

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- Project Schedule
- Public Meeting 2 Review
- Public Opinion Survey Results
- Updated Benchmarking
- Aligning with Concurrent Planning Efforts
- Classification of Parks by Area: MiniPark, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Greenway
- Addressing the Service Gaps
- Official Map
- Staff Interviews Review
- Next Steps



Committee

Laura Ballek Cole	Mayor's Office
Rebecca Kiss	COA Board of Recreation
Nancy Wilt	COA Board of Recreation
Dave Snyder	COA Board of Recreation
Candida Affa	City Council
Ce-Ce Gerlach	City Council
Natalie Santos	COA Council Representative
Christian Brown	COA Shade Tree Commission and Planning Commission
Tony Hanna	Resident
Carol Robb	Volunteer
Darren Benson Jr	Allentown A's (AYOUTH)
Shaniqua Leak / Rashard Wilkerson	H.D.Y.A. (AYOUTH)
Kevin Ervin / Marlon Thomas	East Side Youth Center (AYOUTH)
Jessica French / Peter Allen	Mountainville Memorial Association (AYOUTH)
Kim Schaffer	Community Bike Works

ALLENTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT – 610.437.7757

Mandy Tolino, CPRP, Director
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Lucinda Wright, Deputy Director
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Bryne Heffner-Bair, Project Coordinator
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Committee, continued

Scott Slingerland	CAT Lehigh Valley
Simon Moore	Parknership
Rosario Stoops	Friends of Allentown Parks
Rick Daugherty	Lehigh Valley Active Life
Leslie Billowitch / Neal Novak	Lehigh Valley Road Runners
Ana Tiburcio / Randy Atiyeh	Allentown School District
Janet Roth	Trexler Trust
John Leonard	COA Police
Efrain Agosto	COA Fire
Julio Guridy	Allentown Housing Authority
Becky Bradley, AICP	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Christian Martinez	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Scott Greenly	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Susan Myerov, AICP	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Liz Rosencrans / Brit Kondravy	D&L Heritage Corridor

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Committee, continued

Darian Colbert	Cohesion
Shannon Fugate	Allentown Arts Commission
Andrew Atiyeh	KNT Basketball
Kyle Edwards	A True L.O.V.E. Story
Daniel Bosket	Community Action Development Allentown
Samantha Shaak	Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health
Flor and Robert Velez	Puertorrican Culture Preservation
Carmen Bell / Jose Rivera	United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley
Fatima Nabavian	Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living
Marci Klinger	Lehigh Valley Disc Club
Christina DiPierro	Valley Youth House
Abigail Goldfarb	Conference of Churches

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Project Team

SIMONE COLLINS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE – 610.239.7601

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Natural Resources Analyst

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Anita Nardone, PE, Stormwater Analyst

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William Collins, RLA, Principal

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CERTIFIED PARK & RECREATION
PROFESSIONALS

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Kathleen Muller, CPRP

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Project Schedule

Meeting Type	Date	Time
Committee Meeting #1	Wednesday, September 25, 2024	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #1 – Project Intro / Brainstorming	Wednesday, November 13, 2024	6pm – 8pm
Committee Meeting #2	Monday, December 9, 2024	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #2 – Existing Conditions, Initial Concepts	Wednesday, January 8, 2025	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #3	Wednesday, January 22, 2025	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #3 – Refined Plans, Admin Analysis	Wednesday, February 26, 2025	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #4	Wednesday, April 9, 2025	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #4 – Finance, Programming, Refined Plans	Wednesday, April 30, 2025	6pm-8pm
Key Person Interviews (20)	TBD	TBD
Committee Meeting #5	Wednesday, June 11, 2025	7pm-9pm
Online Public Opinion Survey	October 2024 – May 2025	
Public Meeting #5 – Draft Plans	Wednesday, June 25, 2025	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #6	Wednesday, September 10, 2025	7pm-9pm
City Council Meeting (to Adopt Plan – TBD)	October 2025	
City Staff Meetings	Estimated 1 per month	Virtual



Review of Public Meeting #2

- East Breakout Group ideas
 - Andre Reed Park needs improvements to define it as a park. These improvements should provide multi-generational opportunities that would keep the park busy throughout the day.
 - Canal Park needs improvements to water access and other areas to make it feel more like a park than an open space.
 - The D&L Trail would benefit from safety upgrades, increased policing, improved lighting and signage.



Review of Public Meeting #2

West Breakout Group ideas

- Participants emphasized the need to extoll the virtues of Allentown's parks and were happy to see some repairs at Union Terrace Park.
- In general, heavy traffic makes accessing parks on foot and by bicycle feel unsafe.
- New trails to connect greenways and other points of interest are needed.



Review of Public Meeting #2

South Breakout Group ideas

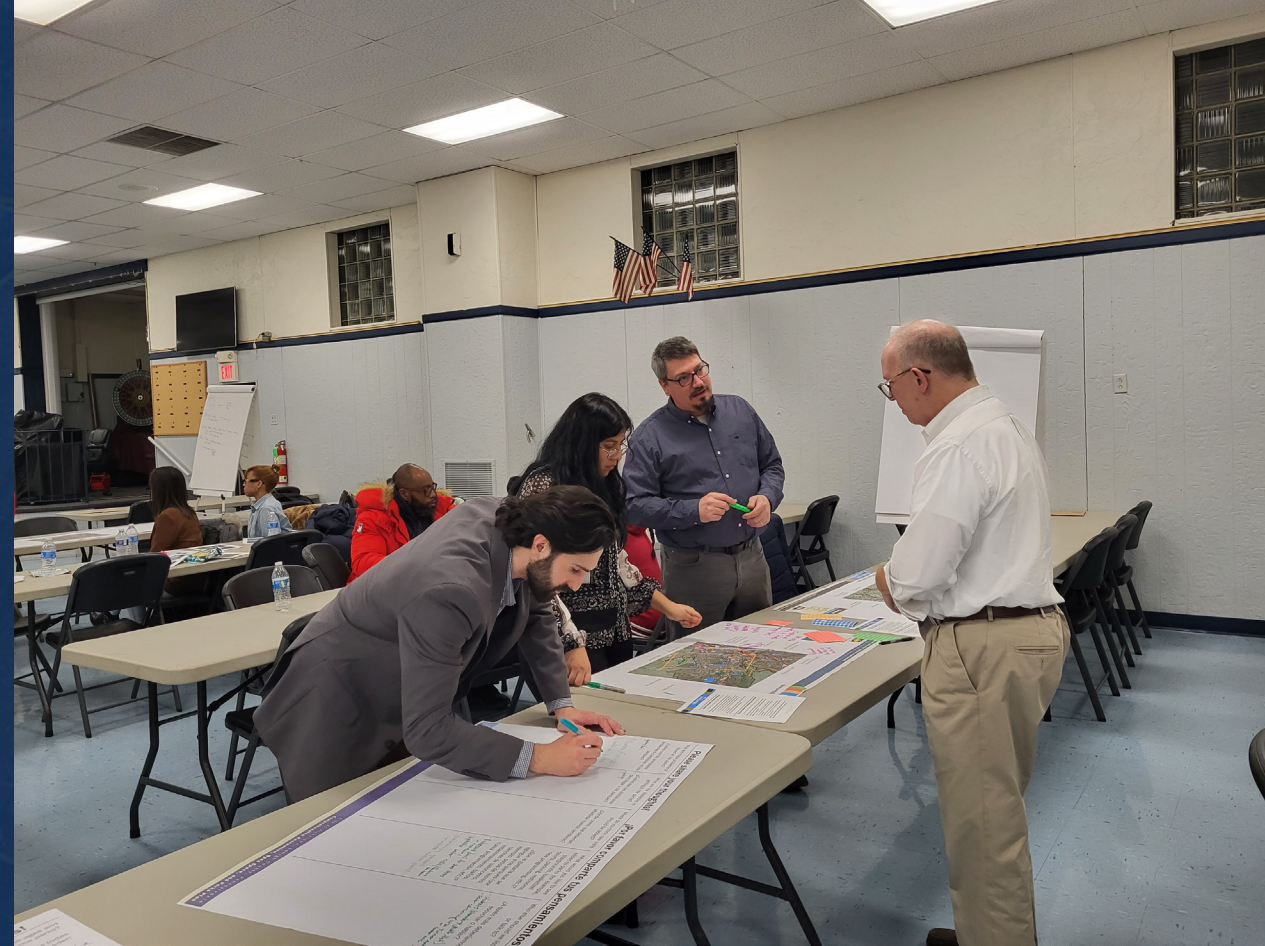
- Lighting at Percy Ruhe Park is an issue. Visitors reported using car lights for football practice.
- Participants reported that trash dumping and ATVs cause major issues at South Mountain Reservoir.
- Arrangements with Allentown School District should be formalized to establish standard expectations for everyone.



Review of Public Meeting #2

Center Breakout Group ideas

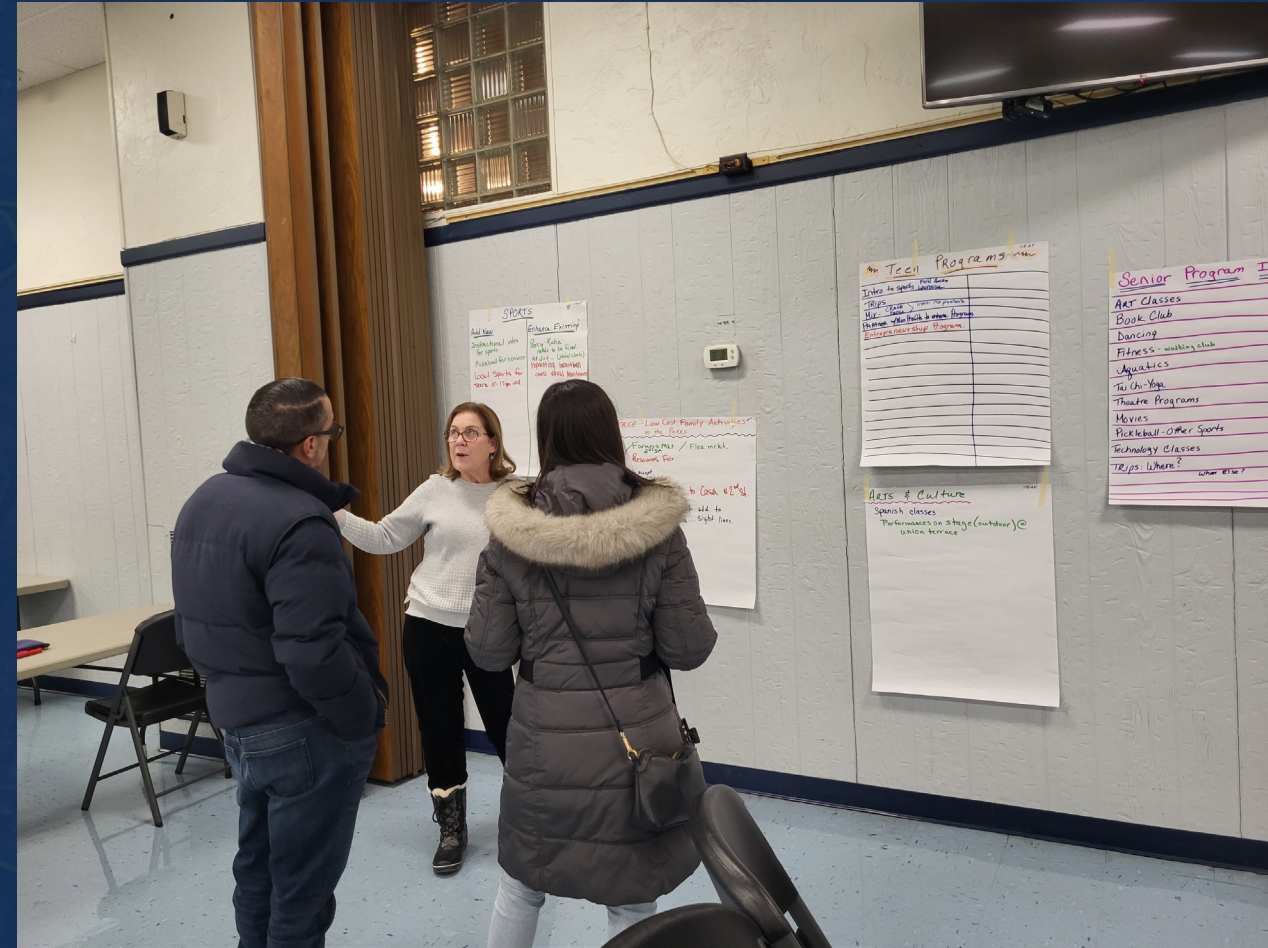
- Community ownership of parks is important to establish. This includes communication with the community.
- Participants identified parking and access to water vs water quality and damage to the ecosystem as major issues at parks.
- Connectivity from greenways to downtown is very difficult.



Review of Public Meeting #2

Recreation Breakout Group ideas

- Participants would like more free / low-cost family programming in parks, including a farmers' market for 2nd Street, which should accept WIC checks.
- Safety and security are concerns throughout the park system.
- Participants recommended holding a listening session in the morning so seniors would attend.



Review of Public Meeting #2

Online Breakout Group ideas

- Roads do not feel safe for accessing parks as a pedestrian or bicyclist.
- Participants would like to see more places to sit and feed the ducks in parks.
- Participants reported valuing the mental health benefits of parks through activities such as yoga, meditation, and walking.





Public Opinion Survey Results

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

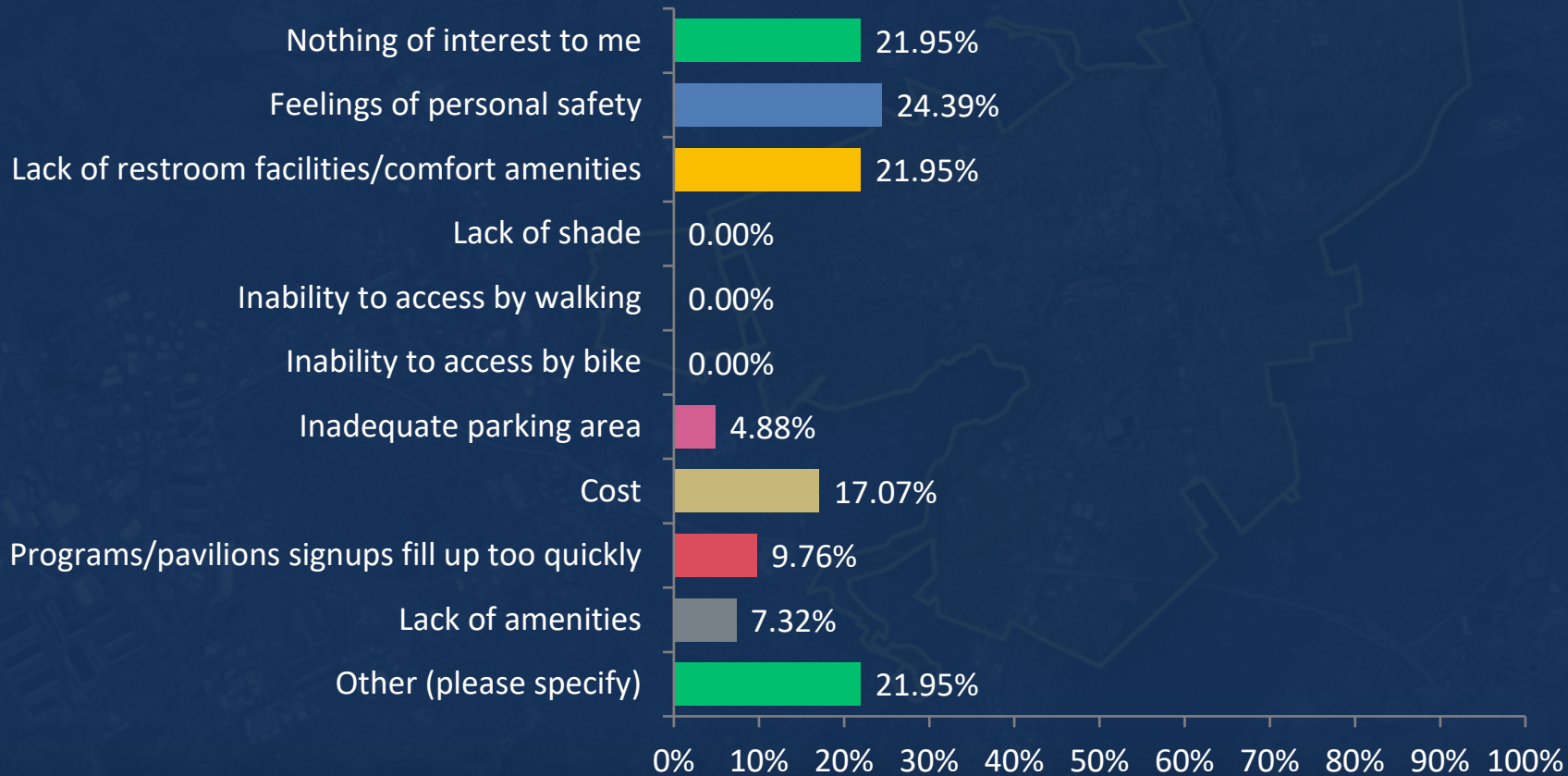
- **263** responses to date
 - 254 English language survey
 - 9 Spanish language survey
- **35%** reside in Zip Code 18104
 - Parks include: Allentown Golf Course, Cedar Creek Parkway, Cedar Beach Park, Daddona Lake and Terrace Park, Rose Gardens, Trexler Memorial Park
- **19%** in 18103
 - Parks include: Roosevelt Park, Alton Park Playlot, Lehigh Parkway, Mack Pool, Percy Ruhe Park, South Mountain Reservoir
- **20%** in 18102
 - Parks include: Bucky Boyle Park, Fountain Park, Franklin Park, Jackson St. Community Park, Jordan Meadows, Old Fairgrounds Playground/5th St. Spray Park, Stevens Park, West Park
- **50%** of respondents have lived in their communities for 20+ years



Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q3: If you answered 'Never' in Question 1 (How often do people in your household visit parks in the City of Allentown?), what are the primary reasons that you DO NOT participate in Allentown programs or rent facilities in the City of Allentown? Select all that apply.

Answered: 41 Skipped: 222



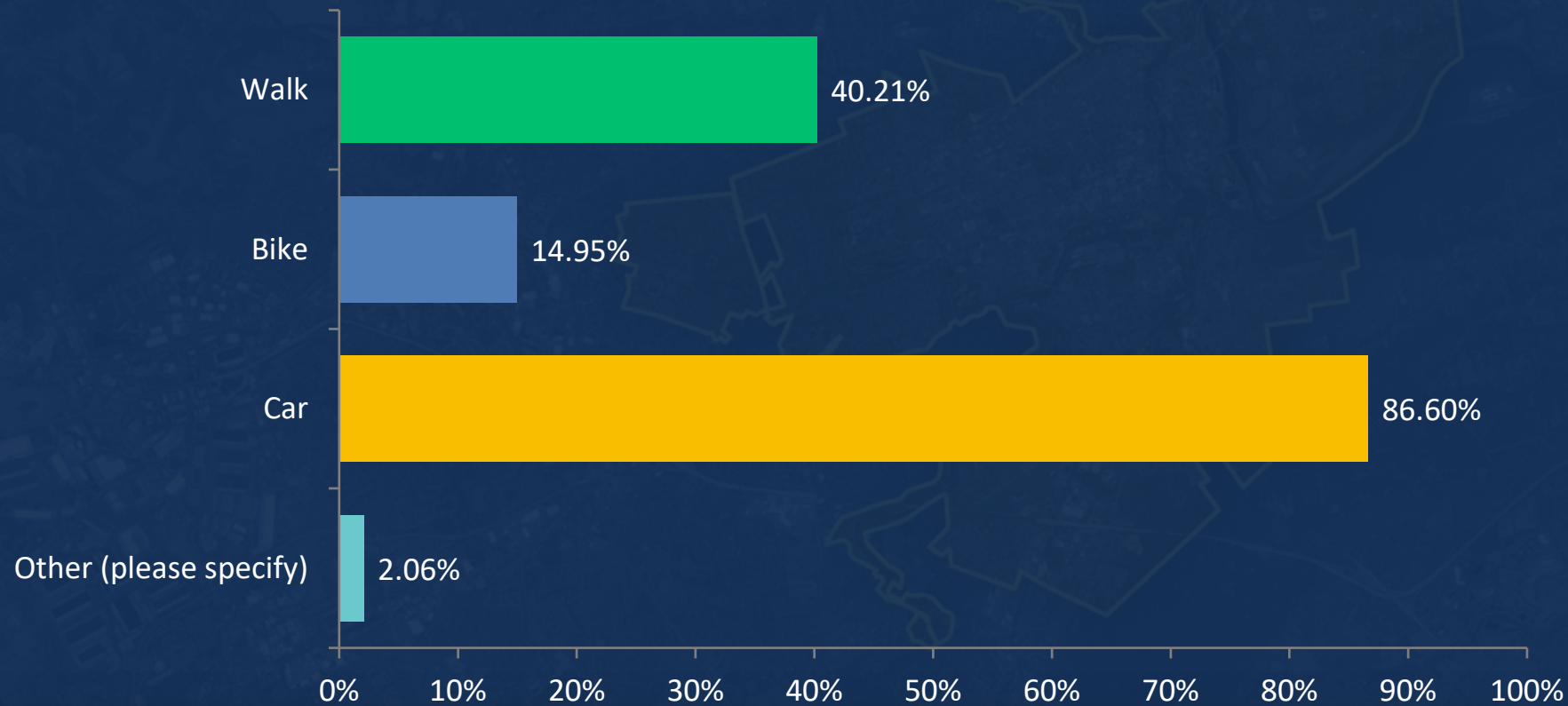
Other responses include:

- *“Not wheelchair friendly with flat and stable surfaces and access”*
- *“Too far to drive”*
- *“Not enough notice ... newspaper has AFTER program happened”*

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q6: How do you typically travel to park/recreation sites in the City of Allentown?

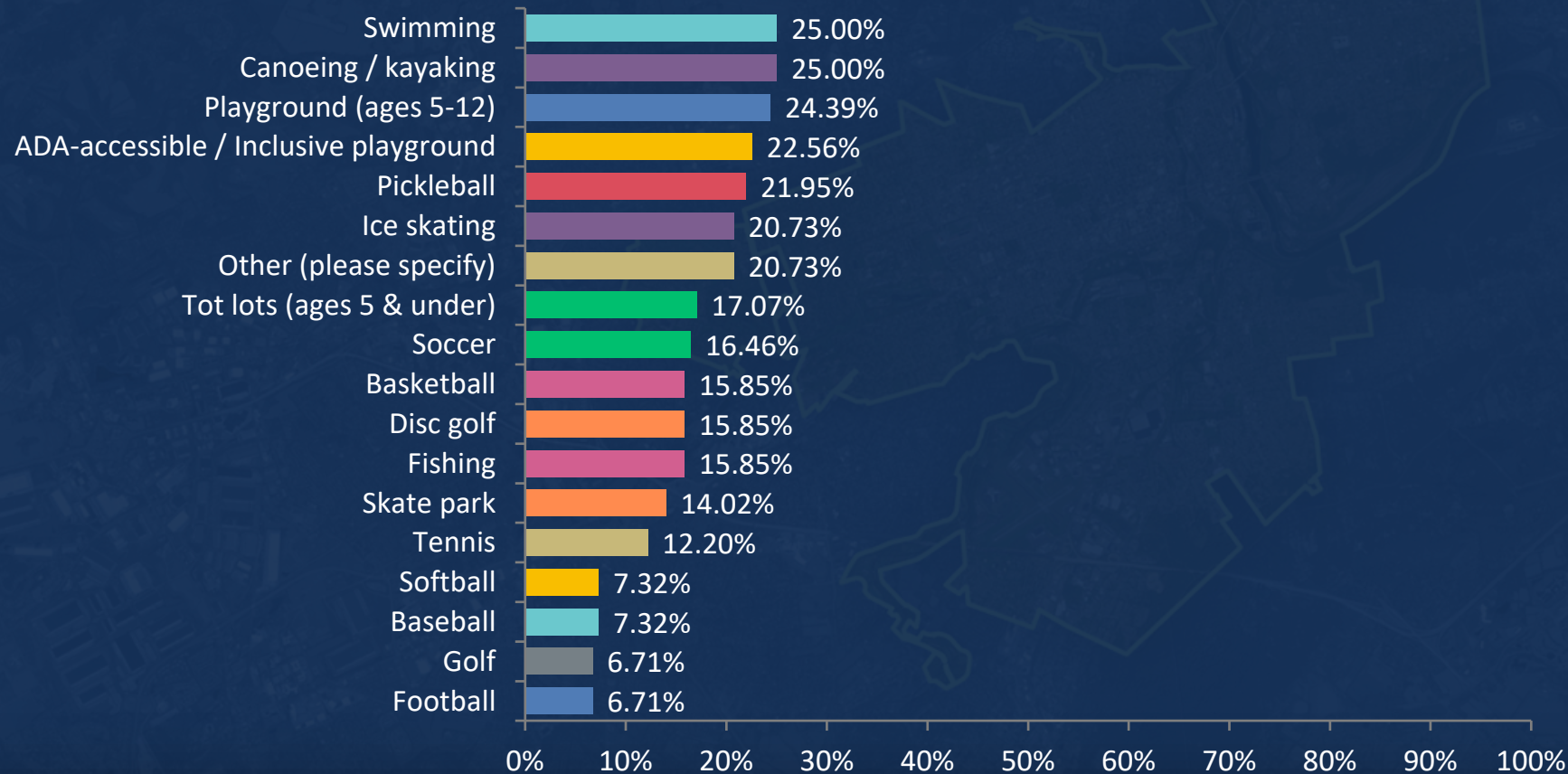
Answered: 194 Skipped: 70



Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q11: Do you believe the City of Allentown needs more active recreational facilities? Select all that apply.

Answered: 164 Skipped: 99



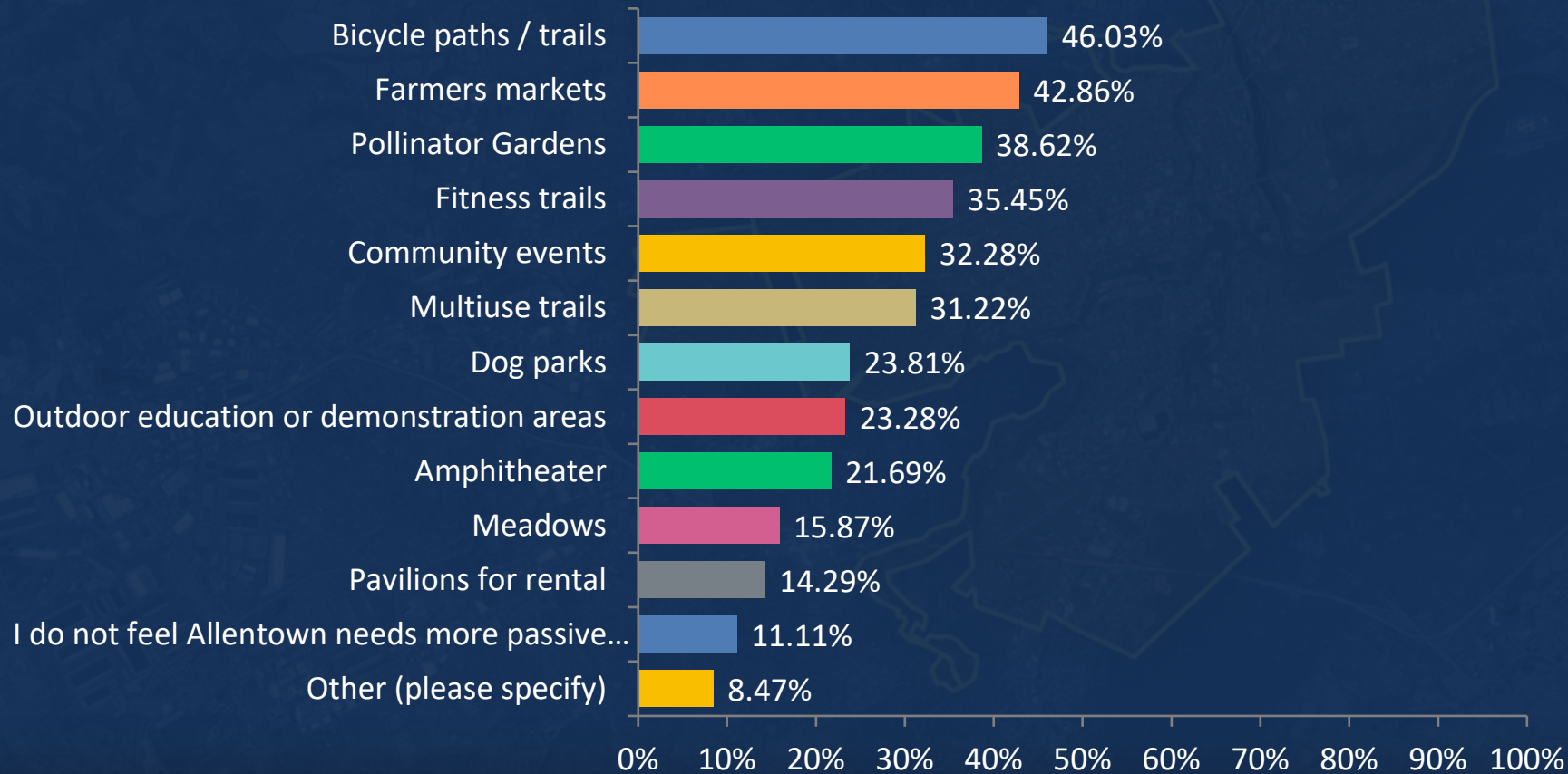
Other responses include:

- Senior activities / programming
- Indoor community space
- Disc golf

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q12: Do you believe that the City of Allentown needs more passive types of activity options? Passive recreational activities are more leisurely and do not require strenuous physical activity. Select all that apply.

Answered: 189 Skipped: 74



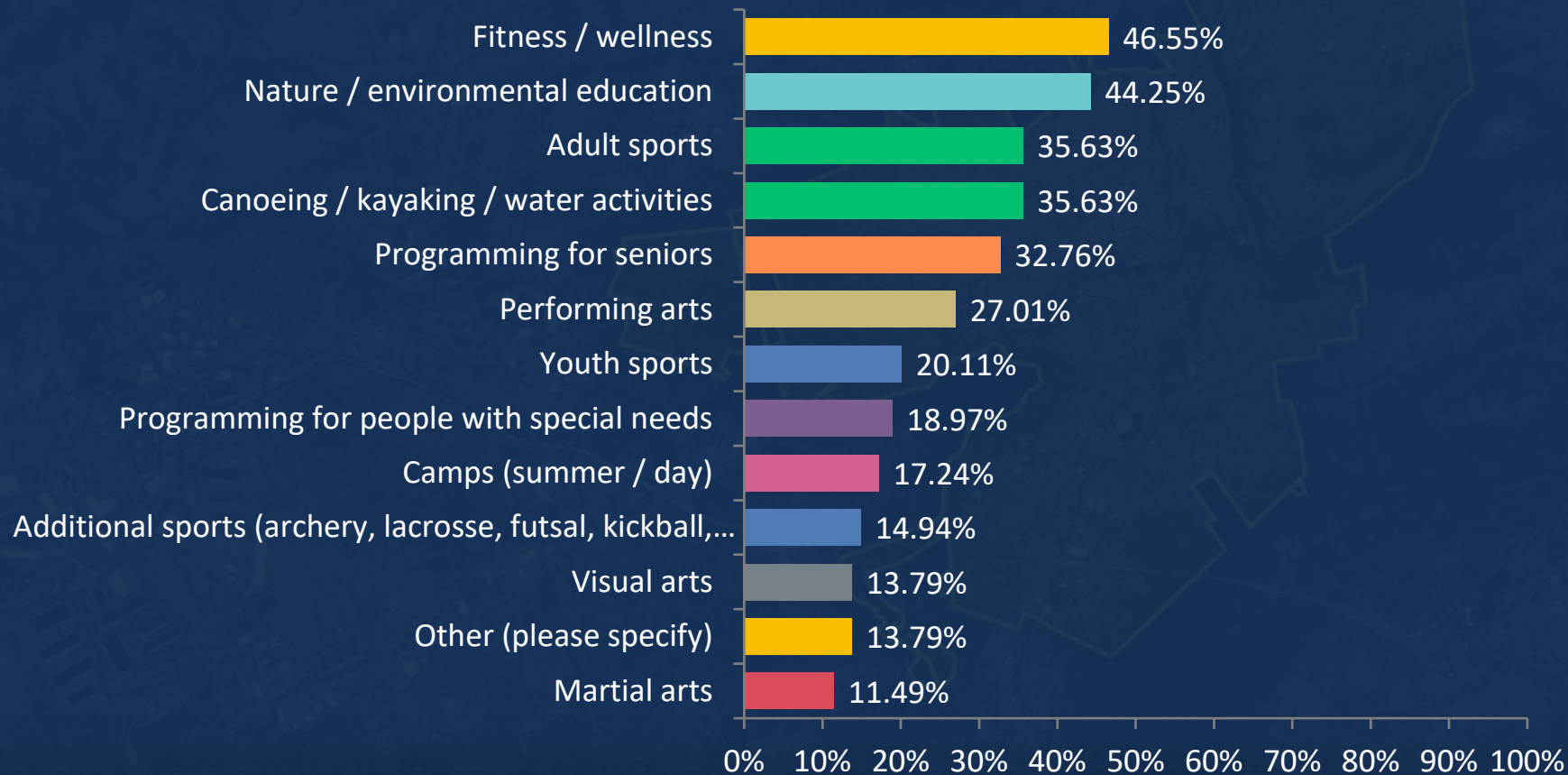
Other responses include:

- More shade
- More seating
- ADA-accessible trails

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q14: What additional programming opportunities would you like to see introduced in the City of Allentown Parks & Recreation System?

Answered: 174 Skipped: 89



Other responses include:

- *“More things offered on the East side of Allentown.”*
- Concerts and amateur musicians



Updated Benchmarking

Community Benchmarking

PLAYGROUNDS



Current number:	24	Additional to meet average:	2
Average of other municipalities:	26	Additional to meet maximum:	26
Maximum of other municipalities:	50		

Municipalities compared:

- Reading, PA
- Erie, PA
- Albany, NY
- Syracuse, NY
- New Haven, CT
- Bridgeport, CT

Community Benchmarking

PLAYGROUNDS



Current number: **24** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **26**
Maximum of other municipalities: **50** Additional to meet maximum: **26**

MULTIPURPOSE FIELDS



Current number: **6** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **8**
Maximum of other municipalities: **16** Additional to meet maximum: **10**

Community Benchmarking

PLAYGROUNDS



Current number: **24** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **26** Additional to meet maximum: **26**
Maximum of other municipalities: **50**

BASEBALL FIELDS



Current number: **25** Additional to meet average: **0**
Average of other municipalities: **20** Additional to meet maximum: **5**
Maximum of other municipalities: **30**

MULTIPURPOSE FIELDS



Current number: **6** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **8** Additional to meet maximum: **10**
Maximum of other municipalities: **16**

Community Benchmarking

PLAYGROUNDS



Current number: **24** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **26** Additional to meet maximum: **26**
Maximum of other municipalities: **50**

BASKETBALL COURTS



Current number: **23** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **25** Additional to meet maximum: **22**
Maximum of other municipalities: **45**

MULTIPURPOSE FIELDS



Current number: **6** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **8** Additional to meet maximum: **10**
Maximum of other municipalities: **16**

BASEBALL FIELDS



Current number: **25** Additional to meet average: **0**
Average of other municipalities: **20** Additional to meet maximum: **5**
Maximum of other municipalities: **30**

Community Benchmarking

PLAYGROUNDS



Current number: **24** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **26** Additional to meet maximum: **26**
Maximum of other municipalities: **50**

BASEBALL FIELDS



Current number: **25** Additional to meet average: **0**
Average of other municipalities: **20** Additional to meet maximum: **5**
Maximum of other municipalities: **30**

POOLS



Current number: **3** Additional to meet average: **0**
Average of other municipalities: **3** Additional to meet maximum: **7**
Maximum of other municipalities: **10**

MULTIPURPOSE FIELDS



Current number: **6** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **8** Additional to meet maximum: **10**
Maximum of other municipalities: **16**

BASKETBALL COURTS



Current number: **23** Additional to meet average: **2**
Average of other municipalities: **25** Additional to meet maximum: **22**
Maximum of other municipalities: **45**

NRPA Benchmarking - Staffing

	Allentown, PA	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 100,00-250,000 Residents
Median Number of Residents per Park Facility	3,894	3,344
Median Number of Park Acres per 1,000 Residents	16.0 ac / 1,000 residents	7.0 ac / 1,000 residents
Park & Recreation Agency Full Time Employee (FTE) Equivalent Staff Levels / 10,000 Residents	4.6 FTE equivalents / 10,000 residents	7.9 FTE equivalents / 10,000 residents
Park & Recreation Agency Full Time Employee (FTE) Equivalent Staff Levels / 250 acres of parkland	7.2 FTE equivalents / 250 acres of parkland	19.3 FTE equivalent / 250 acres of parkland

NRPA Benchmarking - Budgeting

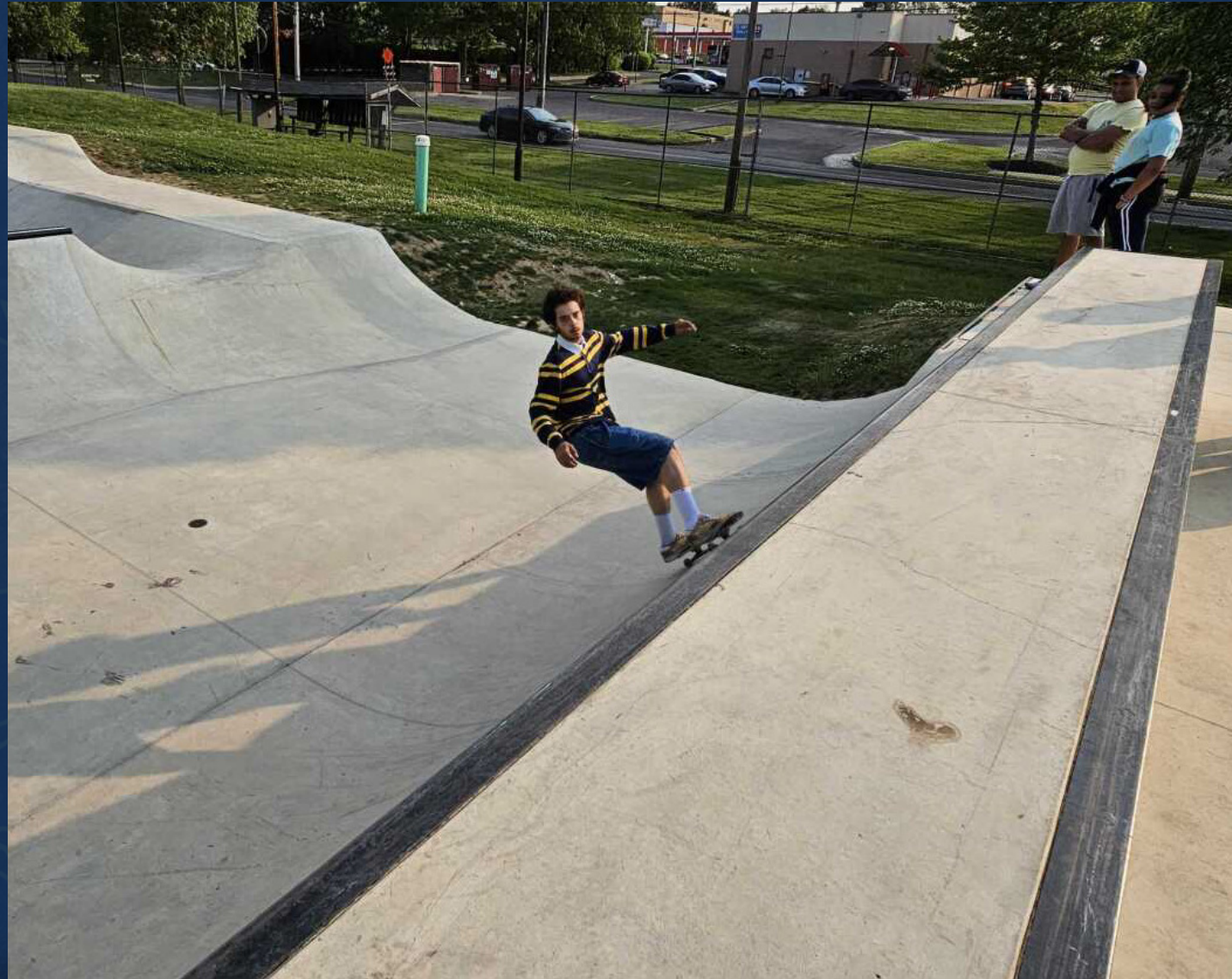
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Median Number of Residents per Park Facility	3,894	3,344
Median Number of Park Acres per 1,000 Residents	16.0 ac / 1,000 residents	7.0 ac / 1,000 residents
Annual Operating Expenses	\$7,319,606	\$13,552,112
Percent of Revenue Generation vs. Operation Budget	?	22.0%
Operating Expenses per Acre	\$3,660	\$8,002
Operating Expenses per Capita	\$58.75	\$87.10



Concurrent Planning Efforts

Capital Projects – Funded or Partially Funded

- Bucky Boyle Park improvements
- Canal Park boat launch
- Cedar Park improvements
- Dixon St. Pedestrian Bridge
- Allentown Municipal Golf Course bunker repairs
- Jordan Park Skate Park Phase 2
- Rose Garden gazebo repair
- Jordan Meadows mini pitch system
- Urban Forestry Plan
- Union Terrace Amphitheatre repairs
- MLK Trail Phase I



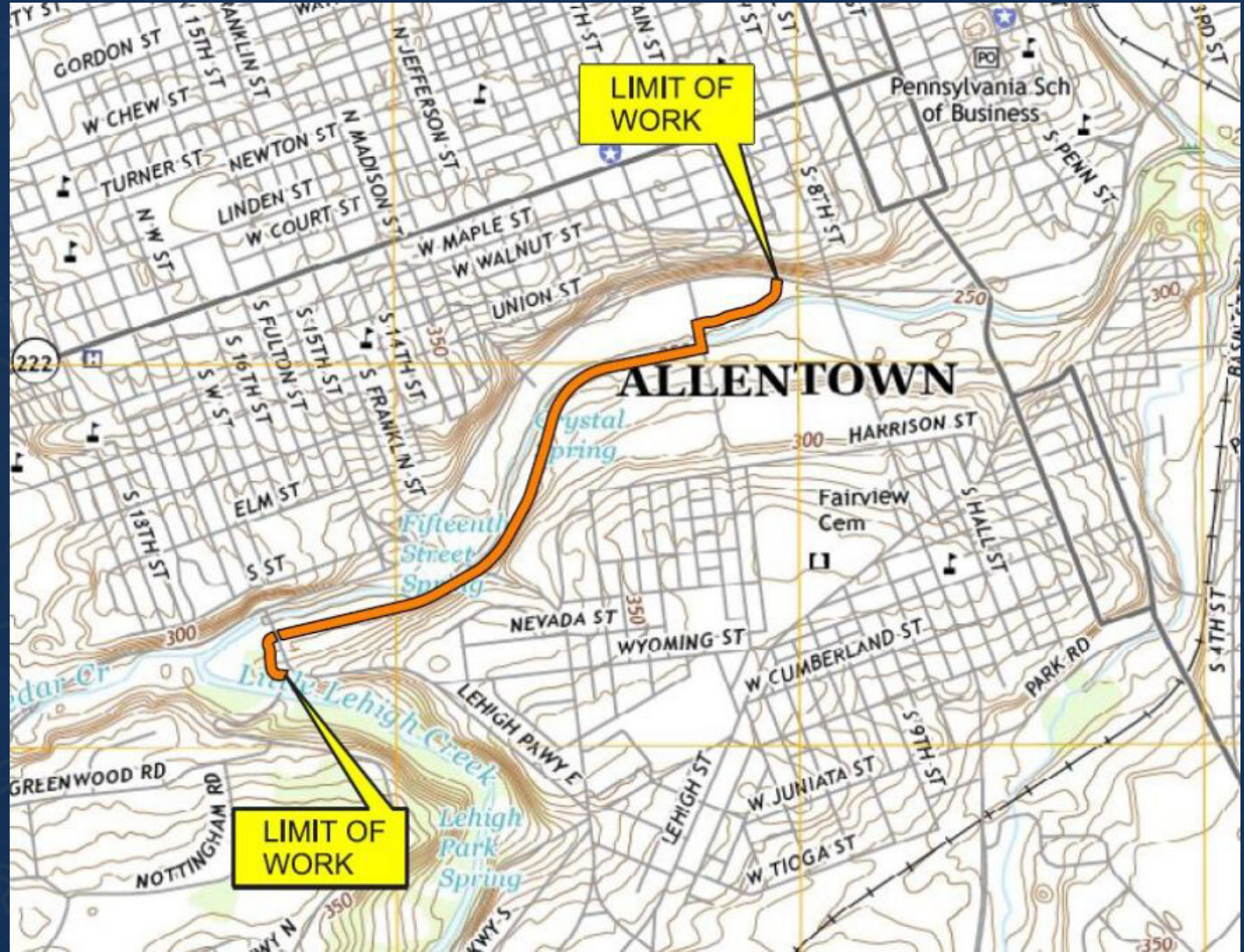
Capital Projects – Awaiting Funding

- Andre Reed Park improvements
- Franklin Park design and construction
- MLK Trail Phases I, II & III
- Auburn Cross Trail Park
- Lehigh Landing Plaza
- Percy Ruhe Park renovations
- Ithaca Park improvements
- La Placita



MLK Trail Phase I

- City awarded \$250,000 from DCED MTF program toward Phase 1 construction
- Extension project will ultimately connect Lehigh Parkway to Fountain Park
- Proposed as a 10-foot-wide multi-use path
- Additional improvements include rapid flashing beacons, crosswalks, pavement markings, street lighting and stormwater management



Safe Streets for All (SS4A)

- SS4A is a US Department of Transportation program that provides grants to communities for planning and implementation activities to prevent deaths and serious injuries on roadways.
- City received \$312,000 from USDOT to prepare an SS4A Action Plan; currently in process
- City adopted Vision Zero policy in 2024 with a goal to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe traffic-related injuries by 2030
- City was recently awarded a \$384,000 SS4A Demonstration Grant to implement and observe temporary measures such as pavement markings, crosswalks, speed humps and traffic measure testing



Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

- An Active Transportation Plan is a comprehensive resource that documents existing conditions and guides the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian programs, policies, guidelines, and infrastructure improvements.
- City received \$35,000 through WalkWorks to create an ATP
- Input from residents and community members will be important to help achieve the overall goal of increasing connectivity





Classification of Parks

MiniParks

MiniParks serve a specific function or age group, or a limited population area; also called pocket parks.

Allentown MiniParks:

- Arts Park
- Benton Street Playlot
- Fellowship East Playlot
- Ithaca Playlot
- Keck Triangle
- South Street Playlot
- Walden Terrace Playlot



MiniPark Service Areas

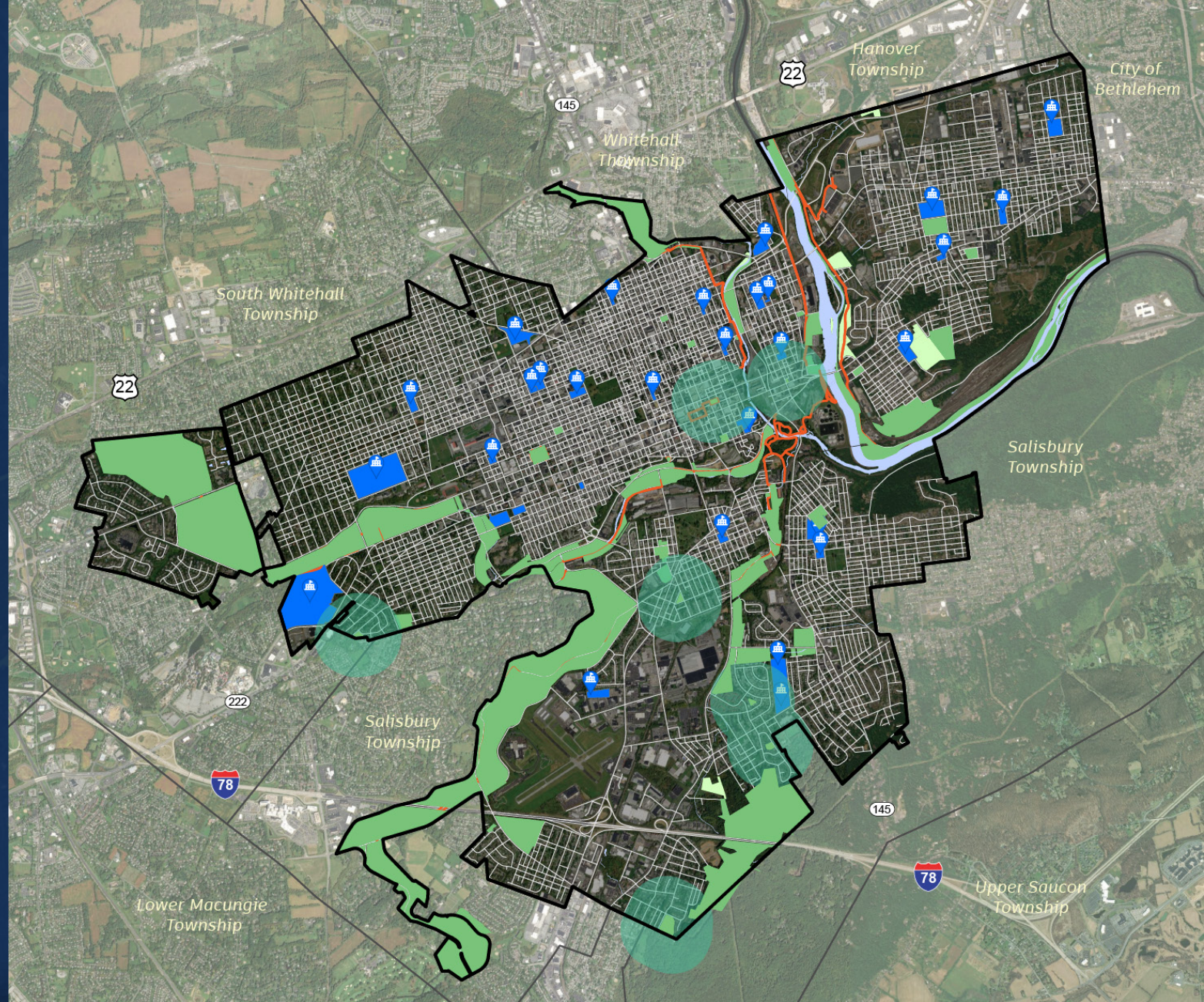
Legend

Existing

- Local Road
- Municipal Boundary
- Park and Rec
- Open Space
- Institutional
- Water

Analysis - Park Service Gaps

- MiniPark Service Area (0.25mi)
- Neighborhood Park Service Area (0.5mi)
- Community Park Service Area (0.5mi)
- Greenway Service Area (0.5mi)



Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks focus on informal recreation that serves neighborhood recreation needs.

Allentown Neighborhood Parks:

- Bucky Boyle Park
- East Side Reservoir
- Franklin Park
- Jackson Street Community Park
- Jordan Meadows
- Kimmet's Lock Park
- Mack Pool
- Old Fairgrounds Park / 5th St. Playground
- Roosevelt Park
- Stevens Park
- Valania Park
- West Park
- Wire Mill Meadow Arboretum




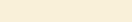
Neighborhood Park Service Areas

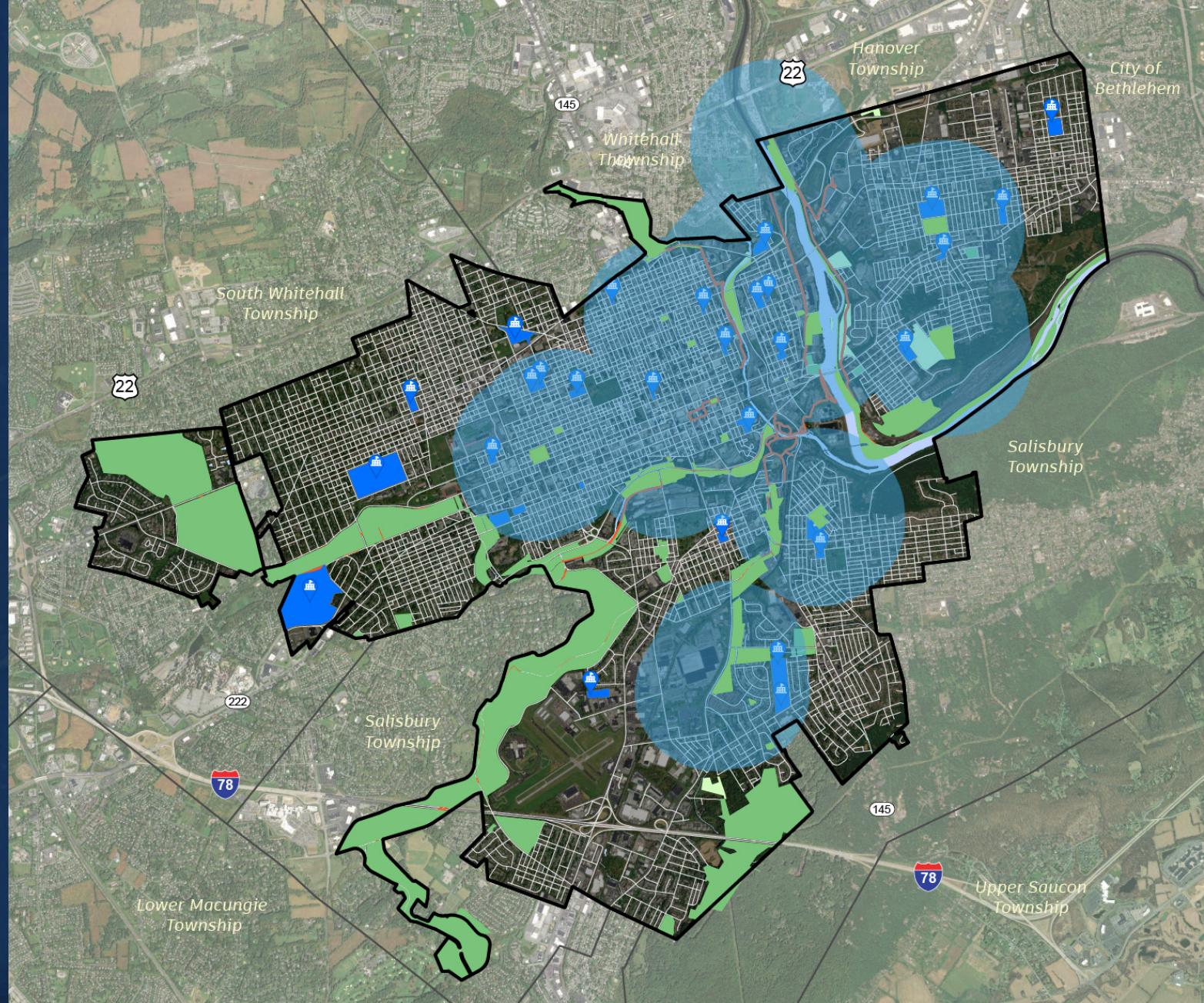
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Existing

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Analysis - Park Service Gaps

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-  Community Park Service Area (0.5mi)
-  Greenway Service Area (0.5mi)



Community Parks

Community parks are larger, multi-use parks that serve a community or multiple communities within a region.

Allentown Community Parks:

- Allentown Municipal Golf Course
- Andre Reed Park and Irving Pool
- Canal Park
- Cedar Creek Park
- Daddona Lake and Terrace (Union Terrace) Park
- Fountain Park
- Jordan Park
- Keck Park
- Percy Ruhe Park (Alton Park)
- South Mountain Reservoir
- Trexler Memorial Park
- Trout Creek Park



Community Park Service Areas

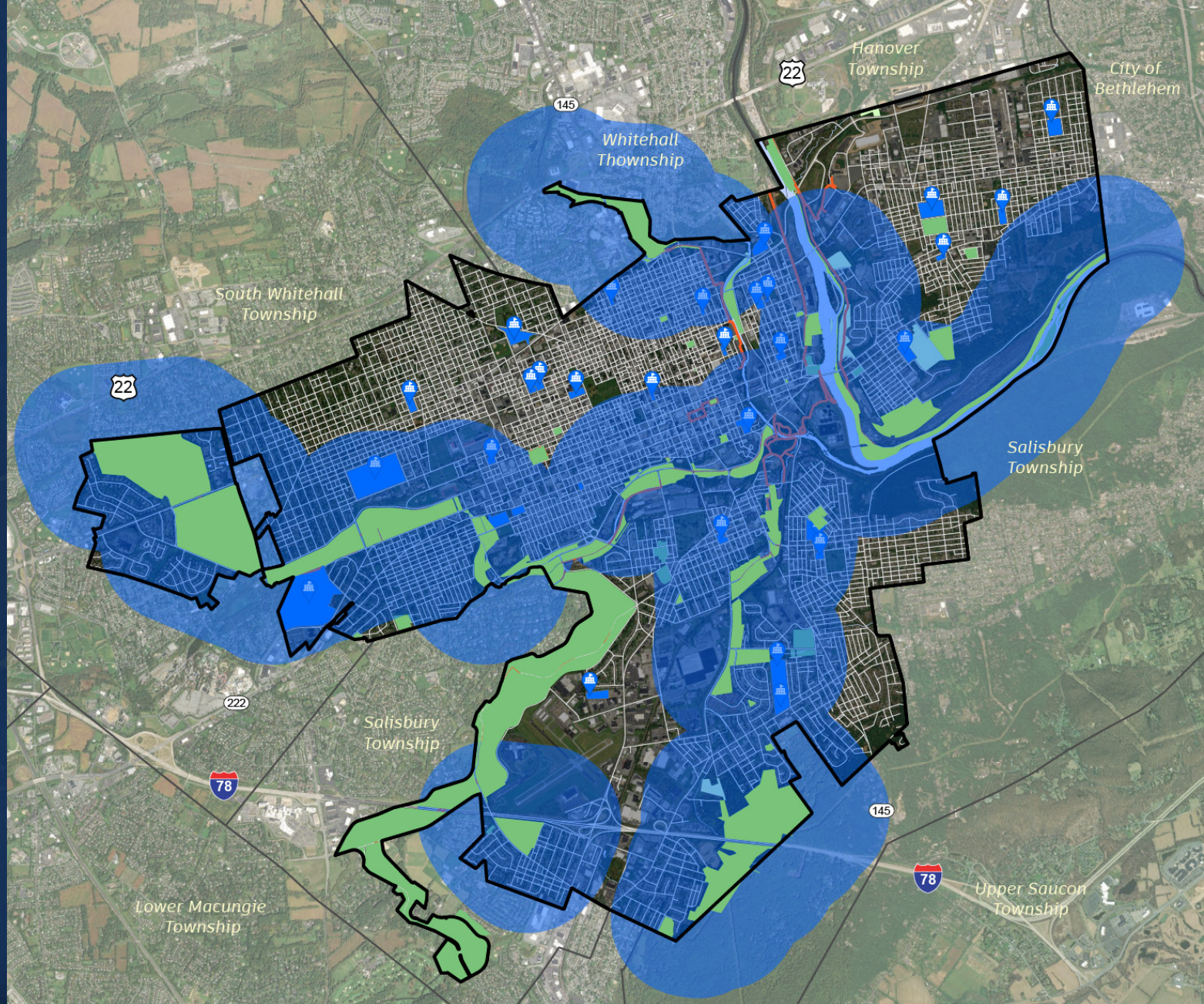
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-  Neighborhood Park Service Area (0.5mi)
-  Community Park Service Area (0.5mi)
-  Greenway Service Area (0.5mi)



Greenways

Greenways are corridors of open space that connect people, parks, historic sites, and natural areas. They vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green to wide corridors encompassing unique landscapes.

Allentown Greenways:

- Cedar Creek Parkway
- D&L Trail
- Little Lehigh Parkway



Greenway Service Areas

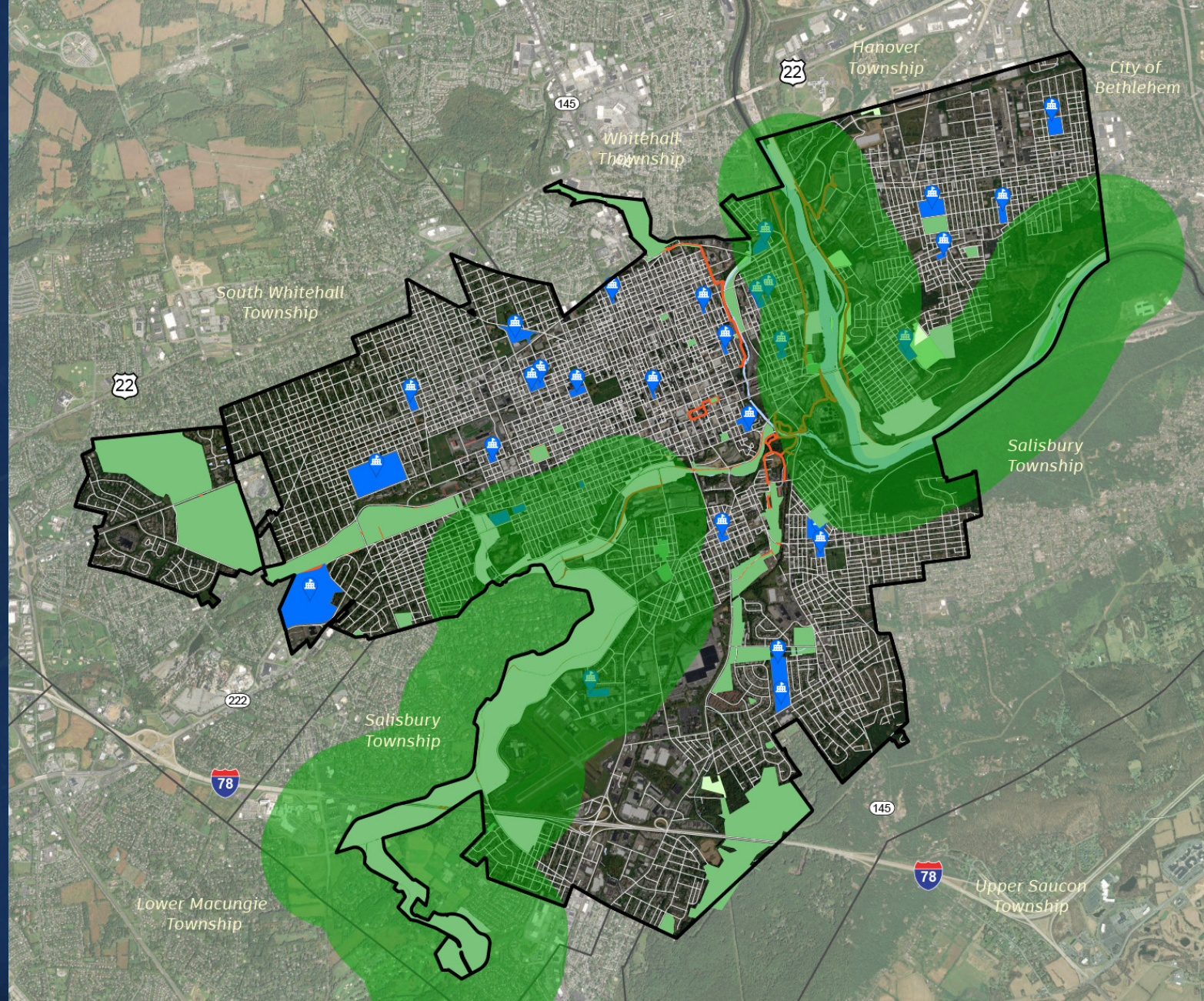
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Addressing Service Gaps

Service Area Gaps

East: north of Hanover Ave. and east of Quebec Ave.

West: mainly north of Sumner Ave.

South: mainly northeast of S 5th St. and south of Emmaus Ave.

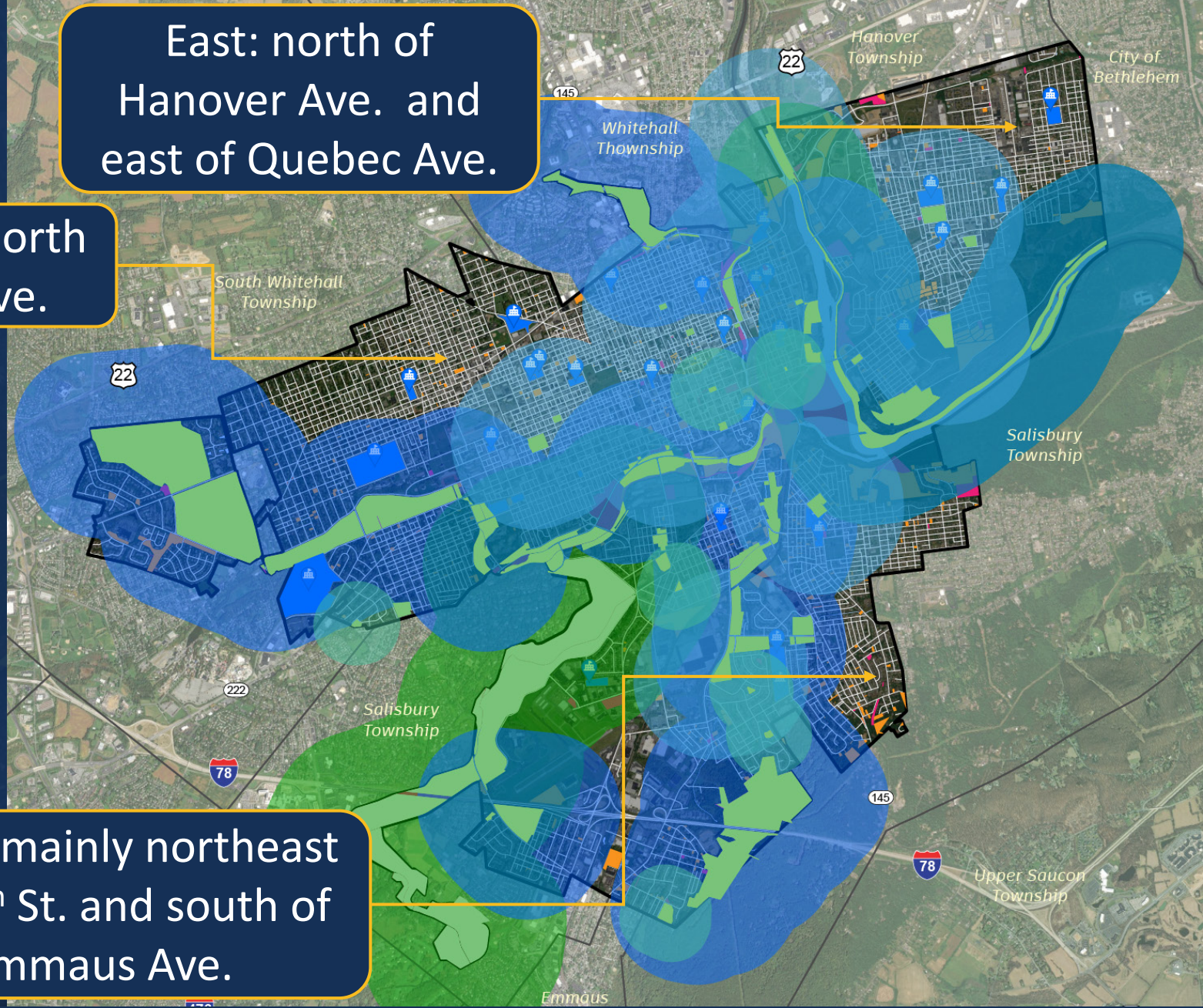
Legend

Existing

-  Local Road
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Park and Rec
-  City owned Property
-  Institutional
-  Vacant Parcels

Analysis - Park Service Gaps

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Service Area Gaps

West: mainly north of Sumner Ave.

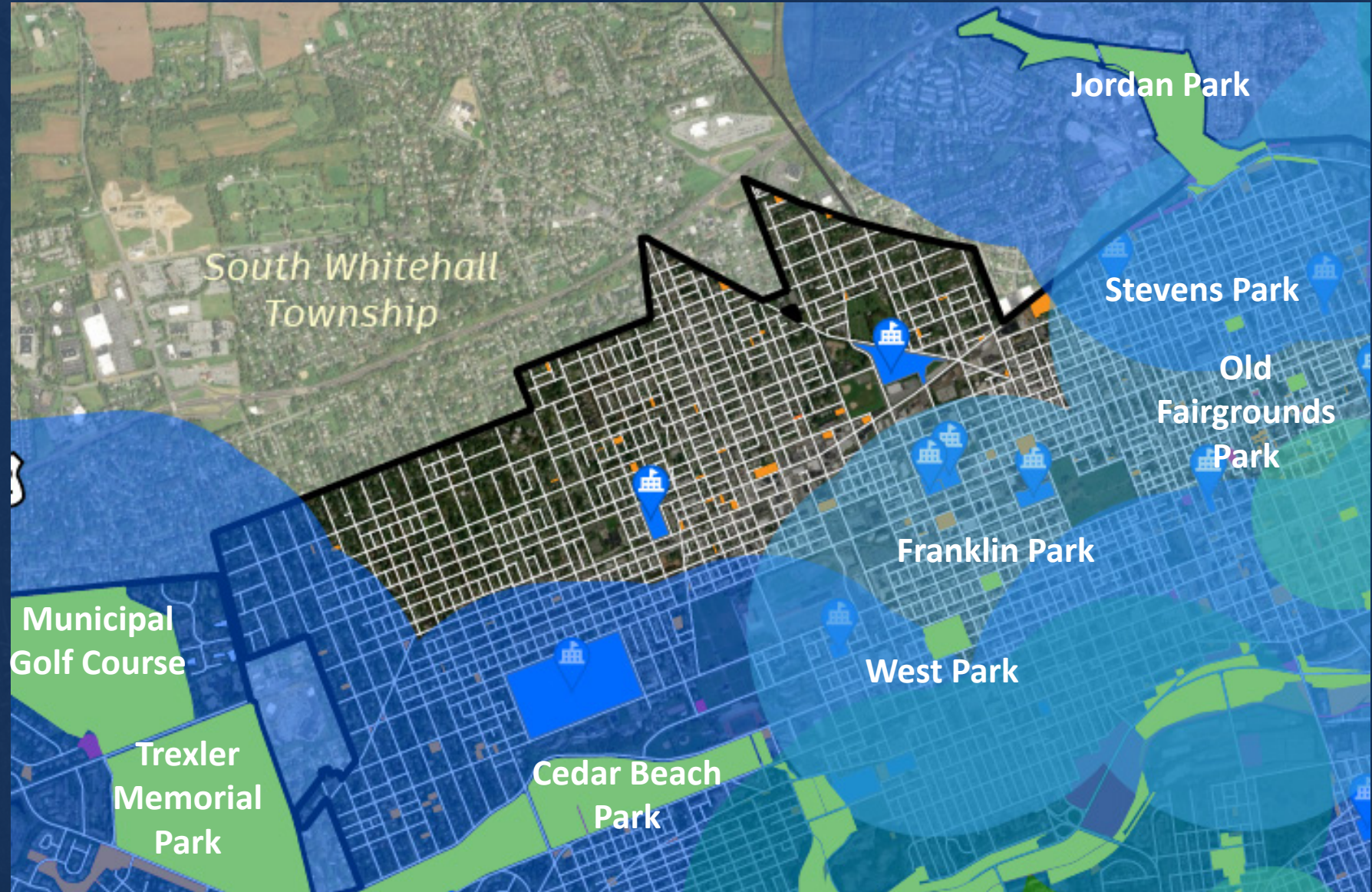
Legend

Existing

- Local Road
- Municipal Boundary
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- Institutional
- Vacant Parcels

Analysis - Park Service Gaps

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Service Area Gaps

East: north of Hanover Ave. and east of Quebec Ave.

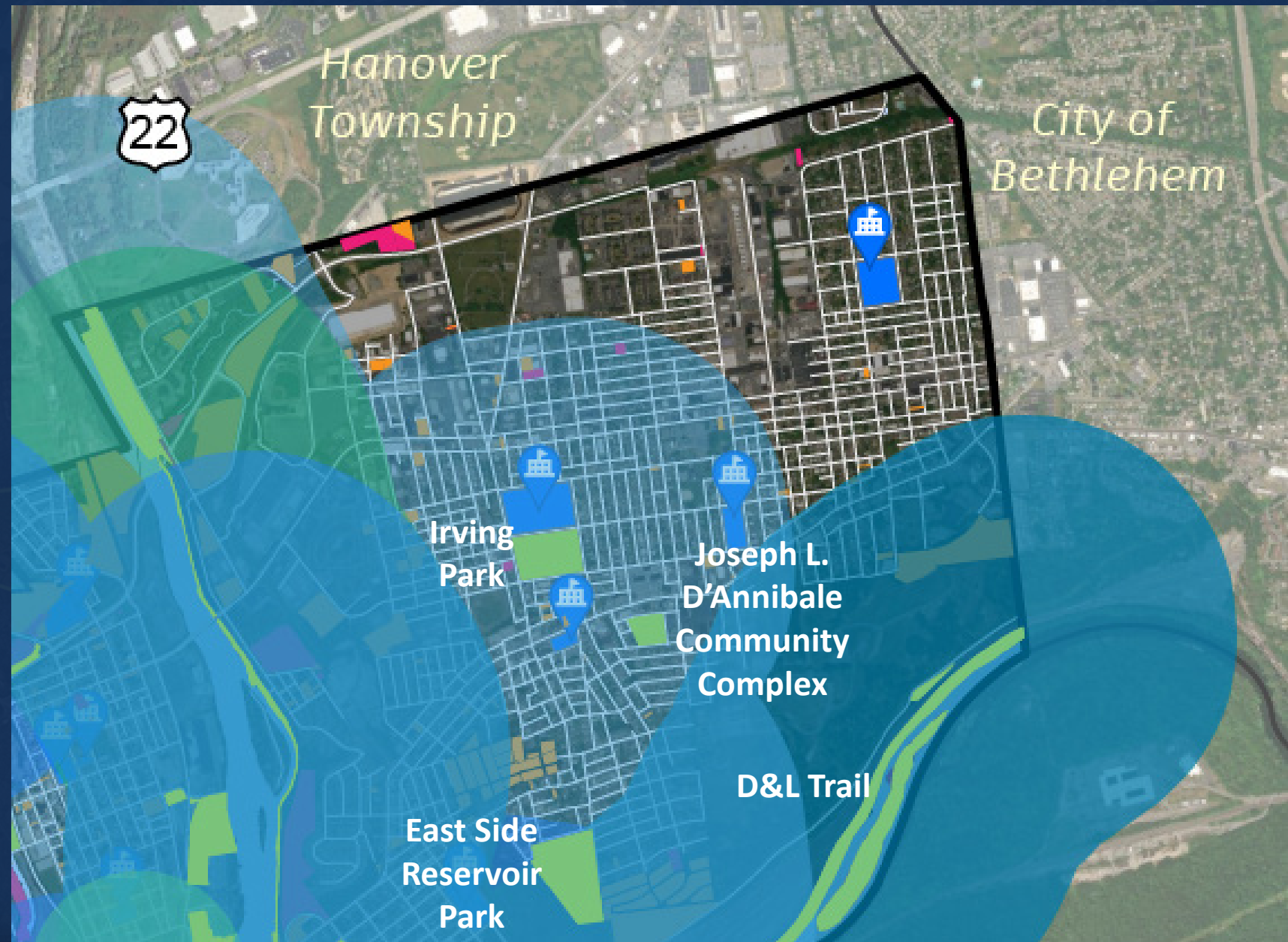
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Service Area Gaps

South: mainly northeast of S 5th St. and south of Emmaus Ave.

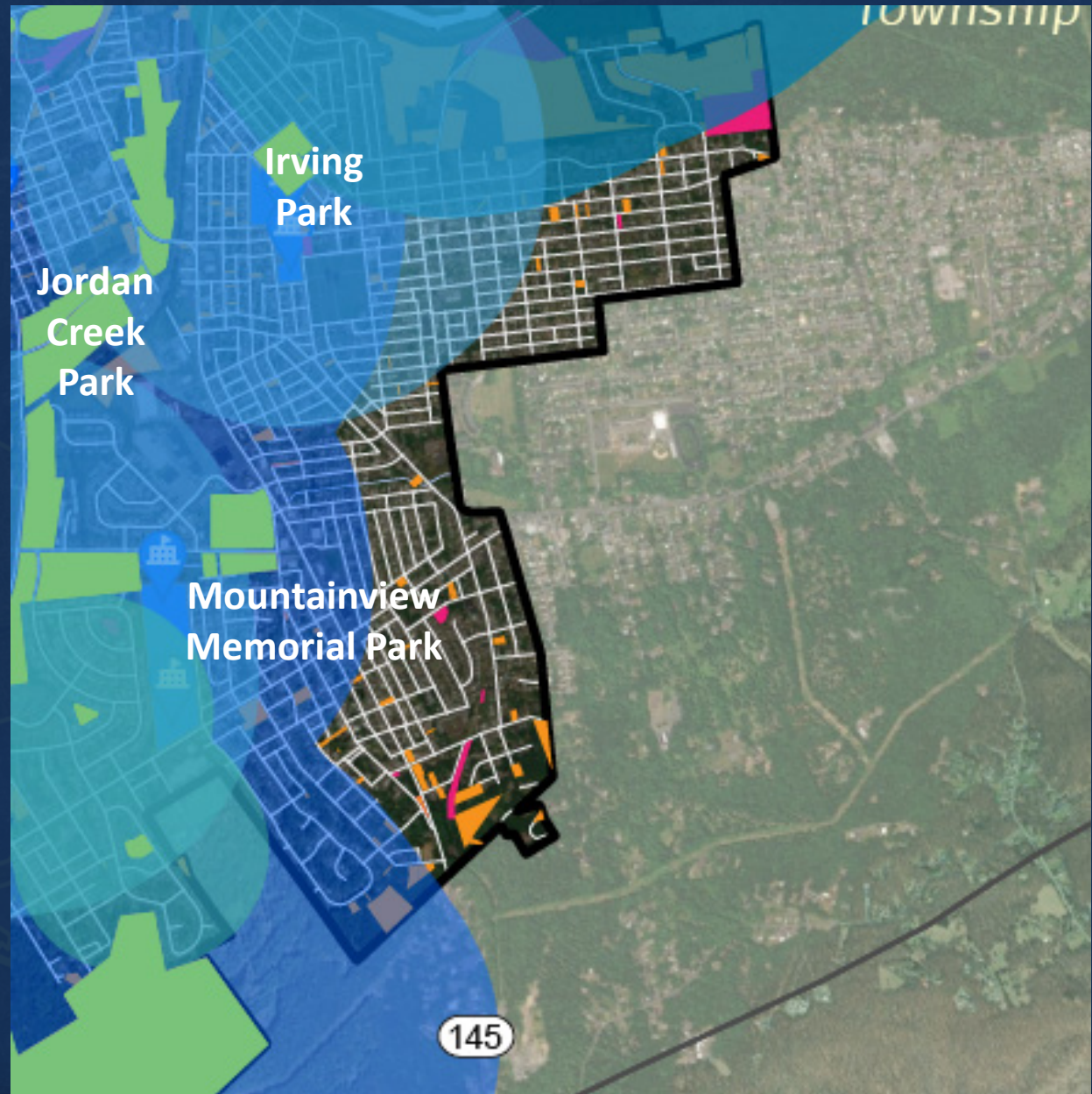
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Allentown
All Inspiring



Official Map

What is an Official Map?

- As permitted by the PA Municipal Planning Code, the Official Map is a combined map and ordinance designed to implement the goals and community vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Official Map shows the locations of planned future public lands and facilities such as **transportation, recreational parks and trails, and open space.**
- The Official Map expresses a municipality's interest in acquiring these lands for public purposes at some future time.

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code

Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247 as reenacted and amended

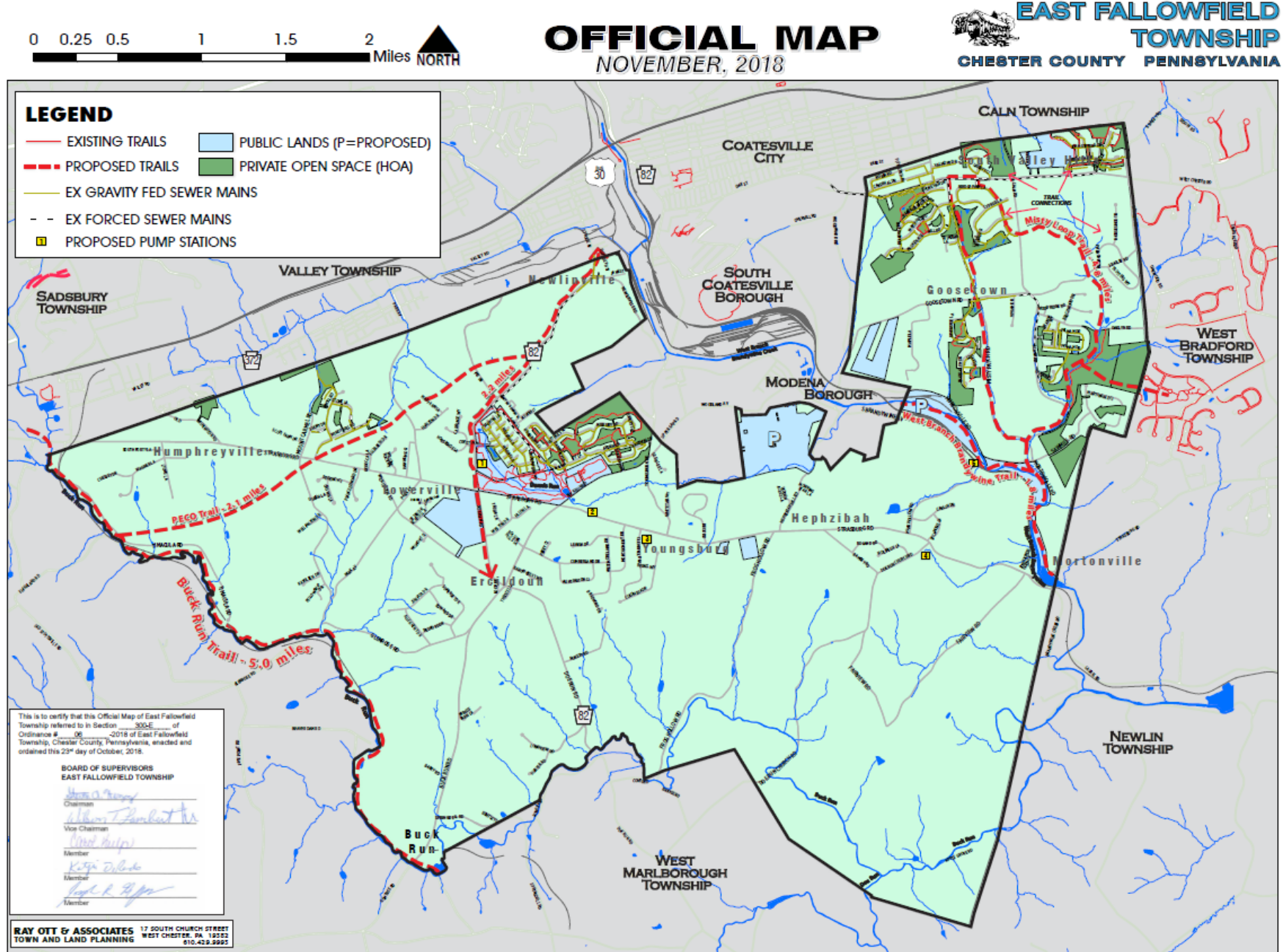


Official Map - Benefits

- Helps to focus limited financial resources on projects that meet and advance community goals.
- Helps to make improvements such as the street network improvements, intersection improvements, protecting natural areas, providing more green space, recreation facilities, trails, and sidewalks.
- Saves time and money by informing property owners and developers of municipal goals and intentions in advance of land development plans.
- Effective negotiation tool for municipalities, helping to ensure development is compatible with and supportive of public goals.
- Gives municipalities advantage in securing grants.



Official Map Example





Staff Interviews Review

Allentown
All Inspiring



Next Steps

Project Schedule

Meeting Type	Date	Time
Committee Meeting #1	Wednesday, September 25, 2024	7pm-9pm
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NEXT

Next Steps - Simone Collins team

- Schedule Key Person interviews
- Conduct site visit for planned parks
- Conduct site visit for CROSP
- Conduct analysis of vacant parcels



Key Persons / Agencies List

- *Community*

- Boys & Girls Club of Allentown
- Ripple Church
- Cohesion
- Valley Youth House
- Puertorrican Culture Preservation
- Casa Guadalupe

- *Equity / Accessibility*

- COA Equity and Inclusion Coordinator
- Lehigh Valley Active Life
- St. Luke's University Health Network
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living
- United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley

- *COA Recreation*

- Allentown Recreation Board
- City Council Parks and Rec Committee

- *School District*

- Allentown School District
- SD Principals
- SD Facilities
- SD Recreation and Sports

- *Recreation / Trails*

- D&L National Historic Corridor
- Community Bike Works
- Lehigh Valley Road Runners
- Link Trail Network

Key Persons / Agencies List

- *Organized Recreation*

- Allentown A's (AYOUTH)
- H.D.Y.A. (AYOUTH)
- East Side Youth Center (AYOUTH)
- Mountainville Memorial Association (AYOUTH)

- *Arts / History Programming*

- Allentown Arts Commission
- Inkwell
- Baum School of Art
- Allentown Art Museum
- Allentown Symphony Association
- Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum

- *Natural Resources / Open Space*

- Allentown EAC
- Wildlands Conservancy
- Lehigh Gap Nature Center
- Little Lehigh Watershed Stewards

- *Planning / Infrastructure*

- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
- Allentown Planning Commission
- Allentown Public Works

- *Colleges*

- Muhlenberg College
- Cedar Crest College
- Lehigh University

Thank You!

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