (market forces at work)
- Walkability, safe pedestrian routes, and trail connections
- Connections to Wissahickon Park, Ambler business district, Ambler SEPTA station, Green Ribbon Trail, Prophecy Creek Park, Broad Axe Village, Cedarbrook Country Club
- Eliminate short vehicular trips to village / downtown Ambler
- Appearance of future development & redevelopment is important
- Marketing and identity of West Ambler Village

Community Survey (407 responses to date)

Obtaining feedback from the community is vital to the planning process. We would appreciate you taking the time to complete the following 26 question survey. It should take about 10-15 minutes.

To take the online survey, please use the link below:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WhitpainCompPlan>

or go to **<http://www.whitpaintownship.net/>**

Now, your ideas, comments, and suggestions.

Brainstorming – Card Technique

GOALS

Goals and priorities for the project — initially broad, then specific: “Enhance Village Areas” or “Improve Traffic Safety”

Existing land use, roadway conditions, natural resources, Township destinations, development projects, trails, all the various interest groups / Partners involved in the project

FACTS

CONCEPTS

Ideas for attaining project goals — “Create Safe Pedestrian Sidewalks”, “Enhance Marketing of Villages”, or “Enhance Stormwater Management”

Next Town Hall Meeting: Wed. October 14th, 7:00 pm

Topic: Presentation of Draft Comprehensive Plan

Location: Montgomery County Community College

College Hall, Rm 144 / 148, 340 Dekalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Upcoming Committee Meetings (Open to public)

All committee meetings held at 5:30 pm at Township building

- **Thursday, May 21st – Present Draft Plan**
- **Tuesday August 4th – Receive comments on Draft Plan**
- **Tuesday October 6th – Present 2nd Draft Plan**
- **Wednesday, November 4th – Receive comments on 2nd Draft Plan**

Next Town Hall Meeting: Wed. October 14, 7:00 pm

Montgomery County Community College, College Hall, Rm 144 / 148

340 Dekalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Comprehensive Plan for Whitpain Township

Project Schedule- Revised 3/2/15

