



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

CHRISTINA "TORI" MORGAN
Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Vice Chair

PHILLIPS ARMSTRONG
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <http://www.tinyurl.com/LVPC2026> OR VIA PHONE
610-477-5793 Conf ID: 947 550 319#

AGENDA

Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chair's Report

Minutes

1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of March 26, 2026, Commission Meeting

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Allen Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Lehigh Valley East 16 Data Center (JS)
2. ACTION ITEM: Summary Sheet (JS, S. Melnick)
3. INFORMATION ITEM: Updated Draft Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy (JS)

Environment Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Summary Sheet (S. Repasch)

Transportation Planning Committee:

1. INFORMATION ITEM: Transportation Improvement Program Overview (SW)

Environment and Transportation Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy Adoption (SM)

Old Business:

1. INFORMATION ITEM: FutureLV: The Regional Plan Update
 - a. Strategy Labs (BB)
 - b. Transportation Needs Assessment (SW)
2. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEM: PlanLV Portal Walkthrough,(JS)

New Business:

1. INFORMATION ITEM: New Municipal Officials Guide (BRG)

2. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Lehigh Valley Government Academy
 - a. PA Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) (MA)
 - b. Local Technical Assistance Program Classes – in-person at the LVPC (MA)
 - i. April 28: Asset Management, 8 am to noon
 - ii. May 6: School Transportation, 8 am to noon
 1. Anyone can register at www.gis.penndot.gov/LTAP or by contacting Hannah Milagio at hmilagio@lvpc.org or 610-264-4544

Executive Director’s Report:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM*: None

Monthly Reports:

1. *INFORMATION ITEMS*:
 - a. March 2026 Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinances/Plans Report
 - b. Highway Performance Monitoring System - Monthly Traffic Count Report

Communications and Engagement

1. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Sustainability Summit (4/29/2026)
2. *PACKET ITEM*: *Morning Call Business Cycle Column*
 - a. Published March 27 – Talking Business with Becky Bradley: “Lehigh Valley development market evolves as new trends take hold”
 - b. lvpc.org; mcall.com
 - c. Next Column: May 12
3. *PACKET ITEM*: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1
 - a. Aired April 6: “Designing Trails to Connection with Evan Gardi”
 - b. lvpc.org; mcall.com
 - c. Next show: May 4, 6:30 pm
4. *PACKET ITEM*: Lehigh Valley Government Academy
 - a. PA Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) – Subdivision + Land Development Training
 - o Wednesdays 5/6, 13, 20; 5:30 – 9:00 PM
 - o Registration at www.lvpc.org/lvga
 - b. Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) in-person classes at LVPC
 - o Asset Management, 4/28 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - o School Transportation Management, 5/6 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - o Registration at www.gis.penndot.gov/LTAP/default.aspx
 - c. Contact Hannah Milagio at hmilagio@lvpc.org or 610-264-4544 with questions or registration assistance
5. *PACKET ITEM*: *GRANTS*
 - a. PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources: Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)
 - o Application deadline: April 30, 4 PM
 - b. PA Department of Community and Economic Development: Multimodal Transportation Fund
 - o Application deadline: July 31

- c. PA Department of Transportation: Automated Red-Light Enforcement (ARLE) Transportation Enhancement Grants Program
 - o Pre-application scoping forms required
 - o Application deadline: June 30

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:

Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

The LVPC/LVTS website, www.lvpc.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in non-English languages and alternative formats, if requested.



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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes from the Thursday, March 26, 2026, Meeting

The LVPC held a public meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2026. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on January 7th, 2026.

LVPC Chair Tori Morgan chaired the meeting.

Mr. Jacob Weinberg took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Craig Beavers, Michael Drabenstott, Gary Fedorcha, Sharon Fehlinger-Ricker, Sunny Ghai, Steven Glickman, Jennifer Gomez, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Ryan Mayberry, Christina 'Tori' Morgan, Santo Napoli, Samantha Pearson, Stephen Repasch, and Kevin Schmidt.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Bryan Cope, Jo Daniels, Andrew Elliot, Charles Elliot, Cathy Fletcher, Anita Erdos Forrester, Judy Haldeman, Tung-To Lam, Steve Melnick, Eric Shamis, Dean Turner, and Brett Webber.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Ron Beitler, Philip Ginder, Josh Siegel and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Justin Amann, Carl Manges, Jack McGorry, Armando Mortiz-Chapelliquen, Salvatore Panto, Jr., J. William Reynolds, Jeff Warren and Tara Zrinski.

Staff Present: Becky A. Bradley, Jillian Seitz, Susan Myerov, David Cohen, Matt Assad, Tracy Oscavich, Hannah Milagio, Beth Ritter-Guth, Steven Weber, Jacob Weinberg and Corinne Ruggiero.

Public Present: Basal Yandem, Bob Elbich, Adam, Steve Root, Jason Addy (Lehigh Valley News), Amelia Sack (WFMZ), Savannah Mosteller (WFMZ)

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Morgan gave a moment of recognition and appreciation to Commissioners who recently cycled off the LVPC. In total, 16 former Commissioners were recognized for their combined 124 years served. Those former Commissioners included: Jessica Cope, Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, John Gallagher, Darlene Heller, Diane Kelly, Dennis Klusartiz, Ken Kraft, Lamont

McClure, Scott Minnich, Rick Molchany, Ed Nelson, Owen O'Neil, Crystal Rose, Jean Versteeg and Basal Yandem. Chair Morgan also announced new Commissioners joining the LVPC. Northampton and Lehigh County Executives in partnership with Northampton County Council and Lehigh County Commissioners made several more appointments of new Commissioners. Chair Morgan welcomed two more elected members to the Commission, Sharon Fehlinger-Ricker from South Whitehall Township and Ryan Mayberry from Slatington Borough, and Bryan Cope as the alternative member for Executive Zrinski.

MINUTES

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the Thursday, February 26, 2026, LVPC meeting minutes. Commissioner Repasch made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Amato seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to approve the minutes. Commissioners Cope and Fehlinger-Ricker abstained. The motion passed.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Eli Lilly Manufacturing Facility

Ms. Seitz presented the staff review of the proposed construction of an approximately 1 million square-foot pharmaceutical manufacturing facility on 150 acres in Upper Macungie Township. Ms. Seitz noted the discussion at Tuesday's Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting and how the project was reviewed on how it aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in terms of site suitability, infrastructure, multimodal access and sustainability, while also highlighting key considerations related to transportation impacts and coordination. The importance of continued coordination with partners and ensuring that supporting infrastructure, surrounding land uses and community impacts are thoughtfully managed as the project moves forward was emphasized.

Commissioner Armstrong made the motion to accept the staff review and Commissioner Beavers seconded the motion. Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff review. Commissioner Ghai abstained. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Lehigh Valley International Airport Parking Garage

Ms. Seitz presented the staff review of the proposed construction of a new 1,200-space parking garage at Lehigh Valley International Airport, along with associated runway improvements, to support growing demand and airport operations. Ms. Seitz noted that the staff review found that the project generally aligns with *FutureLV* by supporting critical transportation infrastructure, while highlighting key considerations related to traffic generation and coordination with PennDOT.

Commissioner Fedorcha made the motion to accept the staff review and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions.

Commissioners discussed clarifying details of the staff review including the potential of future parking expansion at the Lehigh Valley International Airport.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Melnick briefed the Commission of the many ordinance reviews this month and that in addition to the summary sheet, staff had prepared a few summary presentations on data center and solar energy ordinances. Chair Melnick then briefed the Commission on the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet that featured four data center ordinances in Lowhill Township, Bushkill Township, Washington Township (Northampton County) and Plainfield Township, as well as added regulations for Automated Storage and Retrieval Systems in Upper Macungie Township. The summary sheet also included three solar energy system ordinances in Plainfield Township, Washington Township (Northampton County) and Forks Township, as well as a Planned Residential Developments ordinance in Upper Saucon Township.

Commissioner Glickman made the motion to accept the summary sheet and Commissioner Amato seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. Commissioners discussed opportunities to provide additional guidance on emerging land uses, such as data centers and hosted a brief discussion on the Lehigh County Industrial Land Use Guide and how it outlines how communities should be thinking through the impacts of these uses and provides avenues to address and regulate industrial land uses. Commissioners also discussed the number of data center ordinances that are currently adopted in the region. Staff responded, stating that they would need to check on the status and follow-up as some communities are still making amendments to their proposed data center ordinances.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Drabenstott, Commissioner Ghai and Commissioner Inglis abstained. The motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: PlanLV Portal Project

Ms. Seitz presented a project update for PlanLV Portal and how the LVPC will be launching the PlanLV Portal on April 30th. The PlanLV Portal is a new digital, one-stop shop for submitting anything, or requesting information from the LVPC. Ms. Seitz explained that applicants will be able to submit plans, ordinances, and all other reviews, pay fees, track application status, and communicate with LVPC staff through this submission portal. The portal will also support requests for grant letters of support and data requests, which will help streamline coordination and improve efficiency and transparency. Ms. Seitz announced that there will be a walk-through demo of the site and a brief tutorial of how the site works and how to use it at next month's Full Commission Meeting in April.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. Commissioner Beavers asked if plan signing would still occur in-person and require hard copies. Staff confirmed that plan signing would still occur in-person and hard copies would still be required. Commissioner Gomez asked if applicants would know when the LVPC accepts proposals. Staff confirmed that applicants would be able to track the status of their proposals from start to finish.

INFORMATION ITEM: Draft Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy

Ms. Seitz presented an update on the Draft Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy project. Ms. Seitz provided a brief overview of the discussion surrounding the draft document that occurred at Tuesday's Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting and how the Commissioners discussed the importance of balancing open space preservation with accommodating development as the region's population grows faster than before. The current draft of the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy, which is in pre-publication format, was in their meeting packet. Staff requested LVPC Commissioners' review and input on the Draft Strategy be made by Friday, April 3rd. All feedback received from LVPC Commissioners will be incorporated alongside stakeholder input into the Final Draft Strategy. Ms. Seitz noted that following the review period and incorporation of feedback, the Strategy would move into its final phases, which include Design and Layout by the Urban Land Institute, continued discussions and review of the Draft to occur throughout April and anticipated public rollout and formal adoption by LVPC in May.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

INFORMATION ITEM: Municipal Roles When The Federal Government Develops in Your Community Webinar

Ms. Seitz briefed the Commission on how Executive Zrinski and several community representatives have raised questions about what happens when the federal government proposes to purchase, lease, develop or use property within a local jurisdiction, and whether local regulations still apply in those circumstances. From these discussions, the legal counsel for the LVPC, Gary Asteak, began to research the issue and prepared a written opinion for the Commission. The letter was provided to Commissioners in their meeting packet. Ms. Seitz also announced that the LVPC will be hosting a webinar on April 6th at noon, geared towards municipal officials to discuss avenues municipalities have to fulfill their role of protecting the public health, safety and welfare when a federal project is proposed in their jurisdictions, what they can do proactively as well as talk through real-world scenarios.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Environment Committee Chair Repasch briefed the Commission on the Environment Committee Summary Sheet that featured a review of the Bushkill Creek Greenway Master Plan in Palmer Township with connections to Tatamy Borough, Forks Township and the City of Easton. Commissioner Repasch also stated that at Tuesday's Environment Committee Meeting, a presentation of the Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy plan was given and noted that the plan would be presented as a joint Environment Committee and Transportation Committee discussion item later in the meeting.

Commissioner Melnick made the motion to accept the summary sheet and Commissioner Drabenstott seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Beavers abstained. The motion passed.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Transportation Committee Chair Schmidt briefed the Commission that the Transportation Committee discussed several information items at Thursday's Committee meeting, which included a presentation of the Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy plan. Ms. Myerov gave a brief presentation of the plan and discussed next steps and how the LVPC will be implementing a process to update regional trail network data and trail gap closure status. Comments on the Trail Connection Strategy are to be made by April 2nd, and the revised plan will be presented for approval at the April LVTS and LVPC meetings after comments have been addressed.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. Commissioners had a brief discussion on the 10 critical priority trail gaps that were presented in the plan.

OLD BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley General Assembly – March 10th

Mr. Assad provided an update of the most recent General Assembly, which was held on March 10th at the LVPC Conference Center. General Assembly brings together representatives from municipalities, school districts, municipal authorities and legislative districts across the region to discuss the important policy issues that impact every community in the region. Mr. Assad briefed the Commission on the agenda of the event which included introductions by County Executives Zrinski and Siegel, a look into the latest development trends, a presentation of the state and Lehigh Valley Housing plans as well as an update on *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Mr. Assad also stated there was a presentation by Ben Gilsdorf from the National Association of Counties on a piece of federal legislation called the BASICS Act, which would direct more federal infrastructure funding to local communities.

Ms. Bradley briefed the Commission on the BASICS Act, which is the Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act. Ms. Bradley went through the BASICS Act presentation that Ben Gilsdorf from National Association of Counties presented at the most recent General Assembly. In the presentation, it touched on the problem, the proposal, the opportunity and how local governments can get involved and reach out to their members of Congress to tell them to cosponsor H.R. 7437, the BASICS Act. Ms. Bradley noted that a draft letter was provided in the meeting packet for those interested in getting involved.

Ms. Seitz briefed the Commission of the housing plan presentations at the most recent General Assembly. Ms. Seitz noted that Morgan Boyd from PA DCED presented the state's recently released Commonwealth Housing Action Plan and LVPC staff presented the content draft of the Lehigh Valley Housing Strategies, and between the two presentations given at the meeting, close alignment between the two documents was highlighted in the presentation.

INFORMATION ITEM: FutureLV: The Regional Plan Update

Ms. Bradley detailed the *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* update process by outlining the overall project timeline and identifying key tasks that will support update activities throughout the year. Ms. Bradley noted that one of the next steps in the process is engaging LVPC and LVTS members through a series of joint workshops. The workshops will serve as a platform to discuss plan progress, key data and topics and guide the development of draft policies. Ms. Bradley announced the first joint LVPC and LVTS workshop is scheduled for April 20th at 3pm and all board members have received an invitation to attend. Ms. Bradley discussed other key milestones and engagement activities for the update to the plan over the coming months, including upcoming surveys, topic-specific Strategy Labs, an open call for infrastructure projects, policy drafting with the Joint Working Group and then move into transportation project

finalization and draft policy testing as well as the formal launch of the Lehigh Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Ms. Bradley further discussed the project timeline including having a complete draft of the plan by the end of 2026, further coordination with federal, state, county and local governments and key partners in early 2027 with an adoption deadline for federal transportation planning purposes by no later than June 30, 2027. Ms. Bradley went through the Strategy Lab Workshops schedule, which includes a series of workshops focused on different topics to bring together experts, stakeholders and the public for discussion and collaboration that will start on May 11th.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Ms. Milagio presented information on the upcoming Lehigh Valley Government Academy trainings. Ms. Milagio briefed the Commission on how the LVPC's primary training program is offered in partnership with the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute and announced the two courses that are scheduled so far for 2026, which include Community Planning and Subdivision and Land Development. The Community Planning course will be held on April 7th, 14th and 21st at 5:30PM-9:00PM at the LVPC Conference Center. The Subdivision and Land Development course will be held on May 6th, 13th and 20th from 5:30PM-9:00PM. Ms. Milagio also provided information of the free courses through the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) that are offered and how these courses aim to help municipalities address infrastructure issues and ensure that their public works departments are up to date on the latest information on safety and maintenance. Ms. Milagio noted that there is a full schedule of courses that have been booked through June 30th, with Public Works Safety and Asset Management classes coming up in April.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Bradley provided an overview of the county specific 2025 Annual Report presentations that were made to Northampton County Council on March 5th and to Lehigh County Commissioners on March 11th. Ms. Bradley briefed the Commission on the content of the presentations and also stated that copies of the annual report have been sent to all communities, school districts, adjacent counties, County Council and Commissioners, as well as other stakeholders and partners. The annual report is also on the LVPC website.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Chair Morgan notified the Commission that monthly reports are featured in each Commissioner's packet. Mr. Weinberg gave a brief overview of the February 2026 BuildLV report, specifically on residential and non-residential development data within the Subdivision and Land Development Monthly Report.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Mr. Weber gave a brief presentation on the traffic count data throughout the Lehigh Valley, which included traffic and truck volume data spanning from the middle of December 2025 through the first week of March 2026 and noted any trends and patterns examined.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Chair Morgan notified the Commission that items for communications and public engagement are featured in the meeting packet. Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Morgan stated that the next LVPC meeting will be on Thursday, April 23rd at 7 pm. Chair Morgan then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Armstrong made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Fedorcha seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and Corinne Ruggiero, Environmental Planner



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Planning for the Future of Lehigh and Northampton Counties at 615 Waterfront Drive, Suite 201, Allentown, PA 18102 ■ (610) 264-4544 ■ lvpc@lvpc.org ■ www.lvpc.org

April XX, 2026

Ms. Ilene Eckhart, Manager
Allen Township
4714 Indian Trail Road
Northampton, PA 18067

**Re: Prologis East 16 – Land Use of Regional Significance
Allen Township
Northampton County**

Dear Ms. Eckhart,

The application proposes to revise previously approved land development plans reviewed by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission in 2015 that have since been constructed. At the time, the project proposed a warehousing land use. The plans are now proposed to be revised by adding a substation, reducing parking areas, adding outdoor equipment areas, and converting the existing building into a data center.

This project is considered a land use of regional significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the 'Major Industrial and Office Parks' category. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Meeting participation details are below, and we encourage your participation:

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:

April 21, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual)
<https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

LVPC Full Commission Meeting:

April 23, 2026, at 7:00 PM (Virtual)
<https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

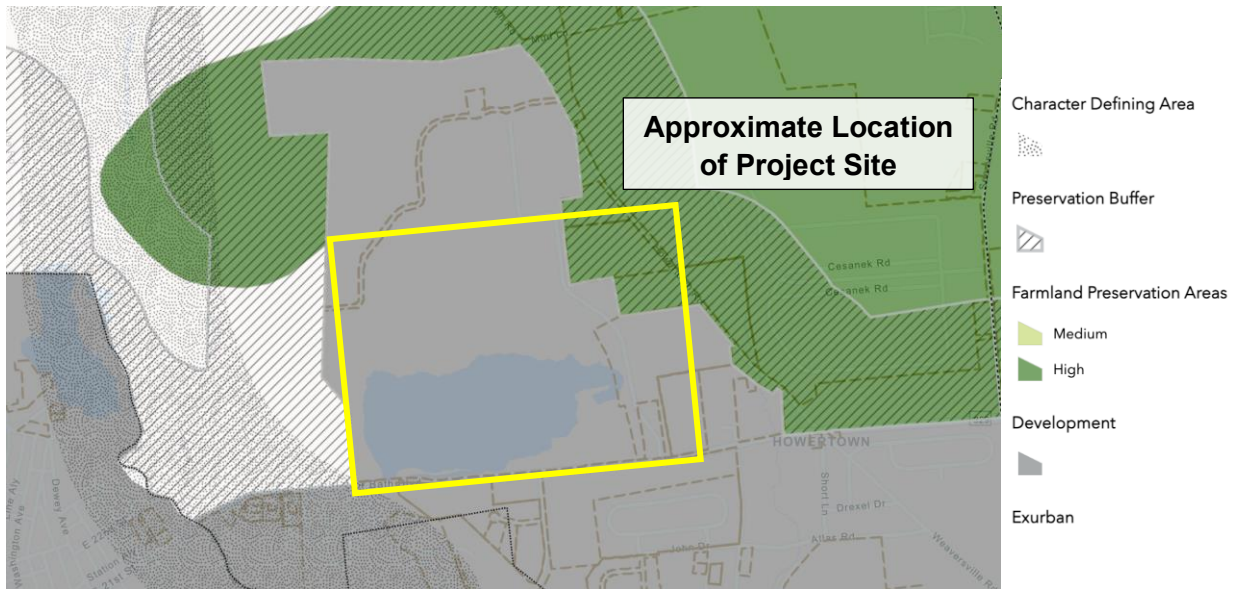
BACKGROUND

The project proposes to convert an existing warehouse into a data center, including site improvements to facilitate the new use, including the construction of a substation and addition of outdoor equipment areas. The project site is 2500 Liberty Drive, north of Nor Bath Boulevard and west of Howertown Road (parcel number L4 9 8-2). The site is also approximately one half-mile east of the Allen Township boundary with Northampton Borough.



SITE SUITABILITY AND LAND USE

The proposal is located within an existing industrial area and is within the Development area identified in the General Land Use Plan of *FutureLV*. The proposal to repurpose an existing industrial building within an established industrial area supports *FutureLV*'s direction to facilitate redevelopment and reinvestment within commercial areas where infrastructure and prior site disturbance already exist (of Policies 4.6 and 1.1). Reuse of an existing building can reduce pressure to convert farmland or other undeveloped land elsewhere in the region and avoids many of the land consumption impacts associated with new greenfield development (of Policy 3.3).

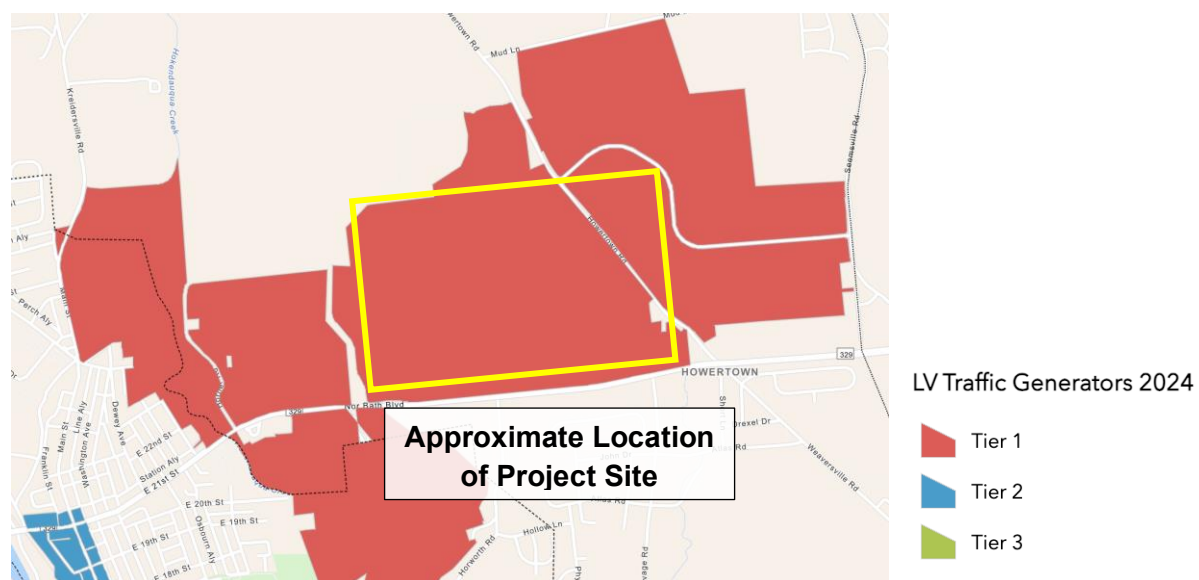


However, the LVPC notes that a data center is functionally different from a warehouse, even where both may occur within an industrial setting. A warehouse is typically defined by goods movement, truck activity, and employee parking demand, whereas a data center is defined more by electrical infrastructure, cooling systems, backup generation, security, and utility demand. Because of those differences, the change in use should be reviewed not only as a physical site revision, but also as a shift in operational characteristics and impacts. The Township should confirm that the zoning treatment of the use is supported by the ordinance and that any applicable performance standards adequately address the use as proposed, to support best practices in land use regulation (of Policy 1.4).

TRANSPORTATION

Because the proposal is an adaptive reuse of an existing building, the plan appears to reduce parking and reallocate portions of the site to equipment and utility areas. If the revised use results in lower employee counts and fewer daily vehicle trips than a warehouse, that reduction in parking may be appropriate. However, the plans should clearly document the expected number of employees per shift, visitors, contractors, and any periodic maintenance traffic so that the Township can verify that the proposed parking supply is appropriate to the use and ensure right-sizing transportation infrastructure (of Policy 2.2).

The approval and construction of industrial facilities in the Howertown Road / Nor Bath Boulevard area have resulted in a concentration of Tier 1 Traffic Generators that substantially impact the roadways of neighboring municipalities. Compared with a warehouse use, a data center generates substantially less employee and truck traffic on a day-to-day basis. The proposed conversion eliminates potential traffic impacts on the surrounding roadway network that would have occurred if a warehouse tenant had opened in the existing facility, which supports ‘minimizing quality of life impacts of freight on residents’ (of Policy 2.4).

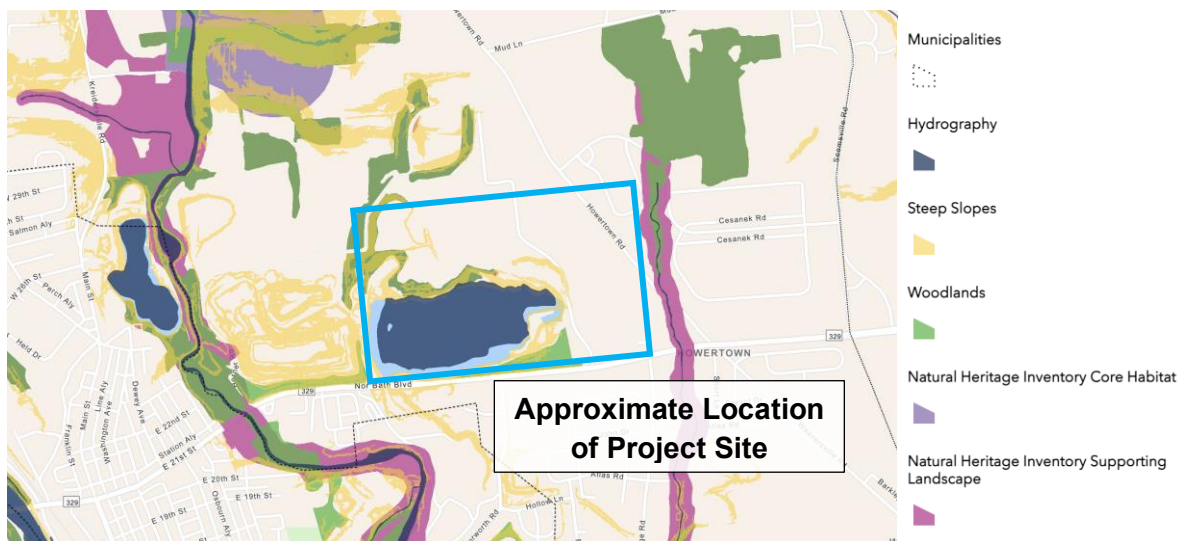


The plans provided for review do not clearly document the anticipated operational traffic characteristics of the data center. The LVPC recommends that the applicant provide additional information regarding expected staffing levels, shift changes, scheduled deliveries, periodic maintenance traffic, fuel deliveries if generators are proposed, and any construction-related traffic associated with installation of the substation and equipment yards. Providing documentation of anticipated traffic demands supports coordination of transportation decisions with the actual operational characteristics of land uses and their impacts on the transportation system (of Policy 2.2).

The site should also be reviewed by local emergency services providers for adequate internal circulation and emergency access to serve the new use, including around all new equipment areas, fenced compounds, and the proposed substation. Data centers often introduce secure outdoor infrastructure and equipment yards that can affect turning movements, emergency access, and service access. The Township should confirm that fire apparatus, maintenance vehicles, and utility crews can safely access all portions of the site and that site circulation is not compromised by the revised layout to support emergency response efforts (of Policy 5.1).

ENVIRONMENT

While the project is in an area identified for Development, the site is near areas identified for Farmland Preservation and Character-Defining landscapes. While the site itself is developed, this proximity reinforces the importance of site buffering, lighting control, stormwater quality, and visual mitigation to avoid undue impacts on nearby habitats, natural resources and lower-intensity areas.



In particular, the Township should carefully review the design of the proposed substation and outdoor equipment areas for noise, light, screening and visual compatibility. Unlike a warehouse, a data center can involve continuous mechanical operation, cooling equipment, transformers and generator testing. Those elements should be designed to minimize off-site environmental impacts that may affect the public

health, safety and welfare (of Policy 3.2). The applicant should document:

- The type and location of all cooling equipment.
- The number, size and location of generators.
- Proposed sound reduction measures.
- Hours and frequency of generator testing.
- Proposed lighting levels and shielding.
- Fence and screening design around equipment yards and the substation.

Because data centers can vary significantly in water demand depending on cooling design, the applicant should clearly identify whether the facility will use air-cooled, evaporative, hybrid, or water-based cooling systems. At present, LVPC cannot determine the likely water demand of the use based on the information provided. This is a significant issue because the intensity of water demand can vary considerably depending on system type and facility scale. The applicant should provide projected average and peak water demand, including any seasonal peaks, and explain whether water demand would change during drought or emergency conditions to 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Similarly, the plans do not clearly identify the presence or absence of battery energy storage systems, fuel storage, or other hazardous materials associated with backup power systems. If proposed, those facilities should be reviewed for environmental protection, spill containment, fire safety, and emergency response coordination (of Policy 5.1). If backup generators are utilized, they should be of Tier 2 standard to support improved regional air quality (of Policy 3.2 and 3.4).

The plans propose substantial landscaping throughout the site, including internal islands, perimeter planting, and buffering along the edges of development, which supports *FutureLV's* emphasis on compatibility between land uses, buffering and high-quality site design. Given the site's position within a developed industrial area but near surrounding agricultural and lower-intensity areas, continued emphasis on perimeter screening and long-term landscape maintenance is an important component of context-specific design solutions (of Policy 5.4). To support the long-term sustainability of the proposed landscaping design, the LVPC recommends that all parking lot islands contain sufficient soil volume and width to support the recommended tree species noted on the landscaping plan (canopy trees typically require 1,000-1,200 cubic feet of soil to support healthy growth).

Based on the provided Lot 2 Plant List, many of the proposed species appear to be native or generally appropriate to eastern Pennsylvania. However, several listed species do not appear to be native and should be reconsidered, including *Zelkova serrata* 'Green Vase' (Japanese zelkova), *Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire' (littleleaf linden), *Abies fraseri* (Fraser fir). Where feasible, the applicant should prioritize species native to the region to improve habitat value, resilience and long-term compatibility with surrounding landscapes (of Policy 3.4).

If the revised use meaningfully reduces vehicle demand relative to the prior warehouse use, LVPC encourages the Township to evaluate whether any excess pavement or underutilized parking could be removed or repurposed as additional landscaped area, stormwater improvements, or tree canopy. This would support both *FutureLV's* land use and environmental goals.

The project site is located within the Hokendauqua Creek watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project's stormwater management plan are included as attachment 1.

UTILITY AND SERVICE NEEDS

Data centers have substantial electrical needs, and those needs are verified by the proposed substation. The Township should request documentation regarding:

- Total projected electrical demand at buildout.
- Whether the proposed substation is dedicated to the site.
- Confirmation from the utility provider regarding available capacity.

Although the site is in the Development area, infrastructure capacity must be verified to support the long-term viability of the project and local services. The Township should ensure that the project's utility demands are fully understood and coordinated to 'match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity' (of Policy 1.1).

The submitted plans also do not clearly indicate who will provide sewer and water service, or if utility service providers have verified capacity and willingness to serve the project. This information should be clearly shown on the plans and supported by provider correspondence where appropriate. The Township should confirm the responsible public or private utility providers, available capacity and any conditions of service. Because the water and sewer demands of a data center can differ materially from a warehouse, this should be documented rather than assumed from the prior approval. Reviewing this information helps ensure that the project 'minimizes environmental impacts of development' (of Policy 3.2).

Given the nature of data centers to require extensive electrical infrastructure, backup generation, transformers, battery systems, fuel supply and secured equipment yards, the Township should confirm that local emergency responders have been engaged regarding access, firefighting, emergency shutoff procedures, hazardous materials, and any specialized response needs. The plans should clearly demonstrate:

- Fire lane access and turning movements.
- Access to all equipment yards and utility areas.
- Hydrant locations and fire flow adequacy.
- Fencing and security provisions that still permit emergency access.
- Whether emergency responders have reviewed the proposal.

Data centers often utilize specialized fire suppression systems designed in consideration of the electrical equipment they contain, and many emergency providers must undergo training specifically to understand how to serve data center facilities. Review of the above elements and continuous coordination supports safe development patterns, emergency readiness, and coordination with public safety providers (of Policy 5.1).

Because data centers may include large generator fields and other continuously operating equipment, the Township should also consider whether additional operational conditions are needed relating to generator testing, noise management and emergency notification procedures.

Outstanding Information

Based on the material provided, LVPC is unable to fully assess several aspects of the proposal that are relevant to *FutureLV*. The following items should be clarified or provided by the applicant:

1. Water service provider and water demand, including who will provide water service or the expected water demand of the proposed cooling system.
2. Sewer service provider and sanitary/process discharge, including who will provide sewer service or whether there will be any process-related wastewater.
3. Electrical demand and utility coordination, including documentation regarding overall load, available capacity, or off-site utility improvements.
4. Cooling system design, including documentation describing whether the facility will use air, water, evaporative, or hybrid cooling, as these directly affect water demand, noise, and heat exhaust.
5. Generator and outdoor equipment details, including the number, size, fuel type, sound levels, hours of testing, and screening of any generators or similar equipment.
6. Noise analysis, including expected operational noise from cooling equipment, transformers, generators, or testing events.
7. Lighting plans, including the intensity, shielding, or hours of operation of site lighting associated with the revised use.
8. Emergency response coordination including consultation with fire, police, or emergency management regarding access, hazardous materials, electrical infrastructure, or fuel systems.
9. Traffic and parking justification, including anticipated trips and traffic generation from employee counts, visitors, service calls, or periodic deliveries.

The LVPC strongly recommends the Township further refine its zoning ordinance definitions and regulations beyond this project review to clarify how data centers and similar land uses are classified under the zoning ordinance and ensure ordinance standards adequately address distinct impacts of emerging and evolving land uses.

Municipalities, when considering subdivision/land developments, should reasonably attempt to be consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, as required by the

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) [Article 1§105, Article III§303, §304 & §306(a), Article VI§603(j)]. The LVPC review does not include an in-depth examination of plans relative to subdivision design standards or ordinance requirements since these items are covered in the municipal review.

The LVPC has copied representatives of adjacent municipalities to 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (of Policy 1.4).

Please feel free to reach out with any questions about this review.

Sincerely,



Jill Seitz
Chief Community and Regional Planner

cc: Mike Schwartz, Township Engineer; Justin Fanslau, Prologis SVP Market Officer, Applicant; Verdantas, Project Engineer; Alice Rehrig, Lehigh Township Manager; Stephen Nowroski, Moore Township Manager; Brent Green, East Allen Township Manager; Melissa Wehr, Hanover Township (LC) Manager; Brian Welsko, Northampton Borough Manager; Glenn Eckhart, Catasauqua Borough Manager; Tasha Jandrisovits, North Catasauqua Borough Secretary; Randy Cope, North Whitehall Township Manager.

Project Review Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Date: April 2026

Project	Municipality	Brief Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	City of Allentown	<i>Data Centers</i> - Adds definitions and regulations for Data Centers in the Manufacturing and Industry Group and to amend the Use Table to add Data Centers in the Industrial General (IG) and Industrial Manufacturing (IM) as a special exception use.	LVPC supports the Township's proactive effort to address an emerging land use, which aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> by guiding the location and intensity of development and encouraging an efficient development process responsive to regional needs (of Policy 1.1).
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Moore Township	<i>Data Centers</i> - Adds definitions and regulations for Data Centers as a conditional use in the Industrial (I) Zoning District	LVPC supports the Township's proactive effort to address an emerging land use, which aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> by guiding the location and intensity of development and encouraging an efficient development process responsive to regional needs (of Policy 1.1).
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Lower Nazareth Township	<i>Data Centers</i> - Adds definitions and regulations for Data Centers as a conditional use in the Manufacturing, Extraction and Processing TD-11 District	LVPC supports the Township's proactive effort to address an emerging land use, which aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> by guiding the location and intensity of development and encouraging an efficient development process responsive to regional needs (of Policy 1.1).



Project Review Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Date: April 2026

<p>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</p>	<p>Lower Macungie Township</p>	<p><i>Data Centers</i> - Adds definitions and regulations for Data Centers as a conditional use in the I-Industrial, HE-Highway Enterprise, and ORLIC-Office, Research, Light Industrial, Center Districts</p>	<p>LVPC supports the Township’s proactive effort to address an emerging land use, which aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> by guiding the location and intensity of development and encouraging an efficient development process responsive to regional needs (of Policy 1.1).</p>
<p>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</p>	<p>Upper Milford Township</p>	<p><i>Comprehensive Update:</i> The amendments reorganized the document, updated the administrative provisions, revised the definitions, revised the table of allowed uses, separated the article for use regulations and added and modified new regulations, updated dimensional requirements, updated the buffer yards, revised temporary sign provisions, updated parking requirements, and updated road classifications.</p>	<p>These changes help ‘encourage an efficient development process that is responsive to regional needs’ (of Policy 1.4), ‘increases social and economic access to daily needs for all people’ (of Policy 5.2), and meet the Township’s housing demand while increasing attainable housing opportunities (of Policy 4.5).</p>



Project Review Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Date: April 2026

<p>Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendment</p>	<p>Upper Milford Township</p>	<p><i>Comprehensive Update:</i> modifies some definitions, updates the checklists, revise recreation land provisions, updates construction standards, and updates the landscaping provisions</p>	<p>Definitional updates and checklist updates help 'encourage an efficient land development process' (of Policy 1.4) and the proposal amends the construction standards to expand helps 'manage the rate, volume, and quality of storm runoff' (of Policy 3.2), and 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure' (of Policy 2.2).</p>
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LEHIGH VALLEY
**TRAIL
CONNECTION
STRATEGY**

Published March 2026

Disclaimer: This project was completed in partnership with the Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape. Funding was provided, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of recreation and Conservation and the Environmental Stewardship Fund, as administered by the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc.

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Lehigh Valley Transportation Study

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Thank you to all 2025 LVTS Members,
Phillips Armstrong, Lamont G. McClure, Jr., Darlene Heller, Richard Molchany, Basel Yandem and Jim Mosca



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Introduction



People across the Lehigh Valley consistently list trails among the region's greatest assets, but successfully closing gaps in the trail network is complex and often takes many years to complete. It can require alignment among multiple stakeholders throughout the Lehigh Valley including municipalities, county agencies, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private partners.

Projects must comply with local, state and federal regulations, in many cases while intersecting with waterways, transportation corridors and environmentally sensitive areas. Securing funds for design, land acquisition and construction can also be a lengthy and expensive process.

Even with the many obstacles, significant progress has been made across the region since the 2013 inventory was completed.

Many of the gaps identified at the time have moved closer to closure through successful grant funding, planning efforts and construction of trail segments within the gaps. These accomplishments reflect a decade of coordinated work between regional partners and demonstrates the continued commitment to building a more connected and accessible trail network throughout the Lehigh Valley. This section highlights those original gaps and explains the work that has been done.

Trails are more than lines on a map or paths along our rivers and streams — they're how a region breathes. They give people a safe, simple way to move, connect and slow down, whether that's a morning bike commute to work, an evening walk, or a weekend escape into green space.

A strong trail network knits communities together, connects us to neighbors, supports public health and local economies, and turns open space into shared places, making a region not just easier to get around, but better to live in. Beyond recreation and mobility, trails also function as resilient infrastructure that supports ecological integrity and hazard mitigation.

In the Lehigh Valley, they are what people say they like best about living here.

For the importance of trails to our mobility, health and economy, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has created an inventory of existing, planned and future trail infrastructure in the Lehigh Valley. This information helps identify trail infrastructure gaps, benchmark them against regional goals and prioritize how those gaps can be closed. This report and analysis translates regional goals, shown in municipal plans across the Lehigh Valley and regional plans such as *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, *WalkRollLV: Active Transportation Plan*, and *Livable Landscapes* into actionable locations, where the network fails to function as a true continuous system, and gives stakeholders a roadmap for fixing it.

In addition to this report, there is a complimentary interactive mapping tool at lvpc.org, that has been designed to coordinate the regional trail system and track gap closures, setting the stage for organized implementation across the region. The previous iteration of this report, the *Lehigh Valley Trails Inventory*, was completed in 2013, and many changes have occurred since then as this region grows, develops and evolves.

This report provides up-to-date trail data, which will inform regional stakeholders about the status of trail infrastructure and further support the build out of the regional trail network. This effort supports other active transportation initiatives throughout the Lehigh Valley for both commuter and recreational options. Municipalities and trail partners can use information included in this document to support funding applications for trail improvements.





Trail Development Update

Closing trail gaps is a complicated and intentional process that requires partnerships, funding, organization and patience. Trails cross many properties involving sometimes dozens of owners, all of whom need to agree to the addition of a recreational facility to their land or to sell it to a government agency or conservancy. Once property is acquired, investigation for contamination, threatened and endangered species, flood plains, steep slopes and other natural and manmade considerations must occur. Any protections for the community and plants, soil, water and wildlife are important to balancing recreational and natural assets, including people.

Resource identification is followed by engineering and approvals prior to any remediation or construction. With limited, but very important, grants available for trail projects, timelines to close important gaps can take decades. Fortunately, the Lehigh Valley has a multitude of deep, long-term partnerships that have resulted in more than 300 miles of trails we enjoy today. While much remains to be done, progress has been made since the Lehigh Valley Trail Inventory – 2013.

A special thanks to every dedicated, thoughtful and persistent trail advocate who has and continues to work toward a seamless regionwide and multiregional trail system.

The last trail gap analysis by the LVPC was completed in 2013 with the publishing of the *Lehigh Valley Trails Inventory – 2013 Lehigh and Northampton Counties*.

The following trails were identified in the 2013 Inventory as the Top Ten gaps in the region at that time. It is important to note that while some of these trail gaps remain, an incredible amount of work has been completed to move to closure, including many successes in receiving funding and building new infrastructure to help address these gaps.

2013 Top Trail Gaps

Trail Gap 1: Cedar Creek Trail to Little Lehigh Parkway Path
Trail Gap 2: Jordan Creek Greenway Trail
Trail Gap 3: D&L Trail to Ironton Rail Trail
Trail Gap 4: Nor-Bath Trail to D&L Trail
Trail Gap 5: D&L Trail Environmental Obstructions
Trail Gap 6: D&L Trail - Dauphin and Bradford Streets Share the Road
Trail Gap 7: South Bethlehem Greenway Trail to Saucon Rail Trail
Trail Gap 8: Karl Stirner Arts Trail to Palmer Township Bike Path
Trail Gap 9: Tatamy Rail Trail to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center (JEEC)
Trail Gap 10: Bushkill Township PPL Trail to Appalachian Trail





Cedar Creek Trail / Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 1: Cedar Creek Trail to Little Lehigh Parkway Path

Municipalities: City of Allentown, Salisbury Township

Start: Little Lehigh Parkway Path at Kline’s Bridge, Allentown

End: Cedar Beach Trail at Hamilton Street, Allentown

Status update: This gap has been identified by the City of Allentown as phase two of the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Drive Trail extension project. As of 2026, the design and engineering for phase two of the trail gap closure project is out for bid. Phase one construction, between the Little Lehigh Parkway Path and Fountain Park, is underway, and the two phases together will create continuous trail from the Cedar Creek Trail at Hamilton Street to the MLK Drive trailhead at South 4th Street.



Jordan Creek Greenway
Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 2: Jordan Creek Greenway Trail

Municipalities: City of Allentown, Lowhill Township, North Whitehall Township, South Whitehall Township, Whitehall Township

Start: Gordon Street at Jordan Meadows Park, Allentown

End: Jordan Road at Trexler Nature Preserve, Lowhill Township

Status update: New trail has been constructed in multiple areas since 2013. Continuous trail has been constructed from MacArthur Road to Mauch Chunk Road. There has been new trail construction on both the east and west sides of Covered Bridge Park in South Whitehall Township, and there is a segment of trail that now runs from Lapp Road to Route 309, through Covered Bridge Park. Trail gaps remain on the Jordan Creek Greenway, from Mauch Chunk Road to Lapp Road, and from Route 309 to Trexler Nature Preserve.



Ironton Railtrail / Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 3: D&L Trail to Ironton Rail Trail

Municipalities: Coplay Borough, Whitehall Township

Start: D&L Trail at Cementon Trailhead, Whitehall Township

End: Ironton Rail Trail at Saylor Park, Coplay Borough

Status update: Since the last plan, Lehigh County has continued to have discussions with Norfolk Southern, the entity that owns the rights-of-way needed for trail construction. The County is raising additional funds to be able to purchase the land.



Nor-Bath Trail / Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 4: Nor-Bath Trail to Delaware & Lehigh Trail

Municipalities: Northampton Borough

Start: Clear Springs Drive, Northampton Borough

End: D&L Trail at Northampton Canal, Northampton Borough

Status update: The proposed alignment of the trail connection has been changed and partially constructed. The Nor-Bath Trail has been extended approximately an additional half-mile, from its 2013 terminus at Clear Springs Drive in Northampton Borough, to the intersection of Main Street and 10th Street. Planning is ongoing to determine the route of the final connection to the Northampton Canal trailhead of the D&L Trail.



D&L Trail / Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 5: D&L Trail: North Catasauqua

Municipalities: Catasauqua Borough, Northampton Borough, North Catasauqua Borough

Start: D&L Trail approx. 0.5 miles south of Northampton Canal Trailhead

End: D&L Trail near Race Street, Catasauqua Borough

Status update: Trail gaps 5A and 5B from the 2013 Lehigh Valley Trails Inventory have been closed as part of the Northampton and North Catasauqua Trail Improvements Project in 2022. Trail gap 5C, at the Race Street and Lehigh Street intersection is complete.



D&L Trail / Photo credit: LVPC

Trail Gap 6: D&L Trail – Dauphin and Bradford Streets Share the Road

Municipalities: City of Allentown

Start: Kimmitt's Lock, Allentown

End: D&L Trail at N. Bradford Street, Allentown

Status update: This project is in the final engineering phase. Final designs are being prepared to meet permitting needs. Projects are being led by the City of Allentown and Hanover Township.



Left to right: Basel Yandem, City of Bethlehem, Becky Bradley, LVPC, Michael Allehal, City of Bethlehem, J. William Reynolds, City of Bethlehem, Phillips Armstrong, Lehigh County, Lamont G. McClure, Jr., Northampton County and Ryan Meyer, Lehigh and Northampton Airport Authority. Photo credit: LVPC / Photo Date: 7-23-25

Trail Gap 7: South Bethlehem Greenway Trail to Saucon Rail Trail

Municipalities: City of Bethlehem, Hellertown Borough

Start: South Bethlehem Greenway at Auburn Street, Bethlehem

End: Saucon Rail Trail at Bachman Street, Hellertown Borough

Status update: A 0.9-mile gap separates the South Bethlehem Greenway from the Saucon Rail Trail, which has prevented an active transportation connection between Bethlehem and Hellertown. The gap also separates the Lehigh Valley's regional trail network, the LINK, from the Circuit Trails, greater Philadelphia's trail network. Due to the gap's local and regional significance, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) identified it as a top 10 trail gap in the Commonwealth. Various funding sources have been utilized to take steps to help close the trail gap, including Transportation Alternative Set-Aside funds allocated through the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study,

PA DCNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Highlands Conservation Act Grant, Northampton County Livable Landscapes Grant Program and congressional Community Project Funding. The final phase to construct the Greenway extension is now fully funded, with construction in 2026. The connected South Bethlehem Greenway and Saucon Rail Trail will provide 13.7 miles of safe and accessible trail for all users, to link together parks and open space, residential areas and commercial and cultural hubs.

Trail Gap 8: Karl Stirner Arts Trail to Palmer Township Bike Path

Municipalities: City of Easton, Palmer Township, Wilson Borough

Start: Karl Stirner Arts Trail at 13th Street, Easton

End: Palmer Bikeway at Edgewood Avenue, Palmer Township

Status update: This approximately one mile trail gap spans from the Edgewood Avenue trailhead of the Palmer Bikeway in Palmer Township, to the Karl Stirner Arts Trail trailhead in Easton, near the Easton Silk Mill. No new trail has been constructed in this segment since 2013, however, it is identified in planning documents such as Walk/RollLV and remains a priority to be connected in the future.

Factors affecting the closure of this gap include possible development of a large parcel of land on the south side of the Bushkill Creek that makes up a large portion of the gap, and high traffic and difficult sight lines for cyclists and drivers on Bushkill Drive, on the north side of the creek.

Photo credit: LVPC / Karl Stirner Arts Trail





Photo Credit: LVPC / Buskill Township - Jacobsburg Park

Trail Gap 9: Tatamy Rail Trail to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center (JEEC)

Municipalities: Bushkill Township, Plainfield Township, Stockertown Borough, Tatamy Borough

Start: Tatamy Trail trailhead at Main Street, Tatamy Borough

End: Plainfield Township trailhead at Main Street (PA 191), Bushkill Township

Status update: This trail gap spans a handful of municipalities and separates four trails, the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center Trails, Plainfield Township Recreation Trail and Tatamy Rail Trail. Significant progress to close the trail gap has been made since 2013. Stockertown Borough has constructed a multi-use trail (Stockertown Rails-to-Trails) from Sherman Metzgar Park to the Belfast Junction trailhead of the Plainfield Township Trail. However, to connect from one trail to the other, trail users must navigate an unmarked crossing of Route 191/Main Street. From this junction, there is a conceptual trail connection to the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, which has been partially constructed.

“Since 2013, the trail gap has received \$654,000 in funding from both the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program and from DCNR to help finalize this trail gap. In 2025, a segment of trail was constructed from the Center’s southern entrance at Henry Road to Filetown Road, aligned along Route 33. The remainder of the conceptual route is anticipated to cross Route 33 at Filetown Road and continue along the Route 33 rights-of-way until the junction of the Plainfield and Stockertown trails. An additional gap remains from Sherman Metzgar Park in Stockertown, to the Tatamy Trail trailhead at Main Street. In 2025, Northampton County used Highlands Conservation Act Grant Award funding to purchase 43 acres of open space that includes the area of the trail gap in Stockertown Borough, which will help facilitate future trail construction.

Trail Gap 10: Bushkill Township PPL Trail to Appalachian Trail

Municipalities: Bushkill Township, Plainfield Township

Start: Bushkill Township Trail parking lot at East Moorestown Road (PA 512), Bushkill Township

End: Appalachian Trail near Route 33, Plainfield Township

Status update: Additional trail has been constructed, from the trailhead at E. Moorestown Road (Route 512), east along the road to Professional Drive. The Township and warehouse developers on the north side of Route 512 have agreed to allow future trail construction on the property.

To reach the Appalachian Trail, future trail development will likely be along utility rights-of-way and on-road segments of low-volume roads. Additional coordination between the Township, state agencies and property owners will be needed.

Photo Credit: Google Maps / Buskill Township - PPL Trail





Trail Benefits

Trails have become increasingly recognized as essential assets in Lehigh Valley communities. Trails can deliver a wide range of transportation, recreational, environmental, and economic benefits. The trail system serves as an important component of transportation networks, improving connectivity, providing accessible opportunities for physical activity, improving environmental resilience, and increasing economic activity. The wide range of benefits extend beyond the traditional belief of a strictly recreational asset.

As part of a connected network, they offer safe routes for walking and rolling that link places such as schools, workplaces, parks and transit stops, helping people travel without solely relying on motor vehicles. Trail infrastructure contributes to environmental resilience by preserving natural features, supporting stormwater management, and preserving ecological connections. Trails also generate economic value by attracting tourism and visitors, supporting local business and increasing property values. As communities look for ways to improve quality of life, investment in trail infrastructure has become increasingly valuable.

Trails as Transportation

Trails provide a critical transportation mode, linking people to key recreation, open space, education, workplace and other desired destinations, without a car and at little or no expense. They provide, reliable, safe and accessible corridors for walking, bicycling and other non-motorized forms of travel. These systems support and enhance traditional transportation infrastructure including roadways and transit, allowing for personal modal choice, supporting emerging

transportation technologies such as e-bikes and providing increasing opportunities at all ages and abilities to experience the region's abundant natural and recreational resources. These transportation systems provide low cost and accessible linkages to our daily destinations, while minimizing traditional infrastructure impacts and costs. This section reviews how our trails service as an important part of the transportation network.

Trails are an integral part of the transportation system, offering an affordable, flexible and healthy option for travel. The benefits to communities and trail users are many.

Trails reduce dependence on fossil fuels and offer residents healthier, more affordable commuting options by encouraging active mobility.

Trails provide safe, accessible routes for walking, biking and largely non-motorized forms of travel. These pathways help people move between neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and public transit stops without relying on cars, filling critical gaps in the transportation system.

Trails also bridge “last-mile” gaps to transit stations and employment centers, improving access for all users.

Connectivity is one of the greatest transportation benefits of trails. When designed as part of a regional or municipal system, trails link key destinations and form continuous corridors that make active travel both feasible and attractive. This not only benefits individuals but also reduces vehicle congestion, leading to cleaner air and less wear on road infrastructure.

For people who cannot or choose not to drive, such as youths, seniors or zero-vehicle households, trails offer a safe and free means of getting around. Expanding multimodal options allows communities to create inclusive transportation systems that support all residents, regardless of income or ability.

Trails as Recreation

Trails provide a physical connection to access our community's natural and cultural landscapes, while allowing us to be physical as we use them – whether walking, running, or cycling, the experience is much different than it would be sitting in a car or bus. Trails not only serve as a means to connect us to places to recreate such as parks, playgrounds, lakes, streams, sports fields, fishing spots, boat launches or campsites, they often are the source of recreational activity.

Whether you like to walk, bird watch, ride a bike, run, or roll, trails are usually how you access these places and in so doing, you are also recreating. These experiences build appreciation for maintaining and stewarding our trail network and the many unique and special places that the network allows us to experience. This section shows the many ways trails increase our region's recreation options.

Trails offer access to outdoor environments that reduce stress and improve mental health, giving people an accessible way to experience nature close to home.

Trails encourage regular physical activity such as walking, running and cycling, which improves cardiovascular health and reduces obesity and chronic disease rates.

Trails serve as community gathering places for casual encounters, family outings and organized events like charity walks or fun runs.

Social interaction is a core benefit. This fosters stronger community ties and creates spaces that promote inclusivity and shared experiences. A well-designed trail system can also become a source of local pride and identity.

Trails showcase and protect natural, historic and cultural resources.

Finally, trails connect people to nature and cultural landscapes, rivers, forests, farmland, and historic sites, helping build appreciation for environmental stewardship and heritage preservation.

Trails as Resilient Infrastructure

Resiliency is defined as, “The capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.” Trails add that toughness to our ecological community and landscape features in locations across the region. They are often one of many “spokes” in a community’s green infrastructure network – a connected system of nature-based corridors such as trails, greenways or riparian buffers that harness the benefits of ecological design. Trails, a type of green infrastructure, are sometimes constructed in or adjacent to ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands, woodlands and floodplains.

Trail design must incorporate systems and materials that protect habitat and provide recreation opportunities. By incorporating ecologically sensitive design such as vegetative stormwater management practices and considering site constraints, trails may be better adapted to recover from natural weather events more quickly than traditional gray infrastructure. This section shows some of the ways trails make our environment more resilient.

Trails can help minimize impacts to wetlands and streams and increase site stabilization through climate adaptive practices.

Trails can be key components of green infrastructure networks, which can incorporate elements such as permeable pavements, rain gardens and bioswales, that all work together to manage stormwater and reduce flooding.

Trails can serve a functional role during emergencies.

Because they are often continuous and separated from major roadways, trails may act as alternative routes for emergency access or evacuation during floods, storms or traffic disruptions. This makes them valuable assets for community resilience and safety planning.

From a climate adaptation perspective, trails contribute to reducing urban heat islands by maintaining vegetated corridors and shade.

They preserve open space and habitat connectivity, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health. Integrating trails into broader greenway or watershed planning efforts ensures that infrastructure investments achieve multiple objectives, transportation, recreation, stormwater management and climate resilience, all within one project.

Photo Credit: LVPC



Trails as Economic Generators

Trails generate economic activity in the Lehigh Valley as quantified in documents such as the 2014 Lehigh Valley Return on Environment Study and the 2025 Northampton County Return on Environment update. Studies referenced in the 2020 Walk/Roll LV- Active Transportation Plan note that Americans increasingly want to live in communities that are walk, bike and roll friendly, which has led to higher property values and higher property tax revenues in communities that invest in active transportation.

Trail users spend money at nearby businesses, purchase specialized equipment and clothing, purchase parts at repair shops, and generally support local communities they visit. Ultimately, trails boost tourism, raise property values and increase recreation-related spending across a region that has a reputation as one of Pennsylvania's most visited for recreational options. This section takes a closer look at how those benefits add up.

Trails provide significant direct and indirect economic and health benefits to the region.

The 2014 *Lehigh Valley Return on Environment* study estimated over \$80 million in direct economic impacts annually from walking and bicycling activities. This includes direct spending on outerwear, athletic wear and equipment as well as generating income for trail users and supporting businesses such as restaurants, trail side cafes, and bike repair shops. Property values are also boosted by trails, as various case studies show that homes near them are valued higher and have elevated demand.

In the Lehigh Valley, there are many greenway and trail corridors in residential areas, such as the Jordan Creek, Bushkill Creek, Monocacy Way and more, which can boost surrounding property values from 5% to 32%, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The *Lehigh Valley Return on Environment* study calculated property values near a trail or park increased by \$14,600.

Trails contribute to local tourism and business development.

Visitors drawn to scenic or connected trail networks often spend money on food, lodging and recreation, boosting local economies. Studies, including the 2014 *Lehigh Valley Return on Environment*, show that homes and businesses near well-maintained trails enjoy higher property values and increased customer traffic.





Barriers to Closing Gaps

Despite broad support, closing gaps in the Lehigh Valley's trail system remains a persistent challenge.

Trail gaps are often the result of a number of factors including historical land-use decisions, natural barriers or funding shortfalls. The process of closing these gaps is complex, requiring alignment among multiple Lehigh Valley stakeholders, regulatory compliance at all levels, and substantial financial resources.

Funding and Cost Barriers

One of the most significant obstacles to closing trail gaps and completing trail networks is securing adequate funding. Trails are often considered amenities rather than transportation infrastructure. This means that trail projects must compete for already limited funds against transportation projects focused on road maintenance, bridge repairs and transit improvements. If grants are available for trail projects, they may require local matches, which can be difficult for some communities and organizations to secure.

Cost estimating can be uncertain. Overruns are common due to rising material prices, complexities in the design phase, or even unexpected environmental issues. In some cases, the per-mile cost of trail projects is higher in gap areas because of constrained rights-of-way or the need for infrastructure upgrades or unique engineering solutions. These financial barriers can delay a project for years, leaving the gaps unaddressed.

Land Acquisition and Rights-of-Way Issues

Acquiring land to close trail gaps can be complex, expensive and time-consuming. Many of the conceptual trail corridors cross privately owned parcels, and negotiating easements or purchases can be contentious. Property owners may resist providing easements due to concerns regarding liability and privacy. Property owners may also resist selling property due to concerns over perceived negative impacts to remaining adjacent property they own.

In more urban areas in the region, high land costs and dense development can complicate land acquisition even more. Gaps may also occur along railways for rails-to-trails efforts. Rights-of-way acquisition for railways may require piecemeal negotiations with multiple landowners or difficult negotiations with rail companies. Without legal access to a more continuous corridor, trail projects may be forced to pursue expensive detours or risk delays.

Environmental and Regulatory Constraints

Environmental considerations can slow the development of a trail. Trails are frequently in areas that intersect with wetlands, floodplains, rivers or endangered species habitats. These projects will require special considerations to mitigate natural resource impacts, and in most cases, trigger specific permitting requirements. Compliance with federal and state environmental regulations, such as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) serve important conservation purposes but often result in delays that can bring frustration to a trail project.

These considerations need to be factored early in the design and approval process to ensure successful integration with natural resources. Mitigation measures like constructing elevated boardwalks or implementing stormwater controls can significantly increase project costs. Balancing ecological preservation and easy trail connectivity is an ongoing challenge.

Stakeholder Coordination Challenges

Coordination among stakeholders can often be one of the most complex barriers to closing a trail gap. Trail gaps may span multiple jurisdictions such as counties and municipalities. This can require careful collaboration and long-term commitment. Differing priorities, timelines and funding capacity can stall or cancel projects, especially when one jurisdiction is unwilling or unable to work to advance a portion of a project.

Photo Credit: LVPC

Stakeholder conflicts may also arise, such as advocacy for different aspects of a trail project. Advocates for recreation, conservationists concerned about ecological impacts, transportation planners and local residents often have differing priorities. Achieving consensus on design, alignment and maintenance is a time-consuming process that can delay a project.





Community and Stakeholder Engagement

In 2025 LVPC staff solicited input from municipalities, county agencies, non-profits and regional partners through a variety of methods including stakeholder meetings, interviews and surveys.

Survey participants reviewed the LVPC interactive map and provided corrections, status updates, project descriptions, and links or offers to share Geographic Information System (GIS) files. Several responses included detailed project status including design, permitting, funding, grant amounts or applications, and specific physical or jurisdictional barriers.

This engagement provided valuable information used to verify and expand the Trail Connection Strategy and to document active, planned and conceptual trail work throughout the Lehigh Valley.

The objective of the outreach was to validate existing mapped trail assets, identify and describe persistent trail gaps and the barriers to closing them, to collect information on project status, funding, permitting, and obtain available spatial data in support of the regional inventory. The surveys were sent to local governments, county staff and multiple local trail advocacy organizations. A total of 24 surveys were completed.

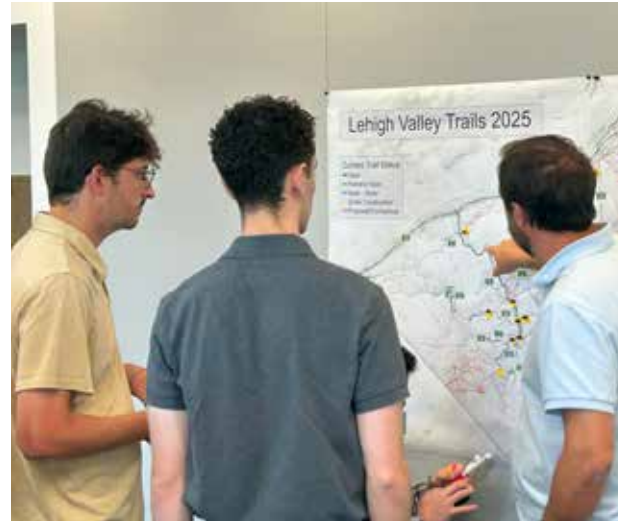


Left to right: Front Row > Rob Neitz, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Evan Gardi, LVPC, Brit Kondravy, D+L National Heritage Corridor, Christian Martinez, LVPC Middle > Bryan Cope, Northampton County, Scott Slingerland, Coalition for Appropriate Transportation, Brandon Sullivan and Trevor Pinho, City of Easton, Sherry Acevedo, Northampton County, Jeff Rau, PA Department of Transportation
Photo credit: LVPC

Survey participants repeatedly cited the following core challenges to implementing trail projects:

- Funding was the most frequently noted obstacle, including capital and maintenance costs for bridges, crossings and trail surfacing.
- Land acquisition and private property, including a lack of easements or unwilling landowners
- Permitting and environmental constraints, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stream permitting, environmental review timelines and coordination with state agencies.
- Jurisdictional fragmentation. Trails that end at municipal boundaries or require multi-jurisdictional agreements create issues for securing rights-of-way and maintenance responsibility.
- Safety and design issues, including difficult or hazardous road crossings, grade and railroad obstructions and lack of Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility.
- Lack of political or community will, including occasional local resistance or competing land use priorities that prevent acquisition or trail alignment choices.

Photo Credit: LVPC



Left to Right: Evan Gardi and Clay Karnis, LVPC, Bryan Cope, Northampton County



Left to Right: Chris Stroehler, South Whitehall Township and Clay Karnis, LVPC

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Lehigh Valley benefits from a strong base of rail-trail and greenway assets but connectivity between the networks is uneven. Major crossings and private parcels are significant constraints. Closing a relatively small number of linkages could substantially increase regional connectedness. Projects with committed funding and completed design and permitting demonstrate that the primary bottleneck for many gaps is right-of-way acquisitions and long-lead time coordination, rather than technical feasibility. In addition to the survey, the LVPC hosted and presented at two meetings of THE LINK Trail Network committee.

THE LINK is an interconnected network of multi-use trails across the Lehigh Valley and consists of over 125 miles of trails that connect into many more trail systems outside of the Lehigh Valley. These include Philadelphia, the Pocono Mountains, New York, New Jersey and various other regions. It is supported by a network of regional partners committed to enhancing this valuable resource. The partners meet often to discuss the growth of the Lehigh Valley's trail network. The LVPC presented survey results, mapping and preliminary findings at two LINK partner meetings to discuss the update to the Trail Inventory, the prioritization process and to gather input on the major trail gaps identified in the Lehigh Valley.



Left to right: Front Row > Rob Neitz, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Evan Gardi, LVPC, Christian Martinez, LVPC, Kent Baird, Brit Kondravy, D+L Heritage Corridor, Bryan Cope, Northampton County, Scott Slingerland, Coalition for Appropriate Transportation, Clay Karnis, LVPC, Brandon Sullivan, City of Easton and Sherry Acevedo, Northampton County

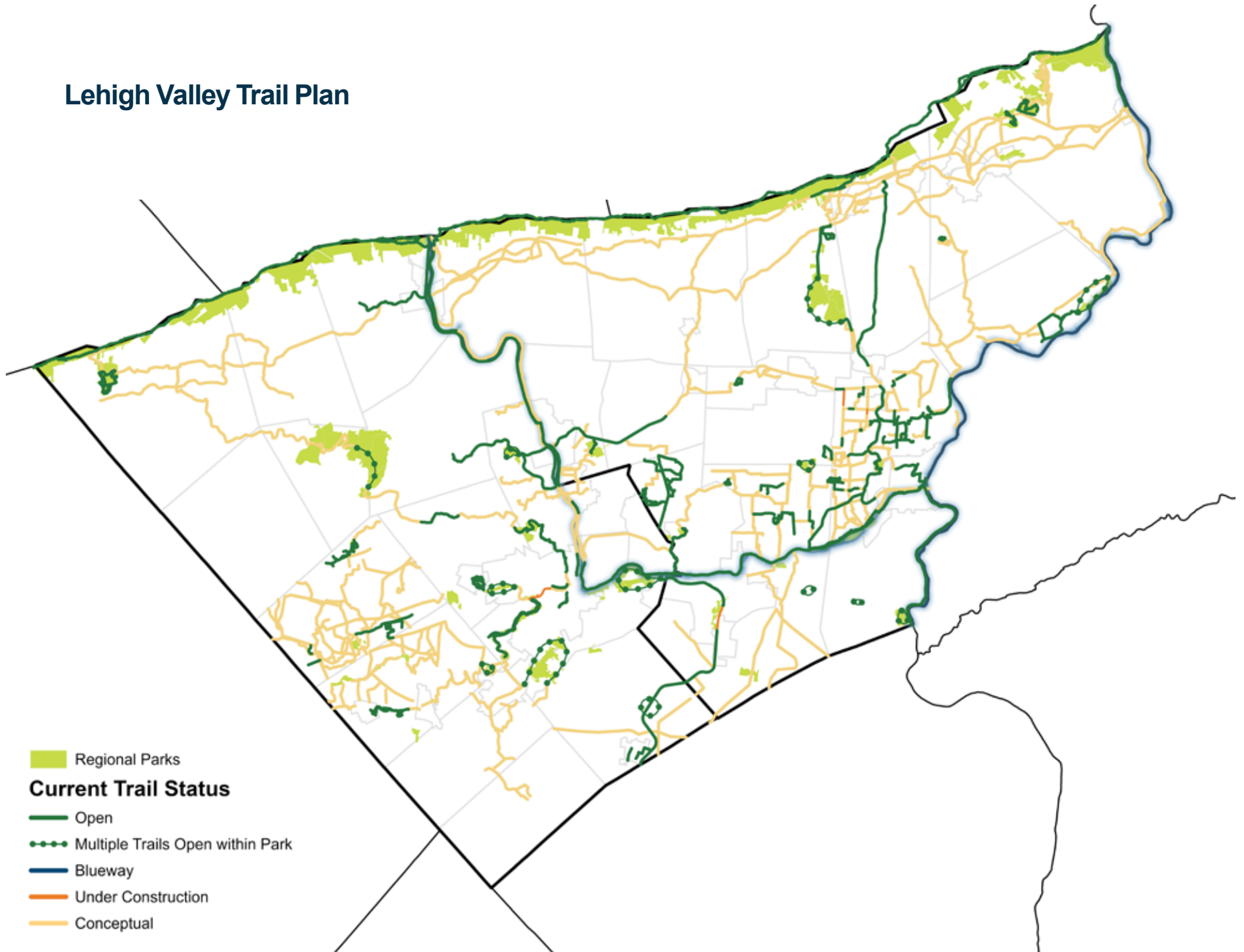


Trail Inventory

Based on information gathered, LVPC compiled an inventory of all trail infrastructure in the Lehigh Valley. The map is broken into three trail status categories: Open, Under Construction and Conceptual.

- Open trails include those that can currently be utilized throughout the region. These trails range from recreation only hiking trails, to commuter corridors, to winding pathways through the Lehigh Valley's parks and open spaces.
- Under Construction trails include any trail projects that are in the process of being built.
- Conceptual trails include all potential trail connections noted in municipal, county or regional plans, and those gathered during the community and stakeholder engagement phase of this effort.

Lehigh Valley Trail Plan



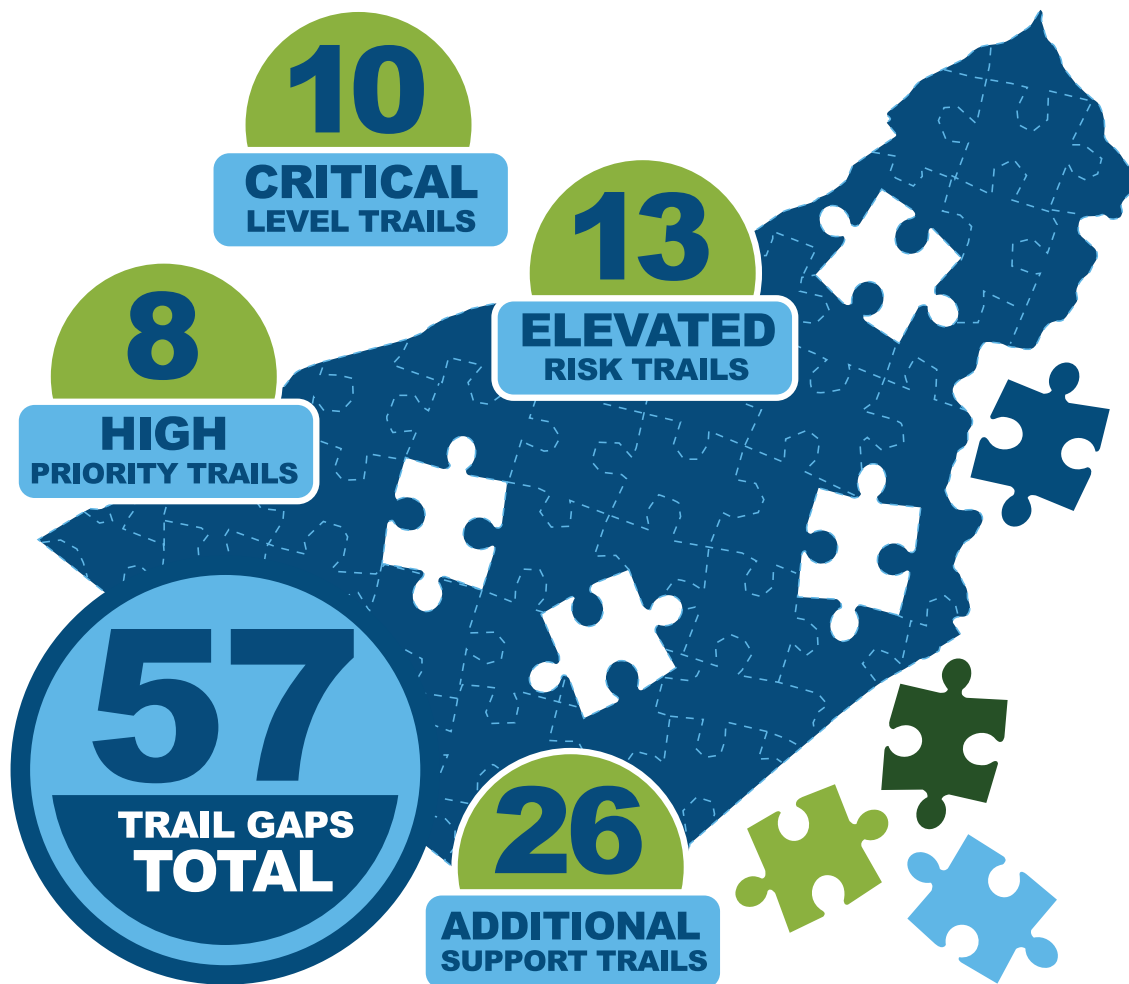
- Regional Parks
- Current Trail Status**
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Under Construction
- Conceptual

Many of the trails terminate at sidewalks and bike networks; the trails are noted based on municipal definitions.

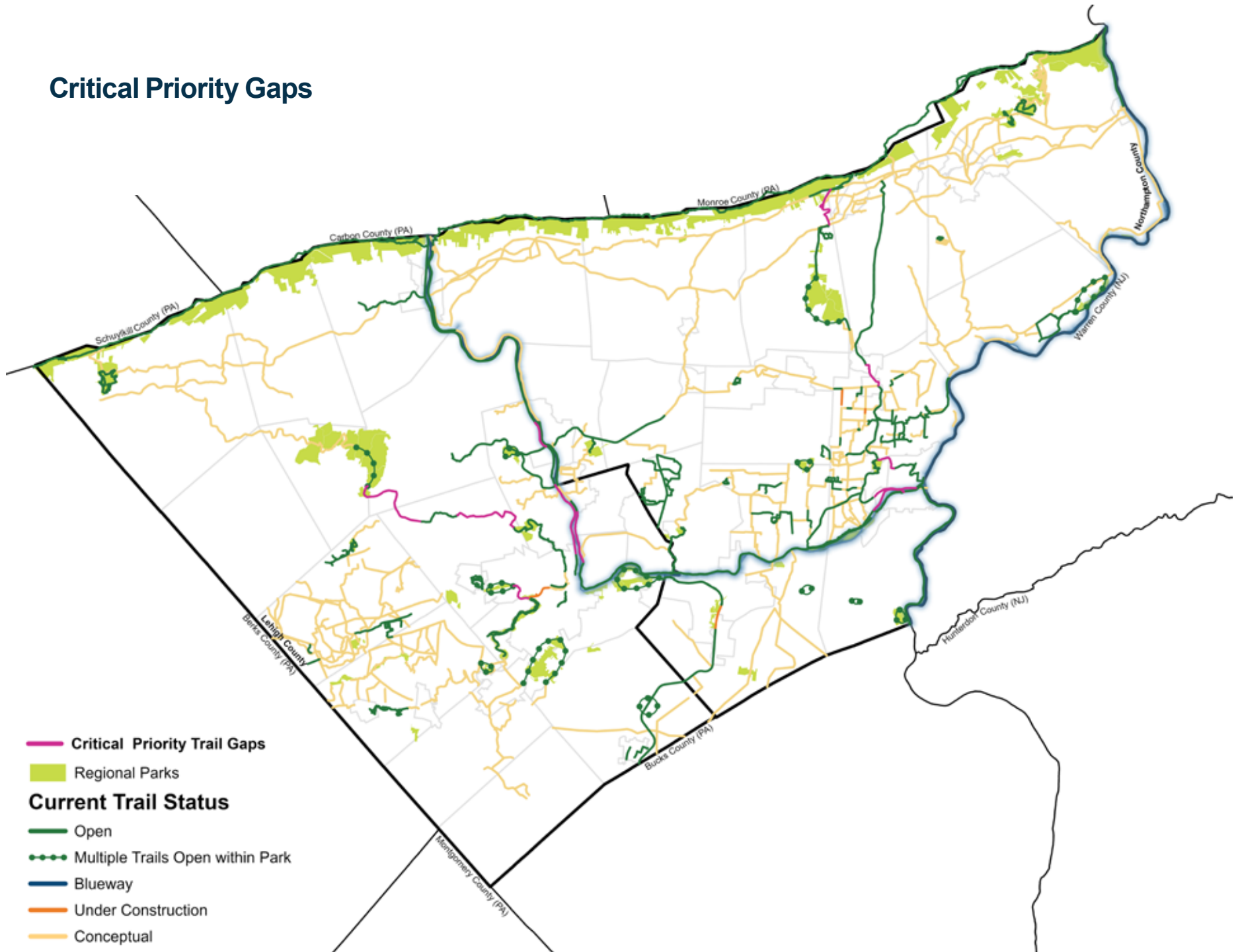
Piecing the Gaps

Fifty-seven trail gaps were evaluated and a complex, data-driven & geospatial analysis was done determine classifications that helped set priorities for how regional leaders will work to close trail gaps in the coming years. The top 10 critical gaps are those trails that have the most significant impact in the region, closing major trail gaps in the regional network.

The additional High, Elevated, and Supporting priority gaps are still important for the region overall but during the analysis did not have as high of a regional impact. A more detailed description of the methodology used to determine the trail gap rankings can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.



Critical Priority Gaps



Many of the trails terminate at sidewalks and bike networks; the trails are noted based on municipal definitions.

JORDAN CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 1



Municipalities: South Whitehall Township, Whitehall Township

Start: Mauch Chunk Road at Jordan Creek Park, South Whitehall Township

End: East end of Covered Bridge Park, South Whitehall Township

Description: The Jordan Creek Greenway & Trail aims to connect existing protected open spaces creating a continuous greenway corridor along the Jordan Creek that provides recreational and environmental benefits. Closing this gap would connect Covered Bridge Park and Parkland High School and provide a continuous trail between these locations and neighborhoods and other parks in South Whitehall, Whitehall, and Allentown.

Status: Rights-of-way have been secured, and design and engineering have been completed between N. Cedar Crest Boulevard and Covered Bridge Park. This section of trail will also serve Parkland High School. South Whitehall Township is awaiting grants for construction funding. From N. Cedar Crest Boulevard to Mauch Chunk Road, the Township is engaged in discussions with property owners, and trail development in this stretch is intended to be included in future land development plans.

Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Conceptual

Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



JORDAN CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 2

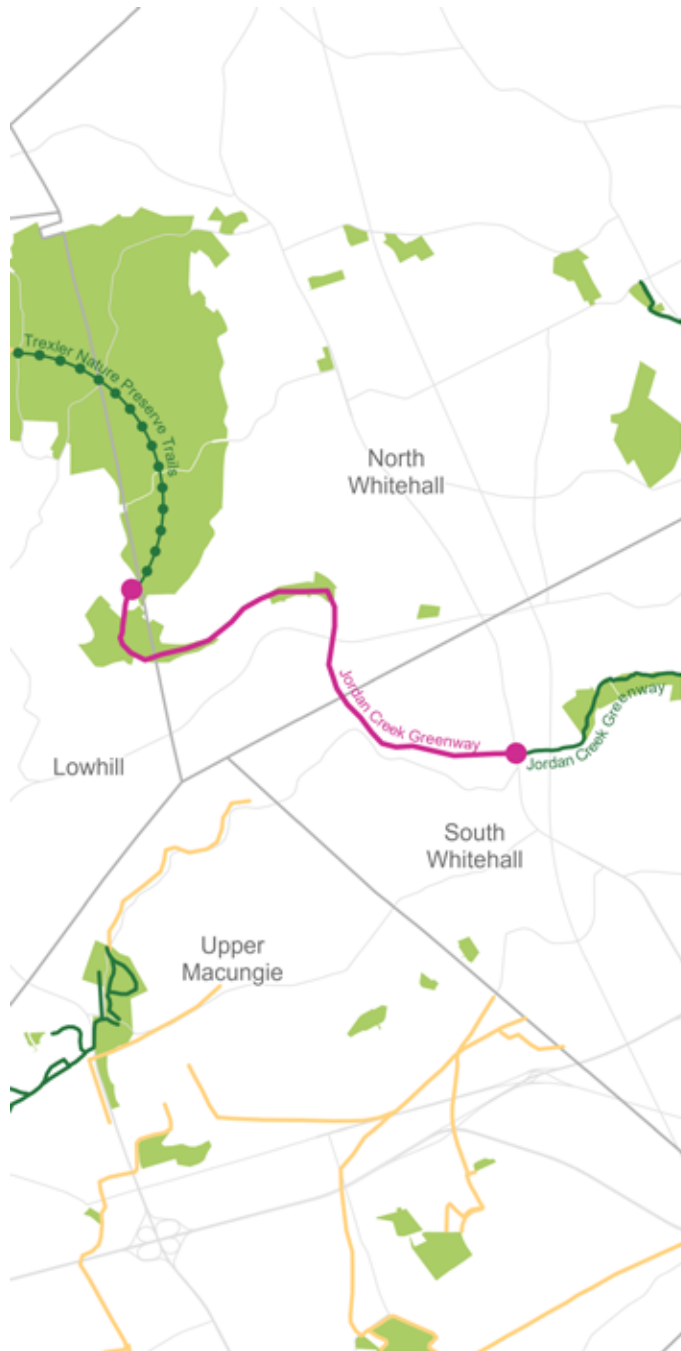
Municipalities: Lowhill Township, North Whitehall Township, South Whitehall Township

Start: Route 309 bridge over Jordan Creek, South Whitehall Township

End: Trexler Nature Preserve, North Whitehall Township & Lowhill Township

Description: The Jordan Creek Greenway & Trail aims to connect existing protected open spaces creating a continuous greenway corridor along the Jordan Creek that provides recreational and environmental benefits. Closing this gap would connect to popular outdoor recreation destinations, Trexler Nature Preserve and Covered Bridge Park. This section of the Greenway could also connect through the historic village of Guthsville, an area of cultural and recreational significance for South Whitehall Township. Closing the two critical trail gap segments in the Jordan Creek Greenway would provide continuous trail from Allentown to Trexler Nature Preserve, greatly enhancing outdoor recreation and multimodal connectivity across Lehigh County.

Status: Starting from Trexler Nature Preserve, Lehigh County is managing trail development from the southern end of the Preserve to Jordan Road, near the Rex Covered Bridge. Land has already been acquired for this segment and final engineering and permitting is occurring. From this point, east to the start of the gap at Route 309, planning is in progress, but there has been no land acquisition as of December 2025. North Whitehall and South Whitehall Townships are managing trail development efforts in these sections within their respective jurisdictions.



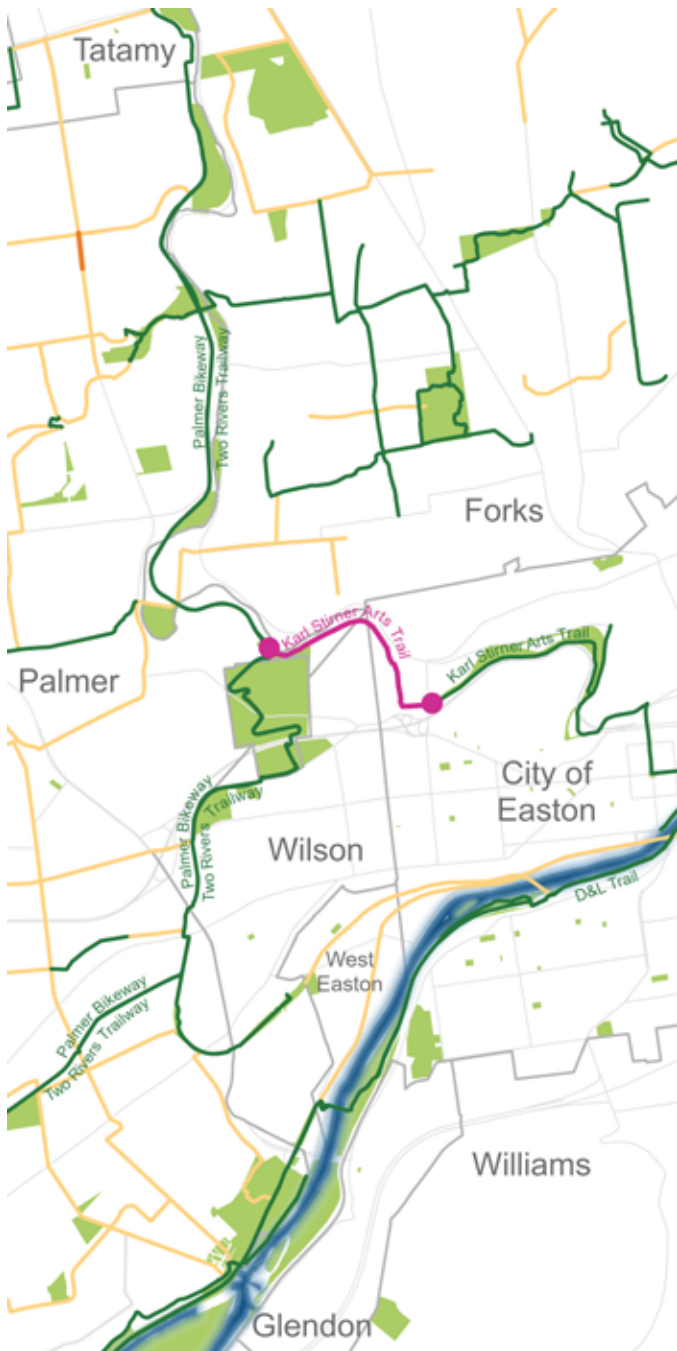
Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Conceptual

Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



KARL STIRNER ARTS TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 3



Municipalities: Palmer Township, Wilson Borough, City of Easton

Start: N. 13th Street at Simon Silk Mill, City of Easton

End: Palmer Bikeway at Hackett Park, Palmer Township

Description: Construction of trail in this gap would make the Karl Stirner Arts Trail continuous, providing a spur route from the Palmer Bikeway to the Simon Silk Mill, downtown Easton and Lafayette College. Constructing trail in this segment would provide a safer alternative for cyclists, as the current shortest connection, Bushkill Drive, is dangerous due to high vehicle speeds and short sight lines.

Status: There are two likely routings for trail in this gap. One is for trail to be constructed along the Bushkill Creek with land development activities at the former pigment plant site. This would likely connect at the Edgewood Avenue trailhead. However, it is uncertain what will go in at the site and when. The second option is to route trail along Hackett Avenue and connect with the Palmer Bikeway/Two Rivers Trailway at or near Hackett Park. Coordination is ongoing between the municipalities and landowners.

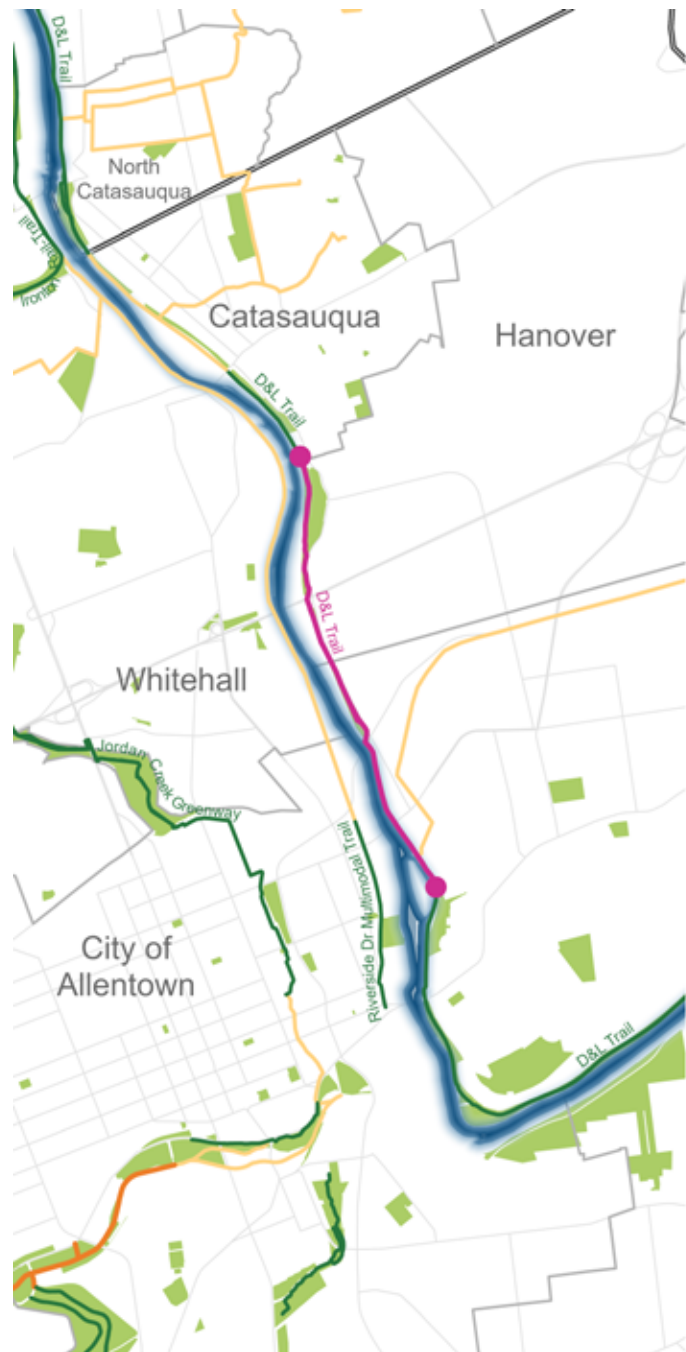
Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Under Construction
- Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



D&L TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 4



Municipalities: Hanover Township (LC), City of Allentown

Start: North Bradford Street, City of Allentown

End: D&L Trail at Hanover Canal Park, Hanover Township (LC)

Description: This project will build out a large segment of trail on the east side of the Lehigh River, creating a continuous route on the D&L Trail through the Lehigh Valley, connecting to Carbon County in the north and Bucks County to the southeast. Construction of this trail segment will also improve multimodal connectivity in and around East Allentown and between Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton as a whole. The project is part of a broader vision, to create a 14-mile loop trail along the Lehigh River between the Hamilton Street Bridge in Allentown and the Route 329 Bridge in Cementon, Whitehall Township.

Status: This gap has one main project area in Allentown and another in Hanover Township. In Allentown, the City is leading development activities, in coordination with Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) National Heritage Corridor. Just over one mile of trail will be constructed between the N. Bradford Street trailhead and the City line, between Kimmett's Lock and St. Luke's Way. There will be a shared-use path on N. Bradford Street, from the trailhead to the intersection with N. Dauphin Street. The trail will then be off-road with a multi-use path from the intersection, along N. Dauphin Street to the city line. This segment will go through Kimmett's Lock, which will be integrated into the trail. Hanover Township, in coordination with D&L National Heritage Corridor, is leading trail development within their jurisdiction. From the Allentown/Hanover Township line to Hanover Canal Park, an off-road multi-use trail is planned along N. Dauphin Street. These projects are in final engineering stages. Additional funding for construction in the Allentown area may be needed.

Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Under Construction
- Conceptual
- Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



D&L TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 5



Municipalities: Whitehall Township, Coplay Borough

Start: Cementon Trailhead, Whitehall Township

End: Race Street Bridge, Whitehall Township

Description: Trail development in this segment will connect the D&L Trail to the Ironton Rail Trail (IRT). There are two gaps within this project area. The north gap is between the D&L trailhead at Cementon and the IRT at Saylor Park, Coplay Borough. The south gap is between the IRT Water Street trailhead and the Race Street Bridge in Whitehall Township. This project will align the D&L Trail with a portion of the already-open Ironton Rail Trail running north/south through Coplay Borough. The project is part of a broader vision, to create a 14-mile loop trail along the Lehigh River between the Hamilton Street Bridge in Allentown and the Route 329 Bridge in Cementon, Whitehall Township.

Status: Trail construction throughout the gap area will be along railroad rights-of-way, which still needs to be acquired. Lehigh County is leading trail development efforts, and the County has had discussions with the railroad about acquisition. More discussions between the County and railroad will be needed in the future, and Lehigh County is raising funds for acquisition.

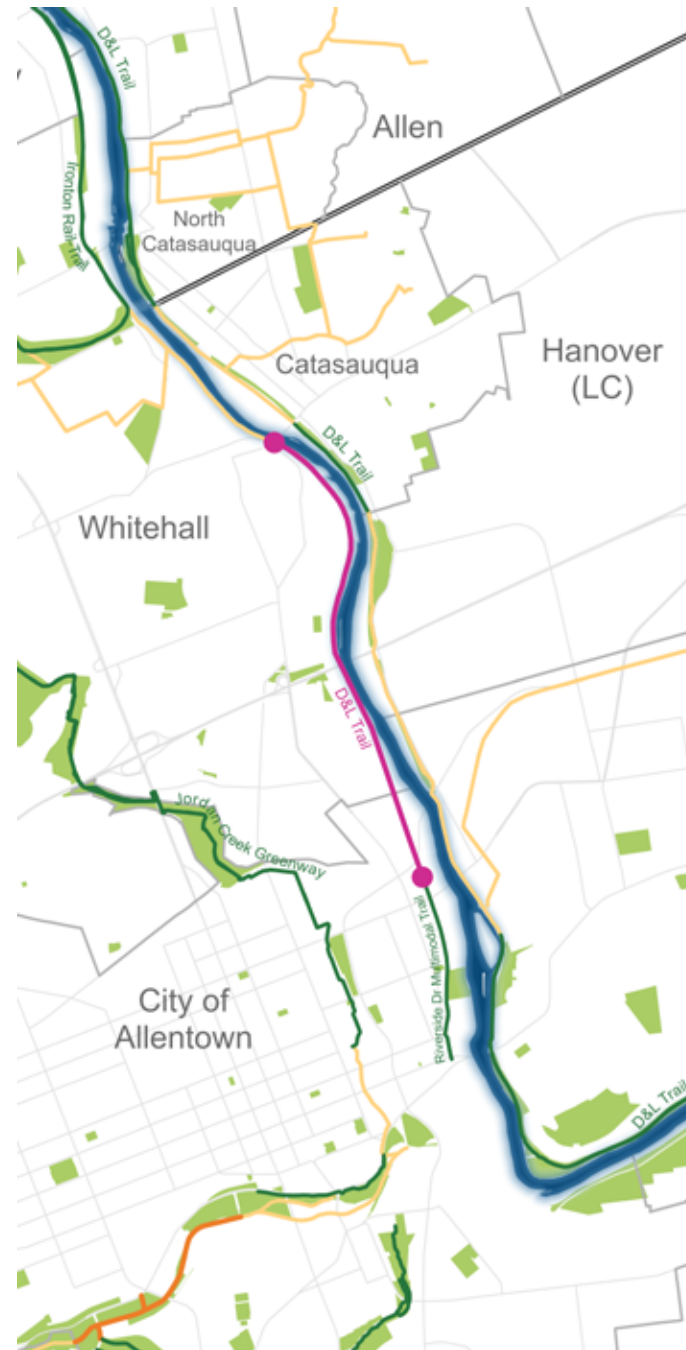
Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



D&L TRAIL - RIVERSIDE DRIVE / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 6



Municipalities: City of Allentown, Whitehall Township

Start: Riverside Drive and Furnace Street intersection, City of Allentown

End: Race Street Bridge, Whitehall Township

Description: The Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project will link Allentown and Whitehall Township, along the west side of the Lehigh River. The project was a successful applicant to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant in 2021. A key goal of trail construction in this area is to create a multimodal commuting corridor, providing safe access to schools, jobs, shopping, entertainment and residential areas, where it largely does not exist currently. Trail construction from Furnace Street to Race Street will be aligned with construction of the Riverside Drive extension. The LVPC is leading planning efforts to close the gap, and is coordinating with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Lehigh County, City of Allentown and Whitehall Township. The project is part of a broader vision, to create a 14-mile loop trail along the Lehigh River between the Hamilton Street Bridge in Allentown and the Route 329 Bridge in Cementon, Whitehall Township.

Status: Trail has already been constructed through the first phase of the project, as there is an off-road shared-use path along Riverside Drive, between Hamilton Street and Furnace Street. Phase Two of the project is being designed and engineered. Received Carbon Reduction Program regional funding to help close funding gap. Working to leverage additional regional funds into project.

Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Under Construction
- Conceptual
- Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 7



Municipalities: City of Allentown, Salisbury Township

Start: Little Lehigh Parkway Path at Kline's Bridge, Allentown

End: Cedar Beach Trail at Hamilton Street, Allentown

Description: This project provides a safe multimodal connection between some of Allentown's most popular recreation destinations, including the Lehigh Parkway, Rose Garden and Cedar Beach Park. This project is Phase 2 of 3 of an initiative to build out the MLK Trail, which will provide more continuity between the City's parks and create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive has high levels of traffic and acts as a barrier between residential and recreational areas. The projects will greatly enhance multimodal connectivity throughout Allentown.

Status: The City is leading trail development efforts, and Phase 2 is undergoing design and engineering.

Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Blueway
- Under Construction
- Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



STOCKERTOWN TO TATAMY RAIL TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 8

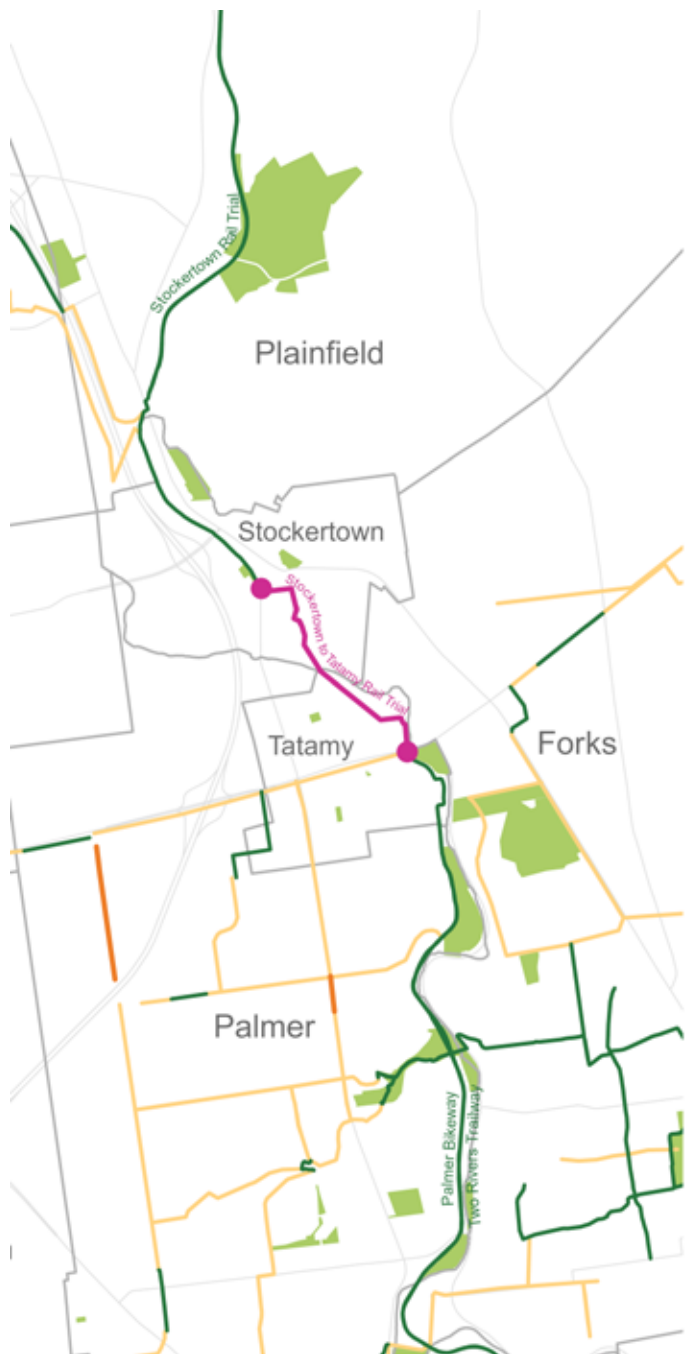
Municipalities: Stockertown Borough, Tatamy Borough, Forks Township

Start: Tatamy Trail trailhead at Main Street, Tatamy Borough

End: Stockertown Rail Trail at Sherman Metzgar Park, Stockertown Borough

Description: An approximately one-mile gap between the Stockertown Rail Trail and Tatamy Trail, which is the last missing segment of continuous trail that connects Easton and the D&L Trail to the Slate Belt. Connecting this gap would provide enhanced recreation opportunities and multimodal access across Northampton County. The Stockertown to Tatamy gap has been identified as a top trail gap by both the LVPC and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Status: The County is leading trail development efforts in this area and coordinating with the municipalities. At the start of the gap, in Tatamy, there is a sidewalk crossing of Bushkill Creek on the Main Street Bridge, and the Borough is applying for grant funding to enhance this crossing and construct trail through Braden Park, to the Uhler Road and Bushkill Drive intersection. Within the gap area, trail routing has not been determined yet, due to environmental factors and landowner negotiations. One possible route is along Uhler Road and Sullivan Trail, then passing through the Bauer Preserve, a 43-acre parcel in the gap area acquired by Northampton County in 2025. The County is in the process of land and right-of-way acquisitions in this area, which will help determine trail routing.



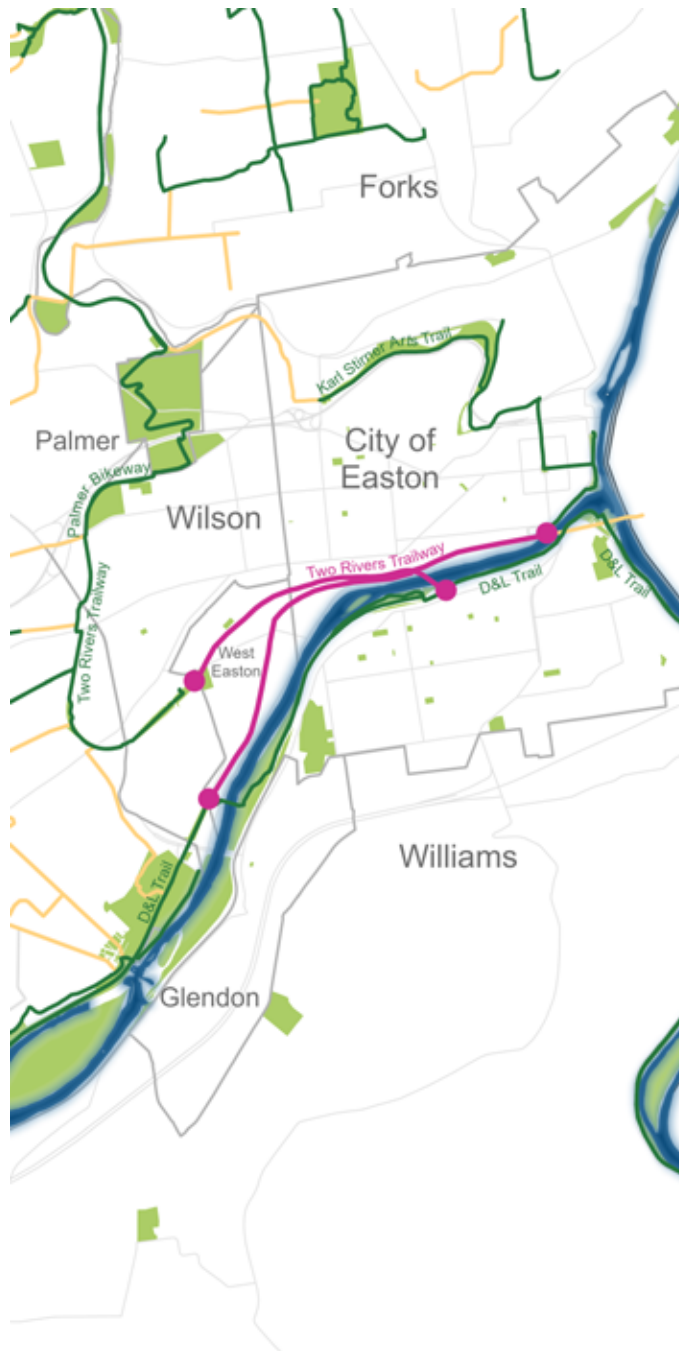
Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Under Construction
- Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



TWO RIVERS TRAIL EXTENSION / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 9



Municipalities: City of Easton, West Easton Borough

Start: Two Rivers Trailway between S. 24th Street and Gerald W. Gross Community Park, West Easton D&L Trail at Glendon Hill Road, West Easton

End: Lehigh Drive and Larry Holmes Drive intersection, Easton

Description: Trail development in this gap area presents an opportunity to connect two of the region's most popular trails, the D&L Trail and Two Rivers Trailway, to downtown Easton and its riverfront. Easton aims to construct trail from the Lehigh Drive and Larry Holmes Drive intersection along rail rights-of-way parallel to Lehigh Drive. This right-of-way splits at the inactive Easton & Northern Railroad bridge, near the Lafayette Crew Boathouse. The rights-of-way gradually diverge, with one connecting to the D&L Trail at Glendon Hill Road in West Easton, and the other connecting to the end of the Two Rivers Trailway in West Easton, between S. 24th Street and Gerald W. Gross Community Park. Future opportunities include a Highline trail east of Lehigh Drive, using inactive railroad bridges, through Delaware Canal State Park and across the Delaware River into Phillipsburg, NJ.

Status: Easton and West Easton are in the process of acquiring properties within their jurisdictions to use for trail development. Rights-of-way from the Two Rivers Trailway to the railroad bridge at the Boathouse is owned by the municipalities, and they are seeking funding for trail development in this section.

Current Trail Status

— Critical Trail Gap

— Open

••• Multiple Trails Open within Park

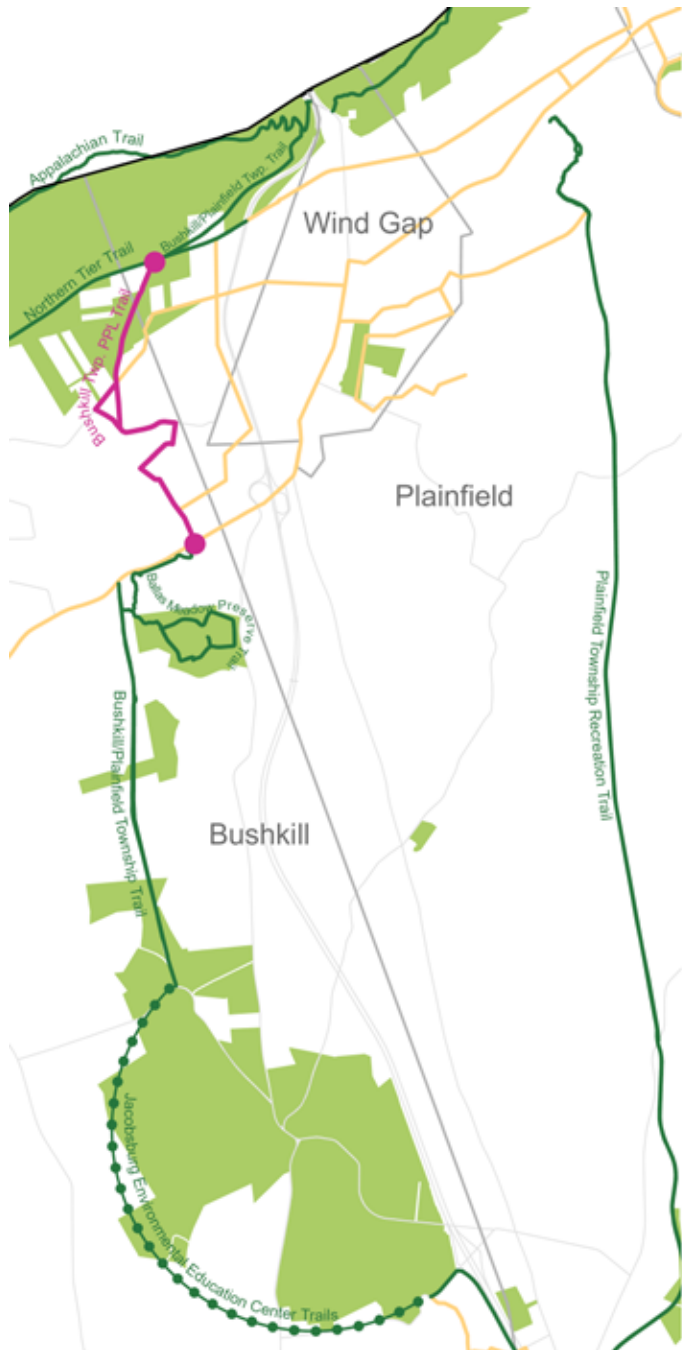
— Blueway

— Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas



BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP PPL TRAIL / CRITICAL PRIORITY GAP 10



Municipalities: Bushkill Township, Plainfield Township, Wind Gap Borough

Start: Bushkill Township Trail parking lot at E. Moorestown Road (Route 512), Bushkill Township

End: Appalachian Trail at Wind Gap, Plainfield Township or Wind Gap Borough

Description: This gap separates the Bushkill Township Trail and Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center from the Appalachian Trail. Connecting the regional trail network to the Appalachian Trail, which draws visitors from across the country, encourages more users to visit nearby recreation areas and businesses. Trail construction in this area will extend the Two Rivers Trailway and improve multimodal connectivity in Northampton County.

Status: Bushkill Township has negotiated with landowners near the trailhead at Route 512 for trail easements. Additional trail has been constructed east of the trailhead with the warehouse development on the south side of Route 512. The trail now ends at Route 512, between the two warehouses and shopping plaza. Trail rights-of-way have been secured along the warehouse on the north side of Route 512, but additional negotiations are needed with nearby landowners to bring the trail through this area. As of December 2025, the trail connection is planned to utilize utility rights-of-ways and shared-use on low volume roadways to route the trail up to Pennsylvania State Game Lands, north of 8th Street. There are trails on the Game Lands that lead to the Appalachian Trail. These will need to be widened and improved to encourage more users. Coordination is needed between Bushkill Township, Plainfield Township, Wind Gap Borough, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, National Park Service and private landowners. Additional connectivity opportunities exist by routing a trail east along 8th Street into Wind Gap Borough to establish a connection to the Appalachian Trail east of Route 33, which could encourage additional trail development in the Slate Belt area.

Current Trail Status

- Critical Trail Gap
- Open
- Multiple Trails Open within Park
- Conceptual

■ Parks, Open Space, Natural Areas

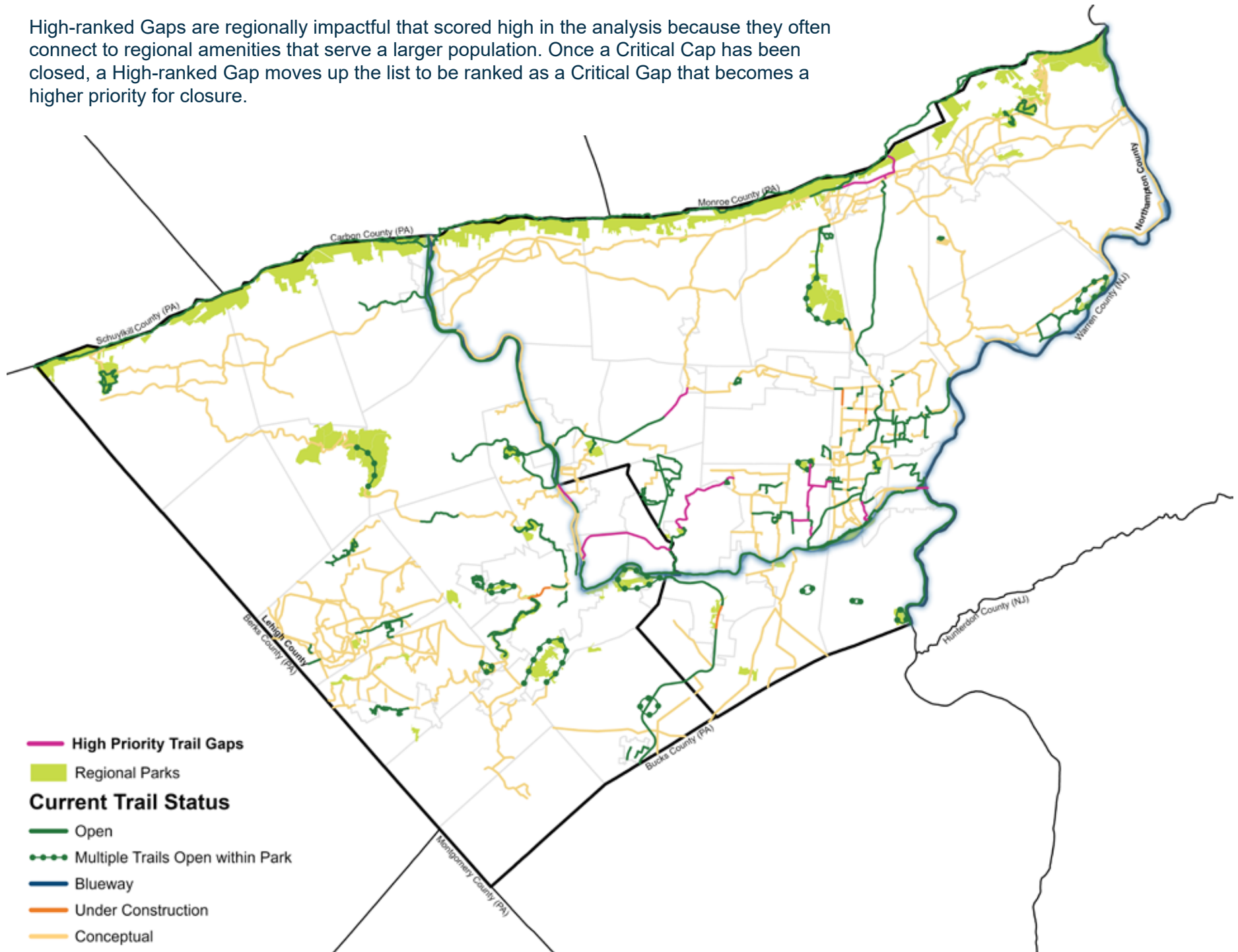




LEHIGH VALLEY HIGH GAPS

TRAIL	DESCRIPTION	MUNICIPALITY
Bethlehem Township Trail Network	Louise Moore County Park to Palmer Township Neighborhood Network	Bethlehem Township
Bethlehem Township Trail Network	Palmer Bikeway to Bethlehem Township Neighborhood Network	Bethlehem Township
D&L Trail	D&L from Race Street to North Catasauqua Borough Line	Catasauqua Borough
Monocacy Way	From Monocacy Park along Monocacy Creek to Housenick Memorial Park Trail	City of Bethlehem, Hanover Township (NC), Bethlehem Township
Nor-Bath Trail -Jacksonville Road to Bath	Current eastern terminus of Nor-Bath Trail at Jacksonville Rd to Mill Street in Bath Borough	East Allen Township, Bath Borough
Palmer Township Trail Network	From Palmer Bikeway on Freemansburg Avenue to D&L Trail	Palmer Township
The Highline	From the conceptual Two Rivers Trail Extension along Rail Line across Delaware River to Phillipsburg, NJ.	City of Easton
West Bethlehem Rail Trail	West Bethlehem Rail Trail from North Bradford Street to Pennsylvania Avenue and City line	City of Allentown
West Bethlehem Rail Trail	West Bethlehem Rail Trail from Pennsylvania Avenue/City Boundary to Monocacy Way	City of Bethlehem
Wind Gap / Pen Argyl Area Trail Network	From Appalachian Trail North of Pen Argyl Area High School to West Pennsylvania Ave. Trailhead and to N. Broadway continuing along 8th Street.	Plainfield Township, Wind Gap Borough, Pen Argyl Borough

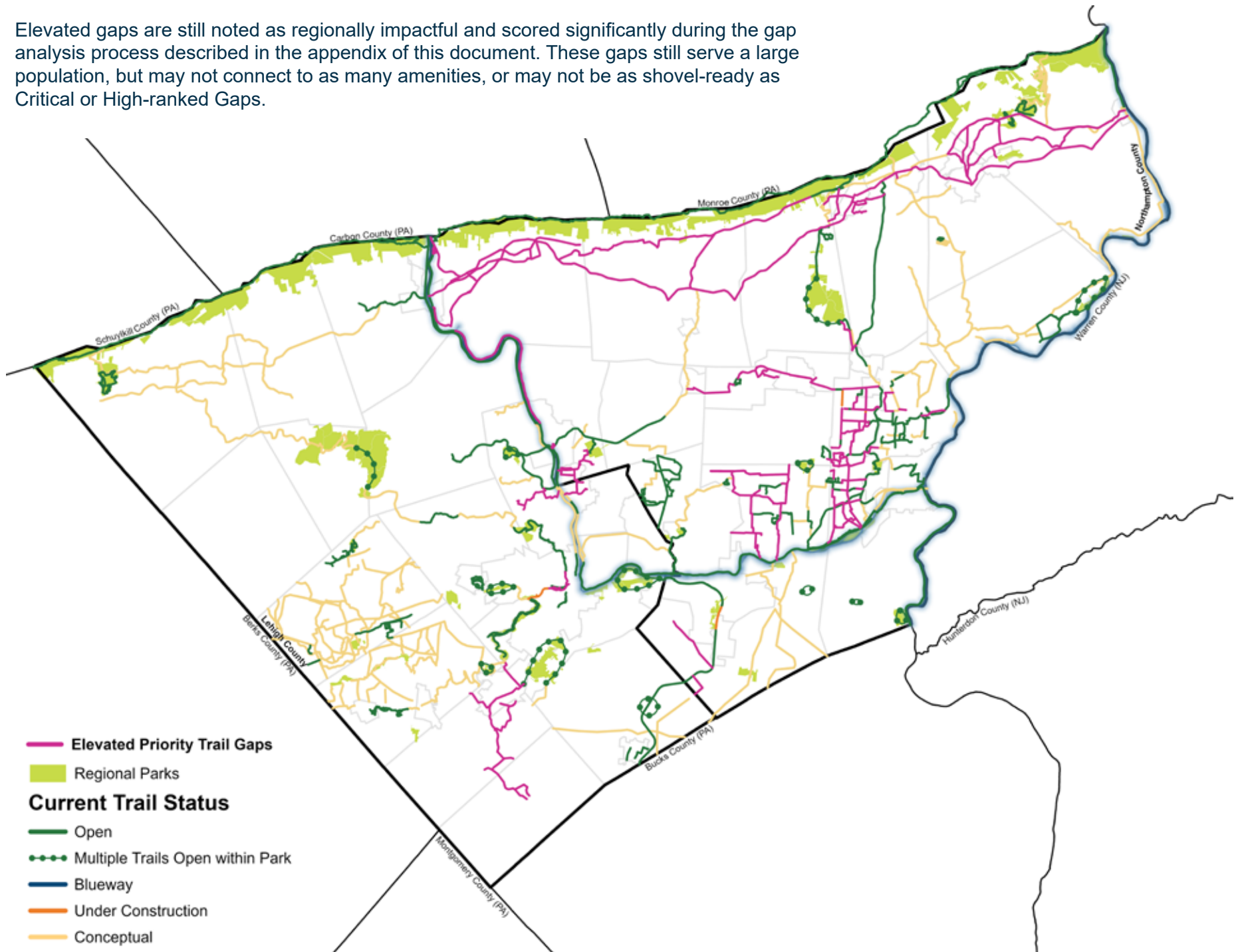
High-ranked Gaps are regionally impactful that scored high in the analysis because they often connect to regional amenities that serve a larger population. Once a Critical Cap has been closed, a High-ranked Gap moves up the list to be ranked as a Critical Gap that becomes a higher priority for closure.



LEHIGH VALLEY ELEVATED GAPS

TRAIL	DESCRIPTION	MUNICIPALITY
Bethlehem Township Trail Network	Multiple connections within Bethlehem Township Neighborhood Network	Bethlehem Township
Catasauqua-North Catasauqua-Allen Trail	D&L Trail at Catasauqua to Catasauqua Area High School and Nor-Bath Trail	Catasauqua Borough, North Catasauqua Borough, Allen Township
D&L Trail	Northampton to Walnutport, east side of Lehigh River	Walnutport Borough, Lehigh Township, Allen Township, Northampton Borough
MLK Trail Phase 3	Current Eastern terminus of MLK trail to Hamilton St. Future goal is to connect to the D&L trail, east Allentown and north to Jordan Creek Greenway	City of Allentown
Nor-Bath Trail	Jacksonville Road to Route 946 in Moore Township via Bath Borough	East Allen Township, Bath Borough, Chapman Borough, Moore Township
Northern Tier Trail	Extensive trail network spanning northern municipalities in Northampton County	Boroughs of Walnutport, Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Roseto, East Bangor and Portland Townships of Lehigh, Moore, Bushkill, Plainfield, Washington (NC) and Upper Mount Bethel
Palmer Township Trail Network	Multiple connections to Palmer Bikeway and D&L Trail from the Township's neighborhood network	Palmer Township
Saucon Region Trail Network	Saucon Rail Trail to Upper Saucon Township Line	Upper Saucon Township, Lower Saucon Township
Saucon Region Trail Network	Saucon Rail Trail to I-78 Overpass	Upper Saucon Township, Lower Saucon Township
Southwestern Lehigh County Trail Network	Extensive trail network spanning southwestern municipalities in Lehigh County	Salisbury Township, Emmaus Borough, Upper Milford Township, Lower Milford Township
Whitehall Township Trail Network	Schadt Ave to Ironton Rail Trail and D&L Trail	Whitehall township

Elevated gaps are still noted as regionally impactful and scored significantly during the gap analysis process described in the appendix of this document. These gaps still serve a large population, but may not connect to as many amenities, or may not be as shovel-ready as Critical or High-ranked Gaps.



LEHIGH VALLEY SUPPORTING GAPS

Allen Township Trail

Spur from Nor-Bath Trail at Savage Road North to Howertown Park and south to residential cul-de-sac at 8th Street

Allen Township

East Allen Township Trail

Housing development along Hanoverville Rd to Nor-Bath Trail at Bicentennial Park

East Alen Township

Forks Township Trail Network

- Ramblewood Drive Trail
- Uhlers Crossing Network
- Two Rivers Trailway to Forks Trail Network
- Fox Run Rd to Easton Area Middle School
- Winchester Drive Trail

Forks Township

Hanover Township Trail Network

Business park on High Point Blvd to Orchard Ln along agricultural and residential property lines

Hanover Township (NC)

Institute Road Trail

Loop from Institute Drive to natural area

Upper Mt Bethel Township

Jordan Creek Greenway Trail

Trexler Nature Preserve to Leaser Lake

Lowhill Township, Weisenberg Township, Lynn Township

Saucon Region Trail Network

Upper and Lower Saucon Network

Upper Saucon Township, Lower Saucon Township

Saucon Region Trail Network

South Mountain Preserve to Upper Milford Township Line

Upper Saucon Township, Lower Saucon Township, Upper Milford Township, Salisbury Township

Twin Lakes

Loop from Totts Gap Road to natural area

Upper Mount Bethel Township

Two Rivers Trail 9(A)

Stockertown to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center Trail

Stockertown Borough, Plainfield Township

Upper Macungie Township Trail Network

Trail connections between residential, commercial and industrial areas

Upper Macungie Township

Washington Township Recreation Complex

Washington Blvd to Ackermanville Road through Washington Township Recreation Complex

Washington Township (NC)

Whitehall Township Trail Network

- Ringer Road to Ironton Rail Trail
- Spruce St. to D&L Trail

Whitehall Township

Lower Macungie Trail Network

Various independent trail routes in Township.

Proposed trail connection between southern terminus of Lehigh Parkway and Alburtis Trail Network through Lower Macungie Township and Macungie Borough

Lower Macungie Township

Macungie Trail Network

- Hills at Lock Ridge Trail to Locust Street.
- Route 100 to Lower Macungie Trail Network

Upper and Lower Macungie Township

Martins-Jacoby Watershed Trail Network

Loop trail and spurs through numerous Slate Belt communities

Portland Borough, Upper Mount Bethel Township, Lower Mount Bethel Township, Washington Township (NC), Forks, Township, Plainfield Township, Roseto Borough, Bangor Borough and East Bangor Borough

Minsi Lake Nature Trail

Connecting nature preserves north of Minsi Lake to existing nature trail around lake

Lynn Township

Nor-Bath Trail - Bath to Route 946

Regional connection between Bath Borough and PA Route 946 in Moore Township

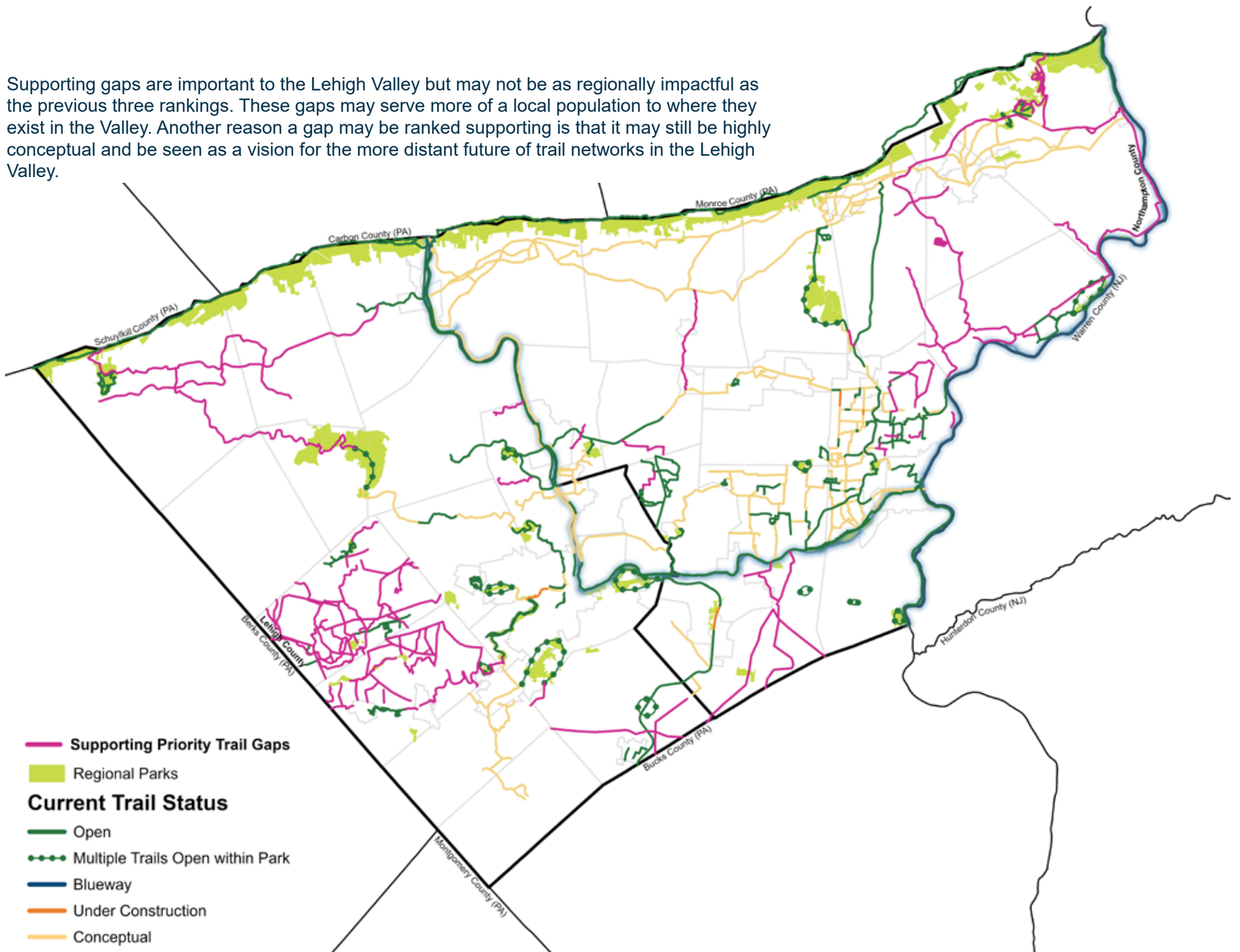
Moore Township, Chapman Borough, East Allen Township, Bath Borough

Northern Lehigh Rail Trail

Allemanengel Road to Slate Heritage Trail near Emerald Washington Township (LC) along rail right-of-way

Lynn Township, Heidelberg Township, Washington Township (LC)

Supporting gaps are important to the Lehigh Valley but may not be as regionally impactful as the previous three rankings. These gaps may serve more of a local population to where they exist in the Valley. Another reason a gap may be ranked supporting is that it may still be highly conceptual and be seen as a vision for the more distant future of trail networks in the Lehigh Valley.





Implementation Strategies

There are various strategies available for stakeholders to plan, finance and construct trail infrastructure.

To acquire funding, there are many grant programs available for stakeholders. Given that trails serve many purposes, from recreation to transportation, funding opportunities from a variety of agencies may be available depending on the type of project. Some potential funding opportunities for trails in the Lehigh Valley include:

Trail Funding Programs

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)

(PennDOT)

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA)

(PennDOT)

Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF)

PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP)

DCED

Local Share Account Grant programs

DCED

Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF)

Pennsylvania Environmental Council (FEC)

Pennsylvania Water Trail Mini-Grants

Before acquiring funding to design or construct trails, local governments can utilize various planning tools to identify current and future trail needs. An initial step is to update comprehensive plans, as well as other specific plans, such as trail and active transportation plans, if possible. These planning documents examine land use trends and establish goals and strategies to help guide near and long-term community decision making.

Local government plans are the foundation of how a community envisions itself in the future. Goals and strategies from plans can be implemented through zoning code and subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) updates, as they can provide incentives for trail construction and set aside land for open space or recreation. Communities can also require trails and sidewalks through the subdivision and land development process. Adding a trail or sidewalk requirement in SALDOs is an effective way to improve trail connectivity while minimizing costs to taxpayers.

For example, the City of Allentown's SALDO requires properties proposed for subdivision or land development approval to provide a trail easement if one is identified on the property in an adopted trails plan.

Specific locations for future trail development can be identified by municipalities through creating or updating their official map. By identifying trails on an official map, municipalities can formalize and prioritize their intent to construct trails, which can be leveraged when pursuing funding sources for public projects. Utilizing these various planning tools allows municipalities to accommodate changing community priorities or other issues. Demonstrating a community's intent to develop or enhance trails through tools like plans and official maps helps trail projects more easily go from concept to reality.

To promote trail connectivity across municipal borders, local governments, community organizations and other stakeholders can participate in collaborative efforts.

Here in the Lehigh Valley, THE LINK, is a group of local governments, non-profits and advocates that work together to promote the region's trail network. Approaching trails from a regional lens encourages greater opportunities for connectivity, grant funding and usage of trails. Educational opportunities about trail planning and infrastructure are available in-person, through PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) classes, held at the LVPC's office. In addition, there are many informational guides online, provided by the LVPC, WeConservePA, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and more.

Alignment with Regional Planning Efforts

The Trail Connection Strategy supports recommendations within existing initiatives such as *the Lehigh Valley Priority Climate Action Plan for Transportation Decarbonization* and *Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan*. LVPC will begin updating *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in 2026. Data updates have already been initiated for the Regional Plan, which will reference the findings of the Trail Connection Strategy.

The Trail Connection Strategy supports recommendations within the recently adopted regional climate resiliency plan,

Pathway to a Resilient Greater Lehigh Valley, by identifying active transportation as a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle travel and congestion, while improving local air quality.

This report also aligns with actions and strategies in the Lehigh County and Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plans, with key health and economic benefit findings of the 2014 Lehigh Valley Return of Environment Study, and the 2025 Northampton County Return on Environment Study.





Next Steps

This report highlights high priority conceptual trail connections, that have been identified in published planning documents. However, by looking at the regional map, there remain gap locations in the trail network where no conceptual trails are currently identified. This map can serve as a starting point for municipalities and planning agencies to identify future additional conceptual trail connections.

By first identifying future trail connections a community wishes to have in a plan, the process to eventually get it constructed can begin. Identifying conceptual trail connections in planning documents allows them to be elevated in reports such as this one and makes grant applications to implement them much more competitive.

Update of Trail Data and Gap Closure Information

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission will implement an annual process to update regional trail network data and trail gap closure status. This process will incorporate information submitted by regional stakeholders, including,

but not limited to, municipal and county governments, transportation agencies, trail advocacy organizations, land management agencies, and other relevant public, private and non-profit partners.



Appendix and Resources

Methodology

Trail gaps in the Lehigh Valley's trail network were prioritized using a variety of different methodological factors. These factors are listed below with information about each one. Only trail gaps specifically identified within an adopted local or county active transportation or parks, recreation and open space plan were considered.

Trail Gap Evaluation Criteria

The following section outlines the full set of evaluation criteria used to assess regional trail gaps for planning, prioritization and funding purposes. Criteria draw upon federal, state, regional and local planning frameworks—including the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Pennsylvania state transportation law, and U.S. Code Title 23—and align with adopted Lehigh Valley plans such as *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and *Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan*.

***FutureLV: The Regional Plan* Alignment**

Statutory Alignment

- Evaluate whether the project supports the goals of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), relevant Pennsylvania state law, and 23 U.S.C. requirements for metropolitan planning.
- Flag projects that fail to meet any applicable federal, state or regional requirements.

Commuter Trail System Consistency

- Determine whether the trail gap falls within an identified Commuter Trail corridor as mapped in *FutureLV*.

Movement Between Centers

- Assess whether the proposed gap closure enhances movement of people between designated Centers, consistent with the plan's place-based strategy.

"Types of Places" Framework

- Confirm the project encourages linkages across all place types in the Valley.

Walk/Roll: Active Transportation Plan Alignment

Project Consistency

- Projects listed in *Walk/Roll/LV: Active Transportation Plan*.
- Additional assessment ensures the project remains consistent with the region's long-range multimodal vision.

Regional-Specific Criteria

Economic Impact Area (EIA) Location

- Determine whether the gap is located in an Economic Impact Area (EIA). A composite index of need based on energy, transportation, housing, health, workforce, pollution, water/wastewater and broadband indicators.

Sidewalk Inventory Relationship

- Assess sidewalk conditions and connectivity where applicable.
- Evaluated through geospatial analysis utilizing LVPC's Geographic Information System (GIS) sidewalk inventory layer.

Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Transit Integration

- Identify if the project improves access to or from the public transit network.

Safety: Suspected Serious Injuries/Fatalities

- Use PennDOT pedestrian and bicycle crash data (suspected serious injuries and fatalities) from the Commonwealth's Traffic Information Repository.
- Aligns with the *Lehigh Valley Traffic Safety Plan* goal to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 50% in 20 years.

Employment Connectivity

- Assess whether the gap closure improves access to employment centers.

School/Educational Connectivity

- Measure the connection to schools, colleges or educational institutions.

High Population Density

- Apply federal/state planning statutes weighting population density impacts.
- Evaluate whether the project falls within 10 minutes of a trail, consistent with DCNR priorities.

Population Affected by Gap Closure

- Utilize 1/4 mile buffer-based service area analysis.
- Identify methods for calculating non-resident users (e.g., employment density, community facilities, regional draw).

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural (DCNR) Resources Statewide Priority Trail Gaps

Statewide Gap Alignment

- Determine whether the project is identified as a priority trail gap by Pennsylvania DCNR.
- Compare DCNR priorities with regional gap mapping to assess overlap.

Connection to Public Recreational Facilities

Trails

- Evaluate direct connections to existing public trails.

Parks

- Confirm linkages to public parks; define parks within the document as publicly owned or publicly accessible recreational spaces.

Length of Trail Gap Segment

Short-Segment Prioritization

- Gaps less than five miles in length feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

Shovel Readiness

Existing/Proposed Project Status

- Identify whether the project appears as a conceptual trail or in prior inventories

Engineering & Design Completion

- Assign points based on level of design completion.

Permitting Status

- Evaluate whether necessary environmental and regulatory permits have been secured.

Funding Secured

- Assess any dedicated or committed funding sources.

Rights-of-Way (ROW) Status

- Identify whether ROW is acquired, under negotiation or unknown.

Tie-Breaker Use

- Applied shovel-readiness as a criteria.

RESOURCES & TOOLS

Key Partners



Delaware & Lehigh (D&L)
National Heritage Corridor



The LINK
Trail Network



Coalition for Appropriate
Transportation (CAT)



PA Department of
Transportation



Community Bike
Works (CBW)



Lehigh County
Parks & Recreation



Northampton County
Parks & Recreation



Lehigh Valley
Greenways



PA Department of
Conservation and
Natural Resources

Maps and Plans Referenced for this Strategy

DCNR Trail Map

Pennsylvania Trail Plan

Lehigh County Livable Landscapes

Northampton County Livable Landscapes

Future LV: The Regional Plan

Trail Implementation Grants

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Motorized Trails Grant

Pennsylvania Recreational Trails (PRT) motorized projects. PRT motorized projects include the development, rehabilitation or maintenance of designated routes on land for all types of motorized recreation activities, as well as the purchase or lease of equipment to be used exclusively for the maintenance or construction of land and water trails and trail-related facilities.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Non-Motorized Trails Grant

Trail projects include the acquisition, planning, development, rehabilitation or maintenance of designated routes on land or water for non-motorized recreation activities, as well as the purchase or lease of equipment to be used exclusively for the maintenance or construction of non-motorized land and water trails and non-motorized trail-related facilities.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Park Rehabilitation and Development Grant

These projects involve the rehabilitation and development of public parks, recreation facilities, greenways and river conservation projects.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Land Acquisition and Conservation Grant

These projects involve the purchase and/or donation of land for park and recreation areas, greenways, critical habitat areas and/or open space.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Recreation and Conservation Planning Grant

Planning projects study the needs, benefits and opportunities for future land acquisition, development and/or management of parks, recreational facilities, critical habitat, open space, natural areas, greenways and river/watershed corridors.

**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation -
Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program**

The federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) provides funding for projects and activities defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose and safe routes to school projects.

**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Multimodal Transportation Fund Program**

The program is intended to provide financial assistance to municipalities, councils of governments, businesses, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, and ports and rail freight entities to improve transportation assets that enhance communities, pedestrian safety and transit revitalization.

**Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic
Development Greenways, Trails, and Recreation
Program**

Projects which involve development, rehabilitation and improvements to public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails and river conservation.

**Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic
Development Multimodal Transportation Fund Program**

Funds may be used for the development, rehabilitation and enhancement of transportation assets to existing communities, streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development.

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Highlands Conservation
Act Grant Program**

State agencies, counties and municipalities are eligible through this program to receive grant funds to acquire land that can be used for trail and greenway development.

**Department of Revenue - Redevelopment Assistance
Capital Program Funds**

RACP projects are authorized in the Redevelopment Assistance section of a Capital Budget Itemization Act, have a regional or multi-jurisdictional impact, and generate substantial increases or maintain current levels of employment, tax revenues, or other measures of economic activity.



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Special Thanks to Christian Martinez for his contributions drafting the Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy and to Mackenzie Geisner for mapping and analysis.

**For more information
visit the LVPC website @ LVPC.org**



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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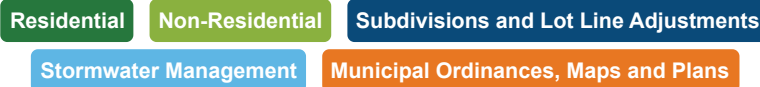
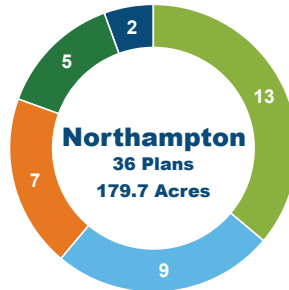
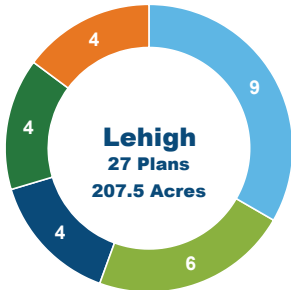
Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: April 2026

Project	Municipality	Brief Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Application to Renew Approval of Existing Groundwater Withdrawal Project (DRBC Review)	Alburtis Borough	Application by the Borough of Alburtis to renew approval of an existing groundwater withdrawal of up to 11.87 million gallons per month (mgm) of groundwater from four existing wells (Wells 1, 2, 3A and 4) to supply the Borough's public water supply distribution system. The system currently serves water to approximately 2,361 customers. The applicant anticipates the current allocation of groundwater to meet its demands over the next ten years.	Aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> action to 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).
Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update (Act 537 Review)	Bethlehem Township	<p>The LVPC reviewed a previous version of this plan in September 2024, commenting on several proposed sewage planning alternatives. Subsequently, the plan was submitted to PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) for its review and comment. This current version has been updated to address PA DEP comments.</p> <p>The majority of the Township is served by public sewer facilities, and a small portion of the Township is served by on-lot disposal systems (OLDS). However, this draft Act 537 Plan considers the remaining parcels currently served by OLDS.</p> <p>The selected planning alternatives from the 2024 version considered to accomplish the Township's Act 537 goals are still applicable to the current update. Additionally, the Township has: clarified its position on and the conditions for mandatory public sewer connections for properties adjacent to existing public sewer mains, identified specific areas for future public sewer connection, and indicated that it will utilize its adopted On-Lot Sewage Disposal Ordinance and On-Lot Disposal Management System program.</p> <p>LVPC notes that in the interim, the Township conducted a door-to-door survey in 2025 to assess the condition of the existing on-lot disposal systems. Township personnel surveyed 132 of the 273 properties served by on-lot disposal systems. Based on the assessment, none of the systems surveyed were confirmed malfunctions.</p>	Ensuring the proper management of on-lot and public sewage disposal systems supports <i>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</i> action to 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2). The planned sewer extensions proposed are in areas designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan and thus aligns with <i>FutureLV</i> actions to 'match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity' (of Policy 1.1), and 'promote development in areas with public sewer and water capacity' (of Policy 3.2). The LVPC recommends continued coordination with the Township and City of Bethlehem on potential infrastructure upgrades and capacity throughout the system and at the wastewater treatment plant, to ensure there is adequate capacity to support the long-term sewage disposal needs of the Township.

Plan Activity by County



Regional Totals*

6
Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments
28
Development
18
Stormwater Management
11
Municipal Ordinances, Maps and Plans
387.2
Acres

Residential Development

214 Total Units

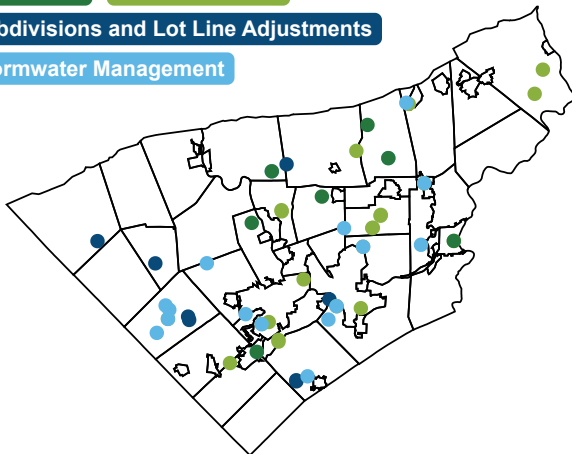


Non-Residential Development

680,534 Total Square Feet

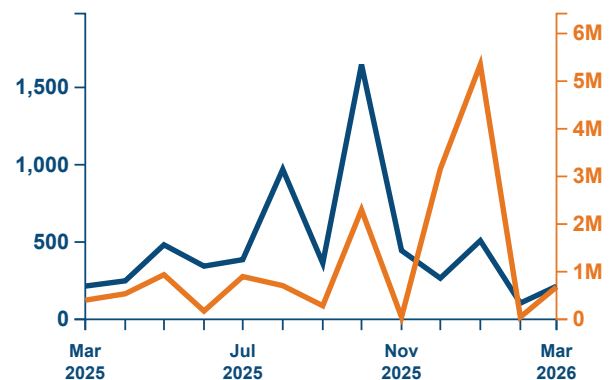


Location of Development



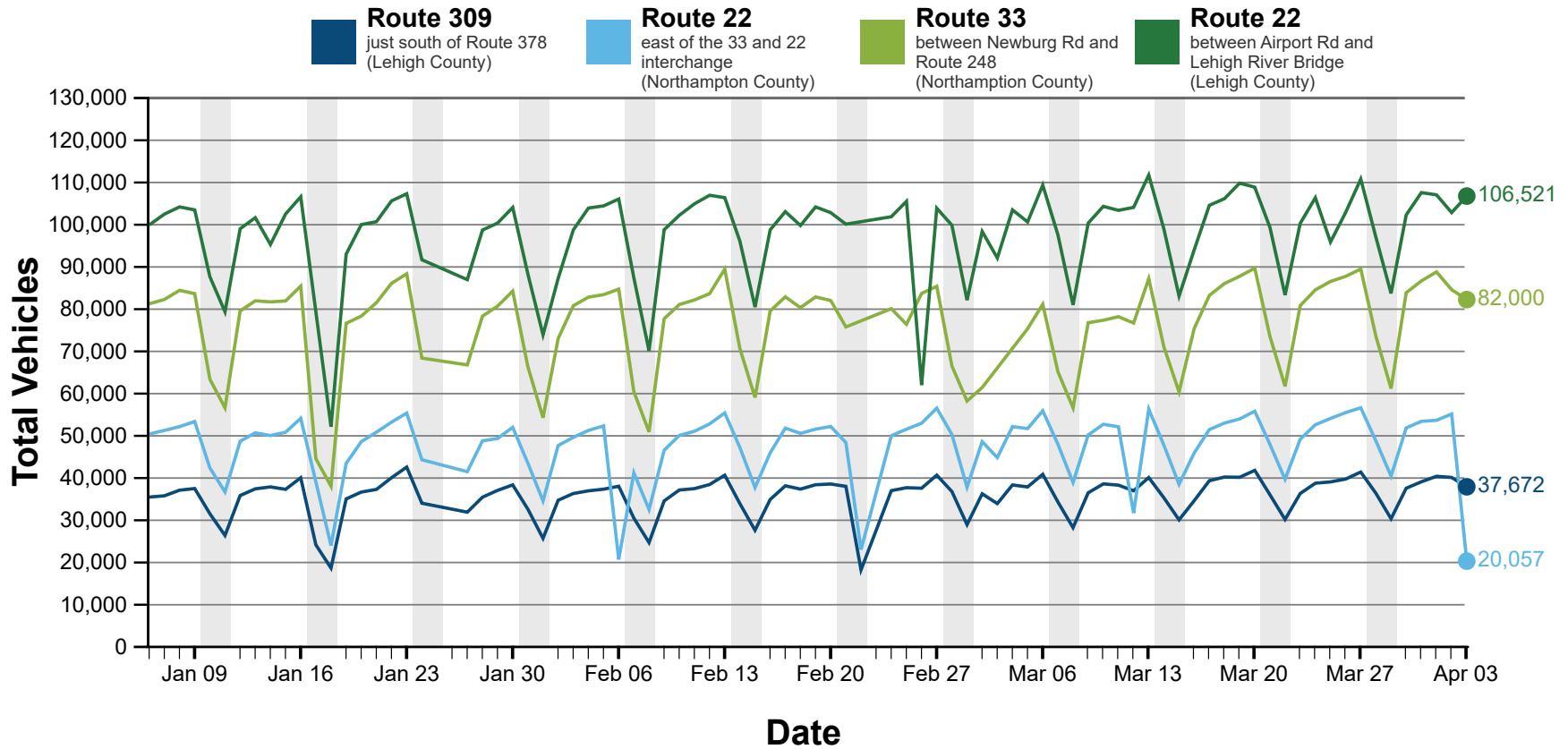
Development Trends

Residential Units Non-Residential Square Footage



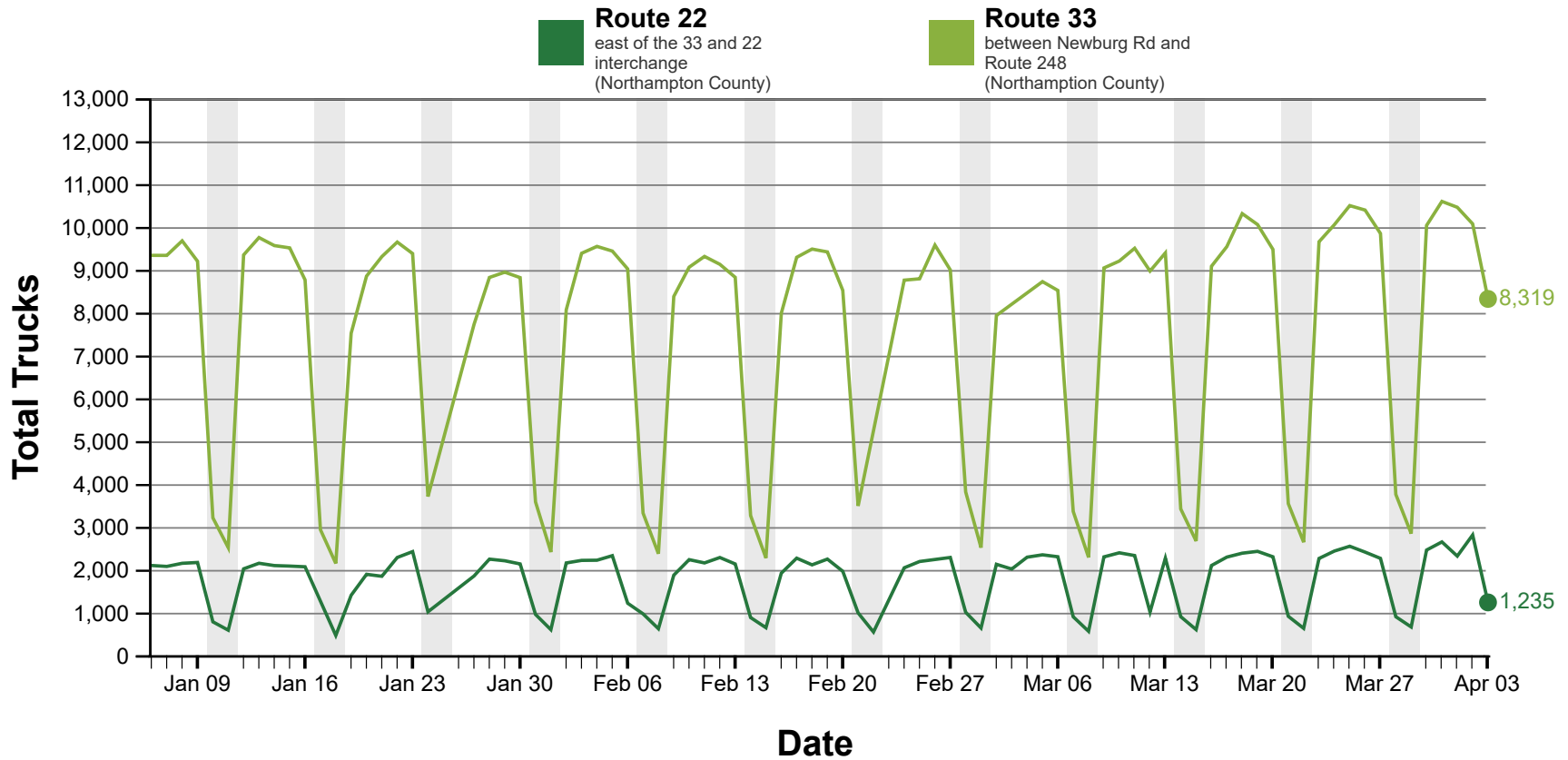
*Includes preliminary and final plans
**Warehouse is a subset of Industrial

Traffic Volumes Throughout the Lehigh Valley



**Data from Jan/5/2025 - Apr/3/2026 at daily intervals*

Truck Volumes Throughout the Lehigh Valley



*Data from Jan/5/2025 - Apr/3/2026 at daily intervals



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Chair

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Vice Chair

PHILLIPS ARMSTRONG
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BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 7, 2026
TO: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
FROM: Hannah Milagio, Regional Planner for Community Engagement
REGARDING: Public Engagement, Education and Grants

Public Engagement

The most recent **Plan Lehigh Valley National Public Radio** show, which aired at 6:30 pm, April 6 on WDIY radio 88.1 FM, introduced listeners to the recently released Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy, with co-author and LVPC Transportation Planner Evan Gardi. Gardi discussed how the LVPC team inventoried the region's trail network to determine 57 trail gaps. Gardi explained how analyzing those gaps enabled the region to set a priority list of which gaps to invest in first, and he listed those that are considered critical to open as soon as possible. The podcast is now streaming at www.wdiy.org/show/plan-lehigh-valley and www.lvpc.org/news/v. The next Plan Lehigh Valley show will air Monday, April 6 at 6:30 pm.

The latest **Morning Call Business Cycle Column** published Sunday, March 30, focused on a busy 2025 development year in which the giant warehouse boom appeared to end, while the era of the hyperscale data center began. In the column, Becky explained the evolving development market that also includes a greater diversity of housing and a lot of proactive measures taken by communities across the region. The column is available at www.lvpc.org/news/v and mcall.com. The next column in the Morning Call will publish on Sunday, May 12.

Lehigh Valley Government Academy (LVGA)

PA Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI)

The following courses will be taught in-person at the LVPC Offices. Registration for these courses can be found at www.lvpc.org/lvga

Subdivision and Land Development

What: This course explores the work of planning commissions in the subdivision and land development review process, from pre-application meetings through project completion. The course was organized into three major sections: principles of subdivision and land development regulation and ordinance requirements; subdivision and land development review procedures; and design and technical standards of subdivision and land development. Participants received hands-on experience reviewing plans and designing alternative solutions.

When: May 6, 13, and 20; 5:30 pm to 9 pm

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

The following LTAP Classes will be held **in-person at the LVPC Office**. More information and registration can be found at <https://gis.penndot.gov/LTAP/default.aspx>

Asset Management

What: Many municipalities in Pennsylvania employ some sort of asset management, whether it is properly planning for road maintenance or using an advanced database system to manage signs, roads, bridges, and even park benches. This course will explore the variety of asset management systems and approaches used throughout Pennsylvania and help municipal officials determine the right level of asset management for their needs. Participants will enhance their knowledge of asset management systems and their benefits to municipalities.

When: Tuesday, April 28, 8 am to 12 pm

School Transportation Management

What: This course provides municipalities with a basic understanding of transportation management issues in and around schools. The course will identify key issues and outline tools and techniques available to mitigate them. At the end of this course, attendees will be able to: Understand the common transportation issues around schools; Understand the purpose of official school zones in Pennsylvania and how they are properly established; Apply solutions to manage congestion and safety concerns during school pickup and drop times.

When: Wednesday, May 6, 8 am to 12pm

All LVGA LTAP classes are free and are intended for municipalities, transportation non-profits and organizations with a transportation purpose. LTAP enables many practitioners who need courses with professional development hours (PDHs) to earn credits for maintaining their licenses and certificates.

Anyone can register at www.gis.penndot.gov/LTAP or by contacting Hannah Milagio at hmilagio@lvpc.org or 610-264-4544

Grant Opportunities

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR): Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)

This grant program, managed by the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC), builds connections between Pennsylvanians and the outdoors by supporting recreational improvements, natural resource conservation, and community revitalization efforts. C2P2 projects "lay the groundwork" for future land acquisition, development and/or management of parks, recreational facilities, critical habitat, open space, natural areas, greenways; and river, stream, and waterway watersheds.

Applications must be received by April 30 at 4 PM. More information is available at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/programs-and-services/grants/community-conservation-partnerships-program-grants>

PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED): Multimodal Transportation Fund

The Multimodal Transportation Fund provides grants to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of the commonwealth. Funds may be used for the development, rehabilitation and enhancement of transportation assets to existing communities, streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development.

Applications for the Multimodal Transportation Fund are accepted annually between March 1 and July 31. All applications and all required supplemental information must be electronically submitted by close of business on July 31st. More information is available at <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/multimodal-transportation-fund/>

PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT): Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) Transportation Enhancement Grants Program

The Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) Funding Program supports a range of safety and mobility projects located in Pennsylvania. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Vulnerable Road User Improvements
- Roadway Safety and Mobility Upgrades
- Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Projects
- Traffic Signal Improvements

Preapplication scoping forms are required. Feedback on preapplication submission forms submitted by April 30, 2026, will be provided by May 29, 2026. Applications will be accepted from June 1, 2026, to June 30, 2026. More information is available at <https://docs.penndot.pa.gov/Public/Bureaus/BOO/TSPortal/FUNDARLE.html>

THE MORNING CALL

Talking Business with Becky Bradley: Lehigh Valley development market evolves as new trends take hold

By Becky Bradley

For The Morning Call

March 27, 2026 at 8:00 AM



Three things became crystal clear during the 2025 development year: The colossal warehouse boom is over, the era of the hyperscale data center has arrived, and the Lehigh Valley's development market is strong and diversifying.

That's the short explanation of a very complex development market that is changing rapidly.

In 2025, while many regions across the nation saw a development slowdown, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission reviewed nearly 1,000 development-related plans between Lehigh and Northampton counties. Some clear trends emerged and can be found in our recently released [2025 Annual Report at lvpc.org](https://lvpc.org).

Housing proposals have dipped nationwide, largely due to inflation and interest rates. While these are factors here, new residential developments continue at a rapid clip. Nearly 5,900 new housing units were proposed last year, the third-most in nearly two decades. That's good news as we try to dig ourselves out of a 9,000-unit housing shortage. With lack of residential inventory, especially homeownership products, costs are being driven up and making it too expensive for many to build a future in the Lehigh Valley.

For only the third time in that period, twins and townhomes outnumbered single-family homes, and for the eighth consecutive year, apartments — nearly 3,500 of them — are easily the most proposed housing type. After decades in which the single-family home dominated this region's proposals, today's residential landscape is more diverse, and it's clear that developers are looking at different types of housing and even smaller homes, providing more options for everyone.

If all of these units are developed, it will go a long way to easing our shortage, but it generally takes 2-5 years to get projects through the approval, engineering and construction phases, and with the region projected to add roughly 4,500 new residents a year, we know reducing this shortage is going to be a decade-long battle.

It's why we'll soon release our Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy, along with our partners Lehigh County and the Urban Land Institute. It provides a menu of achievable ways to increase housing supply at appropriate income levels and in locations that support the needs of everyone.

The nonresidential side is changing even faster. We reviewed 10.8 million square feet of space, and just as had been the case the past seven years, industrial development dominated the development landscape. However, after a decade marked by million-square-foot industrial mega-buildings, we not only saw fewer warehouse proposals, but the ones we reviewed were typically in the 100,000- to 300,000-square-foot range. In the past decade, warehouses made up more than 90% of all industrial development, but last year it covered barely more than half. With Valleywide warehouse vacancies creeping above 10% in the fourth quarter of last year, the days of building new giant warehouses is done.

But the end of one era is the beginning of the next and the hyperscale data center has taken the mega-warehouse's place. These are the facilities that process data every time you search the web, use your car's navigation, send a photo or stream a movie. Like warehouses that host products from your favorite brands, hyperscale data centers keep your Netflix stream from buffering forever and forever.

Two were proposed in recent months, totaling 7.3 million square feet, and several others are in the works. These complexes are even bigger, but unlike the two dozen mega-industrial complexes we saw built since 2015, the multi-billion-dollar investment

needed to build these hyperscale data centers means we'll see a handful built soon but, as artificial intelligence takes a great hold on our day-to-day lives (and it will), they will become more and more commonplace.

Watch closely as each hyperscale data center is proposed because we are already seeing that most are moving through the regulatory review process on “spec” or speculation. This means that landowners, especially industrial property owners, are proposing million-plus-square-foot of hyperscale data center development, as new uses in existing industrial buildings or part of existing industrial developments. Some are being proposed for farmland, too. But spec development proposals advertise to Wall Street, real estate investment trusts and even known data center owners, like Meta and Amazon Web Services, that land and buildings are available for this type of development.

The easiest way to look at it is it's a pre-approval process, end-users unknown. It's the current “gold rush” all across the U.S. and even the world, because if a hyperscale data center chooses your property, the developer will make millions off the development, and many more than if it is a warehouse, or even a typical manufacturing facility.

This is exactly why the LVPC partnered with Lehigh County to update the [Industrial Land Use Guide](#). Our first guide, with Northampton County, focused on the warehouse boom around the COVID-19 pandemic. We have elevated the issues associated with hyperscale data centers and other new and emerging industrial uses by providing training to all Lehigh Valley local governments, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, American Society of Highway Engineers, American Planning Association – Pennsylvania, National Association of Regional Councils, community members and more to come. Both guides are available at lvpc.org and expect that you'll hear more about the issues associated.

All-in-all, the goal is not to get caught flat-footed, like many communities were during the warehouse boom. At the end of the day, whatever the flavor of the boom, it will have multigenerational consequences. Not planning for change means your community and our region won't be able to effectively manage or eliminate externalities, making us less livable and economically competitive. Balance in everything is always the goal, especially if the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code prohibits local governments from outright banning specific land uses or what we call LULUs (locally undesirable land uses).

What I find just as interesting is that commercial and public/quasi-public development remains strong. Each saw more than 1.3 million square feet of space proposed last year. On the commercial side, that came in the form of banks, car washes, convenience stores, service centers and hotels. In the public/quasi-public category, it meant hospitals, medical offices, school expansions, and police and fire facilities. All of those are the markings of a strong and diverse development economy. It's all a good indicator

of why the Lehigh Valley's gross domestic product of \$57 billion is more than two states and why we're now a net importer of workers. Nearly 5,000 more people come into the region to work each day than leave it to find work in other places.

All of this points to a simple truth: the Lehigh Valley's growth story is strong and resilient.

If you look at 2025 overall, the days of a single development type dominating the landscape appear to be fading, even if we still face challenges from specific land use types, like hyperscale data centers. Instead, what we're seeing is a more balanced mix of housing, industry, commercial activity and public investment. That diversity matters. Regions that rely too heavily on one sector can be vulnerable when markets shift. The Lehigh Valley, by contrast, continues to evolve.

Growth is never automatic, and it's never effortless. It requires thoughtful planning, strong partnerships with our 62 municipalities, and a clear understanding of the data that shapes our future. Housing must become more attainable. Infrastructure must keep pace. And communities must equip themselves with the tools to guide development in ways that strengthen neighborhoods and protect quality of life.

If 2025 told us anything, it's that the market will keep changing. Warehouse development is cooling and existing industrial developers are retooling. Data centers are on the rise. Housing types are diversifying. But the underlying story remains the same: people and businesses continue choosing the Lehigh Valley.

Next time you belly up to bar at your favorite neighborhood haunt, you can argue if it's all for the better or not. You are among friends, so keep calm, and remember change is the only constant.

This is a contributed opinion column. Becky Bradley is executive director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. She can be reached at planning@lvpc.org.