



Franklin Park Borough & Ohio Township Joint Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY
June 22, 2023



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Acknowledgments

This plan was put together with the assistance of the project Steering Committee, Borough and Township staff members, and the Borough and Township's elected and appointed officials. This plan reflects a significant contribution of time, expertise, advice, and feedback from the following individuals along with input and feedback from a variety of residents and other stakeholders that work or otherwise have a vested interest in the Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township communities. This plan would not have been possible without their valuable participation.

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Plan Acronyms Table

The following table spells out acronyms commonly used throughout the plan.

Organization, Entity, or Funding Source	Acronym
Allegheny Land Trust	ALT
American Rescue Plan Act	ARPA
Avonworth School District	ASD
Commonwealth Finance Authority	CFA
McCandless Township Sanitary Authority	MTSA
North Allegheny School District	NASD
North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance	NHWBRA
Ohio Township Sanitary Authority	OTSA
PA Department of Community and Economic Development	DCED
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	DCNR
PA Department of Environmental Protection	DEP
PA Department of Transportation	PennDOT
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission	SPC
US Department of Transportation	USDOT
West View Water Authority	WVWA

Executive Summary

The 2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township creates a framework to address preservation, parks and recreation, land use, zoning, trails and connectivity, transportation, stormwater and environmental issues, and multi-municipal collaboration for years to come in both municipalities, and to build upon the many assets and successes of both communities. The plan is the result of an almost two-year process to determine compatibility, to solicit and gather public input, and to ultimately develop an implementable comprehensive plan to address the needs of the Borough and Township over the next ten or more years. The 2023 Joint Plan establishes a vision for the Borough and Township to continue to be desirable places for people to live and to raise a family, to work, to play and explore, and to own and operate a business.

The plan highlights the many assets and amenities present across both municipalities and builds upon the various strengths of the Borough and Township while also addressing some of the bigger challenges that are present within the communities. Both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township continue to experience

growth in population and number of businesses. The combined population of both municipalities increased 57% between 2000 to 2020, from 14,446 residents to 22,657 residents. The growth in population is a result of additional housing units being built. There has also been significant non-residential development over the last few decades in both municipalities, including Mount Nebo Pointe in Ohio Township and growth in Franklin Park around the Wexford Interchange of Interstate 79.

The last comprehensive planning effort conducted by both municipalities, completed in the late 2000s, was done at the multi-municipal level in partnership with neighboring Sewickley Hills Borough. The Borough and Township chose to develop this Joint Comprehensive Plan for many reasons. It is becoming increasingly common for municipalities that share common interests, issues, and borders to work together on planning efforts to address topics like land use, transportation and traffic, stormwater and flooding, preservation, trails and connectivity, and economic development, to name a few. Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township share many similarities in terms of the issues they face on a



Blueberry Hill Park Activity Center in Franklin Park Borough



daily basis and already had established relationships before embarking on the development of the Joint Plan, including cross programming and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities, response to emergency management calls, equipment sharing for public works or other maintenance related issues, etc. This Joint Comprehensive Plan will continue the already established partnership between the Borough and Township well into the future.

The 2023 Joint Plan provides a clear path forward to address the most important and pressing needs in the Borough and Township. The plan focuses on several key theme areas that were identified as part of the visioning and public outreach component of the planning process. These key theme areas include the following:

- Greenspace and Preservation,
- Trails and Connectivity,
- Infrastructure,
- Managing the Impacts of Development,
- Stormwater and Environmental Issues,
- Places to Play, and
- Municipal Collaboration.

Several goals and objectives emerged through the planning process that tie into the key theme areas for the plan. The two most significant themes expressed by both the Steering Committee and the public are

the need for increased preservation efforts and the desire for greater connectivity – connectivity to and between neighborhoods, schools, parks, trails, and other amenities and destinations. In addition, building upon and strengthening the parks and recreation amenities present in both municipalities is a big need, as well as managing the impacts of development and reviewing municipal regulations to ensure that they are modern, up-to-date, and protect the surrounding community from noise, stormwater, traffic, and other development-related impacts.

Each theme area corresponds to its own Chapter in the plan and has its own set of goals, objectives, and strategies. The Implementation Chapter focuses on providing potential partners, timeframes for completion, and funding sources for the goals. The Implementation Matrix is organized by theme area.

Author Alan Lakein once said, “Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.” The 2023 Franklin Park Borough Ohio Township Joint Comprehensive Plan is our effort to plan for the future of the two municipalities while building upon the present and working to identify solutions and strategies to address the most pressing and important needs and issues within both municipalities. This plan is a guide for future decision making and policies in the Borough and Township.



Wayfinding Sign at Linbrook Park



Nature Trail at Ohio Township Park

Introduction

This Joint 2023 Comprehensive Plan for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township was developed over the course of a 22-month period to provide an understanding of how the Borough and Township have changed since their previous Comprehensive Plans were completed in 2006 and 2008, respectively. The new Joint Comprehensive Plan provides a snapshot of where the Township and Borough currently are and develops a roadmap for policy and decision-making for future years for several important topics including development, preservation of greenspace, parks and recreation, environmental and natural resources, trails and connectivity, infrastructure, and various community facilities and services.

What additional improvements are needed for the Borough's and Township's various parks and community amenities? What trails are needed to better connect neighborhoods to the many recreational assets and to connect both municipalities to neighboring communities? Where should development be targeted in the Borough and Township and what areas should be slated for open space, conservation, and preservation? These are all questions that the Joint Comprehensive Plan intends to address.

The Joint 2023 Comprehensive Plan outlines goals and strategies with an emphasis on the key themes that were identified during the planning process. These key theme areas are as follows **trails and connectivity, greenspace and preservation, managing the impacts of development, stormwater and environmental issues, places to play (parks, recreation, community facilities), infrastructure improvements, and areas for municipal collaboration.** The following plan chapters provide background and context for each of the seven key issues that emerged from the public engagement process.



Avonworth Community Park



Historic Home Near Linbrook Park



Sewickley Crossing Development Under Construction

Planning in Pennsylvania

A comprehensive plan is a community's opportunity to aspire to be a better version of itself for its residents and stakeholders. In the case of Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township, this plan was completed so that both municipalities can be an even better place to live, learn, work, and play in the years ahead.

Municipalities in Pennsylvania are required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) to adopt a comprehensive plan and to review it every ten years. A comprehensive plan provides a vision for what a community wants to look like in the future and the actionable steps it must take to make it a reality.

This Joint Comprehensive Plan serves as a policy guide for both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township, where the policy goals and recommendations that are included in the plan are to be implemented over a certain period of time, through a variety of action items, and by teaming up with various partner organizations and stakeholders. In addition, the decision to complete this plan jointly creates a culture of collaboration and support between the communities. Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township chose to create this plan in the Implementable Comprehensive Plan model, which focuses on building consensus on key issues through public input and engagement, and to identify realistic and achievable goals, projects, and initiatives to address the key issues identified in the plan.

As a policy guide and an overall vision for the Borough and Township as they march into the next decade, the 2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance to municipal staff, and elected and appointed officials in the decision-making process. The plan serves as a tool and guide for what matters most to the residents and stakeholders in both municipalities, and what they would like the future of their communities to look like, while providing steps to help preserve and enhance greenspace and open space, better connect neighborhoods to amenities, improve and enhance existing infrastructure, provide ample parks and recreation opportunities, manage the impacts of development on the area's natural and environmental resources, and improve the overall quality.

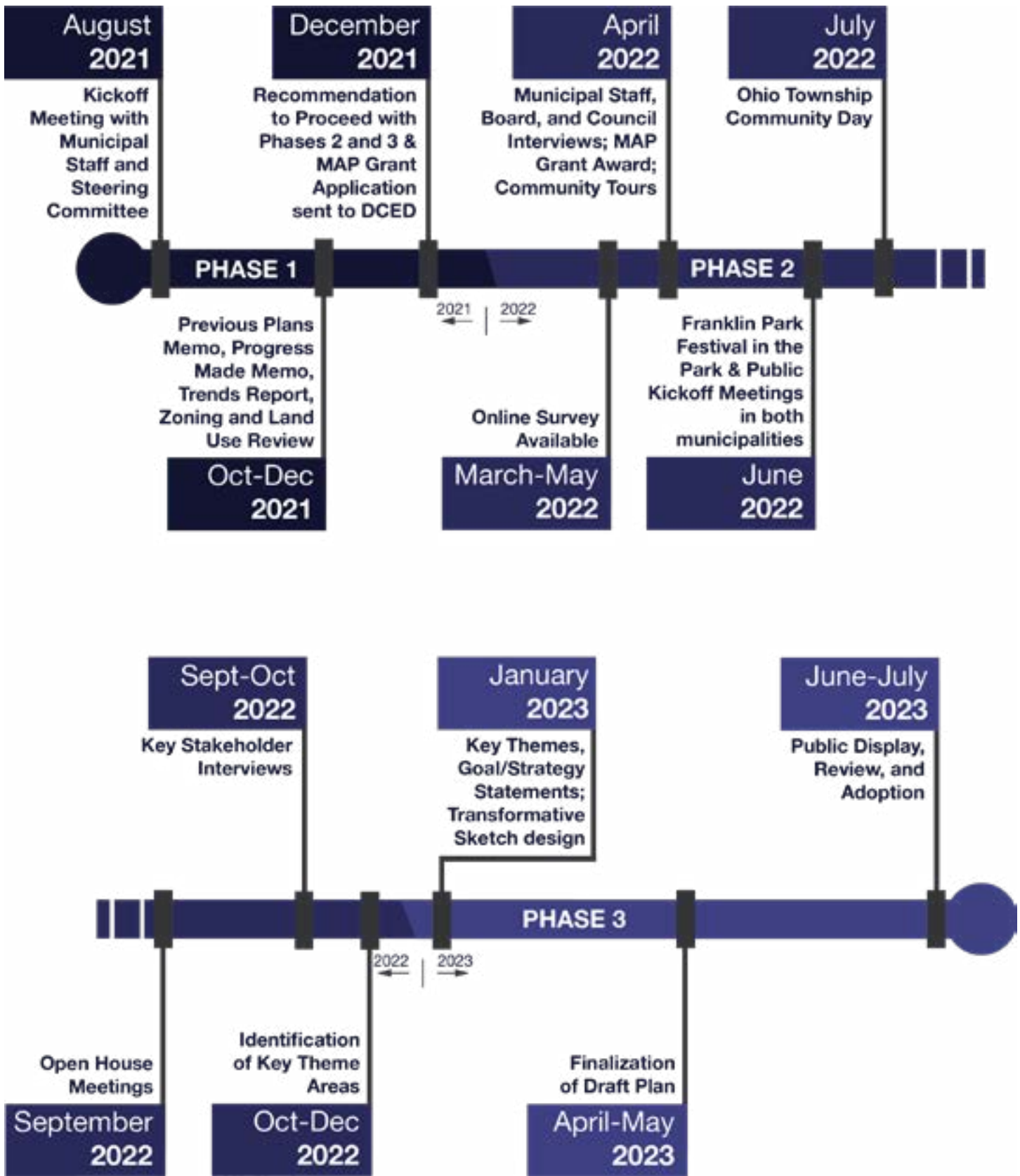
The Process

The planning process for this Joint Comprehensive Plan started in August of 2021, when Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG), the planning consultant, held a kick-off meeting to discuss the project and its goals with the Township, Borough, their respective Planning Commissions, and the appointed Steering Committee for the project. From there, the Borough, Township, and HRG worked through the proposed schedule and tasks that took about 22 months in total to ultimately develop the plan and its key themes, goals, and objectives. Below is a schedule of the overall planning process.

As part of the planning process, the Borough and Township relied heavily on input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was made up of several stakeholders within the community and Committee members were appointed by the Township Board of Supervisors and the Borough Council. Regular meetings were held with the Committee throughout the planning process and specific topics and issues were discussed at each meeting. All of the Steering Committee meetings were advertised and open to the public throughout the planning process. Several residents from both municipalities regularly attended the meetings.

Members of the Steering Committee played an integral part in the development of the plan and helped to create initial recommendations and to provide feedback and input. In addition to the Steering Committee, HRG also conducted Key Person Interviews of Borough and Township officials and staff, participated in a driving tour of the two communities, hosted an online community survey, and attended two community engagement events, which are discussed in more detail throughout this plan, and the specific results can be found in Appendix A.

PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE



Public Input & Engagement

The first phase of the planning process for the Joint 2023 Plan included a review of the existing comprehensive plans for both municipalities, the preparation and submittal of a Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grant application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to help cover the costs to create the plan, the development of a Trends Report, and the overall determination of compatibility of the Borough and Township prior to moving forward with the joint planning effort.

The second phase of the implementable comprehensive planning process focused on visioning, community outreach, and public engagement to determine the critical needs and issues to be addressed in the plan. As part of phase two, extensive outreach was conducted with the public and key stakeholders.

Residents and stakeholders were engaged in the process in many ways, including attendance at neighborhood pop up events, a public kickoff meeting, an online survey, and regular updates via the Township and Borough websites and social media outlets. The following list provides a summary of the public outreach efforts included in the planning process. Please note additional detail on the results of the various public input and engagement methods is provided in the plan's appendices, specifically in Appendix A.

Neighborhood Pop Up Events

Plan consultants from HRG participated in two neighborhood pop up events, one in each community, to gather input on the plan's direction. The neighborhood pop up events included the Franklin Park Festival in the Park event held at Blueberry Hill Park on June 25, 2022, and the Ohio Township Community Day event held at Ohio Township Community Park on July 23, 2022. General conversations with the public took place at the two events and feedback was gathered through a bingo activity that challenged residents to think about what they would like the future of their communities to look like.



Ohio Township Community Day 2022



Ohio Township Community Day 2022



Franklin Park Festival at the Park 2022

Online Community Survey

An online community survey was made available via Survey Monkey for residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to complete. A flyer advertising the survey was sent to all residents. The survey was available from March 14, 2022 through May 31, 2022 and a total of 1,031 responses were received. The results of the online survey helped to identify and confirm some of the key issues and needs in the communities. For example, the results of the survey confirmed that land preservation, trail connectivity, and streetscape improvements were important issues moving forward. In addition, desired development types and land uses included more restaurants, sports/entertainment venues, and retail specialty stores.



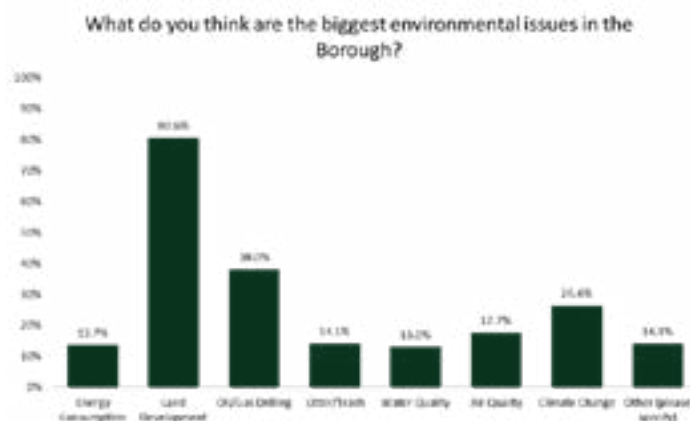
Advertising the Online Community Survey

Key Stakeholder Interviews

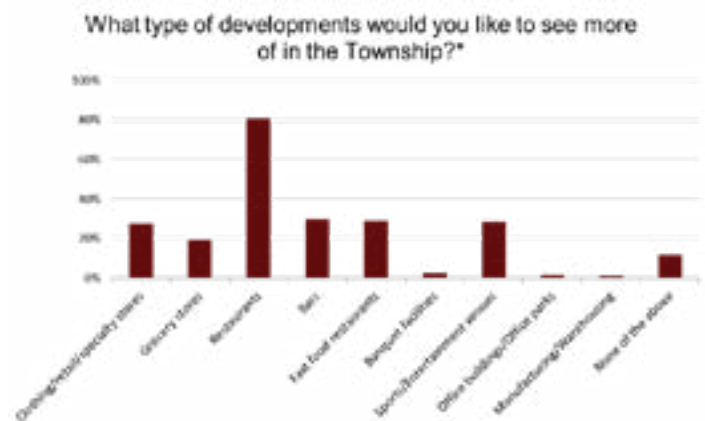
Several key stakeholders were interviewed to gauge their opinions, thoughts, and comments on key issues, including strengths, opportunities, challenges, and other relevant topics to address in the plan. The list of stakeholders to be interviewed was determined by Borough and Township staffs and elected officials, and was representative of the communities as a whole, including business owners, property owners, residents, and volunteers that serve on area boards, commissions, youth sports associations, or other local organizations. The results of the stakeholder interviews further solidified some of the findings from the survey and public input received including the need for improved park assets and space, a generally positive working

Issues to Explore for Potential Collaboration	# of Responses	% of Responses
Greenways and Conservation	590	57.3%
Trail Development	564	54.7%
Traffic Calming/Streetscape Enhancements	508	49.3%
Stormwater Management/Flooding Controls	480	46.6%
Increased Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity	471	45.7%
Zoning/Land Use – Established Growth Areas	456	44.2%
Parks and Recreation – Programming/Events	428	41.5%
Preservation	405	39.3%
Emergency Management	287	27.8%
Wireless/Broadband Connectivity	276	26.8%
Other	117	11.4%

Online Community Survey Combined Results



Online Community Survey Results from Franklin Park Borough Residents



Online Community Survey Results from Ohio Township Residents

relationship between local businesses/developers and the municipal staff, and the numerous funding and collaborative opportunities that are available for community growth.

Public Input Meetings

Two Public Input Kickoff Meetings were held in June at the Blueberry Hill Park and Ohio Township Park, respectively, to solicit public input and feedback on several topics, including an analysis of the municipalities' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, character preference board voting, and mapping on various potential development types and land uses. Approximately 55 residents participated across both meetings.

Public Open House Meetings

In addition to the Public Input Meetings, HRG hosted two Open House events in September of 2022. At the meetings, HRG updated the public on what progress

had been made on Plan development as well as solicit feedback on the proposed goals for the plan. The event activities included theme prioritization, goal-related project brainstorming, and mapping of needed improvements. Between both meetings, around 30 residents attended.

Township Website Updates & Social Media

The Borough's and Township's respective websites and newsletters have been updated regularly with new information concerning the comprehensive plan and the various results and activities conducted throughout the planning process. In addition, Township and Borough staff also utilized the municipalities' various social media outlets, including LinkedIn and Facebook, to provide updates and announcements.



Franklin Park Borough Public Input Meeting



Ohio Township Public Input Meeting



Ohio Township Public Open House, Mapping Exercise

Area Overview

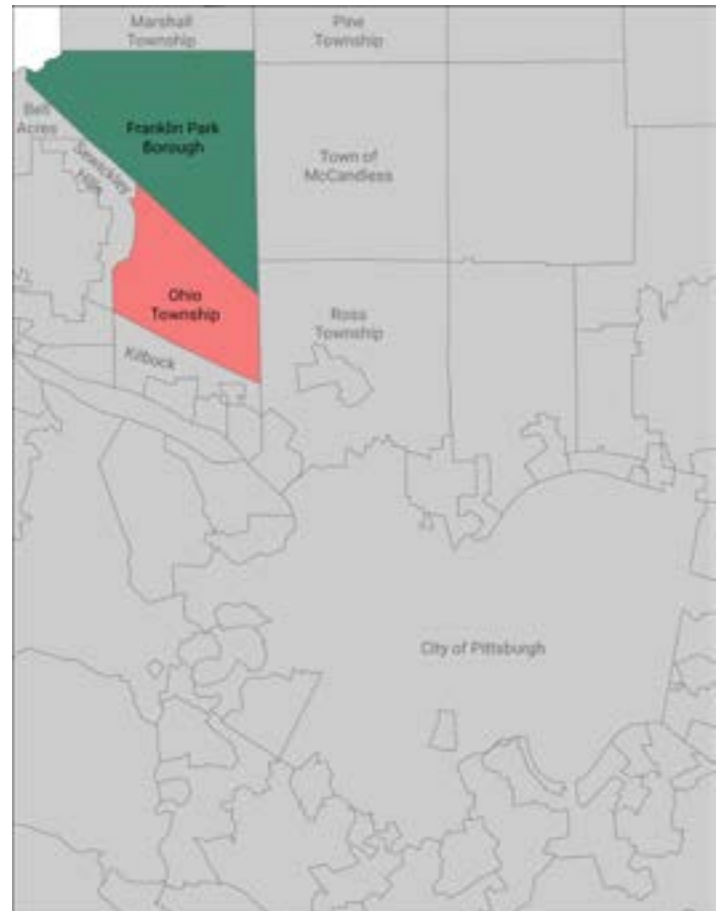
Overview

Shared borders and a shared history makes a joint comprehensive plan ideal for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township. Located approximately ten miles northwest of Downtown Pittsburgh, Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township serve as bedroom communities for the city, but each municipality holds its own unique population and character. Bordered by Pine Township, Marshall Township and Beaver County to the north, Bell Acres and Sewickley Hills to the west, Killbuck Township to the south, and the Town of McCandless and Ross Township to the east, Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have ready access to a variety of resources, opportunities, and amenities.

History

At the time of Allegheny County's formation in 1788, Pitt Township was formed, containing all of the land north of the Ohio River. In September of 1803, the first division of Pitt Township occurred, creating Ohio Township, which at the time extended nine miles along the Ohio River and up to Butler County. In the years to come, the land was further divided and Ohio Township was reduced with the creation of other municipalities, including Franklin Township, in 1823. Franklin Township would eventually grow to become Franklin Park Borough in August of 1961.

Throughout most of their existence, both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have experienced slow, but constant growth. With time, growth accelerated, with both populations expanding significantly between the 1990s and 2010s. With additional population came additional development. While both municipalities do not have conventional business districts, the increased populations brought a housing boom and with that came the addition of support businesses in the area.



Regional Locator Map

Demographics

The following section gives a brief overview of demographic trends relevant to the discussions later in the plan. Additional information about Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township's demographics and local administration and services can be found in the complete Trends Report, provided in Appendix B.

Population

Since the 2000s, the populations of Ohio Township and Franklin Park Borough have consistently grown.

Both experienced a higher rate of growth between 2000 and 2010, with Ohio Township’s population increasing by 52% and Franklin Park Borough’s population increasing by 19%. From 2010 to 2020, the population increased in Ohio Township by almost 51%. Franklin Park experienced a population increase of 15% from 2010 to 2020. The total increase of both municipalities over the past 20 years, from 14,446 residents to 22,657 residents, was almost 57%.

While there are fewer total residents in Ohio Township than Franklin Park Borough, the higher rate of population increase in Ohio Township means that, in terms of population density, the two municipalities have become more alike over time. This can be seen in the population density graph to the right.

These same trends were true of Allegheny County. During the same period, the County’s population increased from 1.22 million in the 2010 Census to 1.25 million in 2020. This was the first decade with population growth since the 1960s. Like the Township and Borough, the County has surpassed its 2026 projected population of 1.217 million.

Households & Housing Units

In 2000, there were a combined 4,972 households in Ohio Township and Franklin Park Borough. From 2000 to 2021, the growth in the number of households exceeded population growth. During this period, number of households increased by 39% in Franklin Park, and more than doubled in Ohio Township. Households in Allegheny County, in contrast, increased by 2,648 households, or just over 1%, during this time.

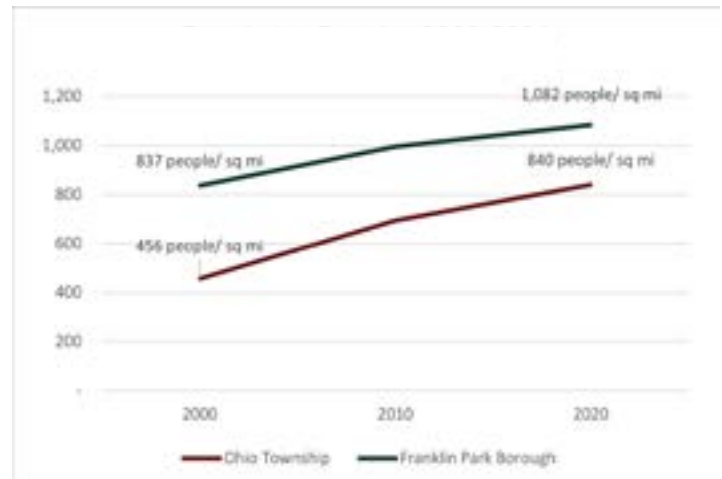
The number of households in both municipalities has increased rapidly in the past, but according to projections growth is predicted to slow in Ohio Township and plateau in Franklin Park Borough by 2026. While household size in the two municipalities has been gradually lessening over the past 21 years, 2026 projections indicate that it is likely to stabilize in Ohio Township and increase in Franklin Park Borough, for a combined average household size of 2.71 in 2026.

Population

	Ohio Township	Franklin Park Borough	Both Municipalities
2000 Population	3,128	11,318	14,446
2010 Population	4,757	13,470	18,227
2020 Population	7,178	15,479	22,657

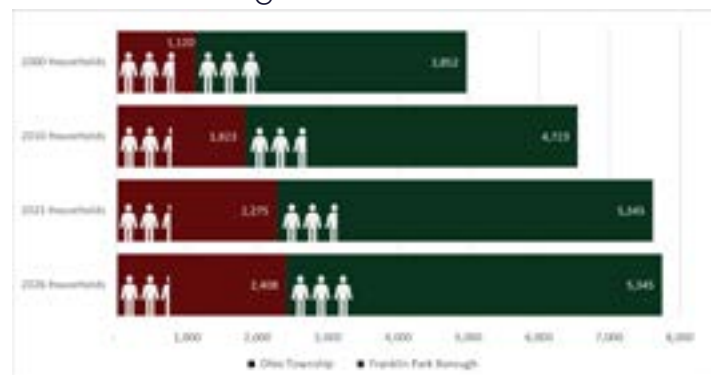
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census

Population Density, 2000 to 2021



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census

Number of Household & Average Household Size



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Theme Areas & Priorities

Overview

Through the visioning and public outreach processes, several key theme areas were identified that help to organize the 2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan. These key theme areas include the following:

- Greenspace and Preservation,
- Trails and Connectivity,
- Infrastructure,
- Managing the Impacts of Development,
- Stormwater and Environmental Issues,
- Places to Play, and
- Municipal Collaboration.

Each chapter is organized following one key theme areas. Theme statements summarizing the intent of each theme were developed, which guide the goals and objectives. The goals and objectives form the priorities for each theme. The Implementation Chapter and Table provide additional details to assist with making the priorities a reality after the adoption of the plan. The following section provides an overview of the priorities for each theme, which are expanded on in the Action Items sub-section of each chapter.

Greenspace & Preservation

Theme Statement

Greenspace provides critical ecosystem services, like natural flood management and mitigation, water filtration, carbon sequestration, and many others. Universal access to greenspace is recommended for its positive impact on both physical and mental health. While both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township currently have greenspace, it is important to consider the ongoing preservation and expansion of

these areas, to support the proper function of natural services and the health of the residents.

Priorities

- Expand preservation areas in the Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township.
- Mitigate flooding through the preservation of flood-prone areas and natural flood ways.
- Integrate more forms of active and passive preservation initiatives in the communities.

Trails & Connectivity

Theme Statement

Public engagement indicated that there is demand for additional walking and biking facilities in both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township. Residents would like to be able to walk and bike for recreation and fitness, as well as a primary mode of transportation. Improvements should be made to increase walking and biking connectivity to all resources, especially parks.

Priorities

- Improve multi-modal connectivity between parks and neighborhoods; between regional parks; within neighborhoods; between neighborhoods; and between neighborhoods and schools.
- Improve walking and biking throughout the municipalities by expanding walking and biking infrastructure.

Infrastructure

Theme Statement

Work to ensure that ample water and sanitary sewer services and broadband and wireless services are provided in the Township and Borough. In addition, roadways owned by the municipalities are maintained, repaired, and safe for all users and modes of transportation.

Priorities

- Improve and enhance existing water and sanitary sewer services as needed, where appropriate, and to support underserved areas.
- Improve traffic flows and conditions along key roadways and at key intersections.
- Improve broadband access and wireless services in the areas which lack service throughout the Township and Borough.

Managing Development Impacts

Theme Statement

Growing and developing are necessary to meet the needs of the community. However, development should not move forward unplanned or unchecked. Input from the public indicated that many community members would prefer to see little or no development, and some are concerned by how development has impacted the landscape. Other community members and regional developers are more interested in ongoing development in the Borough and Township. To help promote compromise between these groups and mitigate the potential negative side effects, processes should be put in place to manage the impact of development.

A balance between development and preservation has been achieved. Development in the Borough and Township is managed through various ordinance measures and regulations and target areas for preservation and growth are promoted and adhered to as inevitable growth continues.

Priorities

- Create a vision for future development in Franklin Park and Ohio Township that is consistent with the future land use map.
- Mitigate potential negative impacts of future developments or redevelopment on surrounding areas.

Stormwater Management & Environmental Issues

Theme Statement

The impacts of stormwater and environmental issues throughout the Borough and Township are minimized due to increased enforcement and regulatory measures taken and the completion of improvement projects to address flooding, promote preservation, conserve natural woodlands, and incorporate best management practices in stormwater and environmental management.

Priorities

- Focus on implementation of the identified Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) projects that have been earmarked by the Borough and Township and their respective engineers.
- Coordinate with regional stormwater and flooding management efforts.
- Incorporate stormwater management best practices into park improvement projects and land development approvals in the Borough and Township.
- Identify flood prone and other problem areas and how to address them.

Places to Play

Theme Statement

The Borough and Township currently provide parks, recreation, and other community facilities that are widely used and enjoyed by residents. Additions should be made to these facilities to accommodate the increasing demand and maintenance and upkeep are also prioritized.

Priorities

- Expand existing parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- Improve and expand existing park infrastructure.
- Expand regional greenways to increase recreational opportunities.

Municipal Collaboration

Theme Statement

Once the Joint Comprehensive Plan is adopted, Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township continue to work together to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies included within the 2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

Priorities

- Continue to work together to implement goals outlined in the Plan and to make progress to improve the overall quality of life in both communities.



Intersection of Ben Avon Heights Road and Joseph Lane



View of I-79 from the Park & Ride Lot at the Intersection of Mount Nebo Road and Red Mud Hollow Road



Baierl YMCA in Franklin Park Borough

Greenspace & Preservation

Overview

Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have experienced ongoing population growth, which is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. With growth comes development. However, development may always be balanced with ongoing efforts to preserve greenspace. The Township and Borough contain unique and beautiful natural character, which provides important ecosystem services and intrinsic value to the communities. Both municipalities have already made efforts to preserve land for greenspace and may continue to fulfill the interests of the public by pursuing new methods to enhance these efforts.

Throughout the joint planning process, members of the public, key stakeholders, and members of the Steering Committee expressed that preservation should be a priority. This was especially true for participants from Franklin Park Borough, which could be seen in the Online Community Survey. When asked, “What issue do you think should be most important to government officials?,” on average, Borough Residents responded that “conservation/preservation of land” should be most important, with general, “conservation/preservation,” close behind. Ohio Township respondents also felt that “preservation/conservation of land,” and “conservation/preservation,” were important ranking them in the top five responses. Throughout the public engagement process, residents from both municipalities often echoed that their preferred development would be no additional development, instead favoring the preservation of natural features and open space.

In addition to documenting current conservation and preservation efforts, goals and strategies have been developed to help advance greenspace preservation in Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township. Methods for expanding the already extensive greenspace in

the municipalities have been suggested, with initial guidance for implementation. Further goals and strategies have been created to promote the ecosystem services that preserved greenspace may provide, including natural flood mitigation and additional space to recreate.



Allegheny Land Trust Conservation Area Along Red Mud Hollow Road in Ohio Township

Existing Tools for Preservation

Preservation of open space takes place through two major forces. The first is the use of regulatory tools, which are generally seen in the form of municipal ordinances that regulate development, like Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs). The second method is the use of conservation tools or land acquisition tools, which generally aim to acquire property rights.

Regulatory Tools

Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township already have Zoning Ordinances and SALDOs in place, both of which include provisions that regulate land that is not suitable for development- i.e., steep slopes, floodplains, etc. This inherently results in these unsuitable areas being preserved as greenspace. Additionally, both municipalities require the dedication of land as public space associated with the creation of larger residential developments.

Ohio Township's Zoning Ordinance and Map also includes a Conservation District (C-D), which currently contains approximately 343 acres. The purpose of this district is to preserve large tracts of land for open space, and only compatible low-density development is permitted.

Conservation & Acquisition Tools

Many non-regulatory tools for the conservation and/or acquisition of land exist. Some of the most used conservation tools are conservation easements, agricultural easements, and the creation of agricultural security areas.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are a tool for conserving land in the public interest that doesn't rely on government regulations and that allows private landowners to maintain ownership and control of their land. A conservation easement is established by mutual agreement between a landowner and a private land trust or government. The easement limits certain uses of the land in order to achieve particular conservation

objectives while keeping the land in the owner's control. The owner may continue to use the land as they choose, within the constraints agreed to when establishing the easement. A conservation easement does not create a right for the public to access a property, unless the owner explicitly establishes that right. A conservation easement is considered to "run with the land," meaning that it will continue in force no matter who owns the land in the future. In order to create a conservation easement, first a land trust or government that is willing to hold it must be identified.¹ In this case, both municipalities have a history of successfully working with and supporting the work of the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT).

It is important to note that conservation easements may only be used to conserve land when the land is in the public interest and will actively advance conservation objectives. Potential objectives generally include the following:

- Maintain and improve water quality;
- Protect natural habitat;
- Prevent loss and depletion of soil;
- Protect scenic views;
- Prevent erosion and flooding downstream; or
- Ensure that the land is managed so that it can always support sustainable forestry or agriculture.

Agricultural Security Areas & Agricultural Easements

Agricultural security areas, commonly referred to as ASAs, and agricultural easements go hand in hand, as an ASA must be established before an agricultural easement can be created. ASAs do not require the acquisition of land, but are the first step in preserving farmland. To create an ASA, a landowner or group of landowners whose parcels together comprise at least 250 acres may apply to their local government for designation. Participants in the ASA program receive protection from local ordinances and nuisance lawsuits affecting normal farming activity, and review of farmland condemnation by state and local government

agencies. According to Pennsylvania law, ASAs must be reviewed every seven years and property owners can opt out of the ASA at any time, provided they go through the proper procedures.

Agricultural easements protect farms from development. Landowners voluntarily sell the rights to develop the farm to a government entity or land trust. The agency or organization usually pays them the difference between the value of the land for agricultural use and the value of the land for its “highest and best” use, which is generally residential or commercial development. These easements are offered for sale based on the quality of farmland, presence of stewardship practices, and the likelihood for it to be developed based on proximity to sewer and water, and the extent of non-agricultural development nearby. Farmers may opt to receive the proceeds of the easement sale in a lump sum or in installments. Agricultural easements and ASAs are administered by the Allegheny County Conservation District.

Currently, no conservation easements, agricultural security areas, or agricultural easements exist within either municipality. Land that is currently preserved in the municipalities has been acquired through fee

simple purchase by the governing bodies or by the ALT with support from the local governments. These lands can be seen in the map of current preservation areas.

Existing Greenspace & Preservation Areas

Significant greenspace and preservation areas already exist within the Borough and Township. The following map depicts existing preserved greenspace, as well as Township parcels that are proposed for acquisition as greenspace in the near future. This map is intended to show parcels which have been officially preserved or developed as greenspace, including land acquired and preserved by the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT), as well as parks, golf courses, State Games Lands, land that has been deeded as public open space associated with developments, and municipally owned land that is reserved as greenspace. This map is not intended to indicate all areas with vegetative landcover. While many more areas in the Borough and Township may seem to be greenspace, they may actually be private property, and therefore should be considered undeveloped and not preserved, unless further action is taken.



Agricultural Area in Franklin Park Borough



The Entrance to Ohio Township Community Park & Nature Center on Red Mud Hollow Road

Action Items

Expanding Preservation Areas

Given the public interest and general support for expanding open space preservation, both the Township and Borough should continue their existing efforts, while considering new methods for expanding green space preservation. Additional regulatory and conservation/ acquisition tools have been included below as potential methods for furthering this goal. Many tools exist to enable land conservation, those included were considered most appropriate for the Borough and Township, but additional methods should be considered based on the exact situation or land being considered. Extensive additional resources for the implementation of these tools may be found through WeConservePA, a non-profit organization that helps other organizations and individuals conserve land. WeConservePA has created model easement agreements and ordinances as well as additional resources to aid in the implementation of the tools listed.

Regulatory Tools

The first step in increasing land preservation should be the review of existing ordinances to enhance their ability to preserve open space and protect sensitive land. Each municipality has adopted steep slope and floodplain regulations, as well as other environmental management regulations. Existing Zoning Ordinances and SALDOs should be reviewed for additional opportunities to conserve land. Franklin Park Borough may consider the creation of a Conservation District, which would need to be part of a larger rezoning effort, but would protect additional tracts of land. They may also consider the creation of an overlay district, which would provide additional regulations to an underlying zoning district or districts. The restrictions of the overlay district supplement and supersede the provisions of the underlying district. Overlay districts may be used to conserve floodplains and other sensitive natural features.

Another regulatory tool to consider would be the creation of an official map. Following the PA MPC, a

municipality may create an official map designating public or private land as a current or future public need. This can be land for roads or other infrastructure, as well as open space for conservation or recreation. The map should identify priority areas for conservation. Even without being adopted as an official map, these areas should be identified and used to guide the expansion of preserved land.

Conservation or Acquisition Tools

As previously mentioned, conservation and agricultural easements may be used to conserve land. To enable the use of agricultural easements, ASAs should be established in the municipalities, as appropriate. Additionally, trail easements, which allow a property owner to give the rights to create, maintain, and use a trail on their property without giving up ownership of their land through which the trail passes, and forest land conservation easements, which protect forests for the current and future economic benefit, should be



Wooded Area in Western Part of Franklin Park

considered.

When implementing easements, it is important to remember that while a property owner may be willing to donate their land for conservation, a receiving group, like a land trust or government agency, must be willing to receive the land and take on the responsibility of stewardship. The group must also consider if permanent protection of the land is appropriate and in the best long term interest of the public. Finite time and financial resources, or greater benefit from potential future development may mean that an agency will choose not to preserve the land. In this case, if an owner or group of owners is still interested in preserving their land, a deed restriction may be a better tool. Deed restrictions, sometimes referred to as restrictive covenants, place conditions on the deed to a property, limiting acceptable future use. WeConservePA provides materials on this conservation method, but if a property owner is interested in pursuing this, it is best for them to seek personal legal counsel.

Natural Flood Mitigation

During the joint planning process, members of the public and key stakeholders also expressed concern about current flooding issues. While the physical characteristics of the land make flooding in some areas inevitable, development and maintenance practices can exacerbate the issue. While both municipalities have implemented ordinances that should help to mitigate flooding issues, proper and sufficient enforcement is needed. In addition to evaluating the content of their ordinance, both municipalities should evaluate their ability to implement and enforce any existing and future regulations.

To mitigate flooding, it must first be understood where the problem areas are. Mapping should be done to understand the area of probable flooding. This may involve geospatial analysis and a community wide hydrology study, which could be done jointly by the two municipalities. Finally, residents should be engaged in this process to understand if unexpected flooding is occurring in specific areas.

If it is deemed appropriate to implement additional regulatory tools to help naturally mitigate flooding,

a tree ordinance could be considered. Maintaining a healthy population of trees and groundcover vegetation on a lot can be important to reducing runoff and maintaining natural drainage patterns. A tree ordinance is a tool to help protect and manage a community's trees. It can be designed to regulate various aspects of tree planting, removal, and maintenance on public and private property within a municipality. There are three general types of tree ordinancesⁱⁱ:

- Street and park tree ordinances regulate the planting, removal, and maintenance of trees in parks or along public rights-of-way, including private trees that could endanger the traveling public. These ordinances can include tree planting specifications (e.g., requiring tree planting in parking lots) and tree care standards (e.g., standards for pruning and removal).
- Tree and woodlot protection ordinances protect specific tree species, trees of a certain circumference or height, or trees with historical significance on private property. These ordinances usually stipulate that permits are required to remove, encroach upon, or prune such trees. They also provide for the replacement of removed trees.
- View ordinances help resolve conflicts between property owners that occur when trees block views or sunlight.

In Pennsylvania, tree cutting permits may also be required by a municipality, however this can be time consuming and expensive to administer and enforce.

Trees may also be regulated through the SALDO, which can require certain mature trees and other existing vegetation to be maintained at the time of development. Requirements to maintain site vegetation and the planting of native species may be incorporated as part of the design requirements. Outside of official regulations, community initiatives may be considered to promote the planting of native species and integration of green stormwater management. Collaborations with groups like Tree Pittsburgh may help to guide that process.

Integrate More Active & Passive Preservation

Once areas have been designated for preservation and the appropriate tools have been identified for implementation, the potential uses for these areas should be reviewed and considered. While the goal is to reduce development on these sites, controlled, low-density uses allow the community to engage with and benefit from the preserved natural features. Parcels should be preserved based on their ability to fulfill conservation objectives. Based on the associated objectives, the appropriate uses may be selected. Some parcels may need to be more restricted in order to achieve their objective. Others may be used for

community recreation, especially passive recreation. Passive recreation is usually characterized by being nature-based and non-motorized, generally requiring less development and less overall impact on the land. Conversely, active recreation may include more vigorous activities, which may include motorized vehicles and/or additional indoor facilities. Local environmental groups may be good organizations to partner with to help determine and develop appropriate uses for conserved properties, so that conservation, citizen engagement, and recreation can be balanced.



The hiking trail at Ohio Township Community Park shown to the right would be an example of passive recreation, while the baseball fields at Blueberry Hill Park in Franklin Park, shown above, would be an example of active recreation.

Sources:

ⁱ WeConserve. (2021). Conservation Easements: An Introduction for Private Landowners. <https://conservationtools.org/guides/149-conservation-easements>

ⁱⁱ WeConserve. (2017). Tree Ordinance. <https://conservationtools.org/guides/37-tree-ordinance#:~:text=A%20tree%20ordinance%20is%20a%20tool%20to%20help,on%20public%20and%20private%20property%20within%20a%20municipality.>

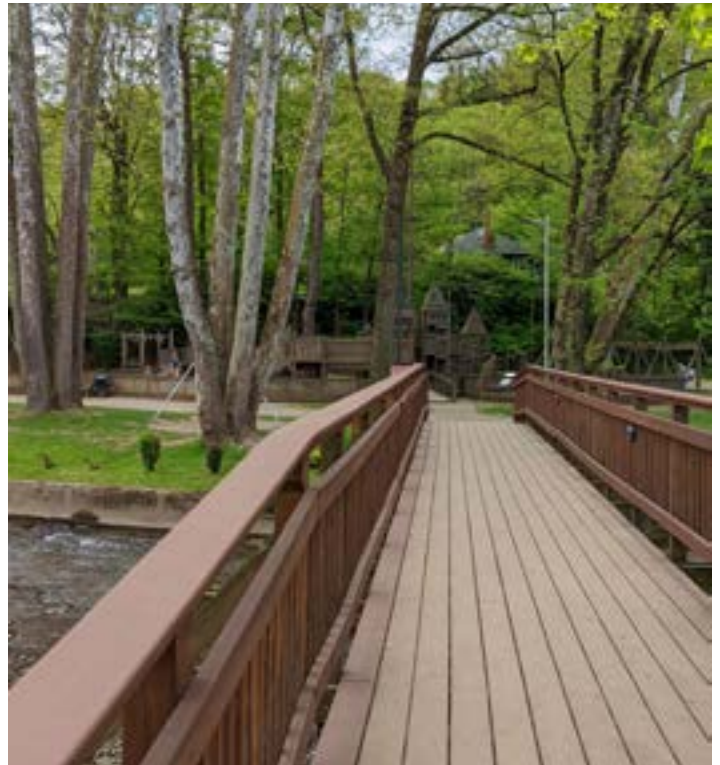
Trails & Connectivity

Overview

While significant development has taken place in Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township, the creation of non-motorized transportation infrastructure has not kept pace. Today, with greater interest in being able to walk, bike, and roll for both recreation and as a primary mode of transportation, there is greater demand for non-motorized connectivity. The incorporation of greater walking and biking infrastructure promotes sustainability, resiliency, diversity, equity, and health. Members of the public in both the Borough and the Township supported additional sidewalks, trails, and bike infrastructure, allowing them to move throughout the communities more easily without a vehicle.

Community engagement results indicated that members of the public would like to see additional non-motorized infrastructure created in both municipalities. Respondents to the Online Community Survey prioritized trail development (54.7% of respondents), as well as traffic calming/streetscape enhancements (49.3% of respondents) as potential areas of collaboration for the Borough and Township. During the community engagement meetings, participants again indicated that trail and sidewalk development were desired in both communities, helping to identify areas for additional infrastructure. These locations for additional infrastructure were further refined through the key stakeholder interviews and meetings with the Steering Committee and municipal staff.

Through the implementation of an appropriate combination of on-street and off-street facilities, an intermunicipal non-motorized transportation network can be created that will enable all users to safely walk, bike, and roll. The creation of this regional network will allow the safe movement of residents for recreation, and everyday transportation.



Walking Bridge at Avonworth Community Park



All Purpose Trail,
Old Orchard Park, Franklin Park Borough

The Benefits of Non-Motorized Transportation

In addition to meeting the demand of members of the public, non-motorized transportation brings a host of benefits to the communities.

Health

One of the most obvious benefits of increasing non-motorized transportation infrastructure is the improvement of resident health. Whether using a sidewalk to go for a stroll or taking a bike lane for their daily commute, non-motorized transportation gets people moving. Studies have shown a direct correlation between the availability of walking and biking infrastructure and increased physical activity, resulting in reduced rates of obesity and obesity related diseases, like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Increased physical activity and time spent outside has also been shown to positively impact mental health, as well as increasing vitamin D, a critical nutrient.

The availability of non-motorized transportation infrastructure is also related to a decrease in motorized transportation use, decreasing related air pollution. Reductions in air pollution result in reduced occurrence of asthma and other related breathing disorders.

Sustainability & Resilience

Increased use of non-motorized transportation can be directly connected to improving sustainability measures for a community. By promoting walking and biking, residents drive less and produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions. This improves air quality and reduces warming effects. Driving less also reduces driving related pollutants from gasoline, heavy metals found in a variety of automobile parts, and hydrocarbons from lubricating fluids that end up on the roadways, often finding their way into local water bodies through stormwater runoff.

Increased walking and biking can also improve resilience. By creating an alternative transportation network, residents are less dependent of oil and gasoline for their primary transportation.

Equity & Diversity

Walking and biking are low to no cost means of transportation and exercise. This enables all sectors of the population to access the goods and services they need throughout the community and opens up opportunities for employment. If installed properly, with respect to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, residents of all ages and abilities have increased mobility. By mobilizing all sectors of the population, residents are more able to participate in society, actively contributing to regional culture and the economy.



Sidewalks in Waterfront Corporate Park, Franklin Park Borough

Non-Motorized Transportation Infrastructure

Non-motorized transportation infrastructure can generally be broken down into two categories- off-street and on-street facilities. Off-street facilities include infrastructure with separation from the roadway, like trails and sidewalks. On-street facilities may include infrastructure like bike routes, bike lanes, and pedestrian lanes.

Off-Street Facilities

When considering non-motorized infrastructure, the most desirable facilities are generally those that completely remove the user from vehicular traffic. This improves safety and reduces stress for the user. Common off-street facilities that would be appropriate in the Borough and Township are sidewalks and trails.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the most common form of non-motorized transportation infrastructure. The recommended minimum width of all sidewalks is five (5) feet. Sidewalks in high traffic areas, including commercial areas or adjacent to major roadways may be widened to six (6) feet or greater when possible or deemed appropriate. Ideally, sidewalks should have a minimum buffer of two (2) feet between the paved surface and the roadway edge or pavement or back of curb.

Trails

Off-street trails, sometimes referred to as shared-use paths, are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic, except at road crossings. Trails accommodate a variety of users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, rollerbladers, people with baby strollers, skateboarders, etc., for both recreation and transportation. Trails located away from roads, on easements or their own rights-of-way, tend to be more pleasant and popular because of their separation from vehicular traffic.

Like shared-use paths and trails, sidepaths are off-street facilities separated from the roadway, but sidepaths are located immediately adjacent and parallel to the roadway, while trails may follow their path. Sidepaths



Sidewalk in Cobblestone Neighborhood, Ohio Township



Off-Street Trail at Ohio Township Park

provide a high-quality, low stress experience for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities, especially when traveling along high speed and/or high volume roadways. An off-street trail network may include a combination of shared-use paths and sidepaths.

Trails, shared-use paths, and sidepaths may be paved or unpaved. Decisions about facility pavement should be made on a case-by-case basis, based on frequency of use, the land through which the trail passes, and maintenance requirements.

On-Street Facilities

While off-street facilities might be the most desirable, in many cases they are not plausible. This may be especially true when retrofitting existing neighborhoods. Limitations in a right-of-way (ROW), cost-prohibitive land acquisition, and the general cost of development and maintenance may make it impossible to create separated non-motorized infrastructure. In these cases, lower cost, on-road infrastructures should be considered. Several options exist for on road bike infrastructure, from bike lanes to bike routes, although space requirements vary. For pedestrians, without the option of off-street facilities, the most common on-road options are the creation of a pedestrian lane or the use of a paved shoulder. Implementing these facilities often only requires the restriping or adding signage to the existing pavement.

Bike Routes

Designated bike routes consist of a system of bikeways providing connectivity through the community. Bike routes are delineated using appropriate wayfinding signage and informational route signs. Pavement markings may or may not be used, depending on the rest of the regional bicycle network. Bike routes may be made of a system of different types of bike infrastructure in order to create an entire regional network, but may be as simple as signage along desirable roadways.

Shared Lanes

Shared lanes consist of a roadway lane that is open to both cyclists and vehicles, without assigning distinct

space for each. Roadway marking in the form of “sharrows” (shared lane markings) and appropriate wayfinding signage may be used to provide guidance for drivers and cyclists. Much like bike lanes, these are a low cost option to create improved awareness of cyclists, improving safety. However, the pavement markings do require some additional maintenance over time.

Shared lanes should be used on roadways with reduced speed limits (30 mph or less) as likelihood of injury or fatality in an accident increases at 35 mph.

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are a portion of a roadway or shoulder which has been designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings for the one-way use of bicyclists. Bike lanes may be protected, with the inclusion of a striped buffer or physical buffer, in the form of planting, a solid structure, or a flexible divider, like bollards.



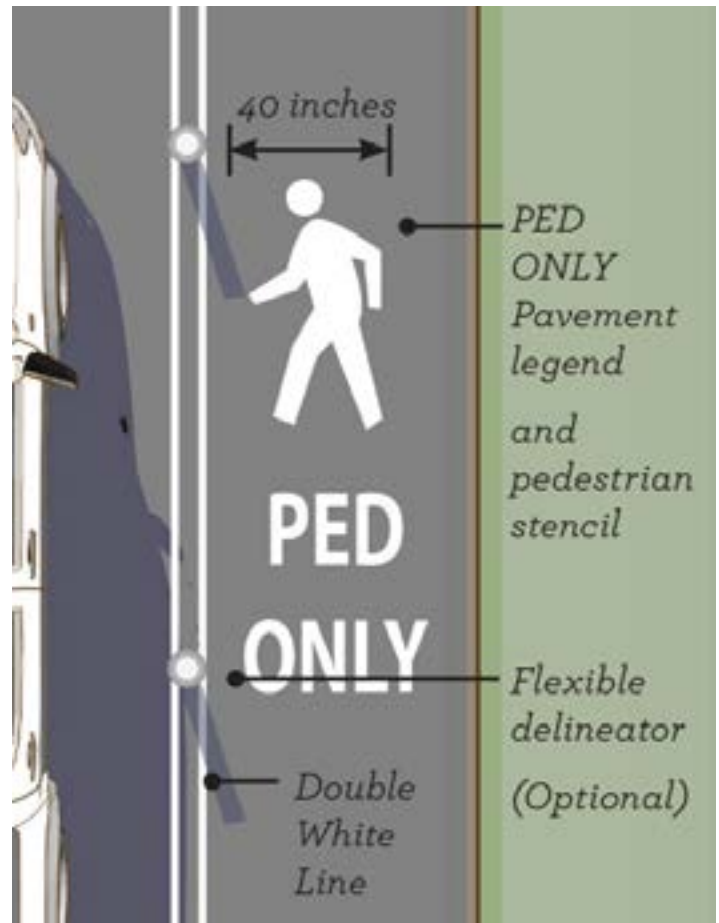
Shared Lane Example
Source: What is a Bikeway - MDOT (maryland.gov)

Because bike lanes create some additional separation from vehicular traffic, they may be used on streets with greater speed limits. If installing a bike lane on a street with a speed limit greater than 35 mph, a separated or buffered bike lane should be considered. Bike lanes should be between four (4) and six (6) feet wide, not including any additional buffering, so sufficient pavement width must be available, or there must be room to add additional paving.

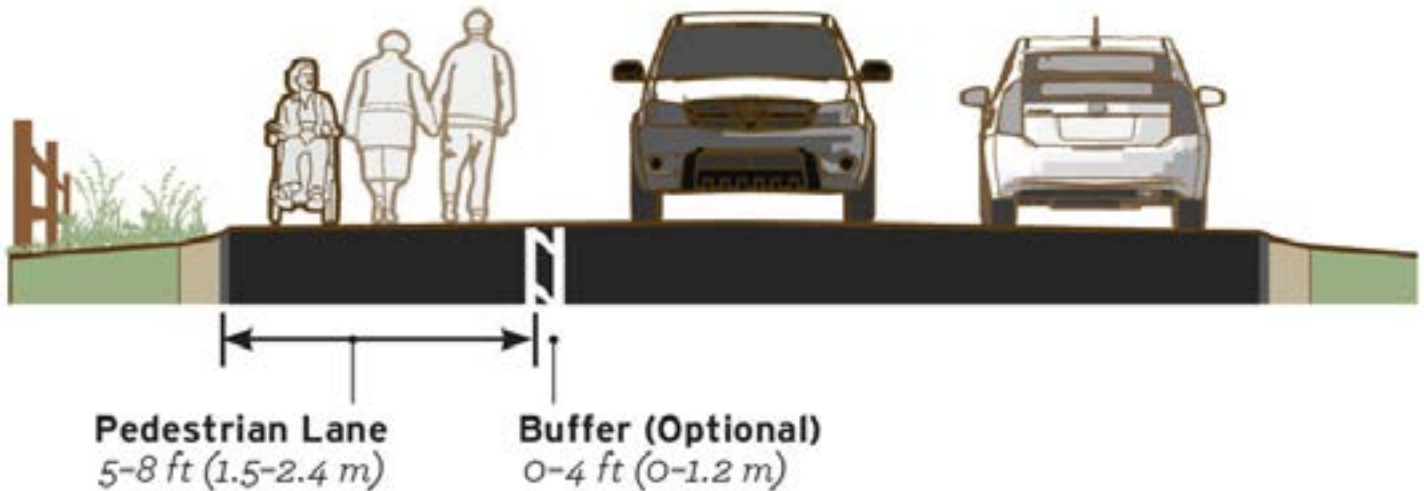
Pedestrian Lanes

As defined by the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide from December of 2016, a pedestrian lane is a designated space on the roadway for exclusive use by pedestrians. Pedestrian lanes are appropriate for roadways with low to moderate speeds (less than 35 mph) and may be present on one or both sides of the roadway. While pedestrian lanes can help to connect important destinations in a community, they are not intended to be permanent infrastructure. They should be used as temporary or interim facilities, connecting short gaps between other higher quality facilities or until a high-quality connection can be identified.

Pedestrian lanes should be designed to support side-by-side walking, with additional width to provide adequate separation from the vehicle travel lanes,



Pedestrian Lane Sample Road Markings
Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks



Pedestrian Lane Sample Crosssection
Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks

therefore pedestrian lanes are ideally eight (8) feet wide, but a minimum of five (5) feet. These facilities must meet all standard accessibility guidelines, including:

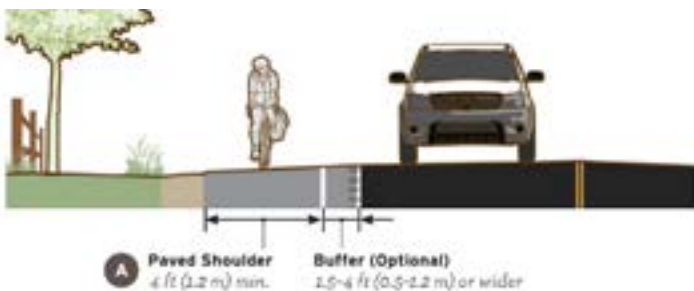
- A maximum cross slope of two percent (2%),
- A grade that shall not exceed the general grade of the adjacent roadway, and
- A surface that is firm, stable, and slip resistant.

Lane markings should separate the pedestrian lane from the adjacent vehicle travel lane with some form of longitudinal marking. A double white line may be used for extra emphasis and to discourage vehicle encroachment. A marked buffer may be added for additional comfort. Any signage should comply with guidance from FHWA and the Manual of Unified Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) given the specific roadway and alignment.

Challenges of pedestrian lanes include detectability by people with vision disabilities, undesired uses by bicyclists, accessible cross-slope requirements, and the need for appropriate maintenance strategies, such as sweeping and snow removal.

Paved Shoulder

Much like a pedestrian lane, a paved shoulder provides dedicated spaces for bicyclists and pedestrians when there is not room for an off-street or other facility with greater separation. Unlike pedestrian lanes, paved shoulders are considered a permanent facility type and are appropriate in areas of greater speed and traffic, if implemented correctly. The implementation of paved shoulders is appropriate in developed and



Paved Shoulder Crosssection Sample

Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks

less developed areas, near schools, and any other area where walking and biking is expected/known to occur. Walkable shoulders should be provided along both sides of more rural or less developed roadways where walking and biking is expected. Paved shoulders can improve the experience and safety of bicyclist traveling along roadways with higher speeds or high volumes.

To accommodate walking and biking, a paved shoulder must be at least four (4) feet wide, excluding any additional buffer or separation. When possible, more width should be provided to increase comfort and safety and enable side-by-side walking or riding. The greater the volume and speed of the adjacent roadway, the greater the width of the shoulder should be. The FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide provides specific recommendations on the design of paved shoulders given the specific conditions of the adjacent roadway and land uses.

Existing Infrastructure

Sidewalks and trails have already been developed in some sections of the Borough and Township. Existing sidewalks, as mapped by the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), can be seen in the Map of Proposed



Paved Shoulder Example

Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks

Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure. While many new subdivisions have sidewalks, older residential areas do not. Furthermore, existing sidewalks are often only internal, not connecting the neighborhoods to outside resources like parks, schools, stores, etc. While this creates a place for people to walk for recreation and exercise, it does not allow walking to be a primary mode of transportation in the Borough or Township as residents can not reach all of the resources needed for everyday life.

Trails in the municipalities are currently limited to those found within the parks. Illustrative depictions of these trails can be found in the Map of Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure. These trails have little to no extension or connection beyond the parks, limiting their use to recreation and exercise.

The municipalities do not currently have any on-street bicycle facilities (e.g., bike lanes or designated bike routes). However, local bicyclists are present on the roadways.

Additional Infrastructure

In addition to the direct development of non-motorized facilities, related infrastructure is needed to create a whole network. This includes but is not limited to the creation of crosswalks at appropriate locations, taking into consideration safe access management and visibility. Pedestrian signals may be added at crosswalks and intersections to improve bike and pedestrian crossing. In some instances, specialized bike signals and crossings may be appropriate, however, at this time it is unlikely that bicyclist counts are high enough to justify the need for this special infrastructure. Curb ramps, which provide a safe transition from the roadway to the sidewalk, must also be considered. New and existing curb ramps must be considered based on their ADA compliance to ensure access for all users.

In addition to the construction of physical infrastructure, speed management is a critical element of increasing the mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists in a community. Reducing vehicle speeds not only makes it more pleasant for non-motorized roadway users but improves their safety. Speeding is a major contributing

factor in crashes of all types, and increased speed increases the severity of a crash. Speed management is a critical part of creating a non-motorized network, especially in less developed areas, especially where the use of on-street facilities is necessary. However, just reducing the posted speed is not sufficient. Traffic calming measures should be put in place to help reduce actual traveling speeds. Traffic calming measures include primarily physical infrastructure, like reduced traveling lane width, the implementation of roundabouts and traffic circles, the construction of pedestrian medians, and many other measures to physically slow traffic. It is important to note that to



Bicyclist on Nicholson Road

be successful, these measures must be implemented at a municipal or regional level in order to enforce consistent driver behavior.

Creating a Regional Network

While feasibility, route, and safety assessments are needed to determine the most appropriate type of infrastructure for a specific roadway or off-street connection, by using the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure listed above, a regional network may be created that will allow all non-motorized users to move freely throughout Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township.

Regional Coordination

Transportation, including walking and biking, must be thought of in terms of a network in order to enable residents to successfully travel from place to place. While infrastructure may be constructed, owned, and maintained by a single jurisdiction, it must feed into a larger regional network. This makes coordination with neighboring municipalities, regional planning associations, and local organizations critical to establishing a regional network.

Coordination with neighboring municipalities will allow the Borough and Township to enhance efforts for a larger, regional non-motorized network. Marshall Township's Comprehensive Plan, Plan Marshall Township, indicates planned trails that would directly lead to Franklin Park Borough's borders. Other neighboring municipalities, like the Town of McCandless, have also developed active transportation goals. Coordination with these other municipalities will help to promote consistent infrastructure and regional mobility.

Local advocacy groups and trail groups should also be partners in these efforts. Groups like North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance (NHWBRA) are already

taking action to help enable a future with a complete regional walking and biking network. These groups should be engaged as the Borough and Township pursue regional connectivity moving forward.

Action Items

The Map of Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure on the following page depicts the needed walking and biking connections identified through the comprehensive planning process. While this map establishes some specific and key first steps in the process of developing a regional non-motorized network in the Borough and Township, additional steps will be required to fully realize connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Improving Non-Motorized Connectivity

During this comprehensive planning process, initial steps were taken to identify priority roadways for implementing bike and pedestrian connections. Some of the roadways specifically discussed during the planning process include:

- Nicholson Road (SR 4049),
- Brandt School Road and West Ingomar Road,
- Rochester Road (SR 4011),
- Parts of Reis Run Road, and
- Mount Nebo Road (SR 4022).

Efforts to identify high priority routes and connections for walking and biking will require additional planning and community engagement, which should be done through the development of a Joint Connectivity Plan for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township. The development of a Joint Connectivity plan should help to develop specific routes and infrastructure, as well as addressing specific steps for implementation. The development of this Joint Connectivity Plan will also help to acquire implementation funding for the development of future infrastructure.

The development of future infrastructure may also be facilitated by gaining additional public support. The implementation of temporary walking and biking

infrastructure in high priority areas, like those shown on the Map of Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure, can help to illustrate the benefits and gain support for additional facilities. This tactic is commonly referred to as tactical urbanism or tactical transportation. Tactical urbanism projects take on an iterative process, starting with a demonstration project and ending at the long-term construction of a facility:

- Demonstration projects are the most temporary, only intended to last a few days to a month. They are low cost, requiring little time and limited materials. They may be as simple as painting lines on the pavement to delineate infrastructure.
- Pilot projects are intended to last one month to one year. They are somewhat more developed and durable, but still utilize temporary elements. These projects may require the acquisition of materials from traffic control or construction equipment companies, and additional time and expertise may be needed for their installation.
- Interim design projects are intended to give a real feel for the infrastructure. They are more durable and are intended to last several years, until funding is available for further refinement. At this point, adjustments may still be made to the exact design, but these projects closely resemble the final infrastructure.
- Long-term construction of facilities is the final, permanent infrastructure. At this phase, community and political buy in has been established and funding has been acquired to complete the facilities.

Throughout each of these phases, the community should be engaged, providing feedback about how to further refine the facilities.

Examples of temporary projects like this might include the striping of pedestrian lanes in residential areas without sidewalks. This may begin with simple striping for demonstration. If the community has a positive response, it may move on to the addition of signage and physical separation through temporary infrastructure like raised lane separators or flexible delineator posts, which can be acquired through traffic control or



Tactical Urbanist Demonstration Project: Bates College Students Installing a Temporary Bi-Directional Bikelane in Lewiston, ME
Source: Street Plans



Street Art Being Used As a Tactical Urbanist Demonstration Project to Draw Attention to Non-Motorized Infrastructure in Price, UT
Source: <https://www.aia.org/articles/6154217-tactical-urbanism-in-rural-utah>

construction equipment companies. This process may eventually lead to the creation of more permanent facilities, like paved shoulders or the development of sidewalks, depending on community response. These tactics may also be used for demonstrating on-street bike infrastructure, like bike lanes or bike paths, or even to help depict how a roundabout might function. Additional details and guidance for implementing tactical transportation projects can be found in the Tactical Urbanist's Guide created by The Street Plan Collaborative.

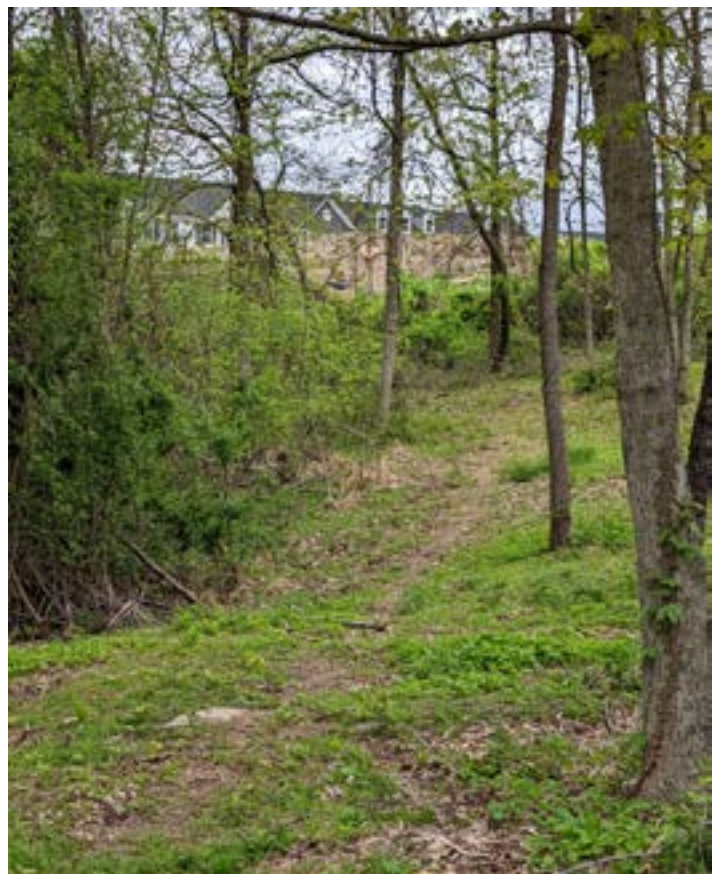
Improving Connectivity to Parks

While Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township both provide high-quality park facilities, non-motorized access to and from the parks is limited. Improved walking and biking connections between the parks themselves and the surrounding neighborhoods would enable greater use of the parks by users of all ages and abilities.

The Map of Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure depicts a proposed route connecting Blueberry Hill Park in Franklin Park Borough to Ohio Township's Park. This route utilizes existing facilities and publicly owned land, but the exact design and engineering would still be required for implementation. The feasibility of this route and additional infrastructure needs should be examined as part of the Joint Connectivity Plan or a separate feasibility study. Connections between other regional parks, as well as connections between regional parks and schools and residential areas should also be explored as part of a Joint Connectivity Plan. These connections will likely require a combination of on and off-street facilities to create a complete connection. Exploring options to create routes using a mix of facility types will help to reduce potential costs associated with land acquisition that would be needed for more direct, off-street trails.

Improving Neighborhood Connectivity

Improving connectivity between neighborhoods or predominately residential areas requires improving internal and external connectivity. Internal connectivity refers to pedestrians' and bicyclists' ability to move around within a given neighborhood. External



Potential Connection from Ohio Township Park to Adjacent Residential Development



Entrance to Blueberry Hill Park off Nicholson Road in Franklin Park Borough

Currently, this entrance is not safe for non-motorized users, but the roadway has space to add bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

connectivity refers to their ability to access resources outside of a given neighborhood development.

Internal connectivity may be improved by requiring the development of sidewalks Ohio Township requires the development of sidewalks on at least one side of the street when a planned residential development (PRD) is developed. This requirement could be expanded to include redeveloped properties. Franklin Park Borough requires the construction of sidewalks in the case of a subdivision or land development plan. For both municipalities, it should be determined if there is sufficient enforcement of the existing ordinances to ensure the sidewalks are built and maintained. In some cases, the construction of a sidewalk may be deemed inappropriate or unnecessary. In this case, a sidewalk fund may be established to collect fee in lieu of sidewalk construction. The fund may be established and administered by the municipality to fund the creation of sidewalks in other more appropriate areas. The Borough has already established this fee, while the Township has not. To help facilitate the administration of this process in either community, a map of priority sidewalk connections should be created.

In existing neighborhoods without sidewalks, the on-road facilities previously mentioned should be considered to create connections with off-street trails. This can be seen in the Map of Proposed Bike Pedestrian Facilities. The use of on-road facilities will allow bicyclists and pedestrians to move through neighborhoods more safely, without the need for land acquisition which may be cost prohibitive or impossible in some cases.

External connectivity may be improved through the development of the Joint Connectivity Plan, which can examine connections between existing neighborhoods. The use of on-street facility types mentioned earlier, like paved shoulders, should be considered as they will be more cost-effective and less time consuming to implement on many of the existing roadways.

Improving Connectivity to Schools

Another important non-motorized connection is residential areas to schools. Through this comprehensive planning process, connections between the



Entrance to Castletown Neighborhood in Franklin Park, Showing Internal Sidewalks without External Connection



Entrance to Cobblestone Neighborhood in Ohio Township, Showing Internal Sidewalks Beginning at the Entrance without External Connections

Cobblestone and Northridge neighborhoods in Ohio Township nearby schools, and improved walking and biking connections to Franklin Park Elementary School along Rochester Road and connections to surrounding neighborhoods were prioritized. While these connections should be examined first, regional connections between all schools and the surrounding neighborhoods should be examined as part of additional planning efforts.

In addition to a Joint Connectivity Plan, a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program should be considered for the area. Safe Routes to School is a federally sponsored reimbursement program, intended to create safe, convenient, and healthy walking and biking connections for students. Safe Routes to School encompasses all aspects of safe walking and biking, incorporating education, encouragement, engineering, equity, and evaluation. SRTS projects may be non-infrastructure or infrastructure based. Non-infrastructure projects do not include physical infrastructure improvements, instead aiming to increase awareness and encourage walking and biking to school safely. Infrastructure projects include physical

improvements to transportation facilities. PennDOT administers the program for the State of Pennsylvania and applicants can apply through PennDot's Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) grant program. Additional resources and technical support are available through advocacy groups, like The Safe Routes Partnership, a national non-profit organization working to advance safe walking and rolling to schools and other community facilities. Support from a wide range of community partners should be considered in an SRTS project, including school districts, schools, parents or caregivers, municipal governments, healthcare providers, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and local advocacy groups.

In addition to the identification of connections and the development of specific infrastructure, walking and biking to school may be improved through the implementation of speed management. As mentioned earlier, this could include a reduction in speed limits near schools, which would improve safety for those walking and biking to school. This could be further combined with traffic calming devices to help ensure



Franklin Park Elementary School on Rochester Road in Franklin Park Borough

Sidewalks currently end at the school's property line, making it difficult for students to walk and bike to school along the busy road.

Infrastructure

Overview

With a collective population of over 22,000 residents, Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have an extensive responsibility to provide their communities with high-quality infrastructure and maintenance. With that said, the Southwestern Pennsylvania region has historically struggled with aging infrastructure and the Borough and Township unfortunately are no exception.

Aging infrastructure places strain on future growth opportunities, as more families move to the region and will require updated infrastructure to support their changing needs. In addition to the demands caused by potential future growth, community residents also expressed the need for infrastructure improvements in the online Community Survey. For example, traffic calming and stormwater management were rated as the third and fourth most important topics that the communities should consider addressing as part of this plan.

Having modern infrastructure, including water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electric, and gas utilities as well as broadband connectivity and safe road networks are increasingly important for communities expected to experience growth. There are necessary steps that the Township and Borough need to take to ensure their infrastructure will support the needs of all residents in both communities.

This plan intends to lay out the areas for improvement in terms of the extent and quality of infrastructure. As a result of infrastructure enhancements, more meaningful development, including new homes and businesses, can capitalize on the extensive nature of the infrastructure in the community. In addition, existing residents can benefit from improved utilities and services.

Issues to Explore for Potential Collaboration	# of Responses	% of Responses
Greenways and Conservation	590	57.3%
Trail Development	564	54.7%
Traffic Calming/Streetscape Enhancements	508	49.3%
Stormwater Management/Flooding Controls	480	46.6%
Increased Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity	471	45.7%
Zoning/Land Use – Established Growth Areas	456	44.2%
Parks and Recreation – Programming/Events	428	41.5%
Preservation	405	39.3%
Emergency Management	287	27.8%
Wireless/Broadband Connectivity	276	26.8%
Other	117	11.4%

Online Community Survey Results

Existing Infrastructure

Public Works

Franklin Park Borough has a Public Works Department of 13 members and manages roughly 65 miles of roads every year. Duties of the Borough's Public Works Department include snow plowing, road paving, and Borough equipment and fleet maintenance. By comparison, Ohio Township's Public Works Department has a team of 10 unionized members and the Director of Public Works. The Public Works Department maintains over 26 miles of roadways and is responsible for the Township's snow plowing, road paving, and equipment and fleet maintenance.

In addition, both the Township and Borough house their MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Programs within their Public Works Departments. The MS4 Program aims to reduce and eliminate polluted runoff from entering local waterways such as the Ohio River and the many area creeks and local watersheds. Some of the strategies used may include repair, replacement, and ongoing maintenance of catch basins, pipes, ditches, and swales along municipally owned roads.

Sanitary Authorities

The McCandless Township Sanitary Authority (MTSA) is responsible for Franklin Park's sewage treatment and wastewater management. The map at the right shows the current coverage areas for the Borough.

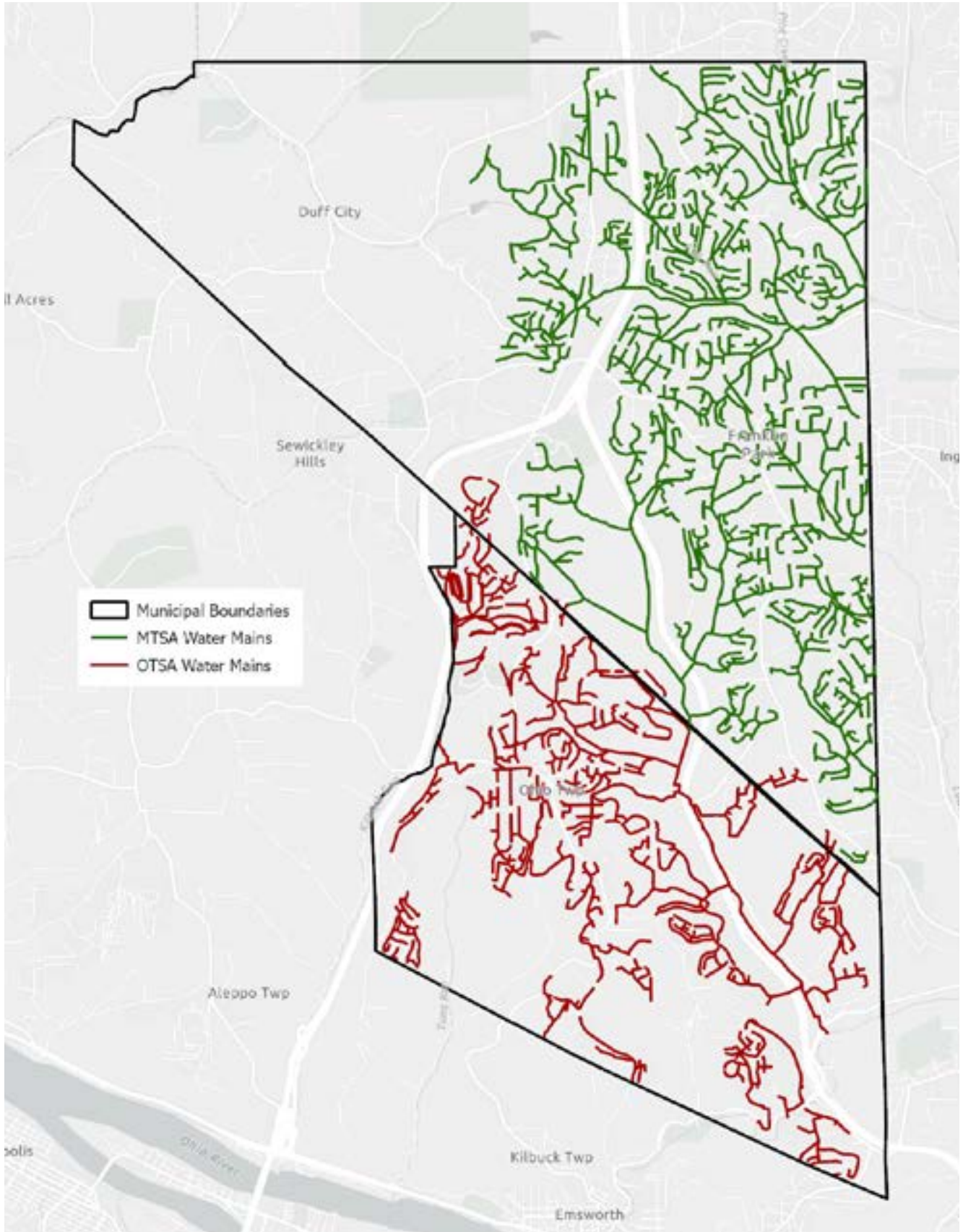
As seen on the map, the eastern side of Franklin Park Borough is well covered in terms of sanitary sewer services, but most of the Borough west of I-79 is not currently sewered. The coverage areas line up with where the largest housing and commercial density is located, suggesting that areas with public sewage are able to support a higher population density than is currently available in the western area of the Borough. Many property owners in the western area will need to replace or repair their septic systems in the years ahead. Extending sanitary services however should be balanced with the desire to limit future development and maximize greenspace preservation.

The sewer access in Ohio Township is more expansive, with fewer portions of the area having no access to public water and sewer services. Some areas lacking necessary sanitary infrastructure in the Township are Crawford Road, Arndt Road, Wible Lane, and a few additional locations near the southern border of the municipality.

Map of MTSA Service Areas



Map of Sanitary Sewer System



Stormwater

Stormwater management is an ongoing issue for both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township due to their topographic features and proximity to major waterways. Poor stormwater management can contribute to flooding of public and private properties, can damage roadways, and can ultimately cost the municipalities or private property owners large sums of money to remediate the damages.

Areas for stormwater management are spread all across the municipalities and some watersheds are shared between the Borough and Township including Lowries Run and Bear Run. Because of the nature of stormwater management, efforts for addressing these concerns are best managed at the multi-municipal and regional level. More about the stormwater needs for the municipalities can be found in the Greenspace and Preservation and the Stormwater and Environmental Issues Chapters of this plan.

Traffic

Both the Borough and Township have traffic concerns that may prohibit future growth in the region. These concerns vary from areas of congestion to confusing intersections to poor visibility. Managing traffic patterns in a community is essential for several reasons. For one, it helps to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists by reducing the likelihood of accidents and collisions. Additionally, it helps to improve the flow of traffic and minimize congestion, which can lead to reduced travel times and less air pollution. Effective traffic management can help to create a more livable and pleasant community by reducing noise and improving the overall quality of life for all residents.

Franklin Park and Ohio Township both benefit from and struggle with the proximity to two vital highway routes in the community, I-79 and I-279. While these roads allow for ease of travel around the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, these two interstates contribute



A Stormwater Detention Facility Along Mount Nebo Road in Ohio Township

to bottlenecking for traffic entering and exiting the community at the various interchanges as well as noise and air pollution from the vehicles utilizing the roadways.

In addition to the two central interstates in the area, some other roads and intersections that inhibit productive traffic flow include the following:

- Nicholson Road, which spans both municipalities, is a narrow road that often has speeding vehicles which makes pedestrian and bicycle travel dangerous.
- The Five Points intersection (meeting of Rochester Road, Nicholson Road, and Locust Road) can be confusing for drivers due the area containing several high-speed roads all meeting in one intersection with only stop signs currently for traffic management.
- Mount Nebo Road, which connects the I-79 offramp to Ohio Township and experiences high traffic counts
- Pine Creek Road, a narrow shoulder-less road that connects Franklin Park to the Town of McCandless
- The intersection of West Ingomar Road, Lenora Drive, and Rochester Road, located near the Franklin Park municipal building and Ingomar Middle School, can cause confusion for pedestrians and vehicles due to sight lines and poor signage.

Broadband

Broadband access is crucial part of the future in the Borough and Township as broadband and wireless services provide the foundation for social and economic development. With broadband access, individuals and businesses can connect with each other more easily, expanding their networks and creating new opportunities. This increased connectivity allows for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and resources, which can help to drive innovation and growth. However, both communities have areas that are insufficiently covered by both wired and wireless internet services. Below is a map of broadband access



Nicholson Road in Ohio Township, Approaching Mount Nebo Road with Limited Shoulder



A Portion of Mount Nebo Road with No Room for On-Street Facilities

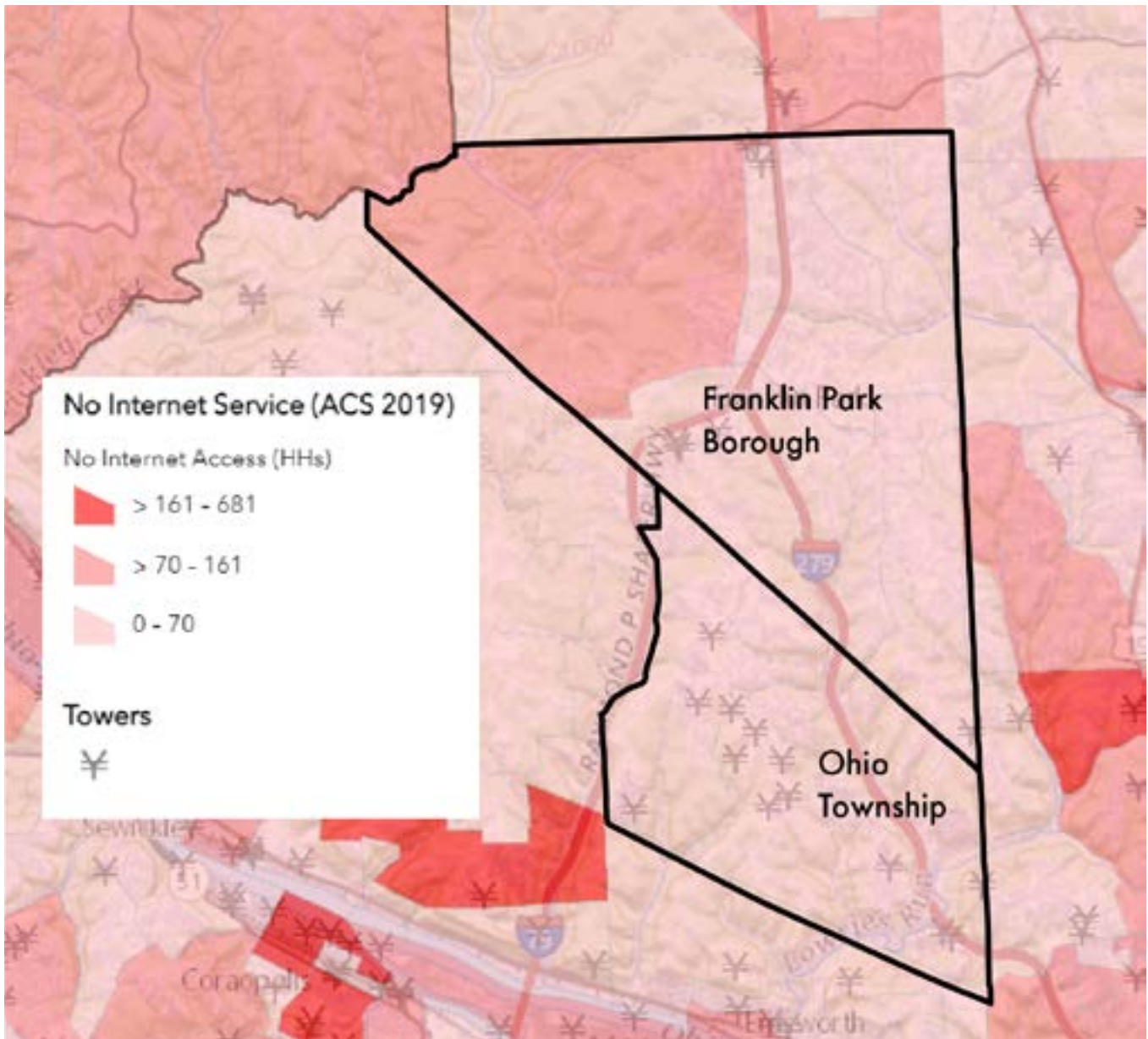
in Franklin Park and Ohio Township.

The data, collected from the 2019 Annual Community Survey, estimated that the northwest section of Franklin Park Borough has reported no internet access for 80 households. Aside from this, residents frequently report and complain about dead zones for cellular data and calling in areas across the communities. Lack of adequate cellular services can also pose challenges for local emergency responders, including police, fire, and emergency medical services to get to these areas

or for additional assistance needed after they respond.

Franklin Park also completed a review in January of 2023 of the wireless coverage in the Borough. The report analyzed service from the three main cellular carriers as well as two-way radio coverage and identified areas within the municipality needing more coverage, seen below. The wireless coverage report, and the respective recommendations, is provided in Appendix C.

Map of Broadband Access



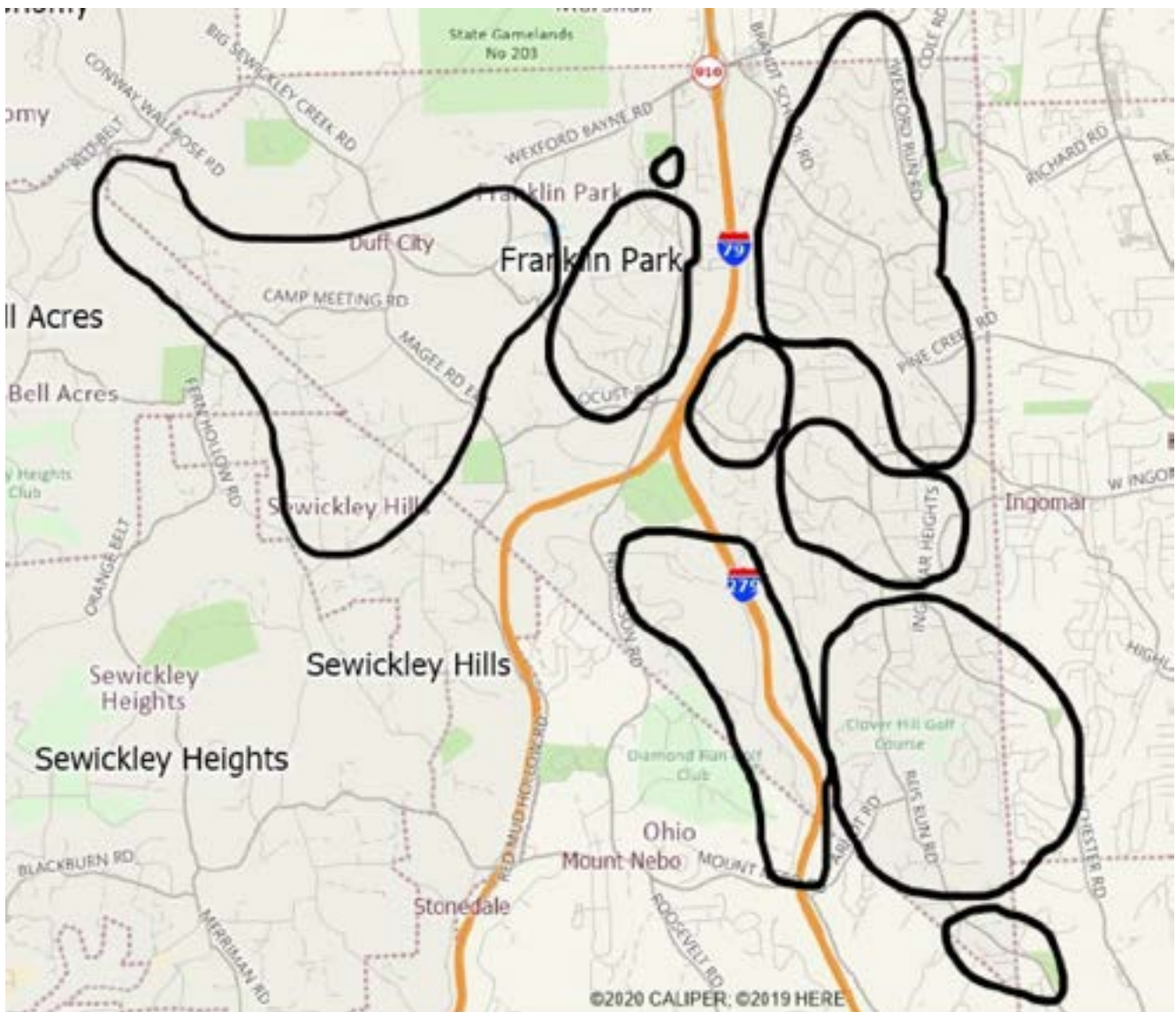
Data Source: PennState Extension

Action Items

While the extent and quality of infrastructure in the Borough and Township are generally sufficient, it will be vital to ensure that ample water and sanitary sewer services as well as broadband and wireless services are provided in the region. In addition, roadways owned by the municipalities need to be maintained, repaired, and safe for all users and modes of transportation. Included in the following action items are initiatives that can be implemented to facilitate the development of the communities' infrastructure needs.

Improving Existing Water and Sanitary Services

In order to provide the Borough and Township with improved water and sanitary services, it is necessary to first identify target areas for these improvements, which should also consider the desire to limit future development in favor of greenspace preservation. Public engagement efforts with both communities provided some problem areas, but to adequately address the existing issues, the municipalities will need to work closely with the Ohio Township Sanitary Authority (OTSA), the McCandless Township Sanitary Authority (MTSA), and the West View Water Authority



Wireless Problem Areas in Franklin Park Borough

(WVWA). Once more specific target areas for improvements are identified, the municipalities may partner with the water and sewer authorities to seek funding through programs such as the DCED Keystone Communities Program, the Commonwealth Financing Authority's (CFA) H2O PA Water and Sewer, or the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Program, among others.

Expanding Water and Sanitary Services

It will be vital to expand existing services to currently unserved areas in the coming years to ensure that expected growth will have the appropriate amenities to succeed. Like the process for improving existing water and sewer infrastructure, the Borough and Township will need to partner with local sanitary authorities including OTSA, MTSA, and WVWA. In addition, the municipalities may want to work closely with developers to determine where areas for growth may be possible and prioritize those areas for potential utility expansion. These initiatives may also be funded by programs such as the DCED Keystone Communities Program, the CFA H2O PA Water and Sewer, or the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Programs.

Improving Traffic Flows

Through the planning process, municipal staff and residents helped to identify areas in both communities that need roadway improvements or better management of traffic flows. These roads and intersections serve as pinch points for effective traffic flow as well as pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The following are potential implementable traffic improvements that the Borough and Township may consider:

- Nicholson Road is a vital connector road between both communities that needs speed management, road widening, and more byroads connecting key areas to residential neighborhoods and parks.
- Traffic flow improvements for the Five Points Intersection of Nicholson Road and Rochester Road in Franklin Park.
- Pine Creek Road and Mount Nebo Road need traffic flow and speed management.



Cell Tower Overlooking Ohio Township Park



Intersection of Nicholson Rd and Wexford Bayne Rd/ST RT 910

- Pedestrian improvements for the intersection of West Ingomar Road, Lenora Drive, and Rochester Road.

All of these roadway efforts will require external funding assistance in order to be accomplished. The Township and Borough may want to consider resources such as the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), and Allegheny County, among others. These organizations have dedicated funds for these types of initiatives, like the Transportation Set Aside Program Funds or the Multi-Modal Transportation Funds.

Strengthening Broadband Access

All residents in Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township should have access to dependable broadband internet and related services. To ensure that all members of the community have this access, the municipalities need to meet with local service providers for both wired and wireless internet to brainstorm ways to manage “dead zones” in the area. Implementation of small wireless facilities may also help address areas with limited broadband access and the municipalities should review their zoning ordinances to ensure that there is ample language regarding the implementation of these facilities on publicly owned land within public rights-of-way. Some specific recommendations for the Franklin Park area can be seen in the wireless report found in Appendix C.

In addition, the Township and Borough may want to consider partnering with area municipal officials to improve wireless service by applying for funding to support the construction of appropriate infrastructure on publicly owned land in areas where service restrictions have been identified. Lastly, the communities may be able to secure funding for these types of initiatives by pursuit of funds through the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act. Lastly, it may be advantageous for the municipalities to partner with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) on any broadband initiatives, as SPC is leading much of these efforts in the region.

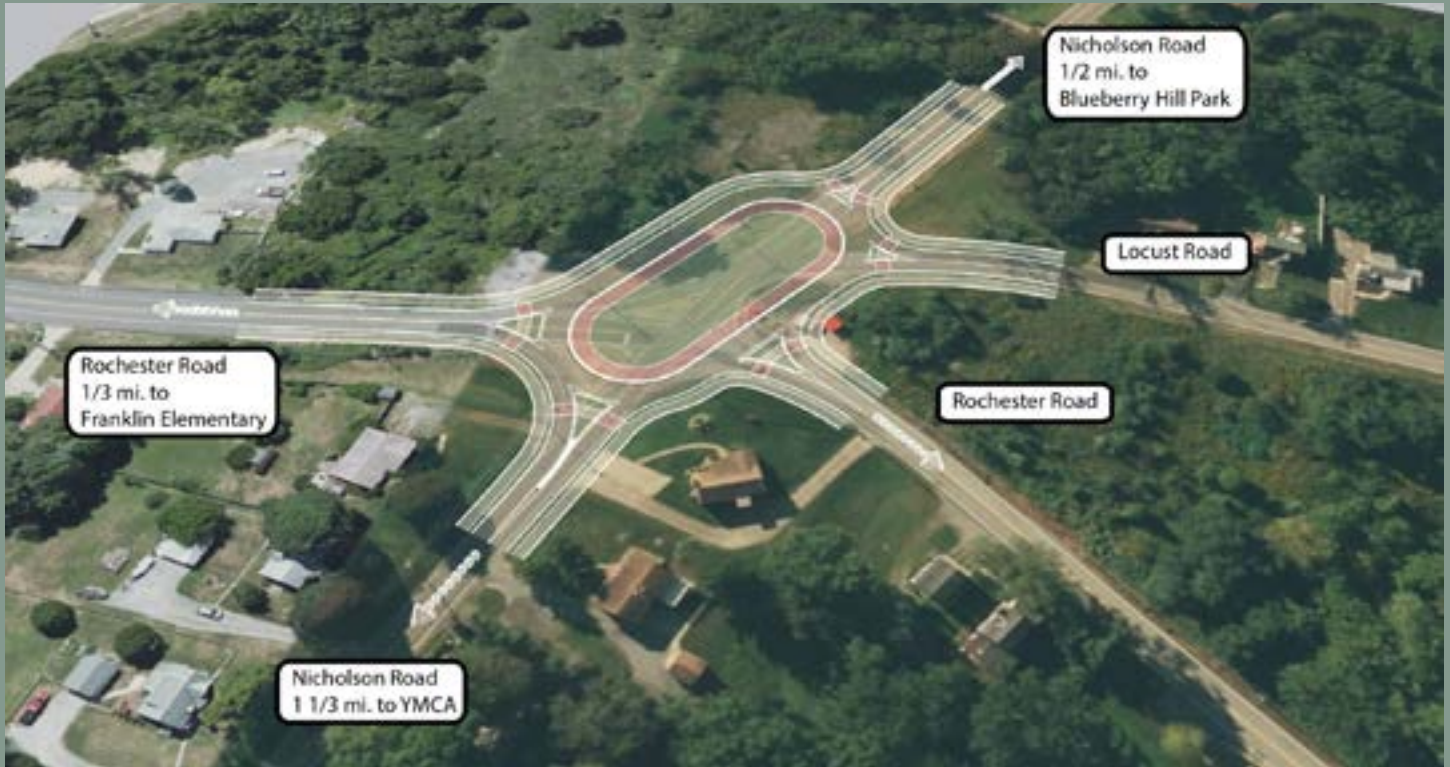


Franklin Park Borough Public Works Garage



Ohio Township Public Works Crews Working on the New Park Improvements; Cell Tower in Background

Five Points Intersection Roadway & Pedestrian Improvements Project



The meeting of Rochester Road, Nicholson Road, and Locust Road, commonly referred to as the Five Points Intersection by area residents, can be confusing for drivers. This key intersection provides an important connection within Franklin Park Borough. Located a few hundred feet from a crossing over I-79 and on a major route to the I-79 Wexford Interchange, Five Points provides access to several neighborhood destinations including Franklin Elementary, Blueberry Hill Park, the Baierl Family YMCA, and several new and legacy Franklin Park neighborhoods. Consequently, it is both a high-volume intersection for vehicular traffic and an important node for future multimodal connections.

For a five-way intersection, a traffic circle or roundabout is a solution that has become increasingly popular with PennDOT and has been successfully implemented in several other municipalities throughout the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. To include the Locust Road intersection and minimize the amount of land or right-of-way needed for the traffic improvements, an elongated or elliptical roundabout would best fit this situation.

In addition to benefits for traffic safety, including a much lower potential for fatal crashes, the roundabout’s one-way traffic flow and many islands for pedestrian refuge make it a great solution for pedestrian transportation. However, the roundabout is not the best solution for dedicated bicycle infrastructure such as bike lanes. Adding a bike lane to a roundabout doubles the number of potential conflict points and increases the learning curve for drivers unfamiliar with roundabouts. If the roundabout or traffic ellipse solution is implemented, the Borough should prepare separate plans for a bike route through Five Points that takes into consideration traffic stress and user safety. Bicycle transportation, however, should not be overlooked because of the proximity of many neighborhood and recreation destinations. Many multimodal funding sources could be applied to both the improvements in this sketch and bicycle routes not pictured.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Five Points Intersection Improvements
Scope	Installation of a roundabout to improve traffic flow and safety improvements; pedestrian safety enhancements
Owner / Partners	Franklin Park Borough, Design and Construction Consultants/Engineers, PennDOT
Timeline	2-5 years
Estimated Cost	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Funding Opportunities	PennDOT, CFA, and DCED Multi-Modal Transportation Funds, PennDOT and SPC Transportation Set Aside Programs, US DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All, DCED Keystone Communities Program
Key Dependencies/Potential Roadblocks	Right-of-way acquisition, PennDOT Coordination due to roadway jurisdiction, Coordination with area property owners



Roadway View of Existing Conditions from Rochester Road



Roadway View of Existing Conditions from Locust Road



Roadway View of Existing Conditions

Mt. Nebo Road

Streetscape & Pedestrian Improvements Project



Mount Nebo Road, a state road, is one of the main gateways into Ohio Township and connects area residents to Interstate 79 on one end and Interstate 279 at the other end. Moreover, Mount Nebo Road also connects residents of the Township's many neighboring communities like Franklin Park Borough, Ross Township, and Sewickley Hills Borough to the area Interstates. Mount Nebo Road's Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts, which are collected by PennDOT, range from 11,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day, which indicates that it is a heavily used local roadway.

One of the goals of this Joint Comprehensive Plan is to create better connections and increase safety for all modes of transportation. The Mount Nebo Road Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements, shown in the high-level, conceptual sketch provided here, will provide both safety and aesthetic improvements to this important gateway and roadway.

This proposed project capitalizes on recent enhancements already made at two intersections along Mount Nebo Road in recent years. Specifically, signalization and pedestrian crossing improvements made at the Nicholson Road and Riya Drive intersections, as well as additional turning lanes at Nicholson Road.

Proposed improvements are concentrated on the north side of Mount Nebo Road where many amenities and retail stores are located, including a day care, a hair salon, and two popular restaurants – Andora and Goodfellas. Additional sidewalks will allow residents of the nearby neighborhoods to more safely access these important neighborhood amenities. Aesthetic improvements include street trees and other landscape plantings and the installation of decorative streetlamps. Community welcome or seasonal banners could be mounted on the light standards. Proposed safety improvements include sidewalks and ADA compliant crosswalks. In future years, pedestrian connections could be extended west toward the Sheetz at the Mount Nebo Exit of I-79, and east to the proposed parklet at Mount Nebo Presbyterian Church (see sketch).

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Mount Nebo Road Improvements
Scope	Installation of street trees, landscaping, sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlamps to improve safety and aesthetic appeal of this important corridor
Owner / Partners	Ohio Township, Design Consultant/Engineer, PennDOT
Timeline	2-5 years
Estimated Cost	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Funding Opportunities	PennDOT, CFA, and DCED Multi-Modal Transportation Funds, PennDOT and SPC Transportation Set Aside Programs, US DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All, DCED Keystone Communities Program
Key Dependencies/Potential Roadblocks	PennDOT Coordination, Right-of-Way Acquisition, Support from property owners along the roadway



Existing Improvements at the Intersection of Mt. Nebo Rd and Nicholson Rd



Existing Businesses at Mt. Nebo Rd and Nicholson Rd



Roadway View of Existing Conditions Along Mt. Nebo Rd

Franklin Park Municipal Building Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project



The intersection of West Ingomar Road, Lenora Drive, and Rochester Road exemplify the need Borough-wide to consider multimodal traffic safety. The intersection contains property uses including a gas station, an auto repair shop, residences, the Borough Municipal Building and Public Works facility, and the Ingomar Middle School just down the road. The transformative sketch above is a conceptual, high-level representation of what the intersection could look like after considering the needs for pedestrian safety. Currently, sidewalks only exist on the Borough municipal building property and down to the school. Therefore, pedestrians may only be able to continue using safe walkways for a limited distance before a pedestrian would need to share the road with fast-moving vehicles. The sketch represents the extension of these sidewalks, with the addition of clearly marked crosswalks to connect both sides of the sidewalk. Improvements to safety and accessibility include ADA compliant curb ramps, and the installation of curb or other separation where none exists on Rochester Road. Curbs aid in the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic but can also help channel stormwater to inlets.

This intersection may also benefit from the assurance of long sight distances so that vehicles and pedestrians are able to clearly see one another at all times through zoning and traffic enforcement. Due to the location of Lenora Drive, drivers may also confuse the right-of-way order for this intersection. Thus, additional signage to indicate traffic flow and order may be considered to help keep traffic moving effectively.

This transformation sketch is representational of the overall need to create better connectivity for pedestrians in the Township and Borough. More information about these connectivity efforts can be found in the Trails and Connectivity Chapter.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Franklin Park Municipal Building Area Pedestrian Safety Improvements
Scope	Crosswalks, pedestrian safety signage, and street tree improvements
Owner	Franklin Park Borough, Design Consultant/Engineer
Timeline	2-5 years
Estimated Cost	\$- \$\$
Funding Opportunities	PennDOT Traffic Safety Grants, PennDOT Safe Routes to School Funds
Key Dependencies/Potential Roadblocks	N/A



Aerial View of Existing Conditions



Roadway View of Existing Conditions from Rochester Rd

Managing Development Impacts

Overview

Despite fluctuations in Allegheny County’s population, both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have continued to gain population over the last few decades. While preservation of greenspace is a top priority for both municipalities, growth and development, both new development and infill or redevelopment, will continue to occur so long as the Borough and Township remain desirable places to live and raise a family and to own and operate a business.

As this joint plan was developed, extensive public engagement and outreach occurred throughout the planning process. One of the common themes heard at the various public meetings and outreach events was the need to better manage the impacts of development, especially given that development is inevitable. Both municipalities need to be prepared and positioned to manage the impacts of development so that the unique character of the communities can remain intact.

Development of any kind, whether residential, commercial, industrial, etc., can affect neighboring

properties and surrounding communities within the general vicinity of the development. Specifically, development can often lead to increased noise, more traffic, loss of trees and greenspace, displacement of wildlife, and increased flooding and stormwater runoff.

There are several goals and strategies that the Borough and Township can use to manage the potential impacts that development has on the community at large. These tactics include reviewing and auditing and potentially amending the land use related municipal ordinances as well as the respective zoning maps. Another strategy is to create a future land use map that reflects each community’s vision and then revise the official respective zoning maps accordingly to be consistent with the vision of the future land use map. A future land use map is a community’s visual guide to future planning.



Sewickley Crossing Residential Development in Ohio Township



Construction at the Deerfield Estates Residential Development along Nicholson Rd in Franklin Park

Municipal Ordinance Revisions

Both the Borough and Township regulate land use and development through their various municipal ordinances, including zoning, subdivision and land development, grading, streets and sidewalks, and stormwater management, to name a few. These various ordinances can be updated and amended to reflect the goals, ideas, and concepts included throughout this plan and to better manage the impacts of certain development types and land uses. Some topics to be explored and examined further to determine potential changes to the respective ordinances concern open space requirements for developments, bufferyard and planting requirements for different and abutting land uses, slope and soil stability requirements, and on-site stormwater management best management practices or BMPs.

Buffering with Trees and Landscaping

In regard to bufferyard requirements, Ohio Township's current zoning ordinance differentiates between several different buffer requirements ranging from Bufferyard A which is 35 feet wide and the most stringent, requiring two rows of plantings and a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees, to Bufferyard C which is less strict and more flexible, requiring a 15-foot-wide buffer of either a compact evergreen hedge or a line of evergreen trees. Buffers are a useful tool and are often required by municipalities to provide separation from differing or incompatible neighboring land uses. In Ohio Township, Bufferyard A is required where any development in a non-residential zoning district abuts adjoining property in one of the residential districts or the conservation zone.

Franklin Park Borough recently amended their ordinance requirements for buffers in March 2022 as a result of recent impacts from residential developments. The March 2022 amendment to the Borough's Zoning Ordinance clarified that bufferyards shall be located along and within the outer perimeter of a lot where a lot abuts an interstate highway. The amendment also added requirements for Bufferyard F, the required buffer for developments that abut an Interstate. Franklin Park's ordinance has seven different buffer types

that can be applied to various development types depending on their neighboring use. These bufferyard types include A, B, C, D, E, F, and N. Bufferyard F is the widest required buffer at 40 feet and trees must be between 80 and 130 inches tall and shrubs between 26 and 116 inches tall. By comparison, Bufferyard A in Franklin Park is a 10-foot-wide buffer that requires trees to be within 24 to 80 inches in height and shrubs to be within 40 to 48 inches tall. The Borough's Ordinance also has specific landscaping requirements that are meant to improve the physical appearance and environmental quality of the community.

It is this simple, buffers come in all different shapes and sizes. They serve a purpose to shield certain land uses from neighboring uses that are incompatible. Buffers can be a tool used to manage the impacts of developments.

Woodland Preservation and Steep Slopes

In addition to buffer and planting requirements, many municipalities have language in their ordinances regarding woodland preservation requirements and even prohibitions on development along steep slopes. An ideal scenario for a proposed development is to incorporate into their final design the keeping of mature, older trees as a buffer as opposed to removing the mature trees and replacing them with new, younger trees that are not as large.

Allegheny County provides requirements in their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) on woodland preservation and the protection of trees and woodlands. The County's SALDO states that not more than 50% of the total area of mature woodlands and not more than 75% of the total area of woodlands on a development site shall be removed in conjunction with a subdivision or land development. In addition, the remaining woodlands need to be protected as open space. Providing additional language similar to what is in the County SALDO in their respective ordinances regarding the preservation of mature trees and additional open space requirements is something that the Borough and Township should review and consider.

Steep slopes are an issue for many communities in Western Pennsylvania. We have many hillsides, slopes, undevelopable soils, landslide prone areas, and challenging terrain throughout the region. Both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township provide steep slope regulations in their respective municipal ordinances. For Franklin Park, the steep slope requirements are found in the Borough’s SALDO. The SALDO states that any areas of steep slopes within a proposed subdivision or land development requires the submission of slope stability study as well as a site geotechnical investigation report. In addition, the slopes present on a parcel correspond with the percent of the parcel that can be developed and slopes in excess of 40% shall not be disturbed in the Borough. Ohio Township’s regulations are not as stringent as the Borough’s and can be found in the Township’s Zoning Ordinance. Steep slopes are also defined at 40% or greater in the Township and various reports are required for steep slope and landslide prone areas as part of the land development approval process.

Noise

Noise, primarily from vehicle traffic along I-79 and I-279, is an issue and concern that has been raised by the public throughout the planning process. Noise

is typically regulated by municipalities through ordinances, including the zoning ordinance or a stand-alone ordinance enforced by either the local police department or the code enforcement or zoning officer.

Noise pollution associated with the two area interstates may be hard to regulate as these are existing highways that have been in existence for many years. Building a noise mitigation wall or barrier could be an option along parts of I-79 and I-279. The potential projects and exact locations where there is a need for better noise abatement would have to be explored and discussed in partnership with PennDOT. There is a specific process that PennDOT uses to identify communities that will be considered for highway noise abatement projects.

Only certain highway improvement projects are eligible for noise mitigation in Pennsylvania. These projects have the potential to alter the acoustical environment and area analyzed for noise impacts and abatement is considered. The scope of these types of projects include highways on new locations, substantial alteration of either the vertical and/or horizontal alignment on existing highways, and various other improvement projects including certain auxiliary lanes, weigh stations, rest areas, etc.



Wooded Parcels with Steep Slopes Near the Intersection of Mtount Nebo Road and Red Mud Hollow Road in Ohio



Castledown Neighborhood Streetscape, Franklin Park Borough

Existing & Future Land Use

The existing land uses in both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township include a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Much of Franklin Park is zoned residential, either R-1, R-2, R-3, or R-4 per the Borough’s current zoning map. The lower to medium density zones (R-1 and R-2) are located primarily in the western portion of the Borough, on the west side of Interstate 79 while the medium to higher density zones (R-3 and R-4) are located on the eastern side of I-79. Commercial and mixed-use areas (M-1 and M-2) are somewhat centrally located in the Borough and can be found along both sides of I-79. In addition, there is a small mixed-use area (M-3) along a portion of Big Sewickley Creek Road.

Approximately 70% of Ohio Township is zoned residential, including a mix of densities within the R-1, R-2, and R-3 Zoning Districts per the Township’s current zoning map. There are several parks, conservation areas, and greenspaces that are zoned Conservation in the Township and these parcels account for about 8% of the land. The Township has several commercial zones, which include the C-1, C-2, and O-C Districts as well as a small light industrial district, the L-1.

Recent Growth and Development in the Area

Given its growth over the past decade, Ohio Township is mostly built-out and what land that is left to be developed is somewhat challenging to build on due to existing terrain, soils, slopes, lack of public utilities, etc. Targeted retail and commercial development in Ohio Township centers mostly along parts of Mount Nebo Road, which is zoned commercial at both ends with a residential area from Highpoint Road to the parcel just before McAleer Road nestled in between the commercially zoned areas. There are a few parcels in the area of Mount Nebo Pointe Shopping Center that are available for development and some vacant storefronts as well in the plazas there. In addition, there is an oversupply of parking and many unused parking spaces in Mount Nebo Pointe that could be used for future outparcel development. This area of the Township is zoned O-C, Office Commercial, and supports a broad range of land uses such as retail



A view of Target and Sam’s Club at Mount Nebo Pointe



One of the Plazas with Vacancies at Mount Nebo Pointe in Ohio Township



Sewickley Pointe Parcel and Pad Sites on Mount Nebo Road in Ohio Township

stores, business or professional offices, business services, card and gift shops, convenience stores, day care centers, day spas, grocery stores, hotels, indoor entertainment, medical offices, personal services, pet services, various restaurants, and wholesale businesses.

On the other end of Mount Nebo Road in Ohio Township, near the Mount Nebo Road exit and interchange of Interstate 79, there are several parcels available to develop and that are currently being marketed by area real estate firms. These parcels are all zoned C-2, General Commercial, and support a mix of potential uses including retail stores, business and professional offices, candy and ice cream stores, day spas, convenience stores, drugstores, day care centers, churches, business services, personal services, pet grooming and pet services, private clubs, repair shops, restaurants, and veterinary services, to name a few. The future of this area of the Township and how it gets developed, what it looks like and what uses are provided, has the potential to create a true gateway into Ohio Township and provide certain uses that aren't currently offered or available to area residents.

Much of Franklin Park Borough is already built out, with little land left to be developed. It is likely that most of the Borough's future development will involve infill development or redevelopment of previously built parcels. There is some land in the Western portion of the Borough, most of which is privately owned, that could be developed in the future. However, much of the land in this area is preserved by the Allegheny Land Trust or owned by the Borough for purposes of providing additional parks, greenspace, or open space. This area of Franklin Park consists mostly of woodlands and lacks public water and sewer. Extending these services to the area is not a priority of the Borough's at this time.

Parks and Greenspace

Both municipalities have done a significant amount of planning and work to build, expand, and improve their existing parks systems. For example, the Borough has over 280 acres of parkland within its 5 Borough-owned parks. This number will continue to grow as the Borough acquires more land adjacent to the parks



Big Sewickley Creek Road in Franklin Park Borough, with a view of the Parcel Recently Purchased by the Borough



The Newly Installed Billboard Along McAleer Road

and looks to make additional improvements and expansions. In addition, the Township has about 93 acres of parkland that it owns. The Township and Borough own additional greenspace including Tom's Run Nature Preserve in Ohio Township and Alpine Nature Reserve in Franklin Park.

The zoning districts for parks and greenspace were discussed in depth at a project Steering Committee meeting during the planning process. Ohio Township's Community Park located off of Nicholson Road and some other conserved and preserved land located off of Crawford Road are zoned C-D, Conservation District. These parcels account for about 340 acres of land in the Township. By comparison, Franklin Park Borough does not designate its parks as conservation on its current zoning map. The parks are uses allowed in the Borough's underlying zoning districts, which are mostly zoned residential and vary in density.

Shared Land Uses and Zoning Districts

Municipalities that work on joint and multi-municipal comprehensive plans together often also work together to ensure that their zoning ordinances are consistent. They can aim to have similar area and bulk regulations, signage regulations, wireless communication regulations, and even share certain land uses across municipal borders. The topic of shared land uses was discussed at several meetings throughout the planning process. Specific land uses discussed included billboards, adult-oriented business, and oil and gas wells and associated uses with oil and gas. The Borough has language existing already in their Zoning Ordinance to allow for oil and gas in the Oil and Gas Recovery District Overlay which sits over the M-3 High-Intensity Mixed-Use Residential, Commercial, and Manufacturing District. The Borough also has language concerning adult-oriented businesses in its current zoning ordinance. In addition, the Township has language concerning billboards already. A billboard was recently approved in the Township along McAleer Road that is visible for drivers traveling southbound on Interstate 279.

As part of the planning process, residential area and bulk requirements were analyzed in both the

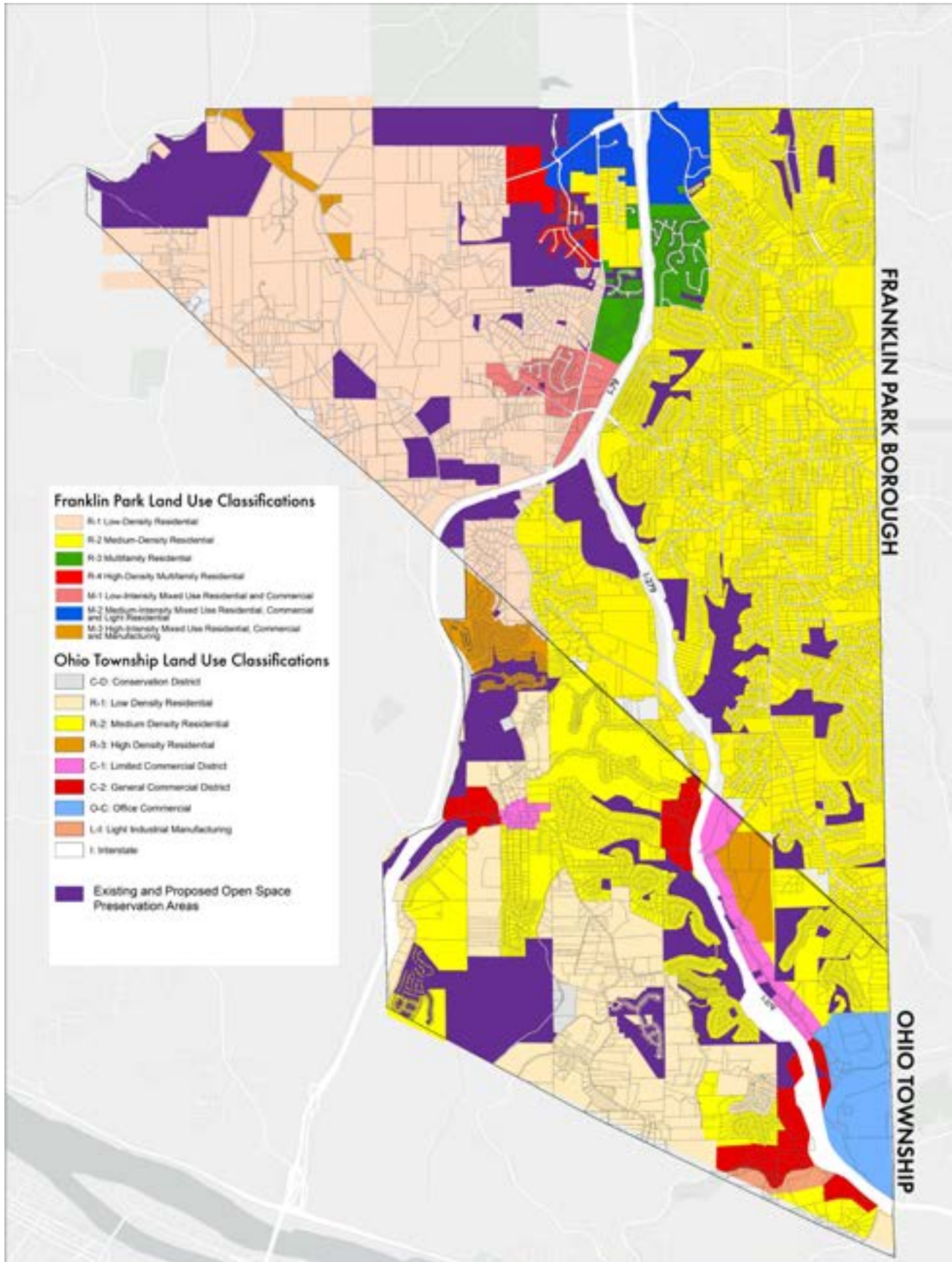
Borough and Township's existing zoning ordinances. Requirements are similar but not exactly the same within the various residential and nonresidential districts in both municipalities. For example, Franklin Park has different standards for single-family, duplexes, townhomes, and apartments while Ohio Township has standards for single-family, two-family, and multi-family developments. In the future, it may be beneficial for the Borough and Township to coordinate their various zoning districts, both residential and non-residential, to allow similar uses and similar area and bulk requirements for such uses, i.e. minimum lot sizes, minimum required setbacks, etc.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map shown on the following page, is neither an official map nor a zoning map. The discussions on future land use with the project Steering Committee as well as the input received from the public have helped to determine that the Future Land Use Map for the municipalities will not result in many changes to the Borough's and Township's respective current zoning maps. Much of the residential areas are built out, with little land left to be developed into more housing. In addition, the commercially and mixed-use areas are still relevant to resident demands. One potential change that has been discussed, as shown on the following Future Land Use Map, is to change all of Franklin Park Borough's parks to a new Conservation classification, similar to how Ohio Township classifies their parks and other conserved or preserved lands and greenspaces.

Moving forward, the Borough and Township may want to review the purpose statements as well as the density requirements, setback requirements, and uses allowed in the various residential, commercial, and/or mixed-use districts to determine if some of these could be consolidated. The underlying land uses of these areas would remain the same though.

Future Land Use Map



Action Items

Growing and improving are necessary to meet the needs of the community. However, development should not move forward unplanned or unchecked. Input from the public indicated that many community members would prefer to see little or no development, and some are concerned by how development has impacted the existing landscape. Other community members and regional developers are more interested in ongoing development in the Borough and Township. To help promote compromise between these groups and mitigate the potential negative side effects, processes should be put in place to manage the impact of development.

The ultimate goal for both the Borough and Township is that by 2033 a balance between development and preservation has been achieved. Furthermore, development in the Borough and Township is managed through various ordinance measures and regulations and target areas for preservation and growth are promoted and adhered to as inevitable growth continues.

Creating a Vision for Future Development

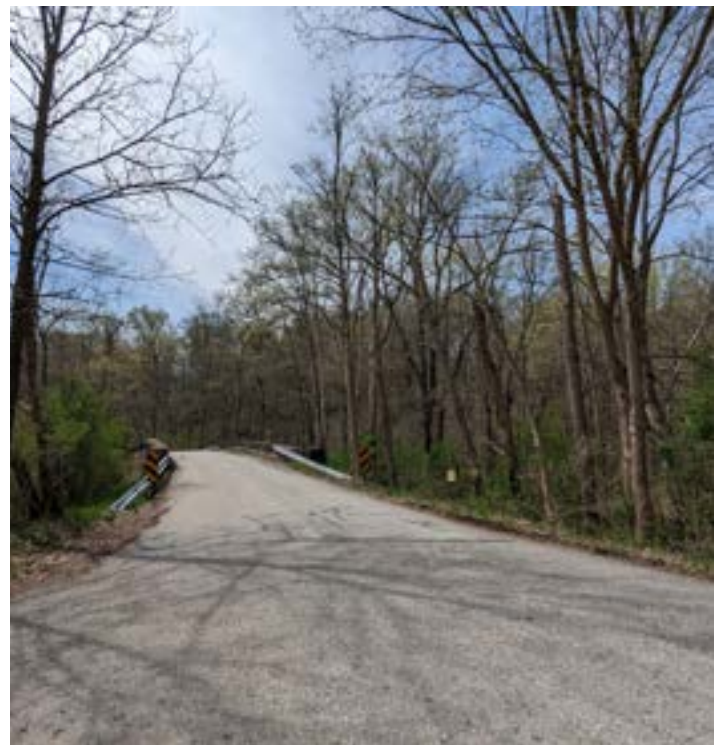
It is important to create a vision for future development in Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township that is consistent with the future land use map. Both municipalities need to identify any potential zoning map changes. This can be done using geospatial data and analysis to understand areas that are best suited for certain types of development. In addition, both the Borough and Township should review and revise their municipal ordinances and zoning maps as needed to ensure that they are consistent with the overall vision. Identifying targeted preservation areas should be part of this discussion.

Promoting Preservation of Areas with Natural Features

The Borough and Township should use geospatial data and analysis to understand and identify areas that should remain undeveloped in order to preserve important natural features and ecosystems.



A View of Pavilion, Playground, and Fields at Blueberry Hill Park, with I-279 and a Residential Development in the Background



Bridge and Wooded Areas along Big Sewickley Creek Road in Franklin Park

Part of achieving this goal will include a review of the respective municipal ordinances to ensure that they prohibit or discourage development in landslide prone and steep slope areas. If required, amendments should be prepared and adopted to promote these regulations. Another method to promote preservation of existing buildings and the existing landscape is for both municipalities to explore the creation of incentives or design standards to motivate property owners and developers to utilize existing structures and buildings as part of potential redevelopment projects as opposed to the development of new buildings or new development on undeveloped lots.

Mitigating the Impacts of Development

An overall goal for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township as development is likely to continue in both municipalities is to do what they can to mitigate any potential negative impacts of future developments or redevelopment on the surrounding areas. The Borough and Township need to ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible or that sufficient measures are taken to reduce nuisances. One strategy recommended is to review and revise municipal ordinances to ensure compatibility between neighboring uses and/or to include nuisance mitigation requirements. This

should include a review of the following: buffer and fencing requirements in existing zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO); noise mitigation requirements in existing municipal ordinances; area and bulk standards in the zoning ordinance; and stormwater management regulations.

Furthermore, the municipalities may want to explore alternative buffer zone and planting requirements to assist with noise mitigation along I-79 and I-279 to reduce noise trespass in adjacent neighborhoods. Additional strategies include ensuring that ordinances contain realistically enforceable requirements and that there is sufficient enforcement staff at each municipality to uphold the requirements. Other objectives to consider include stormwater management and the mitigation of increased stormwater runoff caused by development and clear-cutting of private residential properties. One strategy that many municipalities use to offset the costs of additional stormwater management efforts and comply with municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) requirements is the implementation of a stormwater fee. The municipalities should explore the feasibility of initiating and implementing a storm water fee that provides credits for those who implement green infrastructure on their property.



The New Deerfield Estates Residential Development in Franklin Park Borough



The Mount Nebo Road Interchange/Exit off of I-79

Stormwater Management & Environmental Issues

Overview

To create the best potential future for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township, attention must be given to the inherent relationship between development and the environment. In addition to making places more enjoyable, beautiful, and healthy to live in, the natural environment has the ability to provide ecosystem services, like water filtration and retention, that can help mitigate the need for municipal services, like stormwater management, and perpetuate a healthy natural environment. Human actions in the form of development and improper property maintenance may impede nature's ability to do these jobs. It is the role of the Borough and Township to help promote best management practices for environmental maintenance and stormwater management. Both municipalities already take action to address these issues, but additional steps may help to improve remaining issues.

Through the Online Community Survey, residents in both Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township expressed that stormwater management and flooding improvements should be an important issue for government officials and staff to address. Survey respondents also prioritized flooding controls and stormwater management amongst the improvements they felt were necessary as the municipalities move forward. Franklin Park Borough respondents rated stormwater management and drainage as one of the biggest issues for the joint planning effort to address. Respondents in both municipalities also prioritized the preservation of greenspace and natural character. Key stakeholders supported these interests and noted concerns about personal property maintenance techniques, like the clear cutting of trees, which negatively impact the natural environment and its ability to perform ecosystem services.

By promoting the preservation of natural resources, stormwater and environmental issues may be mitigated throughout the Borough and Township. Additional regulatory measures and the proper enforcement of ordinances will help to address parcel or site-specific issues. Additional improvement projects to address flooding, promote preservation, conserve natural woodlands, and the incorporation of best management practices in stormwater and environmental management will help to promote the natural environment and the intrinsic value it provides.

Physical Characteristics of the Land

To identify the appropriate best management practices, it is important to first understand the characteristics of the physical environment. Slope, soil types, and hydrology are all important characteristics that play a role in how the environment functions and how development should interact with it.

Slope

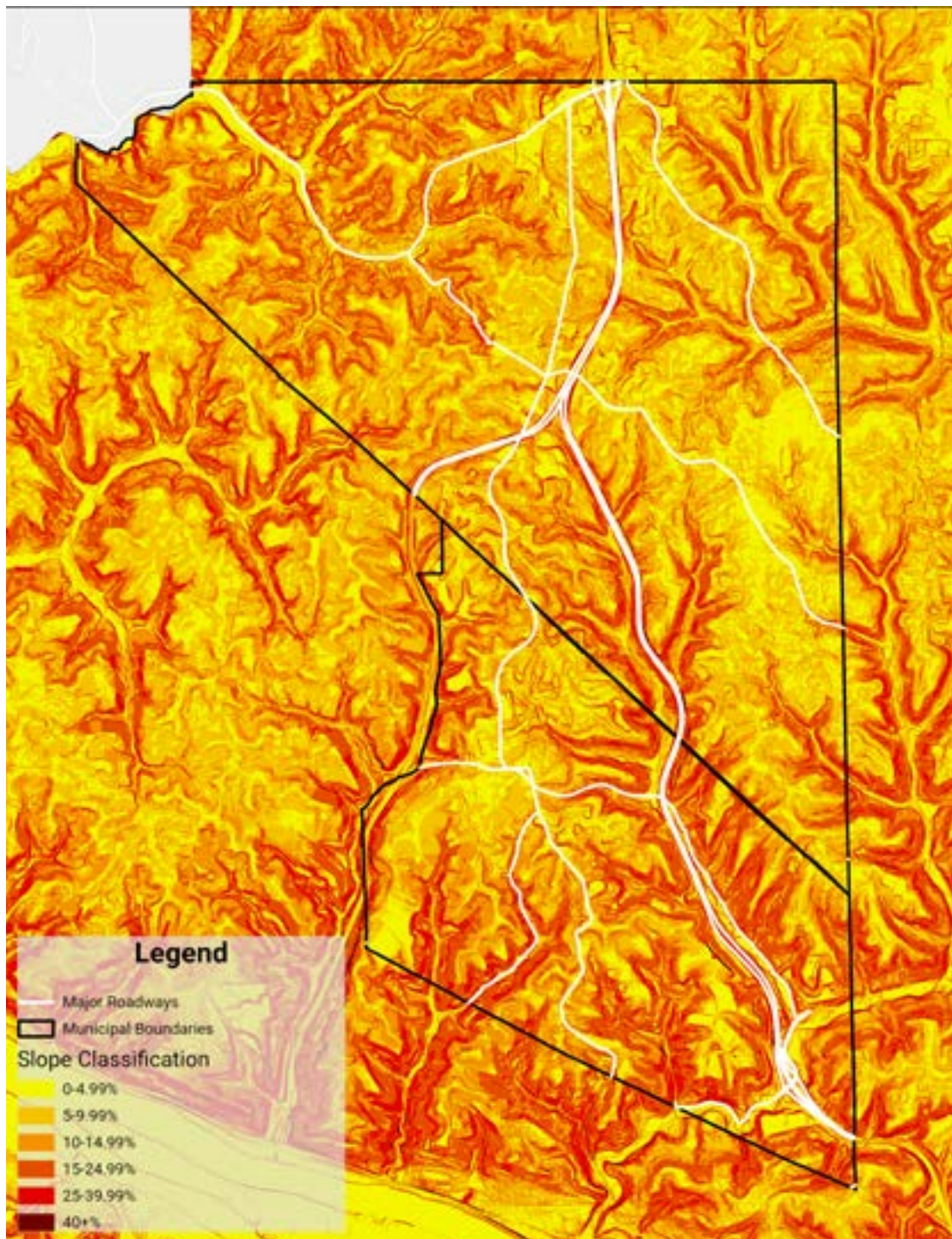
Slope plays a critical role in an area's development suitability. Steep grade changes may render a parcel undevelopable due to instability and/or the prohibitive expense associated with making a parcel safe for development. The following map depicts slopes in the Borough and Township. The slopes are classified following standard development practice and Borough and Township regulation. Moderately steep slopes are those that are 15% to less than 25%, anything greater than 25% is considered a steep slope. Slopes that are less than 15% are generally unrestricted to development. Land with steeper slopes will also have lower water infiltration rates and greater potential for runoff. The addition of impervious surfaces

on these areas can create significant stormwater management issues by increasing runoff. Slopes may be further compromised by the clearing of trees and other vegetation which help to stabilize the land.

Slopes in the Borough and Township range from 0%, in streambeds, to about 50%. The steepest areas are

generally present in the western section of Franklin Park and the southern portion of Ohio Township, especially along State Route 279. Both the Borough and the Township have adopted ordinances to regulate and limit the development of steep slopes.

Map of Slope Classifications

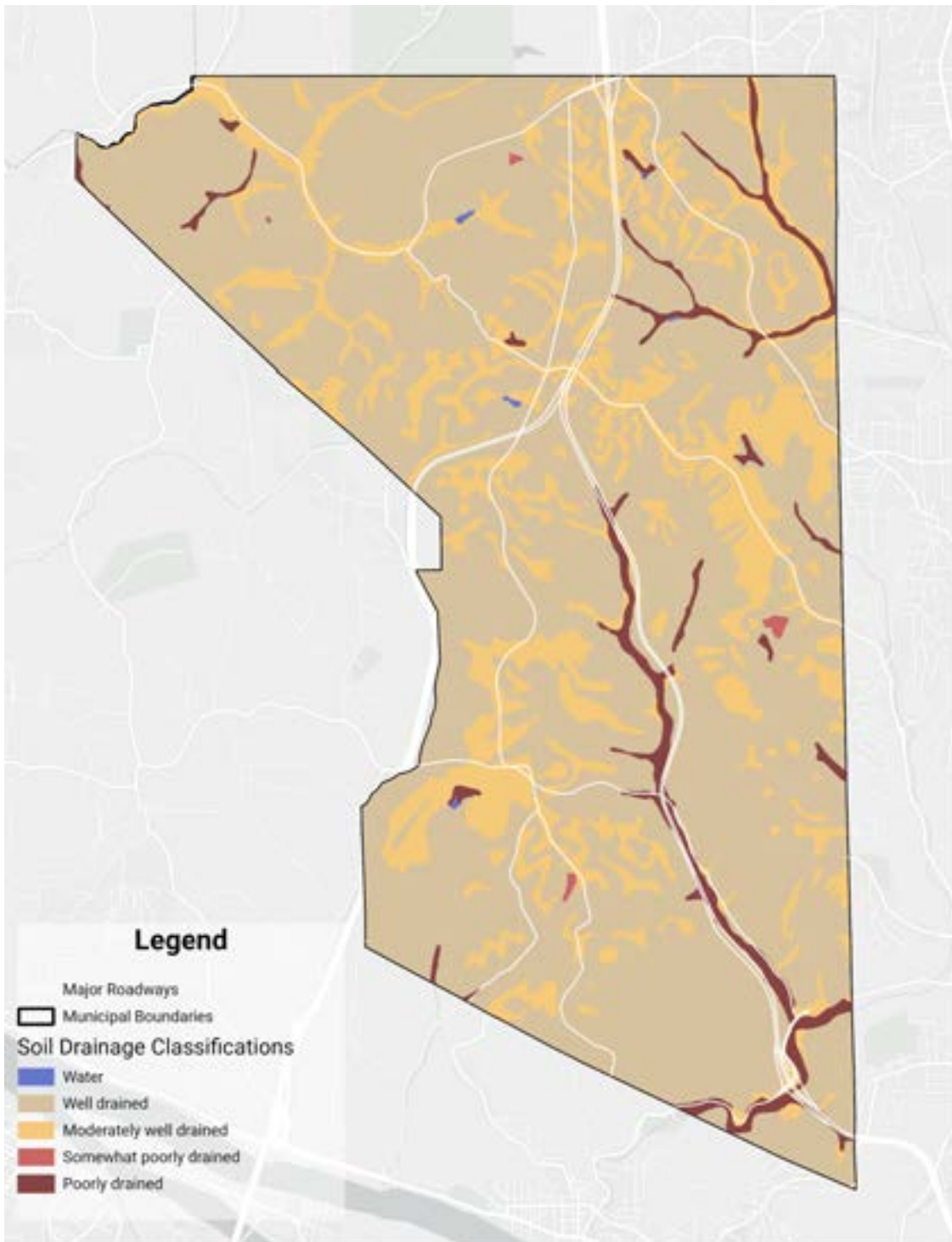


Soils & Drainage

The type of soils present in an area play a critical role in natural services the land is capable of, as well as its suitability for development. Soil type also plays a role in an areas natural ability to retain or drain water. Based on the Soil Survey of Allegheny County, Gilpin-

Upshur-Atkins Association and Gilpin-Wharton-Upshur Association soils are predominant throughout both municipalities, with some Gilpin-Weikert-Atkins Association present in the areas adjacent to Pine Creek and the North Branch of the Pine Creek in the northern and eastern sections of the Borough:

Map of Soil Drainage Classifications



- Gilpin-Upshur-Atkins Association: Moderately deep and deep, well-drained soils underlain by red and gray shale on uplands and deep, poorly drained soils on flood plains. These soils are found primarily on steep hillsides and in valleys. These soils are heavily treed and most suitable for permanent open space because they are characteristically prone to landslides and floods.
- Gilpin-Wharton-Upshur Association: Moderately deep and deep, well-drained and moderately well-drained soils underlain by red and gray shale on uplands, The soils are on lands characterized by low hills and uplands with small cross-streams that serve as drainage swales. This soil is the predominant soil in both municipalities, as well as Allegheny County. Development is most common on this soil type.
- Gilpin-Weikert-Atkins Association: Shallow and moderately deep, well-drained soils underlain by gray shale on uplands and deep, somewhat poorly drained, or poorly drained on flood plains. These soils are found exclusively in flood plains and hydric soils. The frequency of flooding in these areas makes them virtually undevelopable, but supply excellent wildlife habitat.



Example of Steep Slopes, Along SR 279 in Ohio Township

The Map of Soil Drainage Classifications depicts the soils based on their drainage characteristics. The majority of the municipalities are well or moderately drained, which helps to reduce the potential for flooding in the area.

Watersheds & Hydrology

Within the Borough and Township there are several watersheds and streams. The streams range from large, aquatic-bearing, predominantly running streams, like Big Sewickley Creek, Pine Creek, and Lowries Run, to small, shallow, dormant streams. In addition to these features, floodplains are depicted in the following Hydrology and Watersheds map.

Watersheds play a critical role in natural water management. A watershed is an area of land that drains all of the streams and precipitation to a common outlet. In a watershed without development, most precipitation will infiltrate the ground or be used by



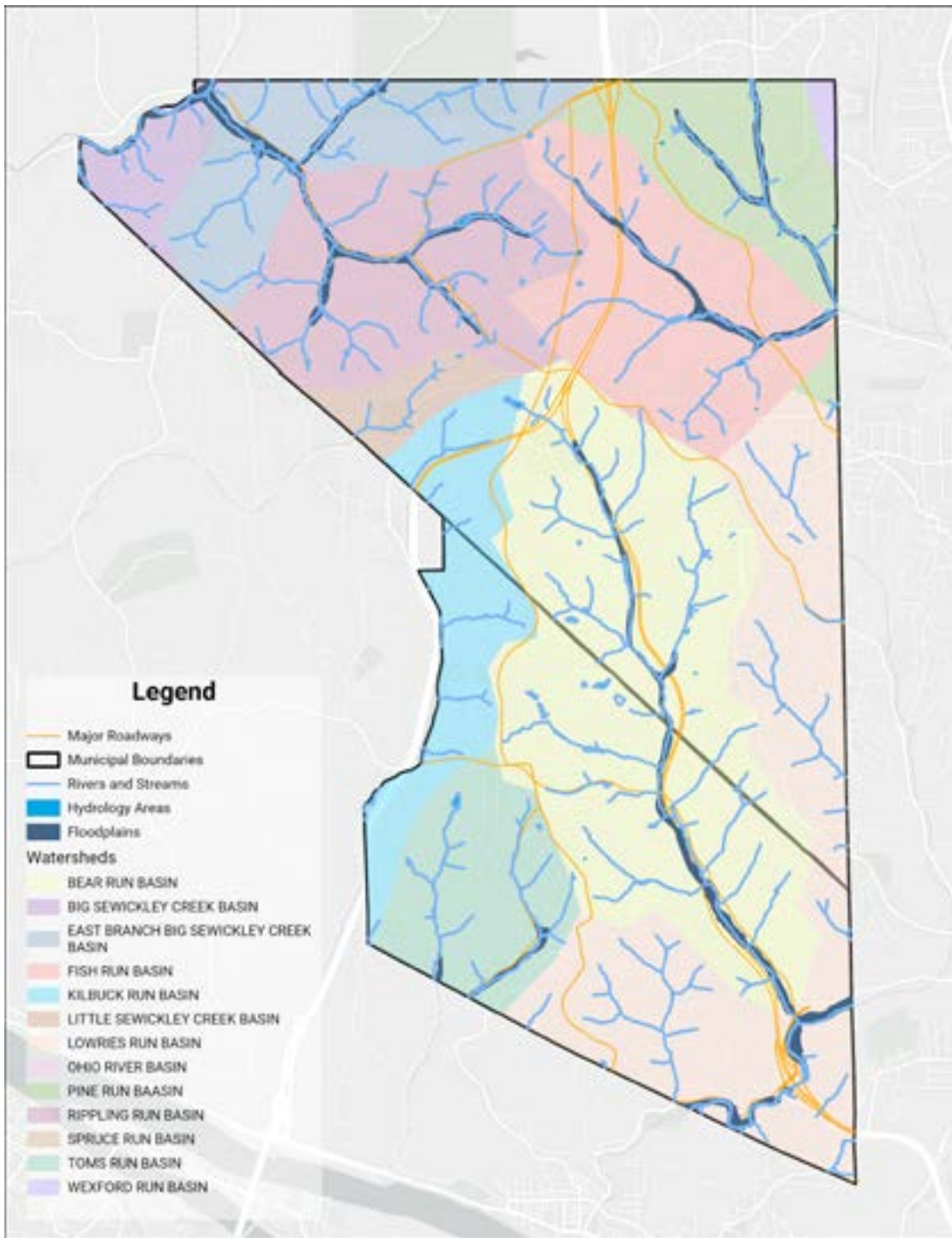
Temporary erosion controls in place near a construction site in Ohio Township. NPDES and municipal SALDOs require erosion control during construction to help mitigate the increased amount of soil entering the stormwater runoff as the ground is disturbed for construction.

vegetation. The majority of the water that soaks into the ground will successfully make its way into bodies of water and through the watershed, being naturally filtered and cleaned as it moves through the layers of soil and sediment. Conversely, in a watershed with significant development, increased impervious surfaces will prevent the water from infiltrating the

ground, causing the water to run directly off and into nearby bodies of water, without treatment, creating significant issues for fresh water and the ecosystems they house.

In addition to the hydrologic features depicted in the map, wetlands are present in both municipalities. Many

Map of Hydrology & Watersheds



are former farm ponds or other man-made ponds, created as part of stormwater management. Loss of wetlands should be considered and addressed and they provide wildlife habitats, as well as contributing to water filtration and natural stormwater management.

Conservation & Environmental Management

Details about land preservation can be found in the Greenspace & Preservation Chapter.

In addition to the natural features and conservation areas already discussed, the protection of wildlife should be taken into consideration in conjunction with ongoing development. Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township are both home to an abundant variety of wildlife common to Western Pennsylvania. These animals play a critical role in the ecosystems to which they belong, as well as contributing to the natural beauty and character of both municipalities.

Action Items

Flooding & Stormwater Management

Stormwater management refers to the collection, conveyance, storage, treatment, and disposal of stormwater runoff. This runoff includes water from rain or melting snow that doesn't soak into the ground, and therefore "runs off" the land. As the water moves over the land, it picks up additional materials, including pollutants that pose a risk to local bodies of water. The goal of stormwater management is to collect this water and properly manage it so that environmental impacts are minimized. It is important for municipal stormwater management practices to sufficiently address runoff, but it is also important for development and property maintenance to help reduce runoff, therefore enabling management practices to be more successful.

Both the Borough and Township have permitted Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), which operate under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permit. This requires both municipalities to develop a Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) with specific projects to be implemented. Each municipality should continue to work on implementing these projects by seeking appropriate

funding sources and considering best management practices.

Because stormwater runoff does not limit itself to municipal boundaries, appropriate management often best occurs at the regional and watershed level. Therefore, the Borough and Township should coordinate with regional stormwater and flooding management efforts. The participation in regional organizations, including but not limited to the Allegheny County Conservation District, will help to have a greater impact on regional goals for stormwater and flooding management.

One step that the municipalities can undertake on their own is the identification and mapping of flood prone and other problem areas. This should be done using geographic analysis, as well as incorporating public comment on flood prone and problem areas. Once the areas have been identified, appropriate professional assistance and regional collaboration can be used to identify potential improvements, keeping best practices and environmental management in mind. Best management practices for stormwater management should also be considered and incorporated into park improvement projects and other land development approvals throughout both municipalities. The municipal engineer should be engaged to ensure that best management practices are incorporated in the design of municipal park improvement projects and any other site plan review.

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Stormwater best management practices or BMPs refer to measures, techniques, or procedures that aim to prevent or reduce pollution from runoff, spillage, leaks, or waste, into waters. BMPs can generally be broken down into two groups, structural and non-structural. In addition to these two general groups, educational and operational methods may also be used.

Structural BMPs refer to permanent, stationary, constructed measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater. While the term structural may evoke images of concrete and steel, in this case, structural may also refer to constructed vegetative designs, like wetlands, vegetative berms, and riparian buffers, all of

which may be manmade greenspaces that use plants and soil to filter water, reduce or prevent erosion, and reduce pollutants. Other structural BMPs would include the use of permeable pavement, green roofs, and many more. Structural BMPs would generally be those projects included as part of the Borough and Township's PRPs. These projects are generally site specific and certified professionals should be involved with their design.

Non-structural BMPs are generally less site specific, and focus on preserving open space, protecting natural systems, and incorporating existing natural landscape features into site designs. Existing Borough and Township efforts to preserve greenspace will help to maintain the land's natural ability to manage stormwater. In the future, efforts to preserve land should continue in order to balance the impacts of development. Efforts to reduce impervious pavement should also be considered. Municipalities may motivate the reduction of impervious surfaces, especially for new development, through the development of Zoning and SALDO design standards requiring the use of pervious pavement types. They may also choose to adopt a stormwater tax structured based on the percent of impervious surface on a site.

Another critical piece in stormwater management is public education. Stormwater runoff is impacted by the activities of people. Common activities like littering, washing cars, changing motor-oil, disposing of household chemicals or paints, and many more, have the potential to produce stormwater pollution. Educating the public about the impact of the actions and the preferred alternatives can be an inexpensive and effective way of reducing stormwater runoff and pollution.

Additional information about stormwater BMPs in Pennsylvania can be found in the Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual 363-0300-002, created by the Pennsylvania Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Places to Play

Overview

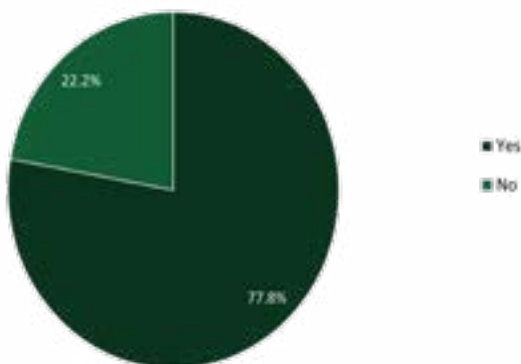
The residents of both Ohio Township and Franklin Park Borough place immense value on their public recreational assets. Due to the considerable population of older adults and young families in the Township and Borough, diverse outdoor and indoor public recreational spaces are needed to support the physical and social wellbeing of the full spectrum of residents in the area. The Township and Borough have already contributed significantly to the quality and access of municipal parks in recent years, but more amenities are needed to match the expected community growth in the near future.

The online Community Survey indicated that park improvement projects were rated among the most prominent issues to be addressed by both municipalities.

In addition, the Survey asked respondents to evaluate the adequacy of park investments; 62.7% of Ohio Township residents and 77.8% of Franklin Park residents felt that their parks and recreation assets were given proper attention and investment.

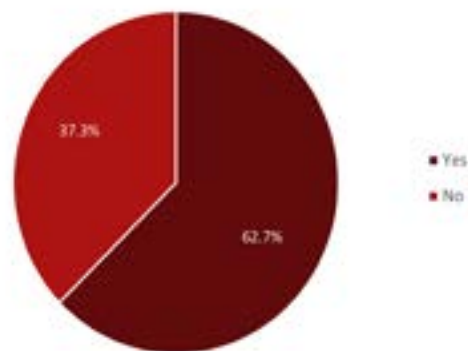
Given the feedback from residents, the most important parks and recreation challenge is to continue the momentum that the municipalities have begun in terms of strengthening the assets they have available. Moreover, the communities should carry that momentum into land acquisition and protection, by identifying new areas of opportunity for future active and passive recreation.

Do you feel like the Borough is investing adequately and properly in its parks and recreation assets and resources?



Online Community Survey Results from Franklin Park Borough Residents

Do you feel like the Township is investing adequately and properly in its parks and recreation assets and resources?



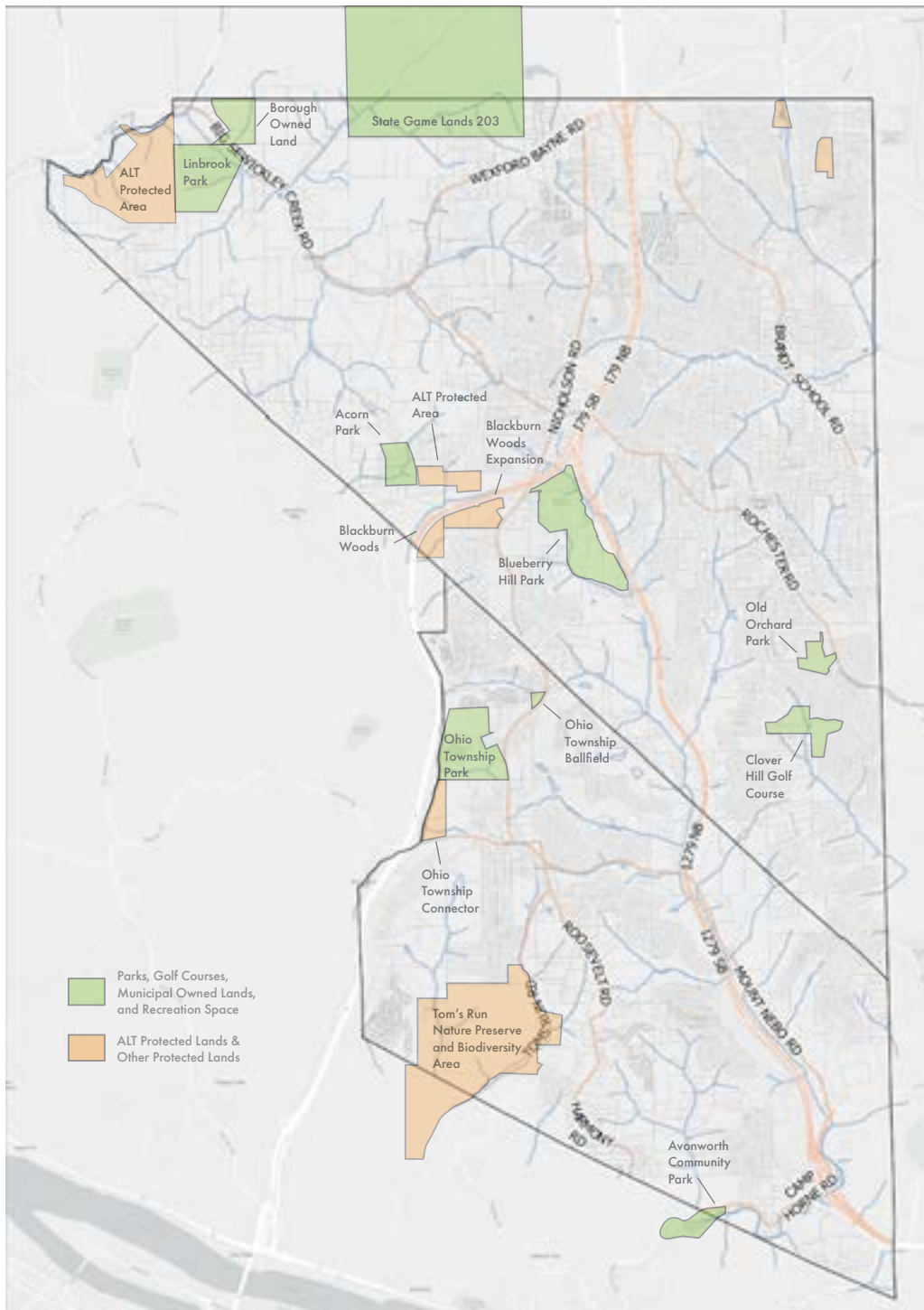
Online Community Survey Results from Ohio Township Residents

Existing Facilities and Amenities

The Township and Borough are fortunate to possess a large number of high-quality parks, facilities, and programming. As of now, Ohio Township has 93 acres of parkland across two parks as well as 2.8 miles of

regional trails throughout the community. Franklin Park Borough has 280 acres of parkland across five parks and maintains 3.3 miles of regional trails.

Map of Existing Parks & Greenspace



Ohio Township Parks

The paramount park in Ohio Township is the Ohio Township Community Park located along Nicholson Road, which features 88 acres of recreational assets, including multipurpose fields, a playground, an amphitheater, pavilions, and a two-story Nature Center. The Township already has plans to improve the Park facilities, including the addition of a pickleball court, basketball courts, a pavilion, and more. Below is the schematic plan for this endeavor.

In addition to the main park, Ohio Township maintains a 5-acre softball field on Nicholson Road, primarily used by the Avonworth Girls Athletic Association.

Another park used by many Township residents is the Avonworth Community Park, which is located at the southern end of the Township in neighboring Kilbuck Township. Avonworth Community Park is a 119-acre park that is leased for use as a public park to the Boroughs of Ben Avon, Ben Avon Heights, and Emsworth as well as Kilbuck and Ohio Townships by the Avonworth Municipal Authority. Avonworth Community Park contains a pool, baseball fields and basketball courts, playgrounds, pavilions, and several rentable recreation buildings, including the Mayernik Center, which is a popular location for weddings and events.



Planned Improvements for the Upper-Level of Ohio Township Community Park
Source: LSSE



Soccer Fields at Ohio Township Community Park



Walking Bridge and Playground at Avonworth Community Park

Franklin Park Borough Parks

Franklin Park is home to five municipally owned parks with an assortment of amenities and recreational assets. These parks include Acorn Park, Blueberry Hill Park, Linbrook Park, Old Orchard Park, and Clover Hill Golf Course. Blueberry Hill Park and Old Orchard Park are primarily active recreation spaces, with playgrounds, fields, and a number of sport courts. Acorn Park and Linbrook Park both have some recreation amenities, but a generous portion of the land is undeveloped natural space. In addition, Franklin Park Borough owns and runs Clover Hill Golf Course, a nine-hole public golf facility. The Borough is also home to a portion of the Pennsylvania State Games Lands Number 203.

In 2022, the Borough purchased two parcels in the northwest area of Franklin Park, adjacent to existing Linbrook Park for future parks and recreation use. More information about the plans for this site is included in the following Action Items section.



Blueberry Patch Playground at Blueberry Hill Park



Linbrook Park

Programming, Activities, and Community Facilities

Both municipalities offer extensive programming and facilities for residents. Below are some of the many programs and activities available within both communities:

- Annual community celebrations/festivals,
- Youth sports,
- Summer camps,
- Holiday celebrations,
- Fundraising events, and
- Senior citizen programs.

In addition to these programs, the following facilities are available for residents in the Township and Borough to use for a broad spectrum of events, from public hearings to weddings, sports, and other gatherings.

- Franklin Park Borough Municipal Building;
- Ohio Township Municipal Building;
- Ohio Township Nature Center;
- Blueberry Hill Park Activity Center; and
- Avonworth Community Park, Mayernik Center and Miller Hall.



Halloween Event at Ohio Township Nature Center

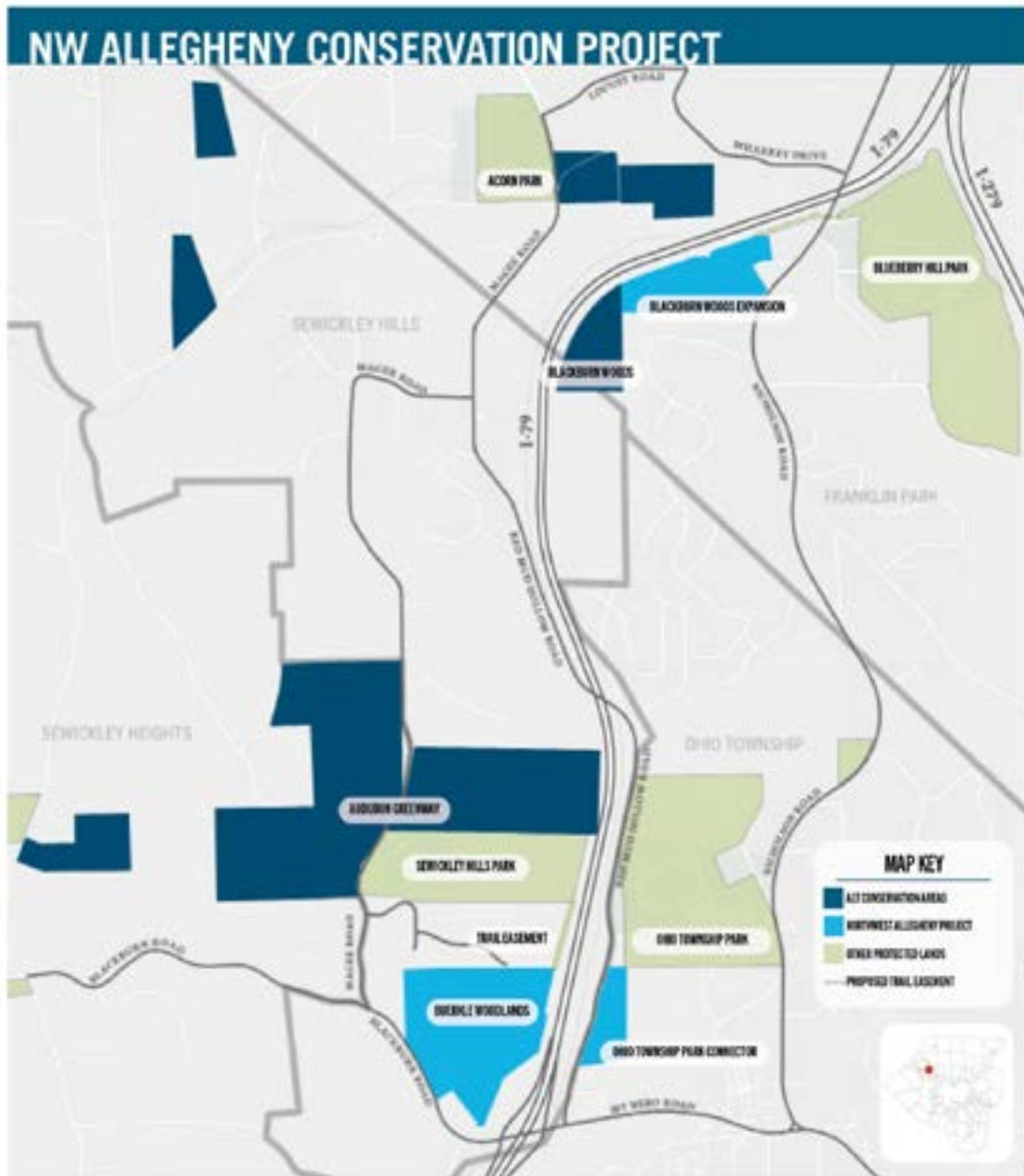
Greenways

Franklin Park and Ohio Township have an ongoing working relationship with the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), two conservation non-profit organizations that identify and conserve local natural land, often by purchasing and owning the parcels. There are a number of properties in both municipalities under the ownership of ALT and WPC as of today and further

land acquisition in the area is expected to continue by the two organizations. Some of these protected lands include Tom's Run Nature Reserve in Ohio Township owned and maintained by WPC, and lands adjacent to Linbrook Park and Acorn Park in Franklin Park Borough and land next to Ohio Township Community Park along Red Mud Hollow Road which are all owned by ALT.

The ALT areas can be seen on the Map of Existing Parks and ALT areas.

Map of Conserved & Protected Lands in Northwest Allegheny County



Source: Allegheny Land Trust

Action Items

Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have demonstrated remarkable efforts in providing premier public recreation facilities and various community amenities to their residents. However, the growing population in the area will put pressure on both municipalities to support the ever-changing needs of the communities. The following action items will create a guide for the Borough and Township to continue their exceptional momentum in recreational and municipal assets for the future of the region.

Expanding Existing Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

The Ohio Township Triangular Parcel: Development of the triangular parcel sandwiched between Mount Nebo Road and Roosevelt Road into a Township gateway element and a public passive recreation space for residents. More about this project can be seen in the Triangle Parcel Gateway and Passive Recreation Space Project information pages at the end of this chapter.

Developing More Athletic Facilities: Sports leagues and organizations in both the Township and Borough have seen an increase in participation over the past several years. In order to meet the spatial demands for expanding sports programming, the municipalities need to cultivate public-private partnerships to fund these spaces. One concept in process is a joint effort between Ohio Township and Allegheny Health Network to develop a tract of land on the east side of the Camp Horne Road exit off I-279 into a sports complex. Plans include several full-sized multi-purpose athletic fields, pavilions, a trail network, and parking.

Aside from the prospective sports complex, Ohio Township's and Franklin Park's respective school districts and adjacent municipalities may serve as an opportunity for collaborative efforts to support the growing demands of local sports organizations and their spatial needs. The Avonworth School District, which serves Ohio Township residents, has a need



Initial Design of the Proposed Ohio Township Athletic Complex

for additional facilities for its sports teams. North Allegheny School District, which serves Franklin Park Borough, may also have needs as well for additional facilities to support middle and high school sports teams and other extracurricular activities.

Linbrook Park Expansion: Franklin Park recently acquired land adjacent to the existing Linbrook Park, and the Borough has plans to expand the park to across the street. In conjunction with this plan, development of a light business district featuring local business may help garner more public park attendance. More about this project can be seen on the Linbrook Park Area Pedestrian and Light Business Development Project information pages at the end of this chapter.

Unification of Ohio Township Municipal Departments: In Ohio Township, the current Municipal Building and Police Department are housed separately, which may create a roadblock in coordinating between public staff across all departments of the Township. One goal for the Township should be to identify a new space to construct a new municipal building that would house all departments and services under one roof.

Improving Existing Park Infrastructure

Franklin Park Borough developed a Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan in 2015 to provide a framework for future upgrades and development to their park assets. The plan included detailed goals for addressing and improving the existing parking infrastructure across all parks in the municipality. Some of these improvements included adding new playgrounds and fields, complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications, expansion of parking lots, and trail development. This Joint Comprehensive Plan recommends the Borough continue the existing momentum of addressing these goals set forth in the Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan.

Some additional park-related recommendations are focused on Blueberry Hill Park's parking issues. Solutions to the parking capacity issues may include a parking study and increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to encourage alternative transportation modes. This initiative may be funded by seeking grants such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation

and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants. For multimodal initiatives that may relieve vehicular traffic, the Borough may want to seek funding from the joint Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) and Commonwealth Financing Authority's (CFA) Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF).

Ohio Township Community Park is the primary park for Township residents, and it hosts a number of recreational assets for a wide range of activities. However, modernization of the Park may include installation of several facilities to meet the changing needs of the community including pickleball and basketball courts as well as additional soccer fields and more. Like Franklin Park Borough, Ohio Township should consider developing a Parks & Recreation Master Plan which would be a tool to help sequester funding for future park features and improvements.

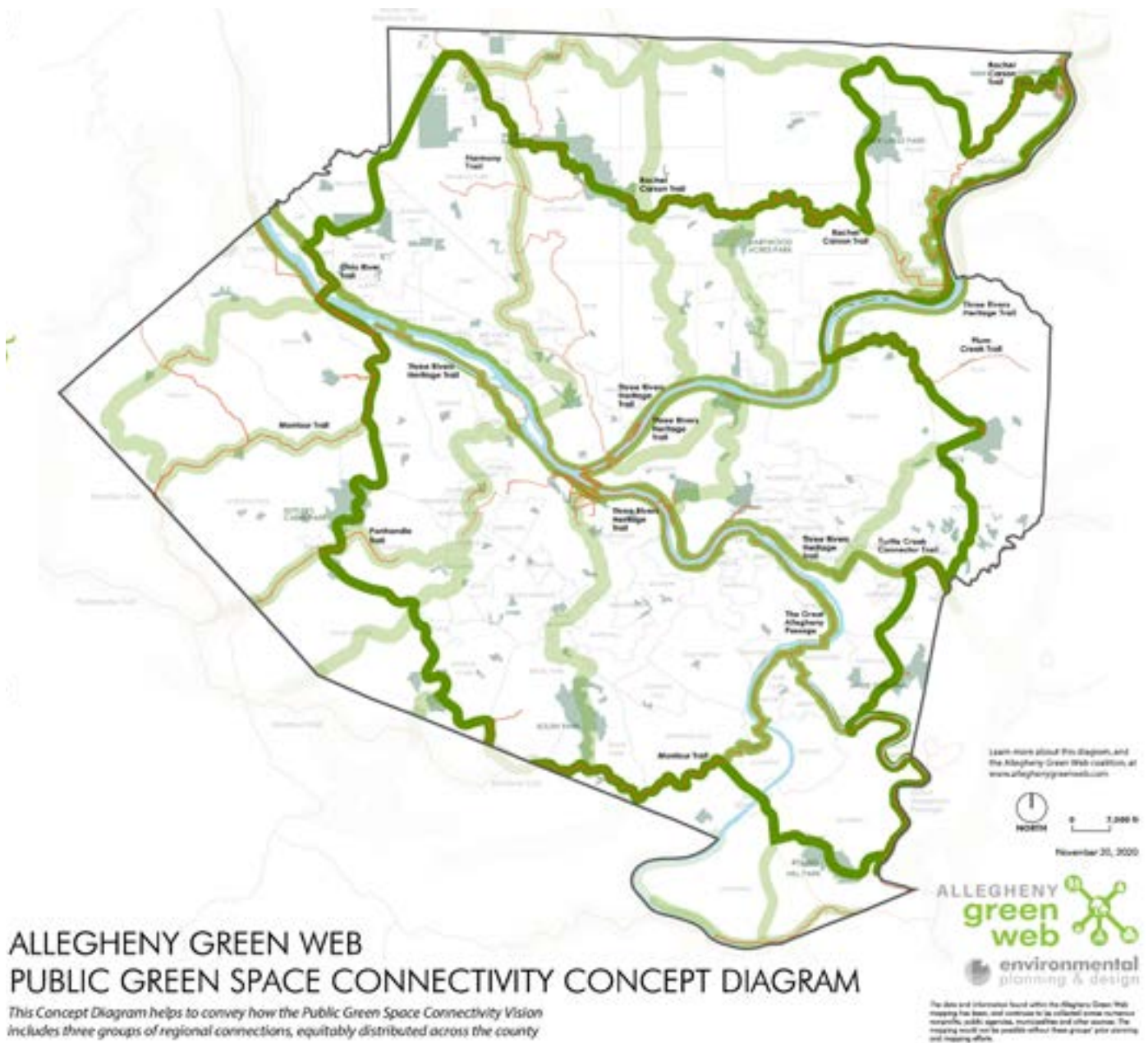


Jones Neely Log House

Expanding Regional Greenways

The Borough and Township should continue to work closely with regional land trusts in acquisition of future land. As the communities will see more housing and business development, it will be vital to preserve land tracts across the region for generations to come. In addition, these preserved ALT lands can serve as an opportunity for development of passive and action recreational spaces, but that may only be achieved through a tight partnership.

Aside from the ALT lands within the Township and Borough, neighboring communities of Sewickley Hills, Sewickley Heights, and Bell Acres are also home to many acres of protected land. In an effort to connect these lands to one another and to all other protected and recreational parcels in the County, the Allegheny Green Web initiative strives, through public and private partnerships, to connect County parks, municipal parks, and conservation land with each other and to other communities so that these green spaces can be enjoyed by all.



Source: Allegheny Green Web

Triangle Parcel

Gateway and Passive Recreation Space Project



In Ohio Township, there is a mostly vacant parcel sandwiched between Mount Nebo Road and Roosevelt Road that has the potential to be transformed into passive recreational space. The parcel is currently owned by the Mount Nebo Presbyterian Church and is serving as a location for their congregation welcome sign as of today. There are also some unofficial gravel parking spots on the north side of the parcel that the church uses as overflow parking for large events. If the project were to be developed, coordination and collaboration with the church congregation would be a vital component. The initiative would benefit both the Township and the Church as a community and placemaking fixture.

Future plans for the parcel could include extended, paved parking for the congregation and residents, a tree-lined perimeter walking path with benches, a decorative fountain, open grass fields, and a Township welcome sign. Due to the recreational nature of the planned parcel development, it will be important that there are safe pedestrian crossings from adjoining roads including crosswalks and roadway signage warning of pedestrian activity. Some of these high-level, conceptual design ideas can be seen in the following transformative sketch.

In addition to the parcel serving as another recreational space for Township residents, the parcel can serve as a gateway to the community. The borders of Ohio Township are not clearly labeled, which means that drivers may not know they have entered Ohio Township in the first place. A marquee sign, with Ohio Township’s design standards, would welcome drivers arriving from Interstate 79 as can be seen in the transformation sketch. Regardless of future ownership of this parcel, the Township and Church should cooperate to resolve any issues that may apply, such as maintenance and repair responsibility, priority use for church residents (i.e. parking on Sundays), public access, allowable uses (e.g. dog walking), and responsibility for liability and damages. In addition to the funding sources mentioned, the sale of memorial benches or tree dedication plaques may provide additional funding for the installation or future maintenance of this project.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Triangle Parcel Gateway and Passive Recreation Space
Scope	Paved parking spots, tree planting, walking paths, a decorative water fountain, welcome signage, and crosswalks
Owner / Partners	Mount Nebo Presbyterian Church, Ohio Township, Design Consultant/Engineer
Timeline	2-5 years
Estimated Cost	\$
Funding Opportunities	DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund
Key Dependencies/Potential Roadblocks	Cooperation with the Mount Nebo Presbyterian Church



Aerial Image of Parcel’s Existing Condition



View of the Parcel from the Roadway

Linbrook Park Area

Pedestrian Improvements and Light Business Development Project



While there are already extensive parks, recreation, and community assets in Franklin Park, public officials have identified opportunities for expansion of Linbrook Park facilities into the two recently acquired parcels. Part of the plans for these additional parcels would include the development of a light business district, and safe crossing for pedestrians across Big Sewickley Creek Road to access both parts of the park. The following Transformative Sketch depicts a **conceptual, high-level** representation of a light business district and pedestrian safety features that may be a potential goal for the Linbrook Park region.

As seen in the sketch, across from Linbrook Park and beside the historic Winterberger-Nagel house owned by the

Borough, there is underutilized space that would be an ideal location for a light business strip that could house a restaurant, café, antique shop, ice cream shop, or another small-footprint business model that can serve residents of the area as well as users and visitors of Linbrook Park. These businesses would be accompanied by a small parking lot, and signalized crosswalks for pedestrians to safely travel to and from the park and to the historical building next door.

A challenge to consider with development in this particular area of the Borough is the current lack of sewer access, which inhibits businesses from connecting to public sewage. Thus, part of development of this area would require extension of public sewers. This concept would help tie the existing parts of Linbrook Park to the recently purchased land north of the existing recreational space. The Borough would need to seek out funding sources, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants for parks improvements and the Commonwealth Financing Authority’s (CFA) H2O PA-Water and Sewer or the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Program to accomplish sewer projects.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Linbrook Park Area Pedestrian and Light Business Development Project
Scope	Crosswalks, pedestrian safety signage, paved parking, construction of a business strip
Owner	Franklin Park Borough, Design Consultant/Engineer, private property owners
Timeline	6-10 years
Estimated Cost	\$-\$\$
Funding Opportunities	Commonwealth Financing Authority’s (CFA) H2O PA Water and Sewer or the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer Program; Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants
Key Dependencies/Potential Roadblocks	Extension of public water and sewers, private land ownership cooperation



Aerial Image of Parcel’s Existing Condition



View of the Parcel from the Roadway

Municipal Collaboration

Overview

Developing a joint comprehensive plan is just one of many steps that Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township have taken towards increased municipal collaboration. Over the past decade, it has become increasingly common for local governments in the State of Pennsylvania and throughout the country that share municipal borders, watersheds, and road corridors and that face similar daily challenges and issues to work together to address problems and garner change.

Benefits of Collaboration

Many local governments are realizing some of the benefits of collaboration, including greater efficiencies with certain services, reductions in costs and spending, increased knowledge capital, and improved delivery of local services. There are many areas of local government that typically fall into the shared services category, including code enforcement, economic development, stormwater management, road maintenance, equipment sharing, mutual aid and emergency services, cooperative pricing and purchasing, and even insurance funding. While there are many benefits to collaboration within municipal governments, there are also some challenges. These challenges include politics and personalities, a lack of willingness to consider new ideas, and protectionist mindsets of retaining municipal autonomy, to name a few.

It makes sense for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township to continue their established relationship and collaboration in the years ahead. The two municipalities have a lot of things in common. They have a similar mix of land uses, they have goals consistent with balancing development with preservation, they provide ample



Welcome to Franklin Park Borough Sign



Ohio Township Community Park Wayfinding Sign

parks and recreation opportunities to residents, and they currently face a lot of the same challenges in terms of stormwater management, land use, development, and traffic calming, to name a few.

While this Joint Comprehensive Plan has identified several goals and objectives for the Borough and Township individually to address over the next decade, there are also several goals included in the plan for the two communities to continue to work together and to build on their established partnership. Furthermore, there are many service areas in which Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township are already working together and have been for the last several years, including emergency management response to 911 calls in the area, stormwater management and flooding across shared watersheds, and cross promotion of their various recreational events and programs.

Focus Areas for Collaboration

In addition to already established partnerships in certain service areas, several of the theme areas that have been explored throughout this plan highlight the many topics and issues that the Borough and Township can work together on in the years ahead. These include trails and connectivity, infrastructure improvements, stormwater and environmental issues, parks and recreation, managing the impacts of development, sharing certain zoning districts or land uses, and greenspace preservation.

These topics are explored as follows:

- From a stormwater management perspective, the Borough and Township share two watersheds – Lowries Run and Bear Run. Efforts to maintain and enhance these watersheds are a prime example of an area for collaboration between the two municipalities in the future.
- Several roadways travel through both the Borough and the Township, including Nicholson Road, McAleer Road, and Arndt Road as well as Interstate 79 and Interstate 279. Traffic calming techniques and streetscape enhancements along these roadways are another area with much potential for collaboration in the future.



Ohio Township Nature Center



Recycling Facilities at Franklin Park Municipal Building



Nicholson Road and Mount Nebo Road Roadway

- Park amenities and facilities as well as recreational programming in both the Borough and Township are plentiful and their respective Park and Recreation Departments do a phenomenal job of maintaining and enhancing facilities and offering programming for residents of all ages. There is potential for cross programming and increased collaboration on parks and recreation programs in the future for the Borough and the Township.
- From a land use and zoning perspective, many similar land uses and zoning districts are located in the Borough and Township. The municipalities may want to consider some shared land use provisions or possible design standards for streetscape enhancements for shared roadways like Arndt and Nicholson Roads.
- Connectivity is another key issue through which the Borough and Township are linked. Connectivity includes trails, walkability, and bike lanes/biking abilities. Linking to other regional trails that are near both municipalities is a potential topic area for continued collaboration as well as connectivity between parks, amenities, and neighborhoods that are on the borders of the municipalities as well as within each municipality.
- Greenways and conservation is another issue that Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township can collaborate on. Both municipalities have Landscape Conservation Areas and Ohio Township also has a Biodiversity Area. The Allegheny Land Trust also owns several parcels of land that are being conserved and both municipalities own significant of parklands and greenspace.
- Broadband and Cellular Networks and identifying areas that lack coverage of these services is another area where the municipalities can partner together. How and where various wireless communication facilities are permitted and what the requirements are should be consistent between the municipalities and particularly in areas near the municipal boundary, along the Interstates, and other shared local roadways that travel through both the Borough and Township.



Ohio Township Staff and Officials at Groundbreaking of New Park Improvements



Ohio Township Roads Dept. Performing Maintenance at Ohio Township Community Park



West View Water Authority



Franklin Park Borough Fire Station

Action Items

Several goals and strategies have been developed to guide Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township as they continue to partner, both now and in the future, to address important issues and challenges in both communities and the area as whole.

The vision moving forward is that once the Joint Comprehensive Plan is adopted, Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township will continue to work together to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies included within this Joint Comprehensive Plan and to Continue to make progress to improve the overall quality of life in both communities.

Monitoring Plan Progress

Monitoring the progress of the various goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Implementation Chapter will be a key component to the plan's success. As part of tracking the advancement of the various goals, each municipality can provide a status report and update on the plan's progress once per year at their respective Borough Council and Township Board of Supervisors meeting. In addition, the Borough and Township should continue to explore shared services, shared zoning uses, regulations, and districts, cross programming and marketing, and other joint initiatives.

Implementation

Overview

Throughout this Joint Comprehensive Plan, many goals and objectives related to stormwater and environmental issues, infrastructure, connectivity, parks, recreation, enjoyable public spaces, municipal collaboration, and preservation have been established for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township to strive to achieve over the next ten plus years. It is important to focus on the prioritization and implementation of these goals and objectives so that the Borough and Township and its many partner organizations can work together to make them a reality.

Implementation of the various goals and strategies included in this plan cannot happen overnight and will require time and patience of not only staff and officials from the Borough and Township but also of area stakeholders and partner organizations. Furthermore, implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan will require coordination of resources, the development of funding and financing plans for specific projects, and the organization of bringing multiple stakeholders together, including representatives from County and State agencies as well as private property owners and developers.

The goals and strategies for Franklin Park Borough and Ohio Township that are included in this plan will take many years to implement and some goals and strategies will be easier and quicker to achieve than others. Successful projects and initiatives that result from this plan will involve partnerships between the Borough, the Township, and their many partner organizations. Some of the most impactful partnerships that end up producing results are public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships have become increasingly important and more common over the last two decades throughout Pennsylvania. Many times, the

reason that projects like the ones included in this plan get implemented is due to the mix of funding sources and partners involved that work together to make it happen.

Prioritization

Project Steering Committee members ranked the various draft priorities and goals. The Steering Committee members were asked to complete rankings in an excel spreadsheet and indicate their preferences in terms of project urgency and importance. The results of the Steering Committee prioritization exercise have factored into the various goals and objectives included within the Implementation Table included in this Chapter.

Overall, the goals and objectives that were rated as most important were usually also rated as most urgent, with some exceptions. Some of the top-rated priorities and goals included items such as municipal collaboration efforts, mitigation of negative impacts of development, and improving traffic flows at key areas. Some of the lowest ranked items included pedestrian connectivity to schools or within neighborhoods and the expansion of Linbrook Park.

Prioritization of goals and the actual reality of implementing each goal, no matter how important or urgent it may be, along with the specific role that the Borough and Township and its partners can contribute in terms of implementation, was factored into the process of development the Implementation Table.

Funding

There are many ways that the identified projects and improvements mentioned throughout this Joint Plan can be funded. For example, there are many public funding sources like grants and low-interest loans available through State agencies like DCED, DCNR, PennDOT, and CFA. In addition, there are regional financing solutions and funds available through Allegheny County and SPC. Federal grants are also a possible funding source for certain projects, including funding programs available through ARPA and US DOT. Locally, western Pennsylvania also has a strong grouping of private foundations and nonprofit organization that offer various grant programs. Donations from private individuals and companies, as well as potential sponsorships from area businesses, are also possible solutions to fund some of the projects and improvements in the Plan.

Implementation

Implementation of the recommendations in the Franklin Park Borough Ohio Township Joint Comprehensive Plan require the cooperation and collaboration of many public and private sector entities, including the Avonworth and North Allegheny School Districts, the West View Water Authority, the McCandless Township Sanitary Authority, the Ohio Township Sanitary Authority, the various sports and recreational associations in the community, Allegheny County Council, the Allegheny County Planning Department, developers, the business community, and other utility and service providers, to name a few. In terms of implementing the recommendations that are outlined throughout this plan, the municipalities will utilize a phasing plan with phases categorized as follows:

- Immediate (1-2 years)
- Short-term (2-5 years)
- Long-term (6-10 years)

The table on the following page provides a list of acronyms used in the Implementation Table.

The funding levels corresponding to the opinion of probable cost provided in the table are included below.

- \$ = \$0-\$250,000
- \$\$ = \$250,001-\$1,000,000
- \$\$\$ = \$1,000,001-\$2,000,000
- \$\$\$\$ = More than \$2,000,000



The Implementation Matrix highlights the various goals and objectives detailed throughout this plan and identifies potential partners, costs, funding sources, and time frames for each goal or strategy.

Next Steps

Moving forward, the Implementation Matrix provides a framework for Borough and Township staff and officials to work on projects separately within their own jurisdictions and also jointly on the many projects that benefit both communities. Staff and officials along with partner organizations and other area stakeholders will need to champion key projects to see them through to fruition.

For all of the identified projects, more detailed funding plans will need to be prepared. In addition, grant applications will need to be completed and submitted. In some cases for certain projects, an engineer or a third-party consultant may be needed to provide support, including more detailed construction drawings for roadway improvements, more detailed park improvement plans, etc. As the Borough and Township move forward into implementation, they will need to further prioritize the most important needs and projects and look for additional resources, both in regard to money and time, to achieve the many goals outlined in this Joint Plan. The Borough and Township can place advertisements for request for qualifications and proposals to assist with the various projects as needed.

Organization, Entity, or Funding Source	Acronym
Allegheny Land Trust	ALT
American Rescue Plan Act	ARPA
Avonworth School District	ASD
Commonwealth Finance Authority	CFA
McCandless Township Sanitary Authority	MTSA
North Allegheny School District	NASD
North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance	NHWBRA
Ohio Township Sanitary Authority	OTSA
PA Department of Community and Economic Development	DCED
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	DCNR
PA Department of Environmental Protection	DEP
PA Department of Transportation	PennDOT
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission	SPC
US Department of Transportation	USDOT
West View Water Authority	WVWA

Potential Partner & Funding Agency Acronyms Explained

Greenspace & Preservation

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Expand preservation areas in the Township and Borough.	1.1	Convert additional land to be held in conservation.	Allegheny Land Trust, Other Local Land Trusts	\$	Ongoing	DCNR C2P2 Planning Grant for Multimunicipal Greenways Plan or Rivers Conservation Plan, Private Foundations, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy- Colcom Revolving Fund for Local Land Trusts, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund or Environmental Stewardship Fund
2	Mitigate flooding through the preservation of flood-prone areas and natural flood ways.	2.1	Identify flood-prone areas and natural flood ways.	DEP, ACCD	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff time, meeting time
		2.2	Plant native vegetation to control the impacts of flooding in natural areas.	TreePittsburgh	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Private Foundations, Western PA Conservancy, DCNR Community and Watershed Forestry Grants
3	Integrate more forms of active and passive preservation initiatives in the community.	3.1	Increase citizen engagement with active open space.	DCNR, DCED	\$\$-\$	Ongoing	Private Foundations, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy- Colcom Revolving Fund for Local Land Trusts, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund or Environmental Stewardship Fund

Trails & Connectivity

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Improve walking and biking connectivity between parks and neighborhoods.	1.1	Create connections between Blueberry Hill Park and surrounding neighborhoods.	Local Property Owners, Allegheny Land Trust, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance, DCNR, DCED	\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds, PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP), DCNR Land Acquisition Grants, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund
		1.2	Create connections between Ohio Township Park and surrounding neighborhoods.	Local Property Owners, Allegheny Land Trust, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance, DCNR, DCED	\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
2	Improve walking and biking connectivity between regional parks	2.1	Connect Blueberry Hill Park and Ohio Township Park.	Local Property Owners, Allegheny Land Trust, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance, DCNR, DCED	\$\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Same as above
3	Improve walking and biking connectivity within neighborhoods.	3.1	Build additional sidewalks within new neighborhoods.	Local Developers, Local HOAs, Local Property Owners, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance	\$	Ongoing	Local Developers
4	Improve walking and biking connectivity between neighborhoods and schools.	4.1	Prioritize connections between the Cobblestone and Northridge Ohio Township neighborhoods and nearby schools	Cobblestone HOA, Northridge HOA, ASD, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance	\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	PennDOT Safe Routes to Schools Program, DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG
		4.2	Prioritize improved walking and biking connections to Franklin Park Elementary School along Rochester Road and connections to surrounding neighborhoods	Settler's Walk HOA, The Estates of Franklin Fields HOA, NASD, North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance	\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
5	Improve walking and biking throughout the municipalities by expanding walking and biking infrastructure.	5.1	Identify high priority routes and connection needs for walking and biking.	North Hills Walk Bike Run Alliance, PennDOT, Allegheny County	\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	DCNR C2P2 Planning Grant for Multimunicipal Trail Study, DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds, PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP), DCNR Land Acquisition Grants, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund

Infrastructure

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Improve and enhance existing water and sanitary sewer services as needed and where appropriate.	1.1	Identify target areas for water and sewer improvements.	Municipal Governance, MTSA, OTSA, WVWA	\$-\$\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	SPC, ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA - PA Small Water and Sewer Program, CFA - Sewage Facilities Program, PennVEST
2	Expand water and sanitary sewer availability and connections as needed and where appropriate to support underserved areas.	2.1	Identify target areas for water and sewer expansion projects.	Municipal Governance, MTSA, OTSA, WVWA	\$-\$\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
3	Improve traffic flows and conditions along key roadways and at key intersections in both the Borough and Township.	3.1	Improve conditions along Nicholson Road, which spans both the Borough and Township.	Municipal Governance, PennDOT	\$-\$\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		3.2	Improve traffic flow and enhance safety for all modes at the Five Points Intersection.	Municipal Governance, PennDOT	\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		3.3	Improve traffic and safety conditions at other key roadways and areas including but not limited to Pine Creek Road and Mount Nebo Road.	Municipal Governance, PennDOT	\$-\$\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
4	Improve broadband access and wireless services in the areas which lack service throughout the Township and Borough.	4.1	Explore solutions to providing additional broadband and wireless services in the areas which lack service in the Township and Borough, including Crawford Road in Ohio Township and neighborhoods and areas along Reis Run Road in the Borough.	Municipal Governance, SPC, Area Service Providers	Minimal Cost	Short-term 2-5 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, Local Service Providers, Private Foundations

Managing Development Impacts

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Create a vision for future development in Franklin Park and Ohio Township that is consistent with the future land use map.	1.1	Identify any potential zoning map changes.	Municipal Governance	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time
		1.2	Identify targeted preservation areas.	Municipal Governance	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time
		1.3	Explore the creation of incentives or regulations and design standards to motivate property owners and developers to utilize existing structures and buildings as part of potential redevelopment projects as opposed to the development of new buildings or on undeveloped lots.	Municipal Governance	Minimal Cost	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time
2	Mitigate potential negative impacts of future developments or redevelopment on surrounding areas.	2.1	Ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible or that sufficient measures are taken to reduced nuisances.	Municipal Governance, Local Property Owners, Local Developers	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	Staff Time, Meeting Time
		2.2	Mitigate increased stormwater runoff caused by development and clear-cutting of personal residential properties.	Local Property Owners, Local Developers, ACCD	\$	Ongoing	Staff Time, Meeting Time, Landowner Incentive Programs (Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts)

Stormwater Management & Environmental Issues

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Focus on implementation of the identified Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) projects that have been earmarked by the Borough and Township and their respective engineers.	1.1	Seek funding to support the identified PRP projects in each municipal PRP.	Municipal Governance, ACCD, PA DEP	\$-\$\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds
2	Coordinate with regional stormwater and flooding management efforts.	2.1	Participate in regional advocacy groups and other organizations that seek to improve stormwater, flooding, and other environmental concerns in the area.	Municipal Governance, Neighboring Municipalities, ACCD, PA DEP	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	Staff Time, Meeting Time
3	Incorporate stormwater management best practices into park improvement projects and land development approvals in the Borough and Township.	3.1	As park improvement projects occur, incorporate best management practices within the design and construction of the improvements and new park facilities.	Municipal Governance, ACCD, PA DEP	\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds
4	Identify flood prone and other problem areas and how to address them.	4.1	Create a map that identifies problem areas in both the Borough and Township.	Municipal Governance	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time

Places to Play

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Expand existing parks, recreation, and community facilities.	1.1	Develop Linbrook Park and expand to the property across the street from it.	Municipal Governance, DCNR, DCED	\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds, PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP), DCNR Land Acquisition Grants, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations, Local Property Owners
		1.2	Explore the possibility of constructing a new Ohio Township municipal building to bring all Township services and departments (police, parks and recreation, administration, code enforcement, etc.) into one building.	Municipal Governance	\$\$\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	
		1.3	Develop more sports and athletic facilities.	Municipal Governance, Local Property Owners, Local Developers, Area Youth Sports Organizations, ASD, NASD	\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
		1.4	Develop the triangular parcel on Mt. Nebo Road into a passive recreation space and township gateway.	Municipal Governance, Mt. Nebo Presbyterian Church	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
2	Improve and expand existing park infrastructure.	2.1	Make improvements to Old Orchard Park as needed.	Municipal Governance, DCNR, DCED	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations
		2.2	Resolve current parking limitations at Blueberry Hill Park.	Municipal Governance, DCNR, DCED	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
		2.3	Improve facilities at Ohio Township Park (pickleball, basketball, soccer fields, etc.)	Municipal Governance, DCNR, DCED	\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	
		2.4	Collaborate on a new Joint Comprehensive Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan.	Municipal Governance, DCNR	\$	Immediate 1-2 yrs	
3	Expand regional greenways to increase recreational opportunities.	3.1	Identify additional land to establish greenways.	ALT	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Partnership Grants for Special Purpose Planning, DCNR C2P2 Planning Grant for Multimunicipal Greenways Plan or Rivers Conservation Plan
		3.2	Promote appropriate community activity on greenways.	ALT, Allegheny County Green Web	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	

Municipal Collaboration

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Continue to work together to implement goals outlined in the Plan and to make progress to improve the overall quality of life in both communities.	1.1	Monitor plan implementation and progress.	Municipal Governance	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time

Appendices

A. Public Input & Engagement Results

B. Trends Report

C. Wireless Coverage Report for Franklin Park Borough

D. Maps (Large Size)