

# Phoenixville 2030



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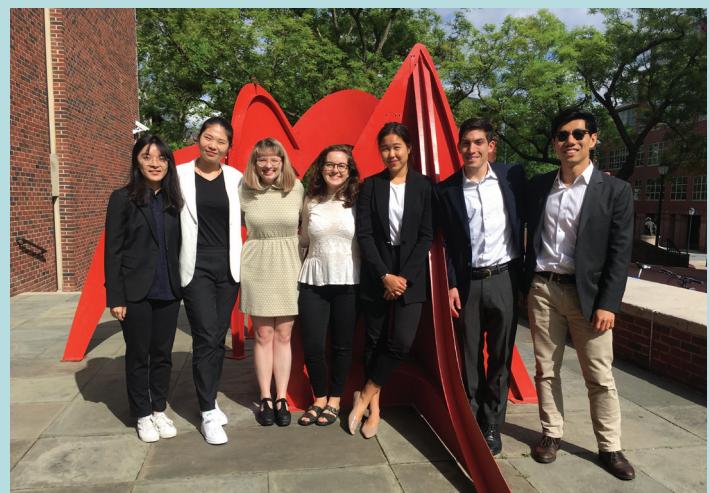
Spring 2019

## Foreword

This plan was prepared by Selina Cheah, Eugene Chong, Julia Marchetti, Natasha Tabachnikoff, Jesse Weiss, Ran Xin, and Siyue Zhang as part of the University of Pennsylvania Planning Workshop 2019 (CPLN 600).

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express special gratitude to our instructor Lizzie Hessek for her patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement, and useful critiques of this book and our work over the semester. We would also like to thank Jean Krack, the Borough Manager of Phoenixville, for his advice and assistance in providing his first-hand knowledge of Phoenixville. Our thanks are also extended to our buddy group, Bridgeport, and its instructor Laura Ahramjian for the valuable advice, feedback, and help for our presentations.



# Executive Summary

## This plan builds on Phoenixville's recent success and long-standing assets to guide its growth and development over the next ten years.

The past decade has brought new investment, residents, and visitors to Phoenixville, making its downtown, parks, and trails a regional destination. This prosperity is evidence of Phoenixville's resurgence after relying on one large industrial employer for decades. Today, Phoenixville now stands on its own as a community that offers a high quality of life for its residents and a variety of recreational, cultural, and entertainment options for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

### Despite Phoenixville's success, there are serious challenges ahead.

As a result of its success and high quality of life, Phoenixville has attracted new residents and investment, which has pushed up real estate values and housing costs. This plan proposes policy changes that will promote housing affordability. Likewise, Phoenixville has many services available for vulnerable residents, but physical access is a limitation. In the interest of creating a stronger, unified sense of social cohesion in Phoenixville, the Borough can better support its low-income, aging, and vulnerable populations through policies that pursue greater equity and physical access.

Climate change is another serious issue that has both local and global consequences. The increasing instability of the world's climate, largely caused by greenhouse gas emissions, has increased flooding and the strength of storms. Phoenixville and its buildings and infrastructure are especially susceptible to flooding due to the borough's position at the confluence of the French Creek and Schuylkill River. Phoenixville has already taken the lead in committing to 100% renewable energy by 2035. This plan helps Phoenixville achieve that ambitious goal and play its part in reducing our negative impact on the environment. The last challenge is to mitigate Phoenixville's reliance on cars and the negative effects associated with it, namely reduced road safety and higher carbon emissions. This plan improves the condition of roads for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, and promotes multi-modal transportation.

### Fortunately, Phoenixville has overcome great challenges in its recent past and now has vast resources to address issues ahead.

This plan leverages Phoenixville's most important resource: its residents. Its residents have already proven resilient after rebounding from the loss of its major industrial employer in the 1980s. After tough economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s, Phoenixville's residents came together to revitalize its downtown, celebrate its history, and promote an active civic and cultural life. In addition, Phoenixville's local government has successfully implemented many forward-thinking planning efforts.

Moving forward, Phoenixville must continue to pursue strategies that make it an attractive place to live and visit. Over the next ten years, Phoenixville will be affordable to people with a range of incomes, provide its most vulnerable residents with greater access to its robust social and health services, adapt its current built environment to protect against the negative impacts of climate change, address dangerous traffic conditions and encourage alternatives to driving, and continue to invest in the preservation of its rich history.

This 10-year plan assesses the issues and opportunities in Phoenixville today and sets out an ambitious, but achievable, vision for its future. The recommendations in this plan will support Phoenixville's growth and help tackle its greatest challenges.



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# CONTENTS

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<b>Phoenixville Today .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Opportunities &amp; Challenges .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Phoenixville 2030 Vision .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Goals .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>86</b>

## **Planning Context**

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**Phoenixville has successfully planned and implemented many forward-thinking planning efforts.**

Since 2000, community and government leaders have revitalized the downtown and attracted new residents and visitors through its successful promotion of a “live-play” strategy. Rather than working to attract large employers, Phoenixville has focused instead on reinvigorating its downtown with many independent businesses, fostering a welcoming residential community, and improving its parks, trails, and other public spaces. In an effort to encourage mixed-use development, Phoenixville eliminated parking requirements in its downtown in 2014. In 2017, Phoenixville committed to transitioning to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2035, becoming the first municipality in the state to set this goal.

**Phoenixville adopted the Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan in 2008 and its Borough Comprehensive Plan in 2011.**

The Regional Plan, which Phoenixville adopted along with five neighboring municipalities, identifies the region’s rapid growth over the past 25 years as a threat to the region’s natural, historic, and community resources. As a remedy, the Regional Plan calls for preserving the remaining natural and agricultural resources and investing in traditional downtown and commercial centers to enhance community character and augment local economies. As part of the plan, the municipalities jointly review significant land development projects and ordinance amendments proposals. In contrast to the Regional Plan, the Borough Plan designates West Bridge and Southeast Industrial as two areas that should remain as employment centers, while Cromby Road and French Creek Valley were targeted as areas that can accommodate future residential development.

**Alongside its forward-thinking planning efforts, Phoenixville has a strong reputation for its well-managed and efficient local government.**

The Borough provides high-quality services to its residents and residents of the surrounding areas, including water, sewage, and trash and recycling services. Phoenixville has its own police and fire departments and maintains its own roads and parks. The local government is led by a Borough Council, Borough Manager, and Borough Mayor. The eight council members set policy and appoint the Borough Manager to carry out its policy. The Borough Manager is the chief executive officer and oversees the day-to-day administration of all Borough services.

## Plan Scope

This plan is intended to guide Phoenixville's growth and development over the next ten years with a focus on promoting equity among residents and workers and protecting the natural environment.

We hope that the strategies recommended in this plan inform strategic actions taken in the future by the Borough, and that the equitable, proud, and resilient vision for Phoenixville portrayed in this plan can galvanize public support for bold collaboration by stakeholders in the community.



Figure 1. Aerial view showing Bridge Street and Borough Hall

Though it is the commercial and civic center of the Phoenixville area, the Borough of Phoenixville is closely connected to and interdependent with its neighboring townships. The 2008 Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan and the updated version of the plan, which will be released soon, show that Phoenixville must plan its future in tandem with its neighbors. We believe that Phoenixville's strengths and challenges call for a plan that pursues strategies that will benefit many throughout the region as visitors, workers, and potential residents of Phoenixville.

### Research of Phoenixville, its history, and its place in the region informed this plan.

Our team relied on the American Community Survey, produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, for documentation of changing economics and demographics in Phoenixville over time. We supplemented this information through an interview with Jean Krack, Borough Manager of Phoenixville. From other visits to the community, we gathered anecdotal, lived experiences from current residents to see how the borough has changed over the years. For insights into how key stakeholders view the issues the borough faces, we reviewed documents prepared by the state and local organizations (such as the Pennsylvania Youth Survey and the Greater Phoenixville Area Community Health Assessment, and SEPTA Ridership Trends).

**This plan recommends strategic actions the Borough can take to guide its future growth and development.**

From our research on the borough, we identified Phoenixville's areas of opportunity (pg. 28) and challenges (pg. 32). From the intersections of these opportunities and challenges, we set six goals for Phoenixville's future (pg. 35) and recommendations for strategies (pg. 42) to help achieve these goals.

# History

Phoenixville's rich history begins long before the inception of our nation or even European settlement. Prior to colonization, the Lenape had lived in present day Phoenixville for over 10,000 years. During this time, what is now called "The French Creek" was known as "Sankanac" while "Schuylkill River" was "Manaiunk." This period was disrupted when English settlement began in the 1600s. Charles Pickering, the former sailing mate of William Penn, purchased a land grant from Penn in the hopes of excavating silver. On this land, the first building in Phoenixville, a grist mill, would be erected. This site would later become the French Creek Nail Works, and eventually the Phoenix Iron Company.

In 1813, Lewis Wernwag, a German engineer, bought the French Creek Nail Works, the first nail factory in the country, and renamed it the Phoenix Iron Works. The Iron Works began to truly take flight with the production of the Griffin Gun and the Phoenix Column. Composing 45% of the Union Army's artillery, these incredibly precise Phoenixville-made cannons aided the Union in winning the Battle of Gettysburg. The Phoenix Column still provides structural support to grand buildings across the world, as well as prominent institutional structures within the United States, such as the Washington Monument and Philadelphia's City Hall. Wernwag was also the driving force behind Phoenixville's separation from the Schuylkill Borough in 1827.



Figure 2. Members of Battery C posing in front of a Griffin Gun

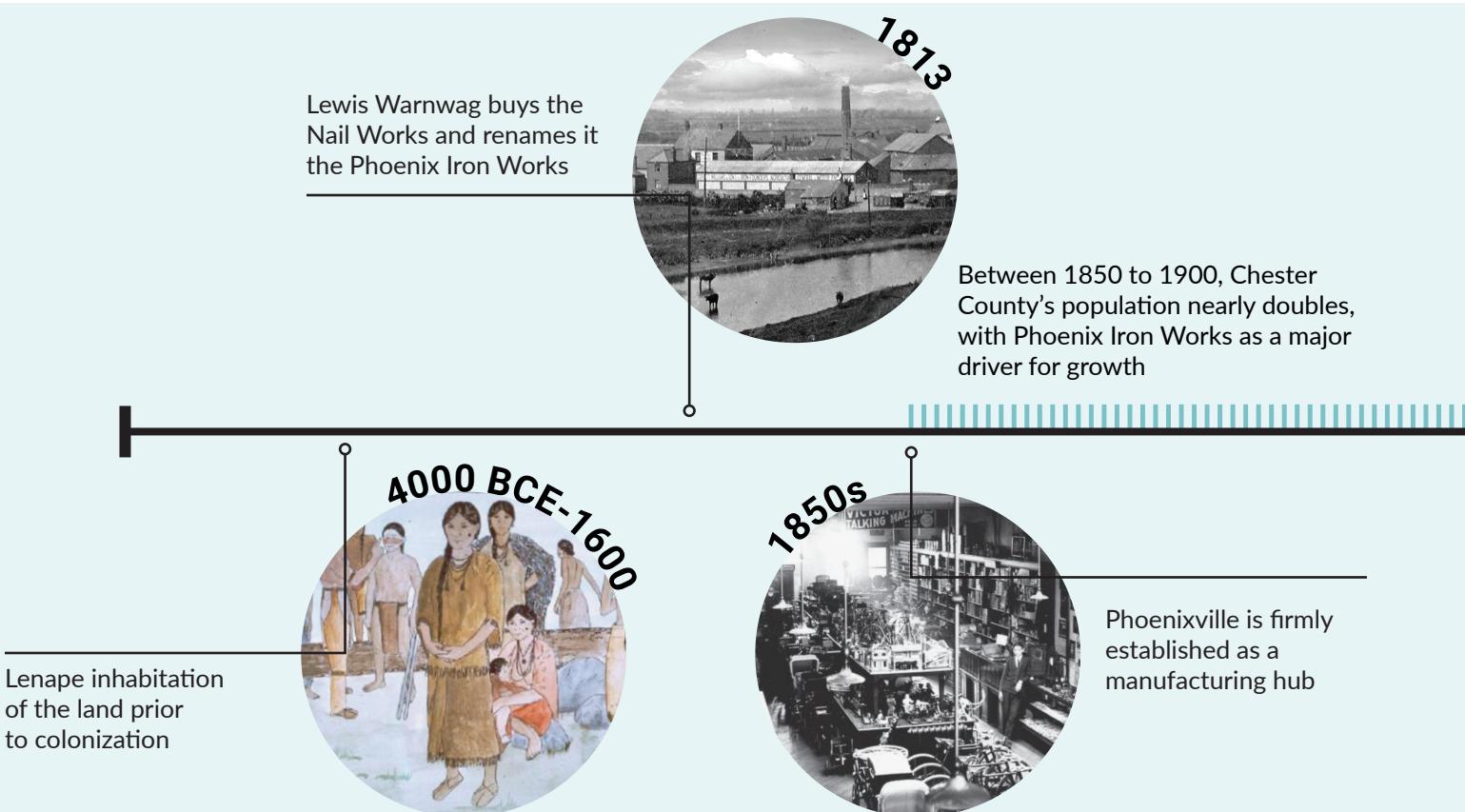




Figure 3. Black Rock Tunnel

Phoenixville's strategic waterfront location allowed this small city to serve as a center for trade and transportation in its early years. These qualities also made Phoenixville an appealing location for immigrants to start their new lives in the United States. In the early twentieth century, many of these immigrants were Irish from County Donegal, but there were also immigrants from Italy, Poland, and Hungary seeking work and opportunity. Many of these immigrants helped build the Schuylkill Canal and the Black Rock Tunnel for the Reading Railroad, the second-oldest functional tunnel in the United States. Between 1850 and 1900, Chester County's population doubled, with Phoenix Iron Works as a major driver for the increase.



Figure 4. 1910 photo of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, a predominantly Polish congregation

As a haven for immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Phoenixville's ethnically diverse population led to a variety of architectural typologies as well as religious presences. Phoenixville's second wave of immigrants arrived from Poland, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Ukraine. By the 1900s, there were four Catholic churches alone, each to serve a different ethnic enclave.



Phoenixville Iron Company employs up to 2,500 workers during the World Wars



The Blob is shot in Phoenixville, featuring the Colonial Theatre

**1917**

Harry Houdini performs at the Colonial Theatre



Figure 5. The circus comes to Phoenixville Main Street, early 20th century

Despite Phoenixville's seemingly recent reputation for a vibrant downtown, Phoenixville was also recognized for its lively events during its industrial heyday in the twentieth century. Phoenixville was a manufacturing hub with its boiler works, Etruscan Majolica pottery production, match factory, iron works, silk mill, and underwear and hosiery factories. This trend continued throughout World War I and II, when the Phoenixville Iron Company employed up to 2,500 workers. While proximity to Philadelphia and Valley Forge National Historical Park contribute to Phoenixville's history, the majority of Phoenixville's growth and unique

character stems from its position as an industrial center, through the Phoenix Iron Company. The infrastructure of the borough and much of its former employment is owed to this company. Although the foundry and the pumphouse remain, the majority of the buildings connected to Phoenixville's steel legacy have been demolished. Following World War II, the company experienced decline as a result of increasing domestic and foreign steel competition, in addition to the proliferation of aluminum and reinforced concrete products. After years of struggle, Phoenix Steel Corporation closed its doors in 1987. This loss was compounded by the closing of Valley Forge General Hospital, one of the largest military hospitals during World War II. Between 1970 and 1980, Phoenixville's population decreased by 4%, from 14,823 to 14,165, with unemployment increasing from 2.4% to 5.7%.



Figure 6. 1906 photo of Phoenix Iron Works as seen from Main Street

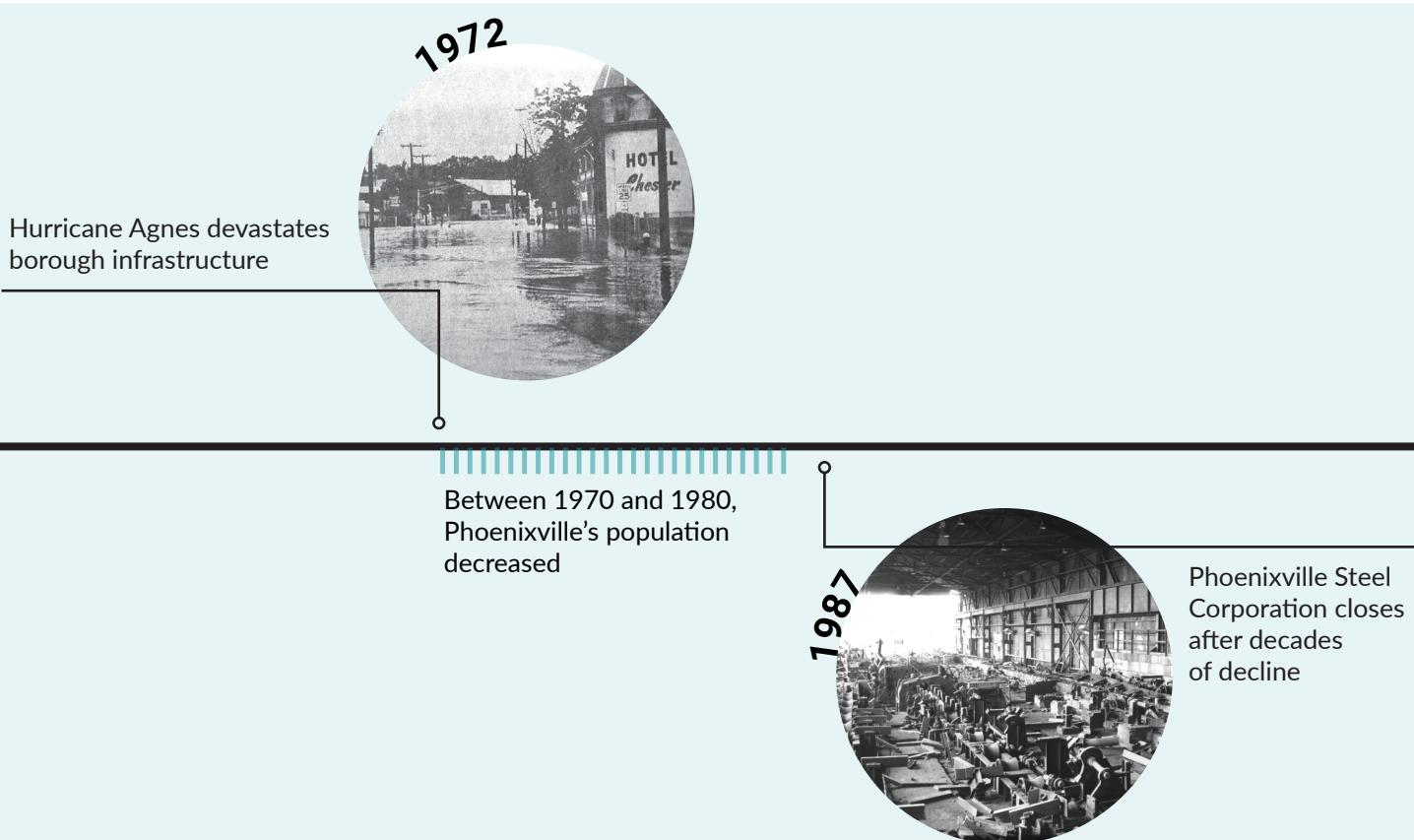


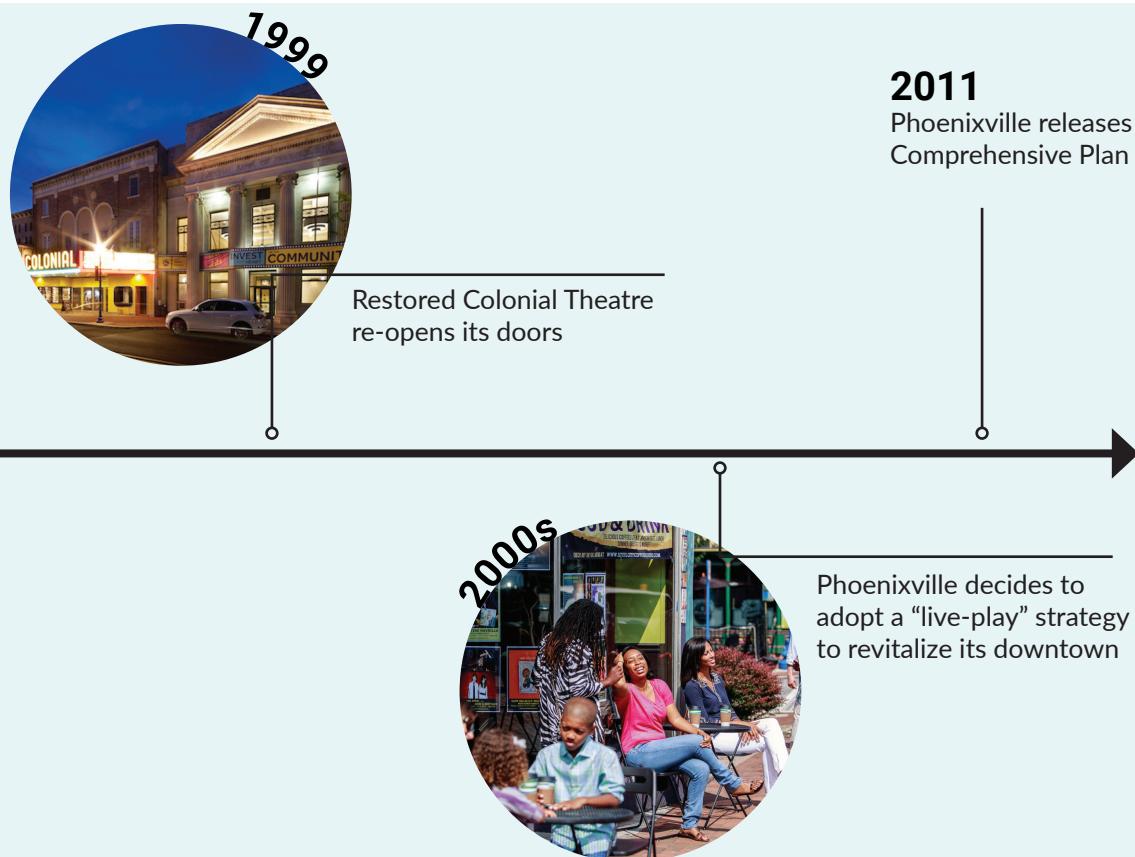


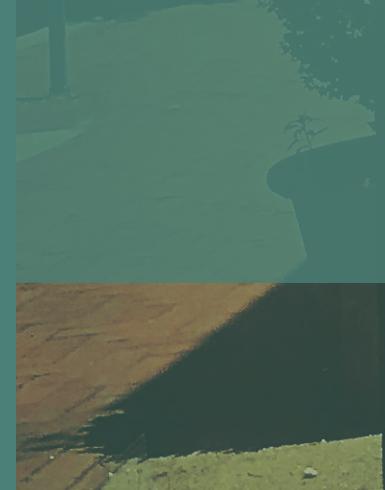
Figure 7. A pop-up sale in the 1980s

Despite difficult times in the 1980s, Phoenixville retained a sense of community through modest events such as street-side pop up sales. During the 1990s, efforts to reinvest in the community through adaptive reuse and restoration began. A notable instance of this is the 1999 restoration of the Colonial Theatre, where the 1958 cult horror classic, *The Blob*, was shot. At this time, Phoenixville began to retake its former place as a center for community and entertainment. A true turning point for Phoenixville occurred in 2008, as the “live play” strategy commenced with rezonings to accommodate new housing and retail. At present, the legacies of immigration and innovation continue as immigrants from Latin America settle in Phoenixville and as the borough continues to thrive as an incubator for small gastronomic enterprise.



Figure 8. Downtown Phoenixville







# PHOENIXVILLE TODAY

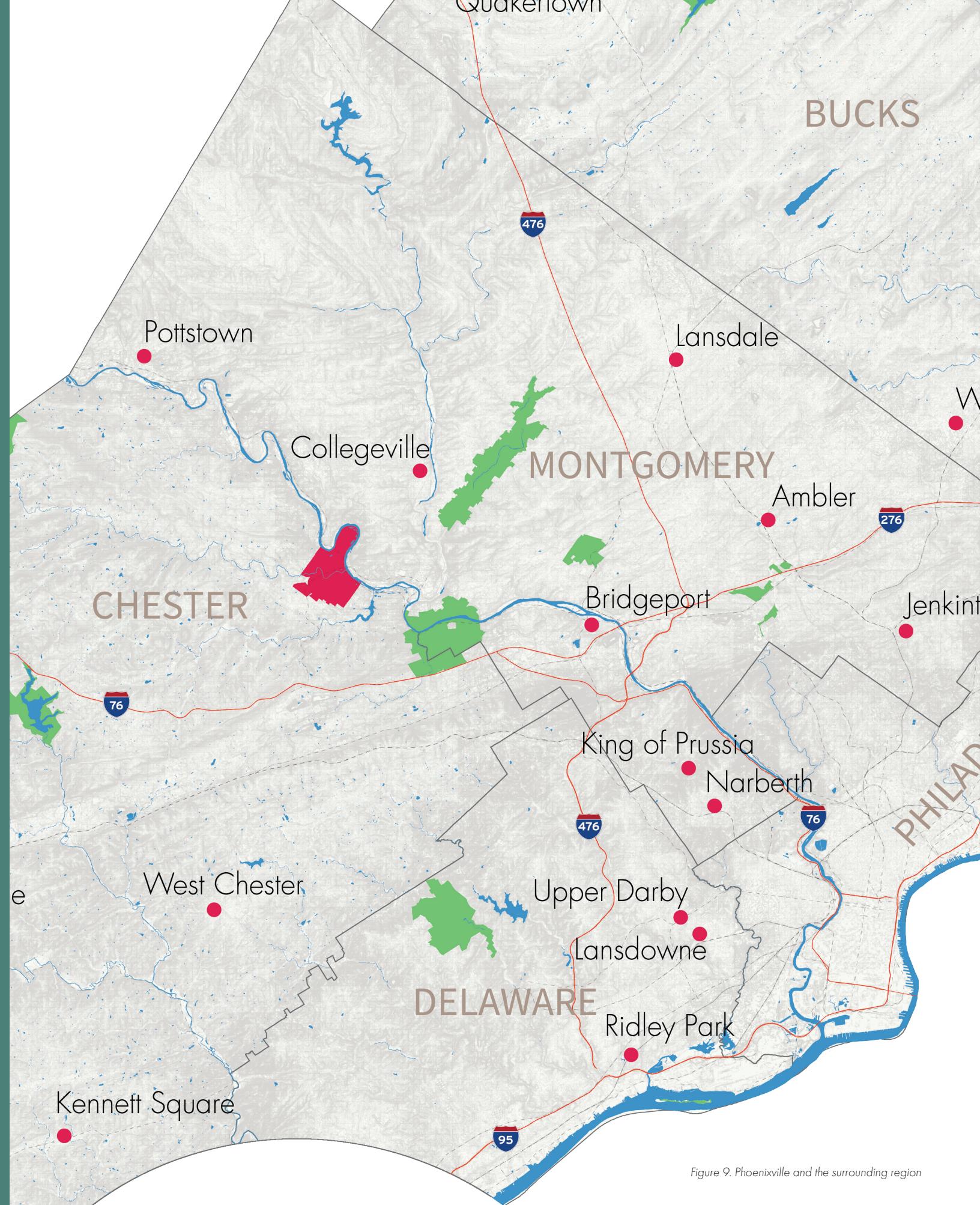


Figure 9. Phoenixville and the surrounding region



Phoenixville is a prosperous community located at the northeast boundary of Chester County, the wealthiest and healthiest county in Pennsylvania. The borough boasts welcoming neighborhoods and a high standard of living. Downtown Phoenixville serves as the main commercial center for residents from Phoenixville and the surrounding townships.

## At a Glance

A former industrial town with  
a successful **“live-play”**  
economic development strategy

**16,743** residents

**\$66,466** median  
household income

**28 miles** northwest  
of Philadelphia

Largest **nationally registered historic district** in Chester County

**25** restaurants, **nine** craft breweries, **one** distillery

**16** annual large-scale community events

Figure 10. Blobfest on Bridge Street

Figure 11. Visitors at the Vegetarian Fest

Figure 12. Dogwood Festival Parade

# Land Use & Zoning

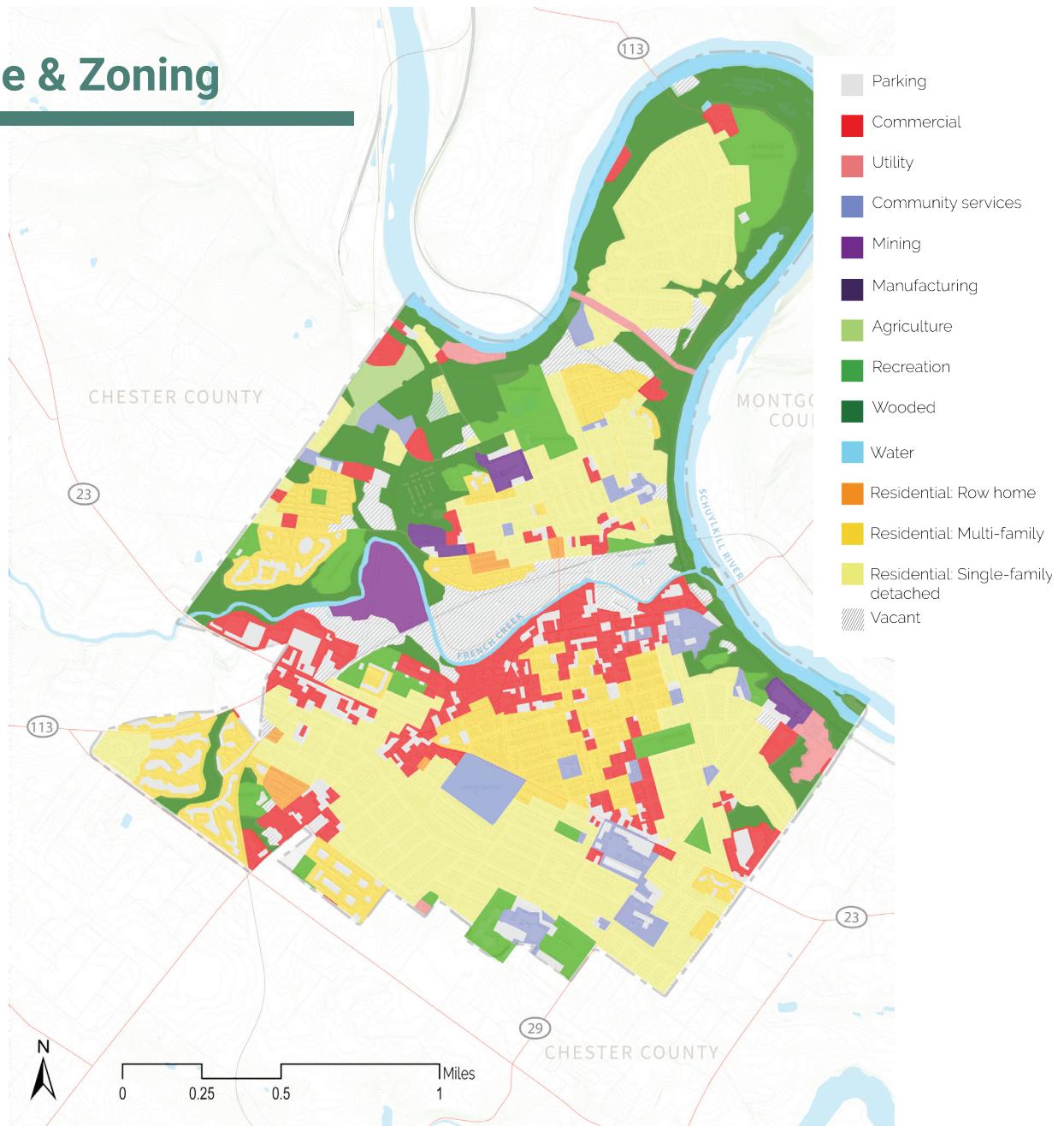


Figure 13. Land use in Phoenixville

**There are a range of land uses throughout Phoenixville.**

The commercial uses are concentrated in the borough center and along major routes including Nutt Road and Bridge Street. Detached single-family houses are the most common land use in Phoenixville, taking up 30% of the borough's total land area, followed by wooded areas. Only 6% of the Phoenixville's land is vacant, and that share is expected to decrease as development continues.

**Phoenixville's current zoning ordinance, adopted in 2013, organizes the borough into seven districts.**

The goal of the zoning ordinance is to promote economic growth in a manner that accommodates new and infill development and enhances the existing streetscape character, development patterns and qualities associated with Phoenixville's historic, architectural, and cultural resources.

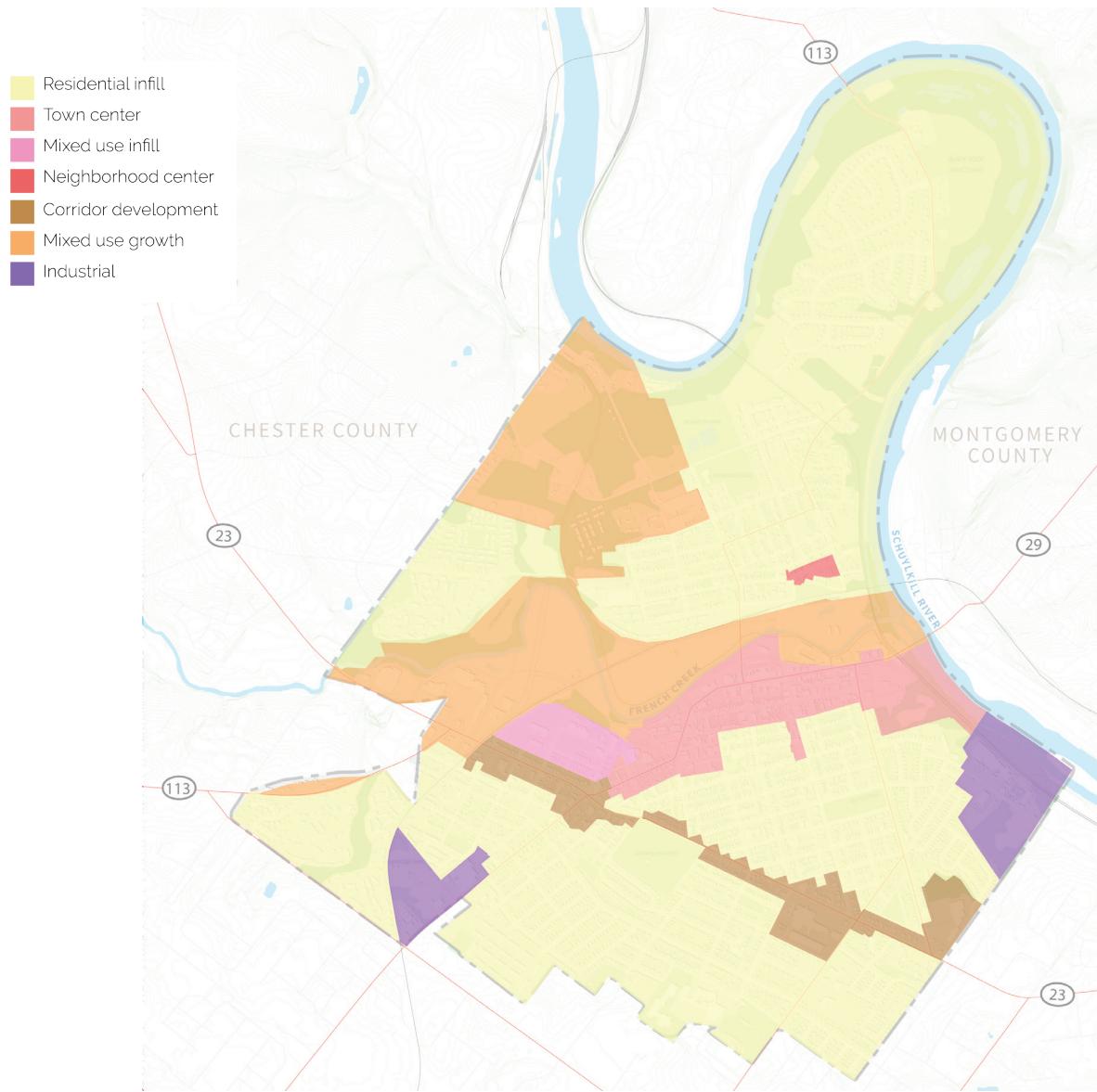
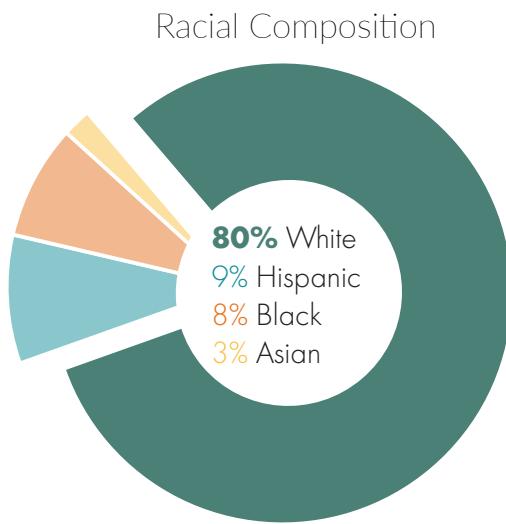


Figure 14. Phoenixville's current zoning

- 1. Town center district:** the historic downtown. New development should enhance the historic character of the streetscapes and built environment.
- 2. Mixed use infill district:** a mix of new multi-family residential and senior housing, former industrial buildings, and traditional detached single-family houses. New development should respect the existing streetscape character and accommodate reuse of former industrial buildings.
- 3. Neighborhood center district:** East High Street historically functioned as a small commercial center. New development should help this area return to its historic function as a small commercial area.
- 4. Residential infill districts:** areas that are already built out. In these areas, the primary goal is to maintain the existing neighborhood and streetscape qualities.
- 5. Corridor development district:** mostly detached single-family houses fronting both sides of Nutt Road. However, this area is less desirable for residential use due to heavy traffic along Nutt Road/Route 23. Many buildings have been converted for retail and office use. Future development should respect the residential character of the streetscape and use existing alleys for access to limit the need for new curb-cuts along Nutt Road.
- 6. Mixed use growth district:** the Cromby Road and French Creek Valley neighborhoods, which will accommodate most of the borough's future growth.
- 7. Industrial district:** entirely non-residential uses, including industrial buildings and the sewage treatment and composting facilities. The district should be maintained as an employment center.

# Demographics



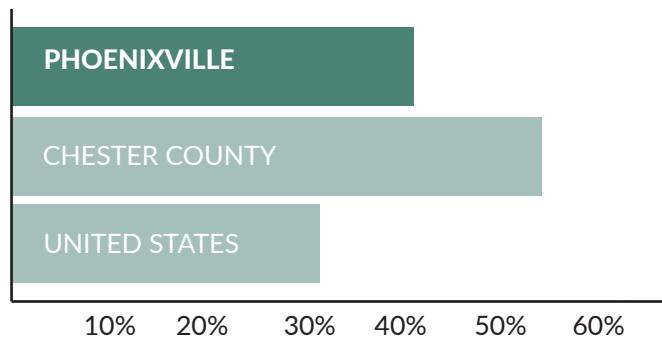
**Overall, Phoenixville is a middle to upper-middle class community.**

In 2017, Phoenixville's median household income was \$66,466, less than the \$92,417 median for Chester County. The borough's median household income increased from \$61,870 since 2010 and Chester County also experienced a growth from \$84,741. However, about 9% of Phoenixville's population lives in poverty, compared to 7% in Chester County.

**Phoenixville is largely homogeneous.**

Phoenixville's racial composition is similar to Chester County as a whole, and is roughly 80% white. Individuals who identify as Hispanic comprise 9% of Phoenixville compared to 8% of the County. Residents are well-educated, with 93% holding a high school diploma or higher and 40% holding a bachelor's degree.

**Population With A Bachelor's Degree**



**The Borough has experienced modest but steady population growth since 2010, and is expected to continue to grow.**

Phoenixville grew by 4.4% between 2010 and 2017, to its current population of 16,965 people. Based on a population projection by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), Phoenixville is forecasted to grow by another 16% between 2010 and 2040.

**Population Trend 2010-2040**

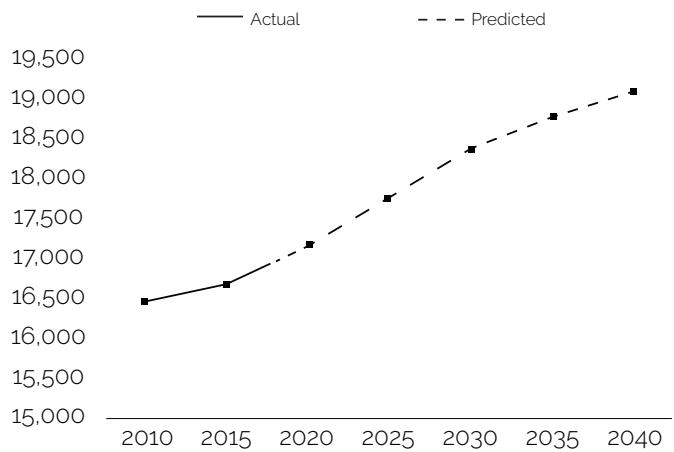


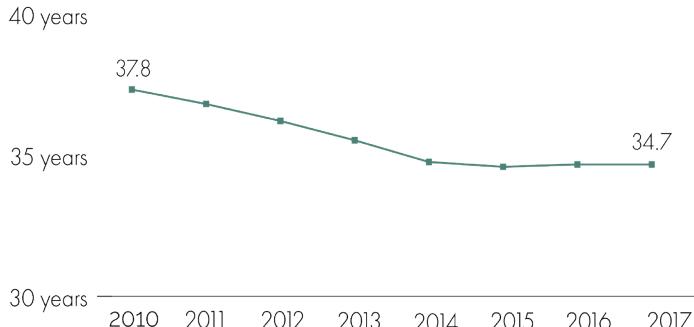


Figure 15. Phoenixville Food Truck Festival

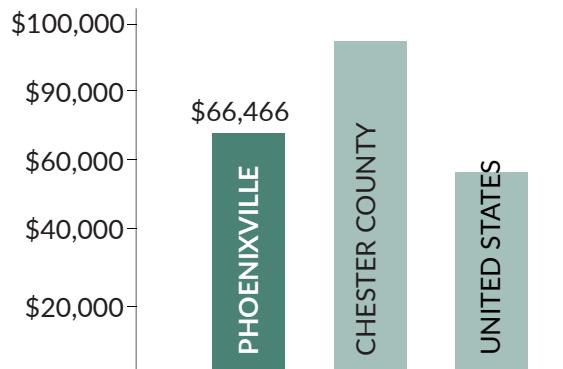
## Phoenixville's population is getting younger.

From 2010 to 2017, Phoenixville's median age dropped from 37.8 to 34.7, while the share of the population between the ages of 35 and 54 decreased 7%. The share of the population between the ages of 25 and 29 increased by about 16%. The borough has seen its older, retirement age population rise as well, from 12.3% to 16.8%, while the proportion of middle age residents has dropped.

Median Age 2010-2017



Median Household Income



# Housing

## Phoenixville residents enjoy a diversity of housing types.

Residential housing types range from the one-unit detached homes, which encompass many pre-1939 homes, to newer multi-family housing with more than 20 units, like Phoenix Village. Despite the fact that the current stock is made up primarily of single-family homes, there is also a significant amount of multi-family housing.

**37%** of the housing stock is 80+ years old  
Average household size: **2.3 people**

**26%** ↑ increase in home values from 2012 to 2018



Figure 16. One-unit detached

**10%** ↑ increase in median rent from 2012 to 2017



Figure 17. One-unit attached

**5%** ↓ decrease in housing stock from 2012 to 2017

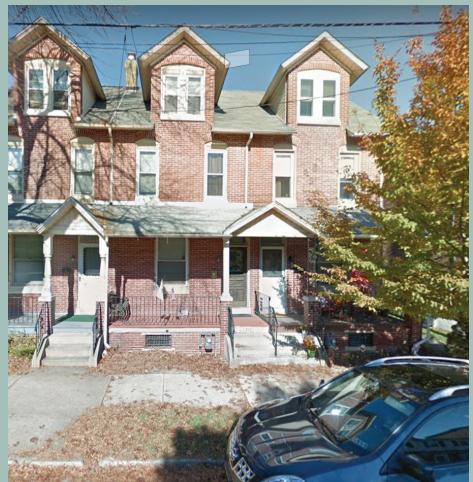


Figure 18. Twin rowhouse



Figure 19. Mixed-use



Figure 20. 10 + units



Figure 21. 20+ units



Figure 22. Rendering of Barclay Gardens, 111 Church Street



Figure 23. Rendering of SteelTown Village, Wheatland and Mason Streets

## **Phoenixville's housing stock is aging—most of homes were built prior to 1960.**

In 2017, 53% of Phoenixville's housing stock was built prior to 1960. Of those homes, 69% were built prior to 1940. The remaining housing stock was built primarily in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In 2017, 37% of the housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier.

## **Phoenixville's recent attraction of multi-family housing is expected to continue.**

Over the past few years, over 600 new multi-family units have been built downtown, largely due to the Phoenix Village and Riverworks developments. However, it remains to be seen whether the housing growth will keep pace with the population increase or impact housing affordability. Residential developers have planned an estimated 2,000 new housing units for the next few years. Of these new developments, there are some affordable projects, including the recently completed SteelTown Village with 48 affordable rental units, and the planned Barclay Gardens with 125 affordable rental units for seniors.

**Over the past decade, the share of renters has increased significantly while the share of homeowners has decreased.**

In 2009, renters made up 42% of households; by 2017, the share of renters increased to 47% of households.

Housing Tenure 2009 - 2017



# Transportation

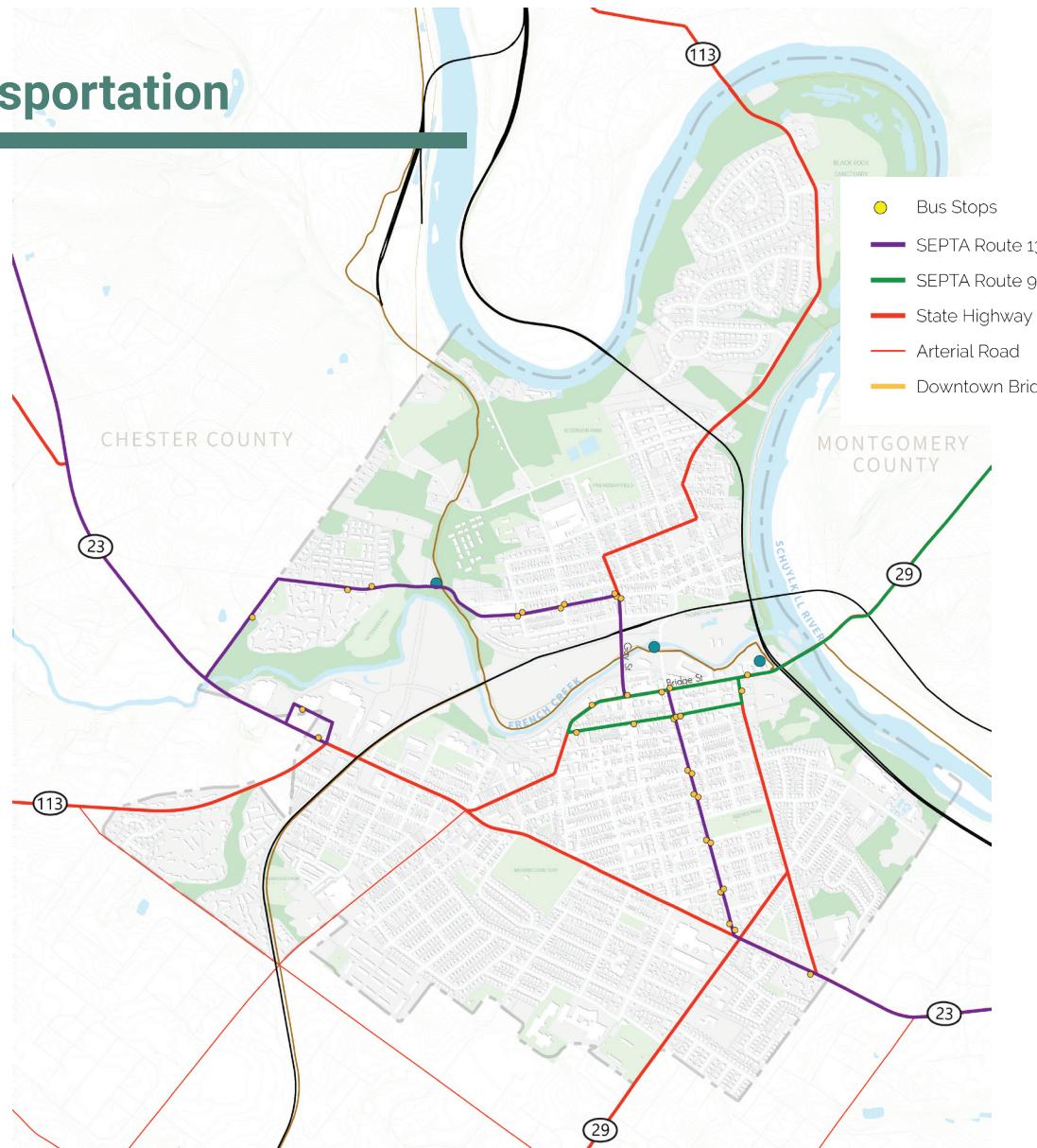


Figure 24. Major transportation routes in Phoenixville

## Phoenixville is at the nexus of three state highways: PA-23, PA-29, and PA-113.

These highways connect Phoenixville to larger parts of the state's road network, such as the Pottstown Expressway to the north and the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the south, providing the borough with access to the greater region. As the borough and region have grown, however, these roadways have been pushed to their limit. The intersection of Nutt Road and Bridge Street, for example, where PA-113 and PA-23 meet, supports nearly 36,000 vehicles passing through per day, pushing traffic conditions during rush hours to a near standstill.

## Phoenixville is underserved by transit.

Two SEPTA buses run through Phoenixville, but these routes serve very few riders. The 99 bus begins in Phoenixville and connects the borough to Norristown to the northeast. However, it departs every 40 minutes on average and serves only 1,500 riders on the typical weekday. The 139 bus, which passes through Phoenixville while connecting Limerick to the northwest to King of Prussia to the southeast, departs every hour and serves only 500 riders per weekday, ranking it 33rd out of SEPTA's 42 non-Philadelphia bus routes. The nearest SEPTA rail stations to Phoenixville are the Paoli and Malvern stations on the Paoli/Thorndale Regional Rail Line, located 7.5 miles to the southeast, and the Norristown Transportation Center located 11 miles to the east, which provides access to Manayunk/Norristown Regional Rail Line as well as the Norristown High Speed Line.

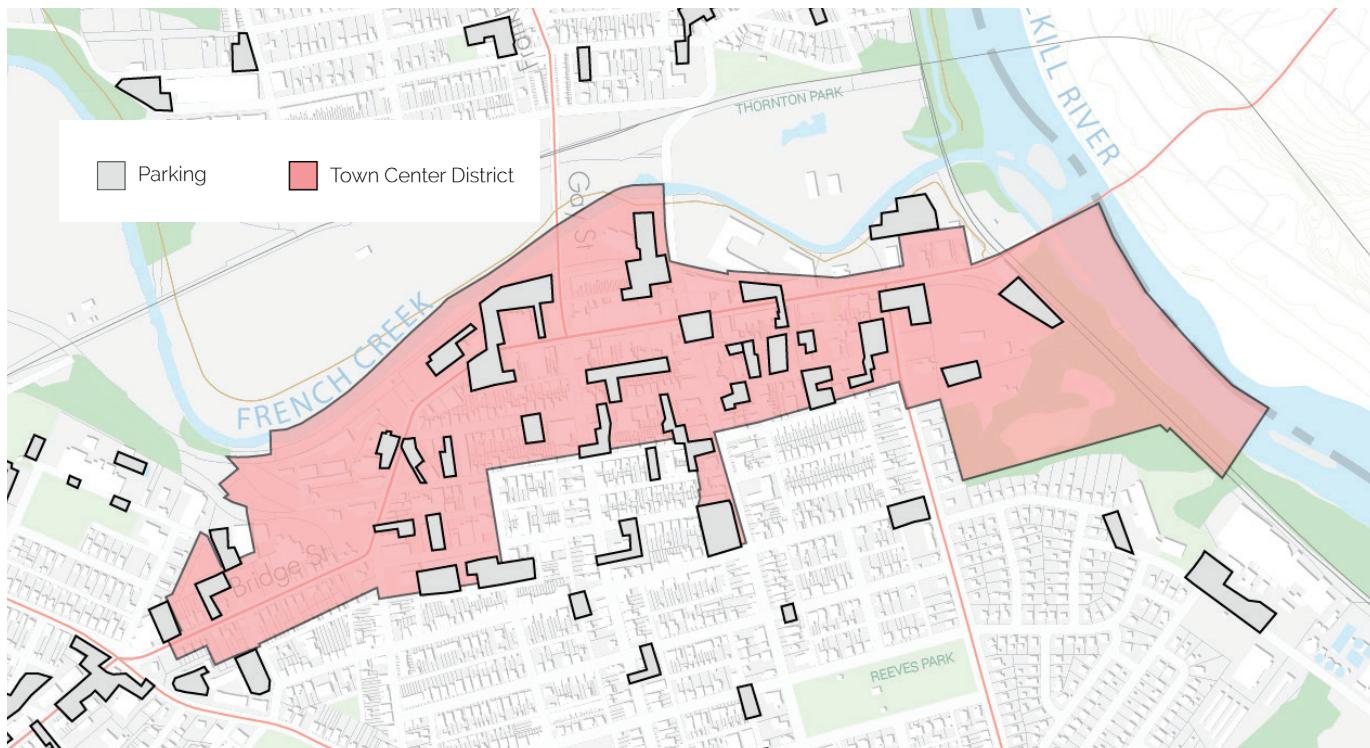


Figure 25. Parking in downtown Phoenixville

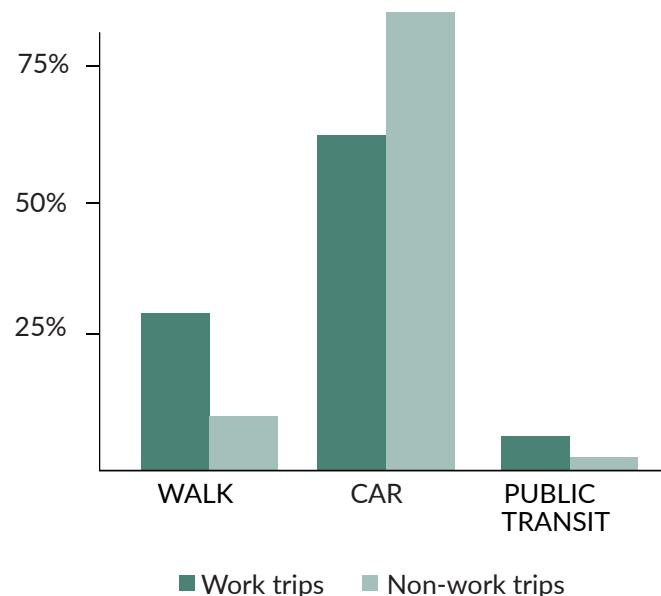
**Phoenixville has high-quality bike trails, but the rest of its bike infrastructure is lacking.**

The borough boasts over 8.5 miles of protected bike trail running along the Schuylkill River and French Creek. Despite the strengths of its bike trails, however, the borough features no protected bikeways on its road network. Phoenixville residents currently have poor bike access to their own bike asset.

**Phoenixville has an array of parking options and has made changes to its parking policies downtown to encourage new development.**

There are currently 87 acres of public parking lots in Phoenixville, with roughly 1,400 spaces in the downtown. Lots owned by the Borough charge by the hour, allowing customers to pay in cash at dedicated kiosks or via a smartphone app. Phoenixville also offers free two-hour street parking along Bridge Street, Gay Street, and Main Street. Notably, the Borough's zoning code does not include a minimum parking requirement for development in the Town Center District. Developers can build new or convert existing buildings in downtown Phoenixville without the need for additional parking.

### Mode Share



**Phoenixville residents make the majority of their trips by car, but they make a large portion of their non-work trips on foot.**

Due to the lack of transit options, nearly 90% of residents commute to work by car, and the majority of these commutes end at major employers in neighboring areas. Over 35% of their non-work trips, however, are on foot, demonstrating the walkability of downtown Phoenixville.

# Economy



Figure 26. Breakdown of major industries of Phoenixville workers

**After tough economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s, Phoenixville's economy has rebounded, resulting in a revitalized downtown and attractive borough.**

Phoenixville's economy took a tremendous hit after the Iron Works closed in 1987. In the late 1990s, community, government, and business leaders came together to develop a strategy to revitalize the borough, which focused on reimagining Phoenixville as a "live-play" community. Over the past two decades, this strategy has paid dividends for Phoenixville residents and businesses. From 2004 to 2014, the borough's tax base grew by \$200 million, a 21% increase in assessed valuation.

**Phoenixville has a strong economy with a growing workforce.**

Between 2015 and 2017, the total number of workers in Phoenixville grew from 9,523 to 9,669, an increase of 2%. Seventy percent of workers commute outside of Phoenixville for work and 21% commute to Philadelphia for work. The remaining 9% both live and work in Phoenixville. The main occupations for Phoenixville residents are managerial roles or positions in healthcare and social assistance, retail, or manufacturing. Within Phoenixville, the major employers are the Phoenixville Area School District and Phoenixville Hospital. Outside of Phoenixville, major employers include Vanguard, GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, and the King of Prussia Mall.

Major employers:

**Phoenixville Area School District**

**Phoenixville Hospital**

**Vanguard Group**

**GSK**

**Pfizer**

**King of Prussia Mall**

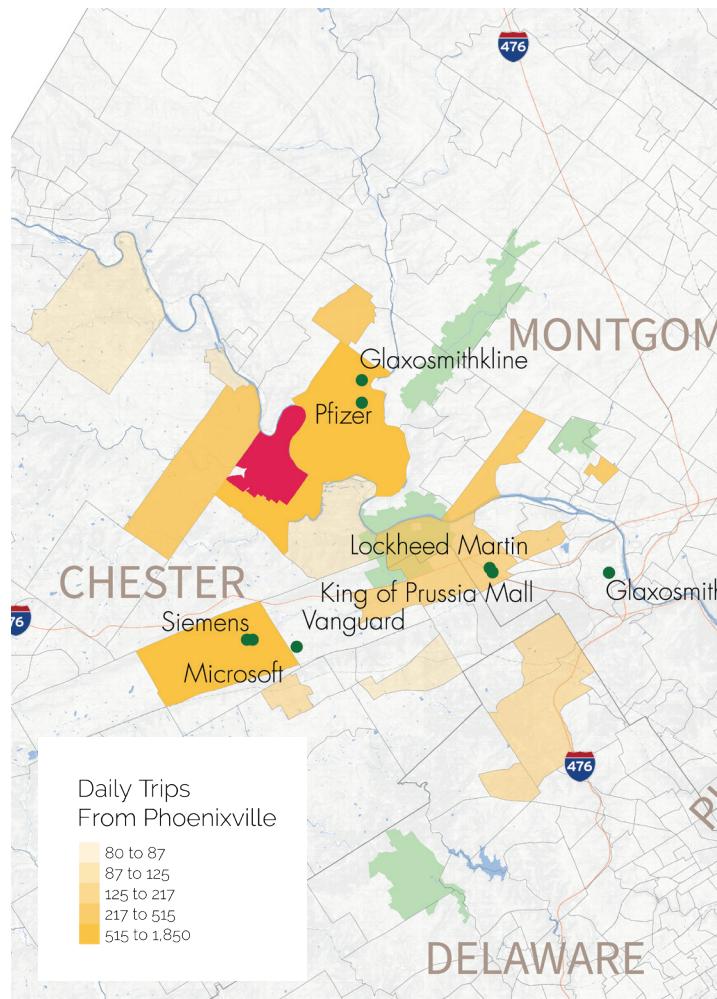
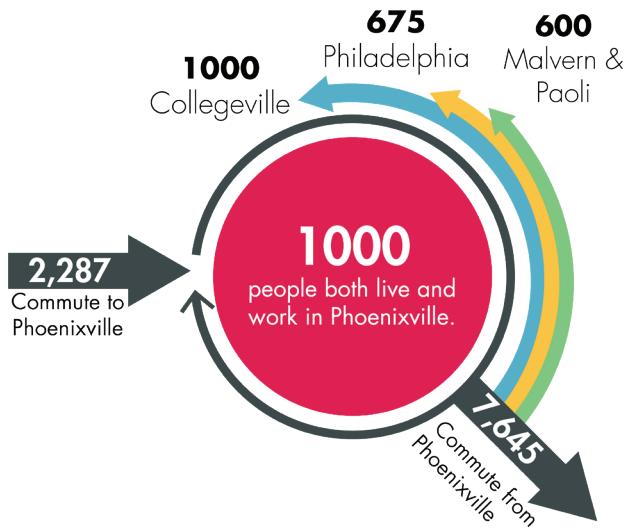


Figure 28. Major commuting destinations from Phoenixville

**Today, Phoenixville has a vibrant downtown that serves as a hub for entertainment, retail, and cultural tourism.**

Phoenixville's Main Street Program was instrumental in revitalizing the downtown area and continues to support the growth of new service and retail business. On average, visitors to Phoenixville spend approximately \$100 per day, including roughly \$30 for food and \$30 in other retail purchases. Adaptive reuse has played an integral role in economic development efforts and has been employed as a strategy to encourage downtown development. Successful adaptive reuse projects include the National Bank of Phoenixville, the Washington Mill Lofts, and the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation headquarters.

**Phoenixville has embraced strategic partnerships to encourage economic development.**

In particular, the Borough fosters cultural tourism through partnerships with the Schuylkill River Heritage Center and the Phoenixville Area Historical Society, capitalizing on the rich cultural fabric of the various historical and cultural sites within the borough through tours and programming. In addition, Phoenixville First, a community group made up of stakeholders from the Borough, the Chamber of Commerce, Phoenixville Area Business Association, and Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation, supports community-wide events by taking the lead in logistics planning as well publicity.

# Parks and Open Spaces

Almost all residents live  
within a **1/2 mile** of a park

**15** parks

**8.5** miles of trails

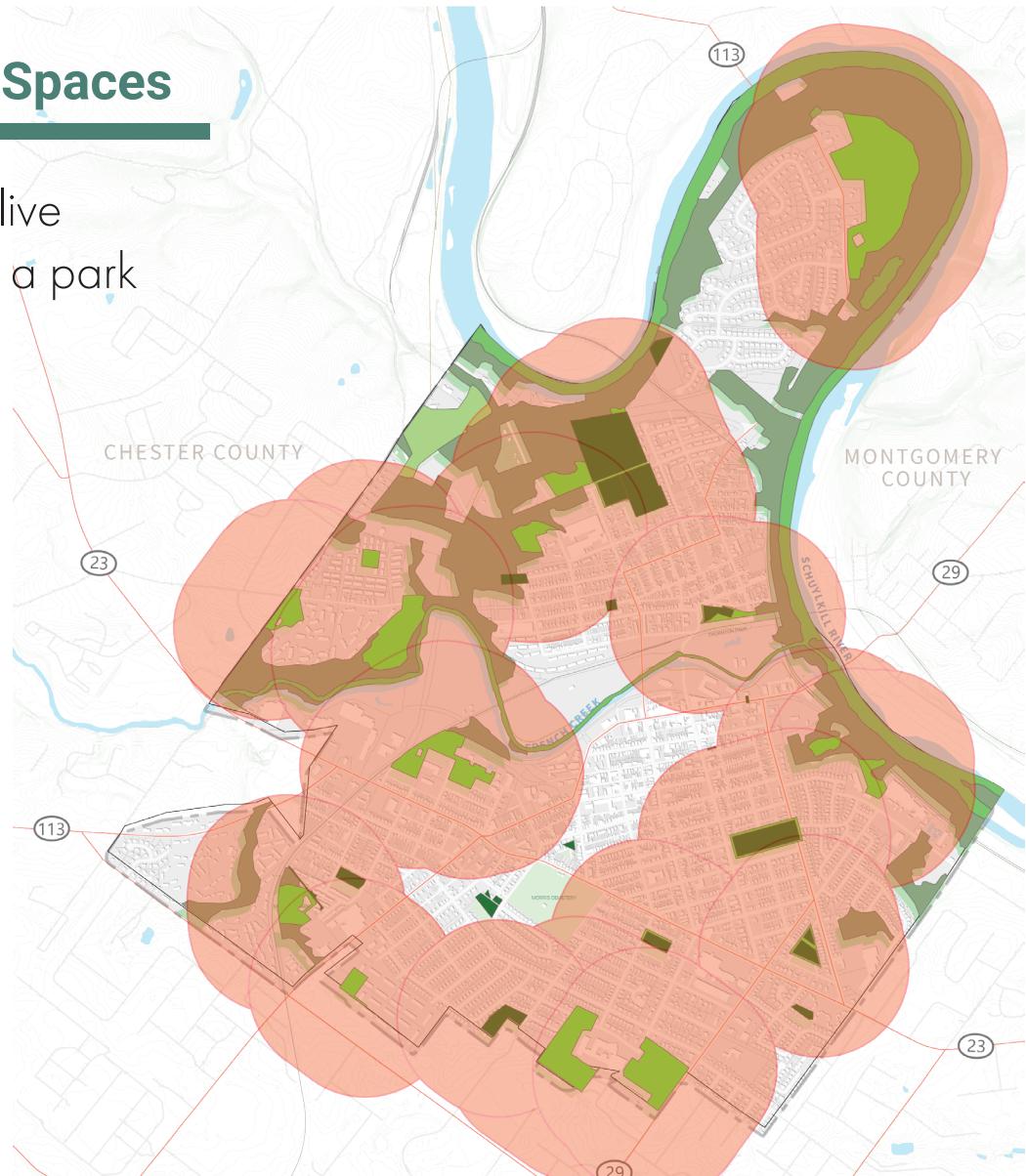


Figure 29. Phoenixville parks and 0.5 mile buffer

**Phoenixville's natural setting and its nearby parks and trails are among its greatest assets.**

Of Phoenixville's 15 neighborhoods, 11 contain parks within their boundaries, while the remaining neighborhoods have plans in place to build direct access to the trail network. Phoenixville residents can easily access open space and parks. The majority live within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile walking distance from a park, and almost all live within a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile walking distance. Phoenixville's parks range in size from neighborhood parks to the 119-acre Black Rock Sanctuary. The Schuylkill River Water Trail and the French Creek Trail are two popular trails within Phoenixville. Outside Phoenixville, nearby national and state parks like the Valley Forge National Park, Marsh Creek State Park, French Creek State Park, and Hopewell Furnace National Historic Park are regional and national attractions.

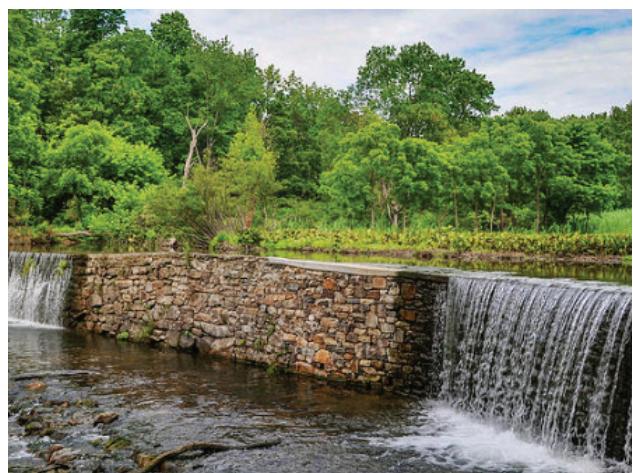


Figure 30. Valley Forge National Historical Park

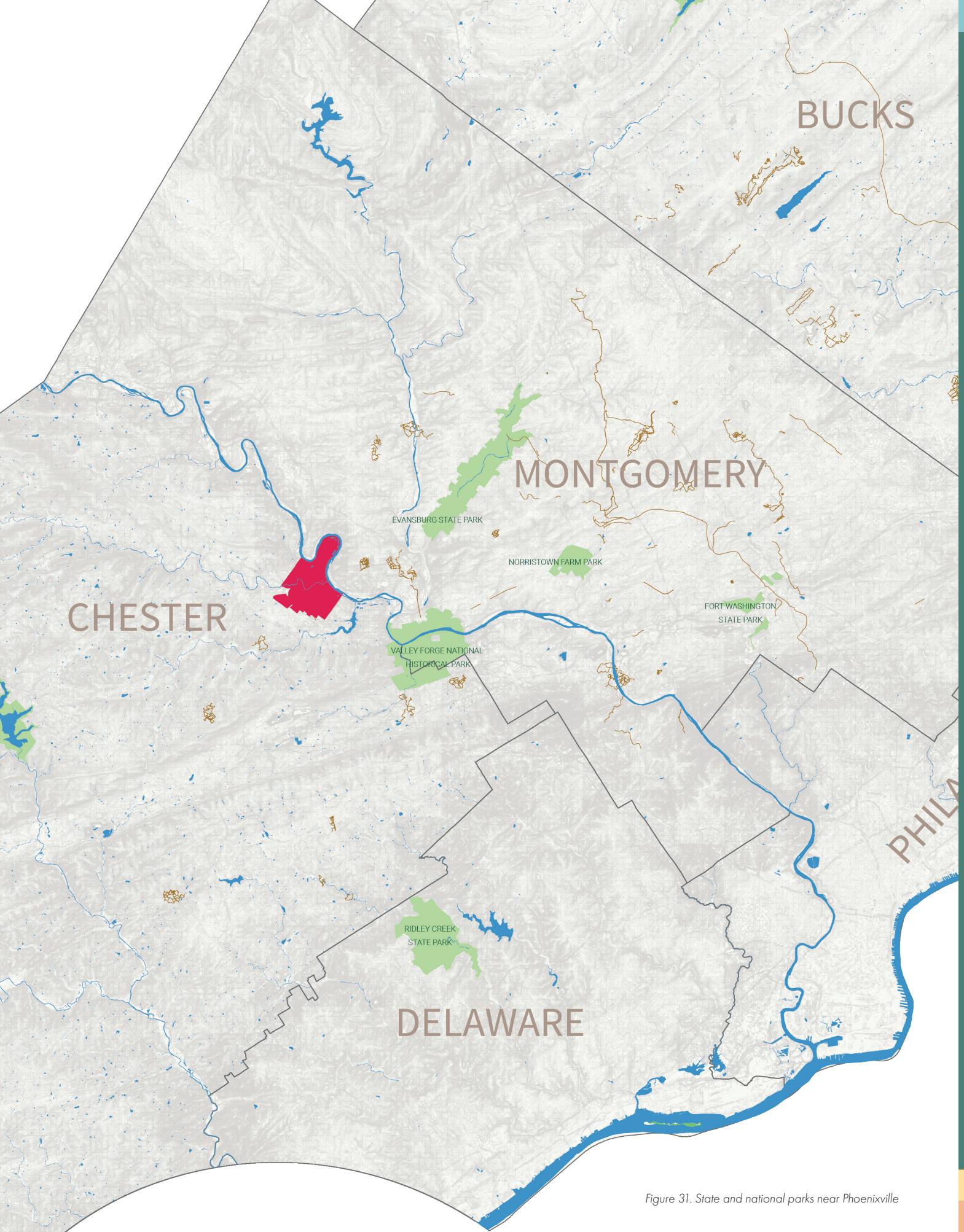


Figure 31. State and national parks near Phoenixville





# **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

# Opportunities

Phoenixville is currently in a position of strength as a community and has a number of promising opportunities upon which to capitalize.



Figure 32. Phoenixville Food Truck Festival



Figure 33. Phoenixville Farmers' Market

## Intergenerational appeal: Phoenixville's vibrant and walkable downtown attracts young and old residents and visitors alike.

There are 25 restaurants, nine craft breweries, and one distillery in Phoenixville, most of which are in the downtown, and the borough hosts 16 annual large-scale community events. In addition, the array of programs and entertainment on Bridge Street fosters bonds between generations. Events such as the Farmers' Market not only promote wellness and sustainability, but also connectivity among different age groups. Likewise, the historic Colonial Theatre offers a wide range of events geared towards individuals of various ages and interests. Programs range from historic tours to theater organ performances and stand-up comedy and documentaries. Phoenixville can build on this asset to continue to attract new people and contribute to its robust economy. Phoenixville is in a strong position to continue to adapt to the interests of residents and visitors.

## Diversity of housing types: Phoenixville has a broad range of housing and neighborhood types.

Most of the residential areas are made up of single-family homes. However, there are plenty of options for multi-family housing of different scales and eras. In its walkable and amenity-rich downtown, there are new multi-family housing developments that offer urban-style living. There are also smaller apartment buildings throughout the borough. This diversity supports Phoenixville's multi-generational appeal and can be leveraged to maintain affordability and character as the borough grows.

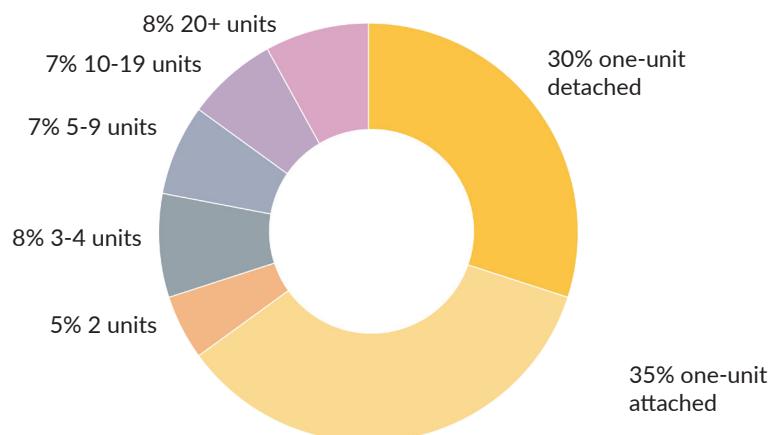


Figure 34. Homes by number of housing units in structure



Figure 35. Social and health service providers in Phoenixville

## Strong social supports: Phoenixville has many social service providers and health access sites, supported by a strong set of community-based providers.

To support residents of the Phoenixville region, different social service agencies in the borough focus on comprehensive needs, homeless services, and the specific needs of the Latinx community. In addition to Phoenixville Hospital, Phoenixville has several health access sites and clinics, and two organizations focused

on health access: the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation and Phoenixville Health Access. The borough also has several organizations focused on mental and behavioral health services, and many options for healthy food access.



Figure 36. Historic district in Phoenixville

## Historic character: The rich historic fabric of the borough speaks to its dedication to celebrating its past.

Phoenixville is home to seven nationally registered historic districts. On a local scale, the Historic Downtown District is the largest historic district in Chester County, numbering over 1,200 properties in total. Organizations such as the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area and the Schuylkill River Heritage Center have worked together to bolster historic and cultural tourism, an integral part of the economy. Likewise, the adaptive reuse of historic structures has been a successful economic development tactic. Phoenixville's continued investment in its historic and cultural assets will continue to draw residents and visitors and contribute to a robust local economy.



Figure 37. Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area



Figure 38. Seal of the Borough of Phoenixville

**Forward thinking:** Phoenixville has an effective and efficient local government that has experience tackling difficult challenges.

As part of its effort to spur revitalization of its downtown, Phoenixville eliminated parking requirements in the downtown area in 2014 to encourage mixed-use development. Phoenixville has also demonstrated its forward-thinking planning focus by committing to transitioning to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2035. It was the first municipality in Pennsylvania to set this goal. In addition, the Borough generated a surplus of \$559,767 in fiscal year 2019, representing 5% of its annual budget. The strong performance of Phoenixville's local government will be an asset as it takes on some of the challenges mentioned in the next section, namely the lack of affordable housing, effects of climate change, and lack of transportation options.

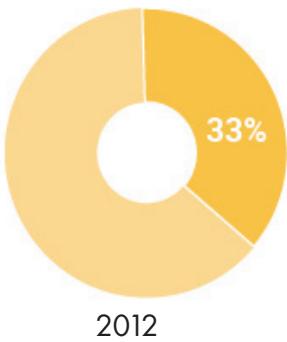
# Challenges

Despite Phoenixville's many strengths and opportunities, there are critical opportunities for improvement.

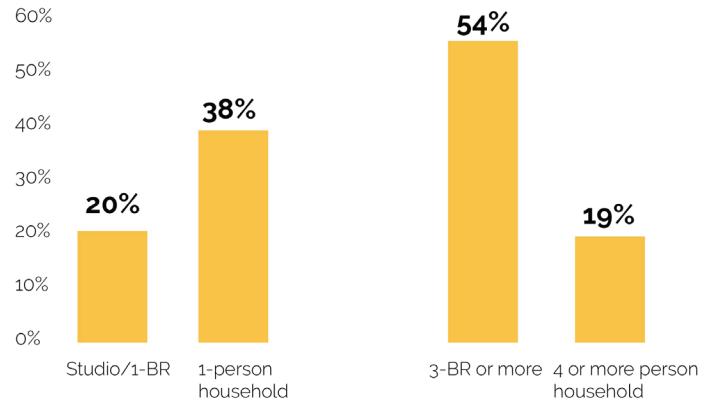
**Rising cost of living:** Phoenixville's "live-play" strategy has created many new jobs, but most are service jobs that do not offer living wages, especially as Phoenixville becomes less affordable.

The median hourly wage for food preparation or serving work in Montgomery, Chester, and Bucks County is \$10.74. However, with rising housing costs, this is not a living wage. In Chester County, a person working 40 hours a week would have to earn \$24.25 an hour to afford the average 2-bedroom apartment.

Percentage of the Population Paying more than 30% of their Income Towards Rent



Bedrooms in Housing Units vs. Number of Individuals in Households



**Housing affordability:** Phoenixville's revitalization has increased housing costs, which creates financial strain for low-income households and increases the risk of displacement.

From 2012 to 2017, the median rent in Phoenixville increased by 10%. That increase strained an already unaffordable market: in that same time period, the share of Phoenixville renters who were rent burdened rose from 33% to 51%. According to data from Zillow, the median home value increased by 26% from 2012 to 2018, potentially placing a strain on some homeowners from increased property taxes. Rising housing costs affect both low-income renters and homeowners, potentially leading to displacement or deferred maintenance.

**Housing mismatch:** There is a mismatch between the housing unit sizes available and the households in Phoenixville.

There are many large houses in the borough that are occupied at lower levels than their capacity. This means that there are 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom homes where just one or two people live. In 2017, 54% of the housing stock had 3 or more bedrooms, yet 68% of the households were made up of just one or two people. On the other side of the equation, only 20% of the housing stock was made up of studios or 1-bedroom units, while 38% of households were made up of just one person.

The recent housing production among multi-family apartments is helping to address this mismatch; the size of the units produced correspond well with household sizes in Phoenixville. According to the building management firms overseeing 704 housing units produced in 2017 and 2018, 54% were made up of studios and 1-bedroom units and 43% were made up of 2-bedroom units. Just 3% of the new housing was made up of 3-bedroom units.

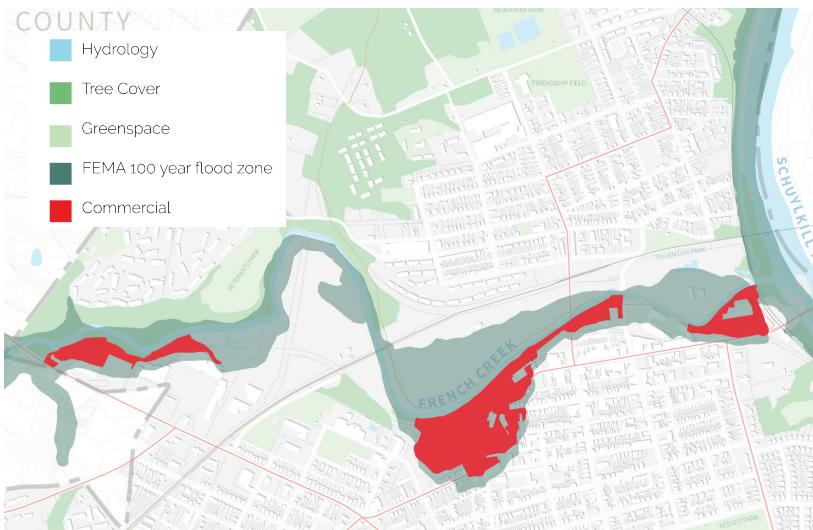


Figure 39. Flood Risk Areas in Phoenixville

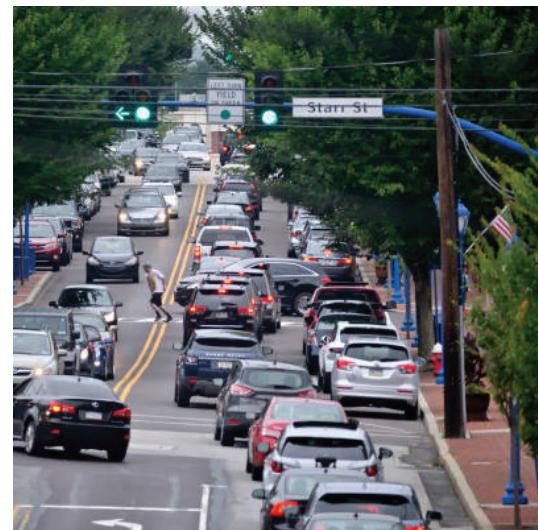


Figure 40. Traffic in downtown Phoenixville

## Lack of vacant land & flooding: Phoenixville's continued growth has left little vacant land for development and flood mitigation.

To accommodate its future growth, Phoenixville will need to allow development to increase its housing stock and provide sufficient services. However, only 6% of the borough's total area is vacant, and much of this land is in the floodplain. New development that targets the vacant land in the floodplain would likely increase the risk of serious flooding in Phoenixville and should be avoided.

## Car dependence: The lack of transportation options makes it difficult for Phoenixville's residents to take advantage of its many amenities.

Nearly 80% of all trips that begin in Phoenixville are made by private car, straining roadway capacities. Worsening traffic conditions and a lack of transportation options make it difficult for visitors to come to Bridge Street, discouraging further commercial investment in downtown Phoenixville. The borough has no dedicated bikeways, making cycling a difficult option for less experienced riders and leaving Phoenixville's beautiful river trails underused. Phoenixville also lacks reliable transit service. SEPTA buses serving the borough are not frequent, making the bus an inconvenient option for many travelers. Further, only 40% of the residential land area in Phoenixville is within a quarter-mile of a bus stop, and the lack of a municipal transit center with a parking lot to serve commuters likely discourages many potential riders from using the bus.

## Pedestrian safety: High traffic volumes reduce Phoenixville's walkability and pedestrian safety.

Two state highways converge on Bridge Street, making it easily accessible to the greater region. PennDOT estimates, however, that roughly 16,000 cars pass through Bridge Street each day. Much of this traffic is heavy truck traffic coming off the highway at high speeds and there are no traffic calming measures in place. Between 2012 and 2016, there were 21 vehicular crashes involving pedestrians within Phoenixville's boundaries, about the same per capita rate as Chester County as a whole. There is much room for improvement to increase the level of comfort and safety for pedestrians.

# PHOENIXVILLE 2030 VISION



*Phoenixville is an equitable and inclusive place where residents, workers, and visitors alike have access to and enjoy its greatest assets and opportunities.*

# GOALS

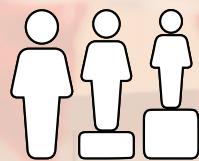
In analyzing Phoenixville's opportunities and the challenges it faces, we arrived at six goals that leverage the strengths of the community to address its challenges.



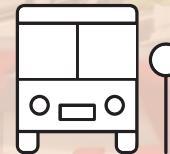
Affordability



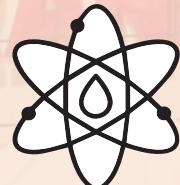
Safety



Equity



Accessibility



Resiliency



Pride

# Affordability



Ensure high-quality **affordable** housing options

As Phoenixville continues to attract new residents, housing costs have increased and new construction does not provide supply at various price points. In addition, the lack of developable sites puts pressure on existing housing that is currently affordable. Nationwide, wage stagnation exacerbates the issue of housing affordability for both current and incoming residents. Providing affordable housing for all residents and workers is essential for supporting a diverse and thriving civic community. Fortunately, Phoenixville's diversity of housing types is an important asset that can be leveraged to protect and preserve affordable housing. Additionally, Phoenixville's zoning and progressive planning culture make the borough a fruitful place to explore programs that retrofit the current housing stock to better serve the incomes and sizes of Phoenixville's households.



Figure 41. Attached single-family home in Phoenixville

## Recommended Actions

- 1.3** Inclusionary Zoning Downtown
- 2.6** Multi-Family Conversions
- 2.7** Small Landlord Program
- 2.8** Affordable Accessory Dwellings

## OPPORTUNITY

- Intergenerational appeal
- Diversity of housing types
- Strong social supports
- Historic character
- Forward-thinking

## ISSUE

- Rising cost of living
- Housing affordability
- Housing mismatch
- Lack of vacant land & flooding
- Car dependence
- Pedestrian safety

Give all community members **equitable** opportunity to live and thrive

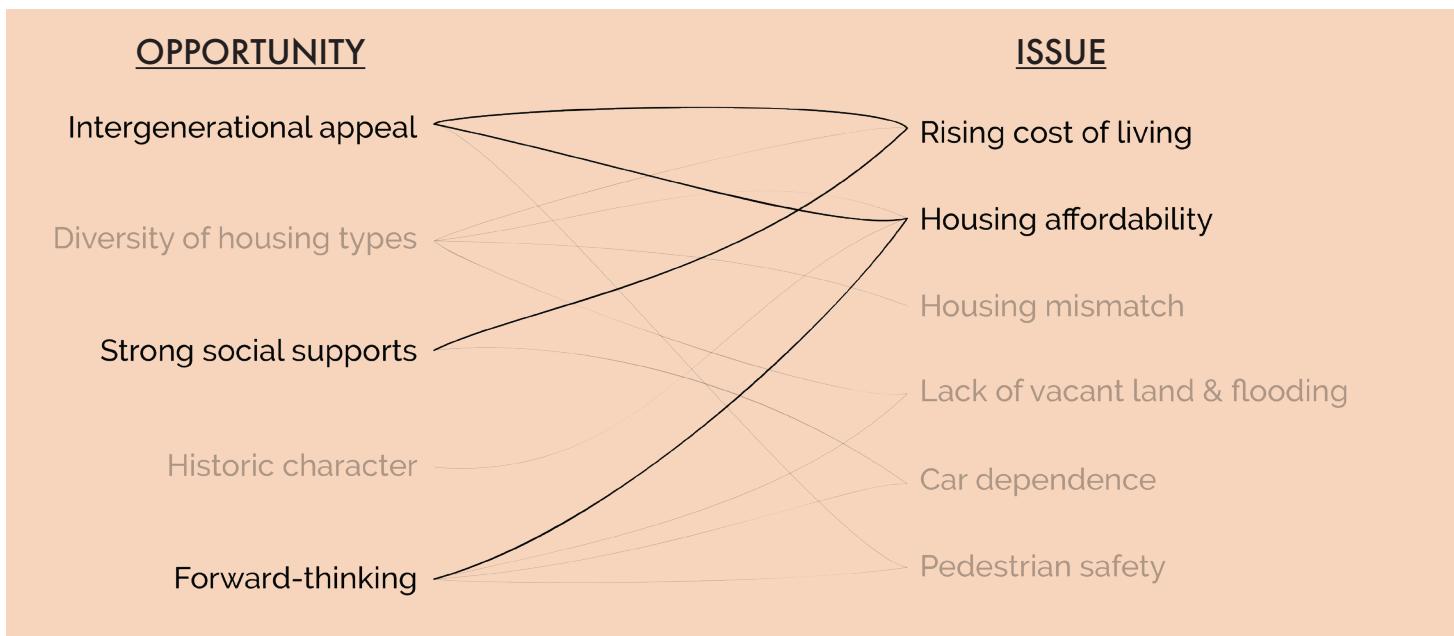


Figure 42. Mixed-use commercial/residential along Bridge St.

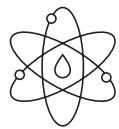
Similar to national trends of increased income inequality over the past few decades, there are a number of socioeconomic disparities in Phoenixville. There is a significant divide among residents and workers expressed through disparate incomes, educational attainment, access to healthcare, and access to transportation. Improvements to public transportation, expansion of healthcare and social services, and investments in affordable housing have the potential to reverse these trends and level the playing field for all community members. Phoenixville has a strong foundation for accomplishing these goals. Its resources include a highly effective and well-resourced municipal government, a robust network of health and social services, and a strong housing market.

## Recommended Actions

- 1.1** East High Street Revitalization
- 1.3** Inclusionary Zoning Downtown
- 1.6** Adaptive Reuse Arts Space
- 2.1** Bike Share Program
- 2.2** Streets Redesign
- 2.7** Small Landlord Program
- 2.8** Affordable Accessory Dwellings
- 3.3** Better Bus Service
- 3.4** Local Shuttle
- 3.5** Health-Centered Community Engagement



# Resiliency



Protect natural resources and open spaces while promoting climate change literacy and **resiliency**

Phoenixville has a wealth of natural resources and scenic landscape, especially along the French Creek and Schuylkill River, and its residents and government are strong stewards of the environment. It is the first Pennsylvania municipality committed to 100% clean energy. However, there are many new and planned mixed-use projects along the French Creek that are vulnerable to flooding. With the rising threat of climate change, there is the potential for Phoenixville to leverage its environmental leadership to improve its environmental resiliency by addressing flood risk, as well as improving overall environmental sustainability and energy conservation.

## Recommended Actions

- 1.5** Overhaul Parking Policy
- 2.1** Bike Share Program
- 2.2** Streets Redesign
- 2.4** Green Infrastructure
- 2.5** Resilient Historic Preservation Guidelines
- 2.6** Multi-Family Conversions
- 2.8** Affordable Accessory Dwellings
- 3.4** Local Shuttle
- 4.1** Green Building Policies
- 4.2** Floodplain Overlay
- 4.4** Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center

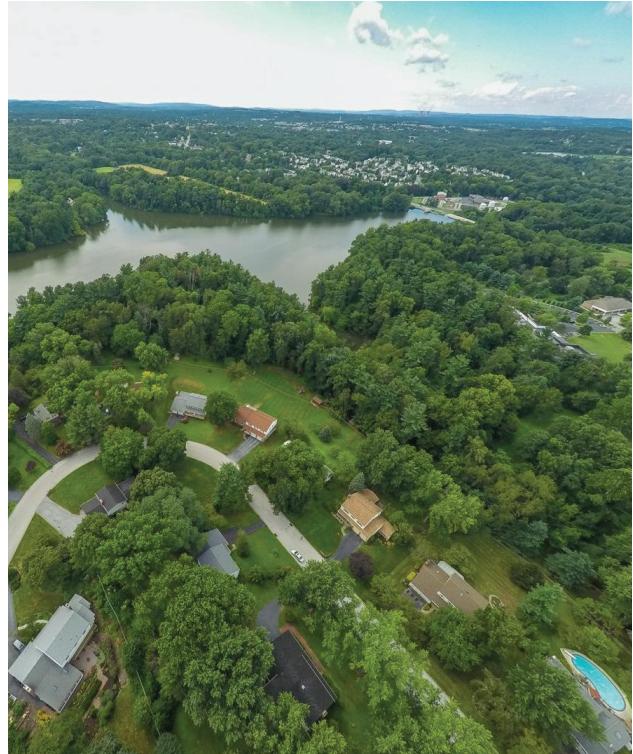


Figure 43. Natural resources in Phoenixville

## OPPORTUNITY

Intergenerational appeal

Diversity of housing types

Strong social supports

Historic character

Forward-thinking

## ISSUE

Rising cost of living

Housing affordability

Housing mismatch

Lack of vacant land & flooding

Car dependence

Pedestrian safety

Improve Phoenixville's streets so that everyone feels **safe** and welcome



Figure 44. Bridge St.

The growth of Phoenixville and its greater region, combined with its location at the conjunction of three state highways, has drawn heavy vehicle traffic into the borough. High volumes of cars and freight vehicles challenge downtown Phoenixville's pedestrian-friendly character, negatively impacting safety and reducing the viability of non-car modes of travel. While vehicular crash rates in Phoenixville have been on par with Chester County's in recent years, the borough should not be satisfied with matching the region's average. Instead, Phoenixville should take proactive steps to improve its street so that everyone feels safe and welcome.

## Recommended Actions:

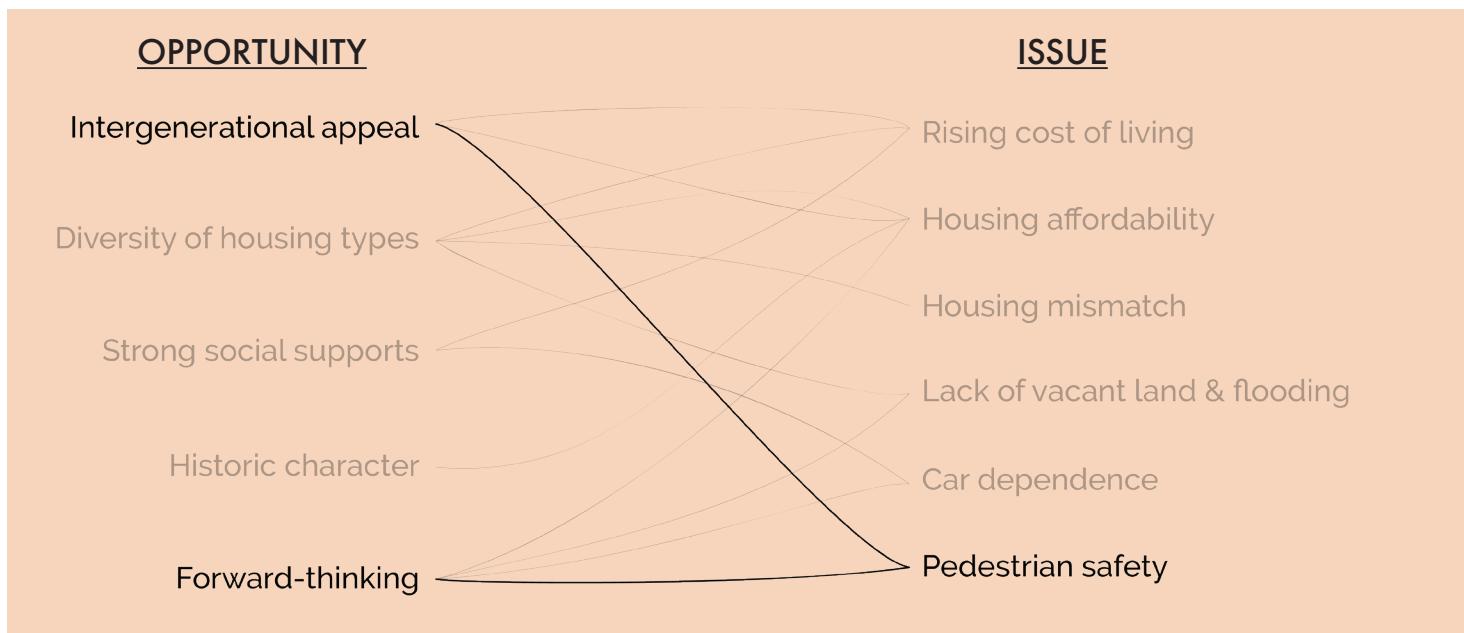
- 1.1** East High Street Revitalization
- 2.2** Streets Redesign
- 2.3** Complete Sidewalk Network
- 2.4** Green Infrastructure
- 3.2** Divert Heavy Traffic
- 4.5** Reactivate Vacant Lots

## OPPORTUNITY

- Intergenerational appeal
- Diversity of housing types
- Strong social supports
- Historic character
- Forward-thinking

## ISSUE

- Rising cost of living
- Housing affordability
- Housing mismatch
- Lack of vacant land & flooding
- Car dependence
- Pedestrian safety



# Accessibility



- Provide transportation options to reduce car reliance, promote public health, and ensure equitable **access**

A lack of alternatives to travel by car is limiting Phoenixville's potential. Heavy traffic congestion is a major problem on the borough's major roads, and car reliance, combined with outdated parking policy, have discouraged commercial investment in the downtown. Furthermore, non-car owners and less mobile residents like children and the elderly have few options for navigating the borough, limiting their access to the amenities and resources that other Phoenixville residents can enjoy. Phoenixville can tackle all of these issues by investing in multimodal transportation that supports transit ridership and encourages active transportation such as biking and walking.

## Recommended Actions:

- 1.4** Rail Expansion Bond
- 1.5** Overhaul Parking Policy
- 2.1** Affordable Bike Share
- 2.2** Streets Redesign
- 3.3** Better Bus Service
- 3.4** Local Shuttle



Figure 45. Multimodal transportation options

## OPPORTUNITY

Intergenerational appeal

Diversity of housing types

Strong social supports

Historic character

Forward-thinking

## ISSUE

Rising cost of living

Housing affordability

Housing mismatch

Lack of vacant land & flooding

Car dependence

Pedestrian safety

Maintain and **celebrate** Phoenixville's rich historic assets and cultural fabric



Figure 46. Phoenixville Public Library

Phoenixville is recognized for the quality and preservation of its historic architecture and cultural landscapes. These tangible resources of cultural heritage can be seen in its buildings, parks, gardens, street patterns, and landmarks. The unique cultural identity of Phoenixville is celebrated by its community and appreciated by those who visit. The continued preservation and strengthening of Phoenixville's cultural heritage, historic fabric, and related programming is integral to its success as a destination for tourism and education. Phoenixville can ensure the future of its cultural heritage by adapting progressive and flexible models of preservation as well as taking part in intergenerational and interdisciplinary partnerships, promoting diversity, inclusion, and resiliency.

### Recommended Actions:

- 1.1** East High Street Revitalization
- 1.2** Reinvigorate Historic Programming
- 1.6** Adaptive Reuse Arts Space
- 2.5** Resilient Historic Preservation Guidelines
- 3.1** Regional HARB
- 4.3** Phoenixville Environmental Center
- 4.1** Reactivate Vacant Lots

### OPPORTUNITY

Intergenerational appeal

Diversity of housing types

Strong social supports

Historic character

Forward-thinking

### ISSUE

Rising cost of living

Housing affordability

Housing mismatch

Lack of vacant land & flooding

Car dependence

Pedestrian safety





# RECOMMENDATIONS



# FOCUS AREA I: THE DOWNTOWN

Phoenixville has a vibrant downtown that attracts residents and visitors from the surrounding region. The recommendations that follow build on this strength to increase the supply of affordable housing, support local business growth, improve the conditions the surrounding neighborhood, and expand transportation alternatives.

## 1.1 East High Street Revitalization

**Physical conditions on East High can better reflect the historic nature of the corridor and invite visitors to enjoy the space.**

East High Street is a historic commercial corridor in the North Hills neighborhood, but is now made up of mostly residential uses. While geographically close to Bridge Street, East High is separated from Phoenixville's bustling downtown by the French Creek. With the northern side of the French Creek the site for a potential SEPTA Regional Rail station, East High has the potential to serve as a gateway to Phoenixville.



Figure 47. Rendering of a revitalized East High Street

### Actions

- » Institute traffic-calming measures on East High Street
- » Consider expanding sidewalks to make more room for ecological features and sidewalk seating
- » Encourage customer dining on expanded sidewalks
- » Encourage pedestrians to travel between Bridge and East High Street through visual wayfinding
- » Re-site some community festivals from Bridge Street to East High Street: offer discounted street closure permits and invite festivals with many vendors, like food festivals, to have a second site along East High Street
- » Create a volunteer task force to support the existing small businesses on East High Street
- » In the case of a Regional Rail extension, revise zoning to allow greater density in the Neighborhood Center zoning district and extend inclusionary zoning requirements to new projects to act as a value capture method

### Financing

- » Downtown parking and festival fees
- » Create a fund from a portion of East High property taxes to support physical improvements and coordination

### Partners

- » East High Street business owners
- » Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- » Phoenixville Area Business Association
- » Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation

### Goals addressed:



## 1.2 Reinvigorate Historic Preservation and Programming

A revamping of the historic programming and collaboration with community partners can strengthen the community's connection to historic preservation.

Currently, the Phoenixville Area Historical Society offers free walking tours highlighting Phoenixville's connection to the Civil War, the industrial revolution, and European immigration. There is a unique opportunity to expand and improve upon the content and promotion of the tours to reach a wider audience. The Historical Society would charge a new intergenerational group of residents, reGENERATION, with improving the content of the historic walking tours and launching a mobile app to reach a wider audience.



Figure 48. Bartram's Garden

### CASE STUDY:

#### Bartram's Garden, Philadelphia, PA

Bartram's Garden regularly recruits historians, horticulturists, artists, and community organizers as residents to create dynamic programming at this historical site.

### Action Items:

- » Create partnerships with Community Arts Phoenixville and preservation activists from UCare at Ursinus College to create preservation-oriented installations
- » Hire a historian-in-residence to research Phoenixville's history, engage with local residents, and develop new programming to address relevant topics such as intangible heritage, climate change, affordable housing, indigenous history, and the Underground Railroad
- » Develop an RFP to hire a mobile app developer to create a free app that displays schedules for tours and other events and provides self-guided audio tours

### Partners

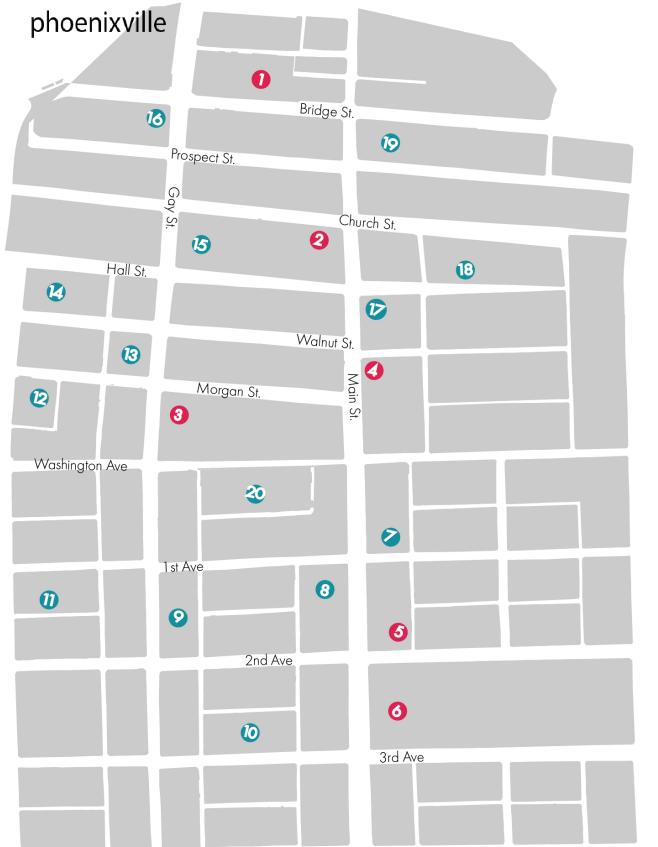
- » Historical Society for Phoenixville Area
- » Ursinus College's UCare
- » Community Arts Phoenixville

### Financing

- » Charge a sliding scale fee and/or annual membership to bring in a variety of experts to lead tours
- » Sell merchandise
- » NPS Preserve America Grant Program

# reGENERATION

## Historic Walking Tour Map



- Historic property
- Recommended property
- The Colonial Theater
- ② Gay Street School
- ③ Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area
- ④ Reeves Park
- ⑤ Phoenixville Public Library
- ⑥ First Presbyterian Church

Figure 49. reGENERATION Historic Walking Tour Map

Goals addressed:

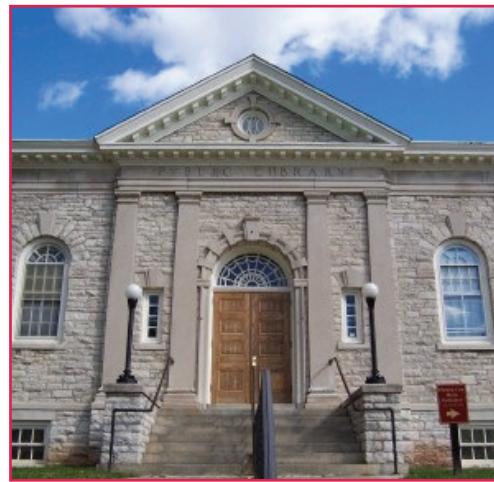


Figure 50. Phoenixville Public Library

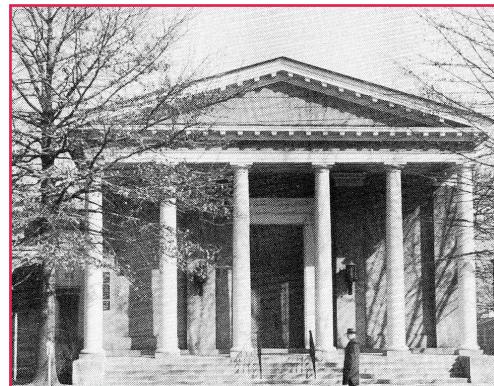


Figure 51. First Presbyterian Church



Figure 52. Reeves Park



Figure 53. Gay Street School

## 1.3 Inclusionary Zoning Downtown

Inclusionary zoning harnesses the recent growth in Phoenixville's housing market to increase the supply of affordable rental units.

Residential developers plan to develop over 2,000 new housing units in Phoenixville over the next few years. Mandatory inclusionary zoning would harness this housing growth to increase the supply of affordable housing. Such a policy would require all new residential development with at least 10 units in the Town Center district to set aside a share of units at rents affordable to households earning between 30-60% of Area Median Income. The unit set-aside would be based on the affordability of the units. Developers have the option of setting aside 15% of units at rents affordable to households with 60% of AMI or setting aside 10% of units at 30% of AMI. As part of this policy, the Borough would amend the Town Center zoning to allow higher densities.



Figure 54. Inclusionary housing in Montgomery County.

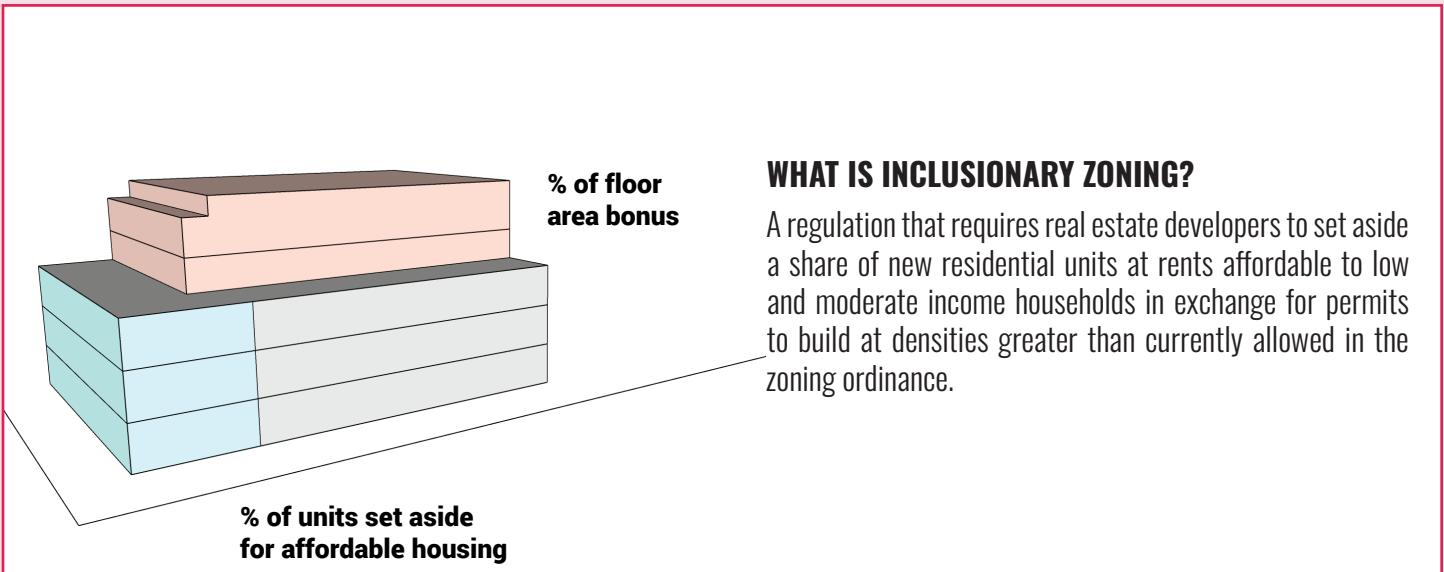
### CASE STUDY:

#### Montgomery County, MD

Montgomery County instituted inclusionary zoning in 1976. Rather than functioning as a static regulation, their policy adapts to market conditions and is designed to balance the interests of residential developers with the County's affordable housing goals. In contrast to many inclusionary zoning policies in other municipalities, Montgomery County's applies to both new rental and homeownership opportunities, and to both single-family and multi-family developments. Between 1976 and 2017, the policy produced over 15,000 affordable housing units.

### WHAT IS INCLUSIONARY ZONING?

A regulation that requires real estate developers to set aside a share of new residential units at rents affordable to low and moderate income households in exchange for permits to build at densities greater than currently allowed in the zoning ordinance.



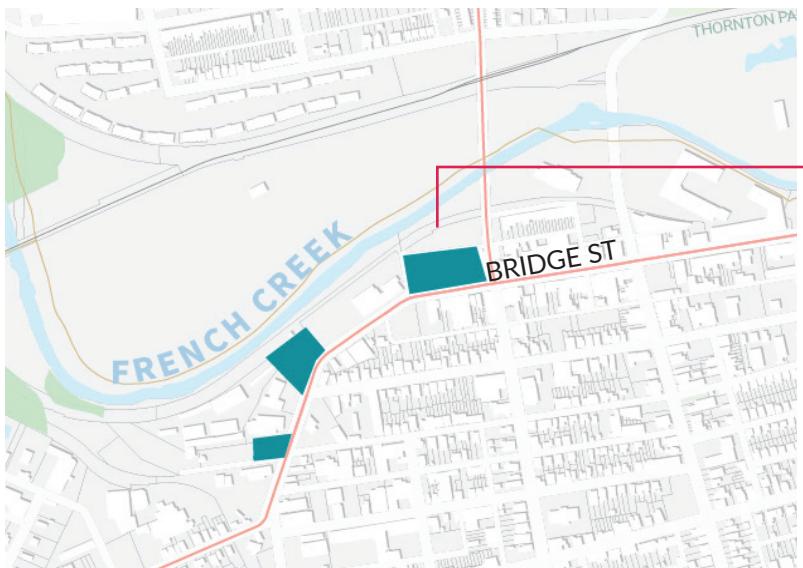


Figure 55. Map of vacant lots in the downtown, with potential for development



Figure 56. Vacant lot at 330 Bridge St

	Affordable at 30% AMI		Affordable at 60% AMI		Phoenix Village
Unit size	Income limit	Rent limit	Income limit	Rent limit	Market rents downtown (new construction)
Studio	\$18,360	\$459	\$36,720	\$918	\$1,395
1 bedroom	\$20,970	\$524	\$41,940	\$1,048	\$1,450
2 bedrooms	\$23,610	\$590	\$47,220	\$1,180	\$1,715
3 bedrooms	\$26,220	\$655	\$52,440	\$1,311	\$2,530

## Action Items:

- » Convene stakeholders, including residents, housing advocates, and real estate developers, to determine the specific parameters of the inclusionary zoning policy
- » Identify the appropriate set-aside requirement, zoning incentives, and geographic location for the policy
- » Propose and pass the ordinance change through Borough Council to incorporate the policy into existing zoning regulations

## Goals addressed:



## Partners

- » Housing advocates
- » Real estate developers such as the DeMutis Group

## 1.4 Bond Financing for the Rail Expansion

**Municipal bond financing provides capital funds to construct a new rail station, retrofit the existing freight track for passenger service, and procure the rolling stock.**

Community leaders are exploring the feasibility of linking the Phoenixville area to Philadelphia. The proposed line would run on existing freight rail tracks owned by Norfolk Southern and connect to the Norristown/Manayunk line. Early estimates of costs for three stations (one of which would be Phoenixville) include \$15 million for upfront capital investments and \$3 million for annual operating expenses. Bond financing would provide capital funds for the creation of a commuter rail station, retrofitting of the existing freight track for passenger service, and the rolling stock that would operate on the track.

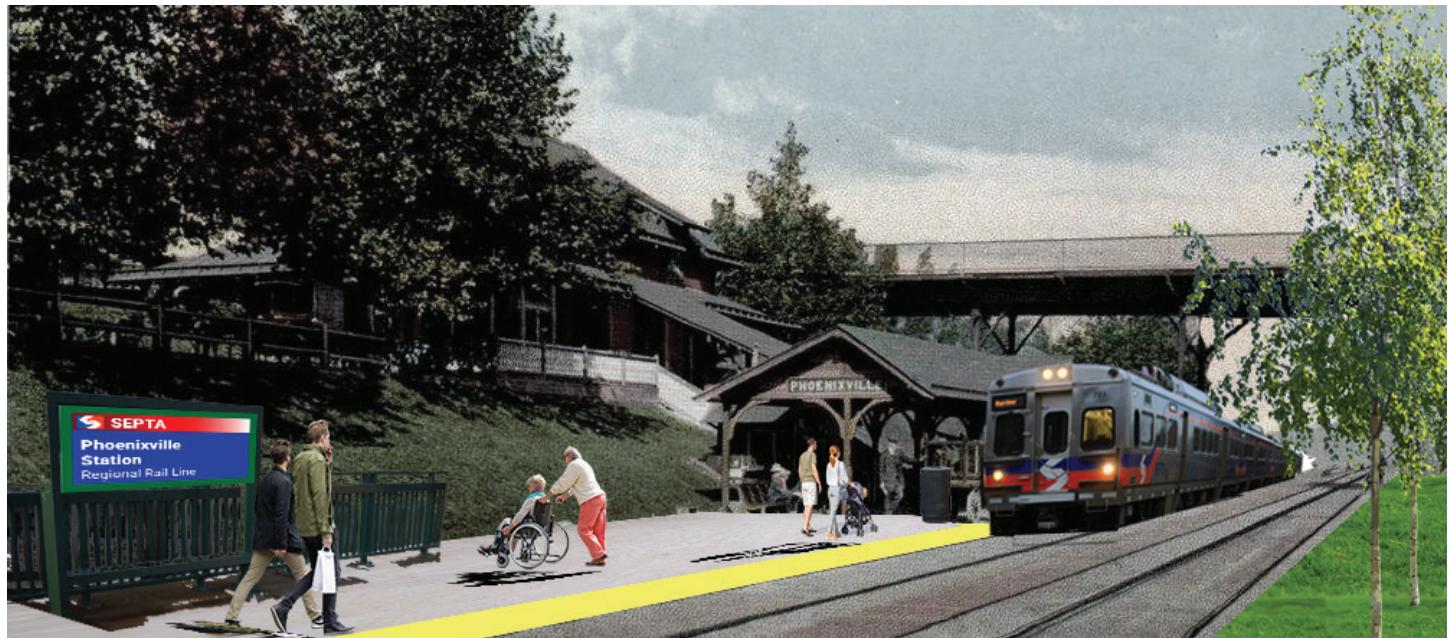


Figure 57. Rendering of Phoenixville's rail station

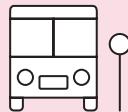
### Action Items:

- » Conduct a feasibility study to estimate the total development costs of the project
- » Solicit proposals for the rail station construction, track retrofitting, and purchase of rolling stock
- » Secure approval from Borough Council to issue a municipal bond to fund the rail expansion

### Partners

- » SEPTA and Norfolk Southern
- » King of Prussia and Schuylkill Township
- » Transportation infrastructure and real estate developers

### Goals addressed:



## 1.5 Overhaul Borough Parking Policy

### Parking policy can improve access to Bridge Street, encourage investment in Phoenixville's downtown, and raise revenue for other initiatives.

Residents have pointed to a lack of parking downtown as a quality-of-life issue and a barrier to commercial investment. While devoting additional land to parking may help the issue temporarily, revamping parking policy to more appropriately price parking would be a more space-efficient and market-oriented approach. Diverting some of the new revenue to improvements for downtown streets and storefronts would encourage buy-in from local businesses. The Borough could then use the remaining revenues for other initiatives.



Figure 58. Old Pasadena

#### CASE STUDY:

##### Parking Benefit District, Old Pasadena, CA

Old Pasadena declined for decades in part because the lack of available on-street parking hindered commercial activity. The City partnered with local businesses to install parking meters, and it used the new revenue to finance public improvements in the area. The meters improved accessibility to the neighborhood, and the district used the revenue to build Old Pasadena into an attractive destination.

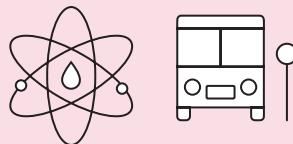
#### Action Items:

- » Add \$2/hour metered street parking on Bridge Street and raise prices of lot parking to \$2/hour to increase turnover
- » Raise parking ticket prices from the current \$20 fine to \$50 to encourage compliance with the meters
- » Divert new parking revenues to downtown businesses to implement street, sidewalk, and facade improvements
- » Subsidize parking for downtown employees, but provide the option for workers to receive the cash value of the subsidy if they elect to commute by other modes
- » Conduct a study to measure the impact of the new policy and parking availability and commercial activity

#### Partners

- » Phoenixville Area Business Association

#### Goals addressed:



## 1.6 Adaptive Reuse Arts Space

A transformation of the vacant building at Lincoln Avenue and Walnut Street would extend Phoenixville's arts, cultural, and entrepreneurial space.

Phoenixville has a robust and active cultural scene with many small businesses on Bridge Street. However, increasing issues of affordability and a lack of vacant land to develop new commercial space threaten the livelihood of business owners and artists. The currently vacant building at Lincoln Avenue and Walnut Street is a prime target for redevelopment into an arts, culture, and entrepreneurial space. The redevelopment of the building would spur new job creation along provide a space for networking, working, and community interaction.



Figure 59. Selden Market

### CASE STUDY: Selden Market, Norfolk, VA

Selden Market is an adaptive reuse of a building featuring up-and-coming small businesses. It provides entrepreneurs a “supportive space” to develop and test new ideas. The market also offers mentorships and a development program, as well as four different spaces available to rent: incubator storefronts (\$), mentor business storefronts, pop-up booths, and a community kitchen.

### Actions

- » Explore site ownership and identify developer(s) for the project (potentially PAEDCO, who has completed a similar project at 100 Bridge Street)
- » Redevelop vacant building into a community space with a distinctive working environment (co-working spaces, community kitchen, pop-ups for tenants to showcase work, etc.)
- » Provide a sliding scale of rent, from below market-rate to slightly above market-rate to cross-subsidize the former

### Partners

- » Phoenixville Area Business Association
- » Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- » Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation

### Financing

- » U.S. Economic Development Administration: Regional Innovation Strategies Grant
  - » EDA's Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) Program awards grants that build regional capacity to translate innovations into jobs through proof-of-concept and commercialization assistance to innovators and entrepreneurs
  - » Pennsylvania's Building PA Program
  - » PA Department of Community and Economic Development: Communities and Opportunities Grant

### Goals addressed:





Figure 60. First floor site plan

### Assumptions

40 foot tall building with 3 stories  
Structured parking for 60 spots  
6.75% cap rate

Project details	Projection
Parcel size (sf)	20,000
Building footprint (sf)	12,000
Building size (sf)	60,000
Rent (annual per sf)	\$27

Total development cost	\$15.7M
Net operating income	\$1.2M
Supportable mortgage	\$10.4M
Required initial cash	\$5.3M
Reversion value	\$17.9M



# FOCUS AREA II: THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Phoenixville has a diverse set of neighborhoods that offer a range of housing types. The recommendations that follow make the streets safer, protect and promote affordable housing, preserve historic structures, and improve stormwater management.

## 2.1 Bike Share Program

**A municipal bike share network could alleviate intra-borough traffic and provide an affordable, healthier mode of transportation to residents.**

While bike shares are often associated with large cities and college towns, Phoenixville's active downtown and plentiful trails present an opportunity to build a municipal bike share system. A bike share would give residents a non-car option for their intra-borough trips, easing congestion and improving public health. The Borough would charge for membership in the bikeshare program, and it could use some of the new parking revenue to subsidize costs for lower-income residents and students.

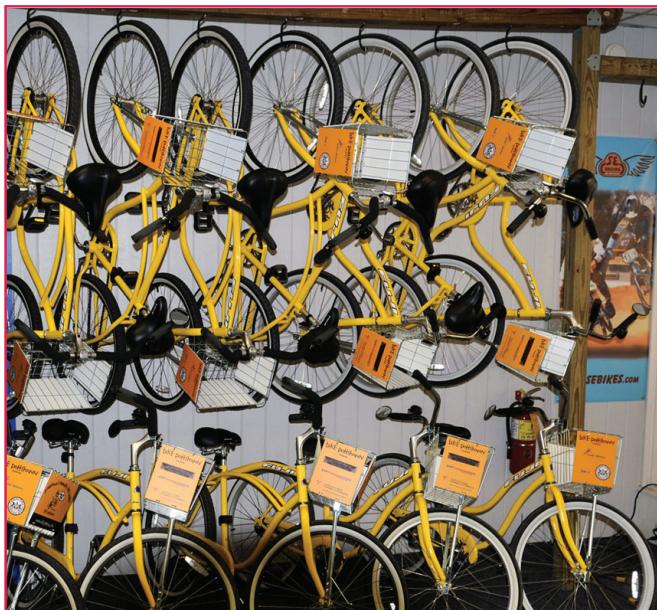


Figure 61. Bike Schuylkill

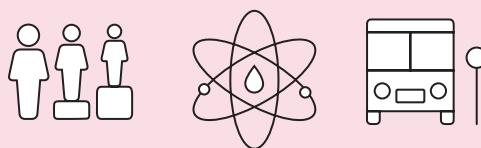
### CASE STUDY: Bike Schuylkill + Zagster

Bike Schuylkill is a community bike share program managed by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area that provides free bike rentals to riders along the Schuylkill River Trail. Zagster is a company that specializes in implementing bike share programs for smaller residential communities. The two organizations demonstrate that bike share programs can thrive in smaller locales.

### Actions

- » Site potential locations for bike share stations through community meetings and travel surveys
- » Build relationships with potential implementation and financing partners like Zagster and local corporations
- » Develop a cost structure for members, including subsidies for lower-income residents and students

### Goals addressed:



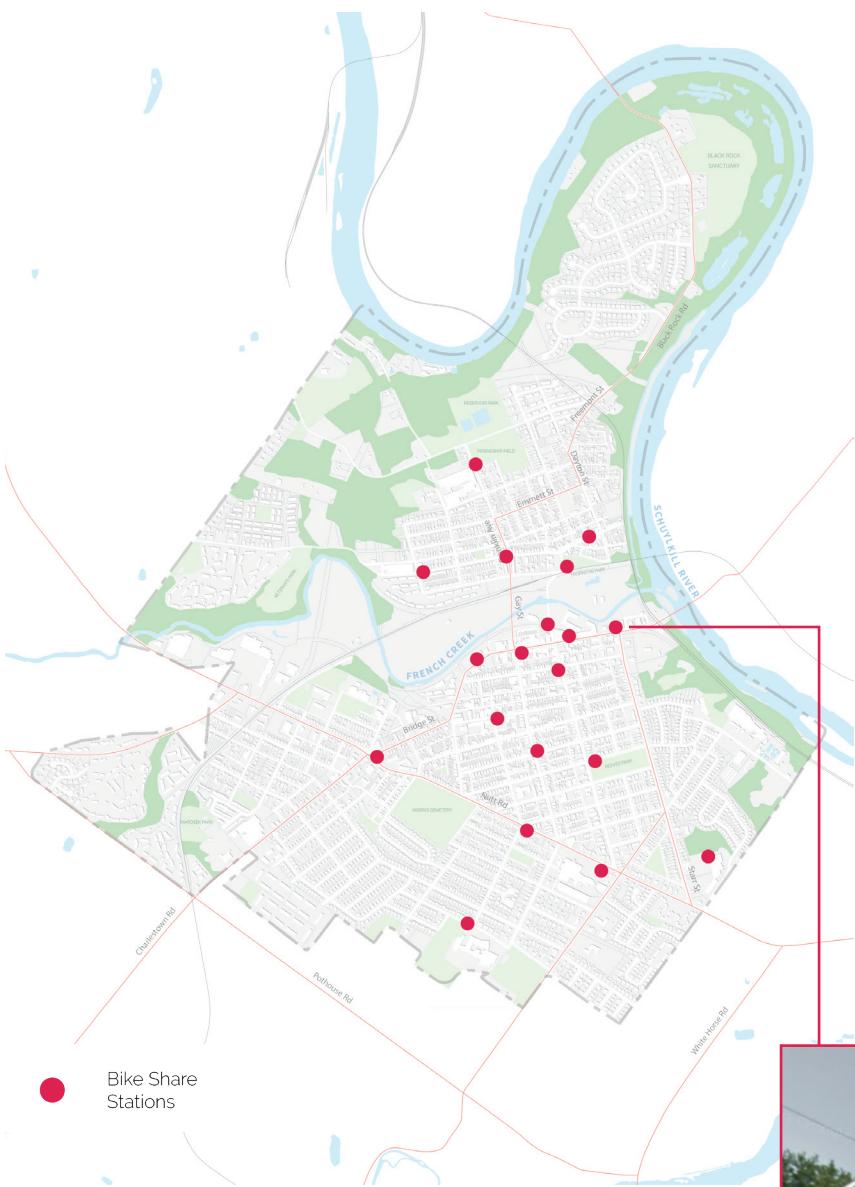


Figure 62. Proposed locations of bike share stations

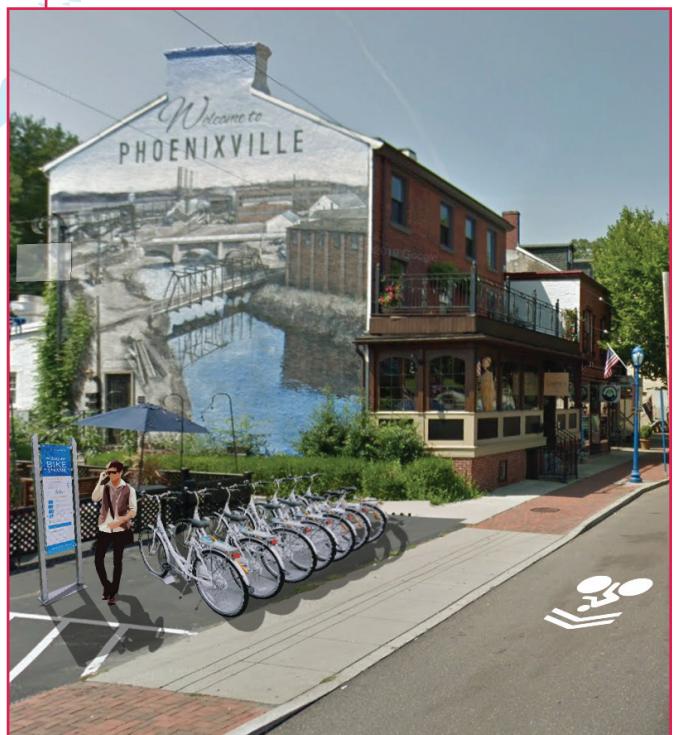


Figure 63. Potential bike share on Bridge Street

## Partners

- » Local corporations
- » Phoenixville Green Team
- » Phoenixville Area Business Association
- » Zagster

## Financing

- » Corporate sponsorship
- » Membership fees
- » Downtown parking revenue

## 2.2 Streets Redesign

### Phoenixville can redesign its streets to support its growth, improve safety, and provide infrastructure for more sustainable, active modes of transportation.

As Phoenixville and its greater region have grown, traffic volumes into and through the borough have pushed the existing road infrastructure to its limit, creating heavy traffic congestion and safety issues. Phoenixville should implement Complete Streets infrastructure to alleviate congestion, reduce speeding, manage stormwater, and provide safe road access for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. Heavily used arterial roads and critical intersections would receive lower-scale interventions to support their traffic volumes. Smaller residential roads would receive more thorough design overhauls to improve neighborhood safety and encourage sustainable modes of transportation.

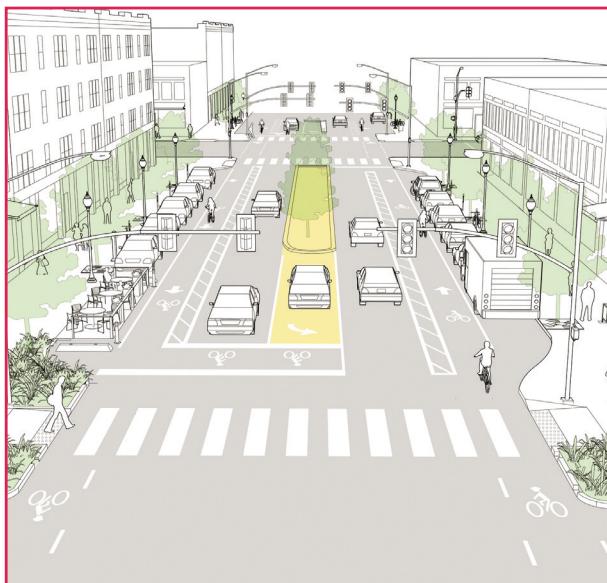


Figure 64. A schematic rendering of Complete Streets

#### WHAT ARE COMPLETE STREETS?

Complete Streets are streets designed and maintained to provide safe access to all users, regardless of their mode of transportation or their physical ability, and to manage stormwater runoff in resilient and environmentally sustainable ways.

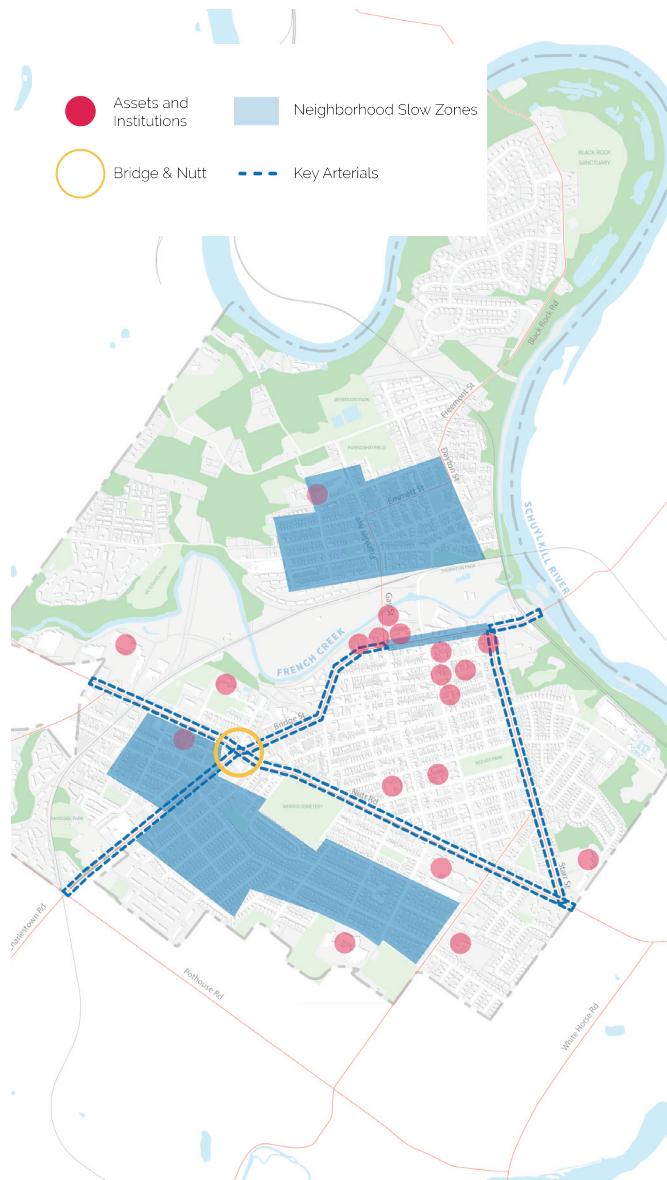
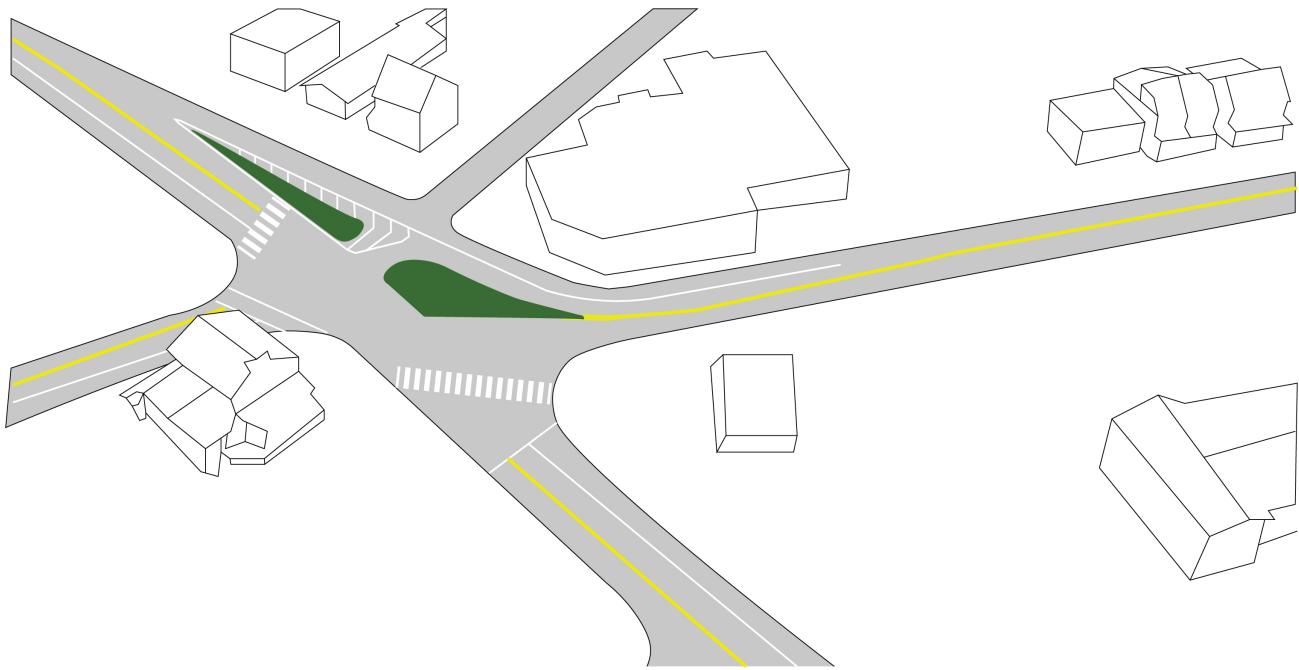


Figure 65. Proposed locations of street redesign

## KEY ARTERIALS

EXISTING: BRIDGE & NUTT INTERSECTION

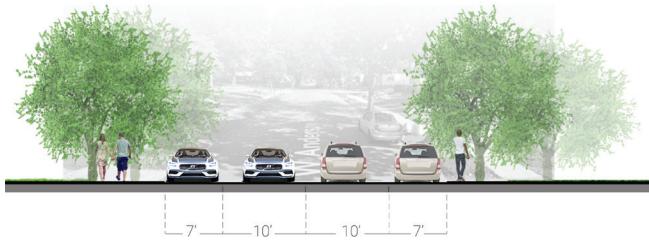


PROPOSED: BRIDGE & NUTT INTERSECTION

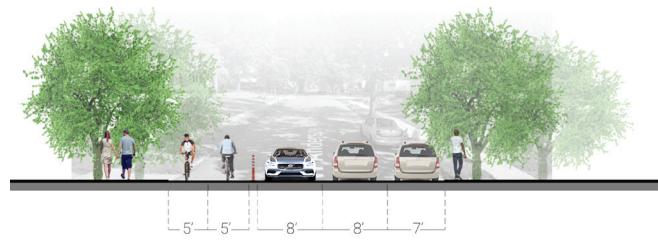


## RESIDENTIAL ROADS

EXISTING: ANDERSON ROAD



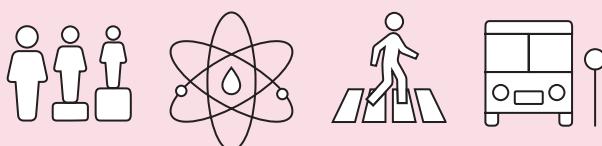
PROPOSED: ANDERSON ROAD



### Action Items: Key Arterials

- » Conduct feasibility studies to understand the forms of Complete Streets infrastructure that key arterials like Bridge Street, Nutt Road, and Starr Street can support
- » Arterials proposals
- » Sharrows on narrower streets like downtown Bridge Street
- » Dedicated bike lanes on wider roads like Nutt Road
- » Pedestrian islands and curb bulb-outs to shorten long crosswalks
- » Dedicate portions of wider sidewalks to multi-use paths
- » Street furniture programs on sidewalks to encourage walking
- » Key intersection redesign: Traffic circles that increase throughput while improving pedestrian and cyclist safety
- » Coordinate with PennDOT to finalize design changes for state-owned segments of key arterial roads

### Goals addressed:



### Action Items: Residential Roads

- » Create Neighborhood Slow Zones in residential subdivisions
- » Institute slowing measures to reduce vehicle speeds
- » Add protected bike lanes on selected streets
- » At key intersections, bump out crosswalks to improve visibility
- » Create in-school programs to promote safe biking and walking practices
- » Outreach to parents about new physical improvements and the viability of alternative transit to school

### Partners

- » DVRPC
- » PennDOT
- » Phoenixville schools
- » Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

### Financing

- » DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative Grant
- » PennDOT's Automated Red Light Enforcement Funding Program
- » Safe Routes to School

## 2.3 Sidewalk Network

**Completing the sidewalk network can make Phoenixville more accessible to residents and visitors of all mobility levels.**

While downtown Phoenixville is very walkable, the rest of the borough is less so, due in part to more sporadic sidewalk coverage. This isolates neighborhoods from the rest of Phoenixville, and makes it challenging for less able residents like the disabled and elderly to reach their destination. To alleviate congestion and improve community connectivity, the Borough should complete the sidewalk network to ensure all residents can access areas of interest in Phoenixville without having to rely on a vehicle.

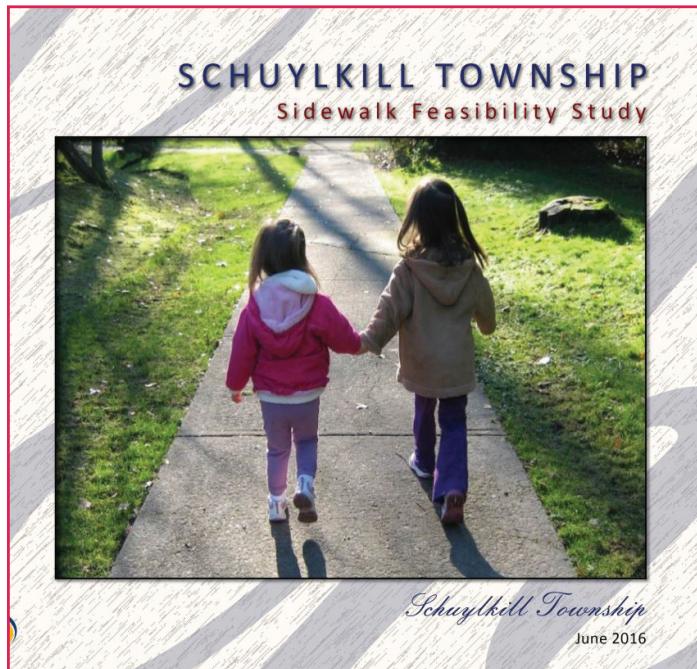


Figure 66. Schuylkill Township Sidewalk Feasibility Study

### CASE STUDY:

#### Schuylkill Township Sidewalk Feasibility Study

Neighboring Schuylkill Township conducted a sidewalk study in 2016 to identify gaps in its network, prioritize improvements, and outline implementation timelines and funding sources.

### Action Items

- » Conduct a sidewalk study to identify gaps in the network, poorly maintained sidewalks, and the relevant parcel owners
- » For Phoenixville-owned parcels: pursue grant funding or divert some parking revenues
- » For county and state roadways: lobby PennDOT for improvements
- » Coordinate with neighboring municipalities on their sidewalk programs to increase walkability in the Phoenixville region

### Partners

- » PennDOT
- » Phoenixville Area Business Association

### Financing

- » Safe Routes to School
- » Transportation Alternatives Program

### Goals addressed:



## 2.4 Green Infrastructure

**Green infrastructure can not only beautify the streetscape and landscape, but also improve the effectiveness of stormwater management.**

Phoenixville is already at high risk of flooding due to its location at the confluence of the French Creek and Schuylkill River. This risk will only increase with climate change. As such, the Borough should expand its implementation of green infrastructure to manage stormwater, mitigate potential flooding, and enhance community safety. Green infrastructure improves both environmental sustainability and community resilience.

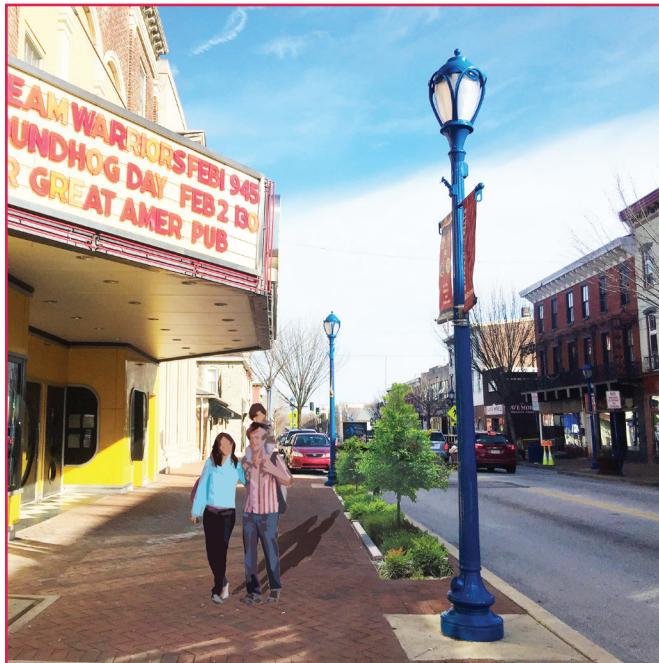


Figure 67. Rendering of a planter box on Bridge St



Figure 68. Rendering of a rain garden

### Action Items:

- » Establish annual goals concerning treatment, infiltration of runoff, and reuse of stormwater
- » Identify green infrastructure opportunities through GIS screenings on parcels and site assessments
- » Adapt Low Impact Development strategies in the green infrastructure design guide, minimizing site disturbance and soil compaction through low impact clearing, grading, and construction measures
- » Convene and educate stakeholders on stormwater management and progress check annually

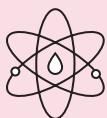
### Partners

- » FIMPC (See Recommendation 4.4)
- » Chester County Water Resources Authority

### Financing

- » EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- » Public-private partnerships through the Stormwater Financing and Revenue Program
- » Impact fees or special user fees charged by the Borough government

### Goals addressed:



## 2.5 Resilient Historic Preservation Guidelines

The Borough should adjust its current historic design protocol to make Phoenixville a progressive model of resilient historic preservation.

The Borough of Phoenixville follows the design guidelines established by the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which are then enforced by the Historic Architectural Review Board to protect the borough's historic fabric. Yet, no measures currently address the intersection of preservation and climate change. Revised guidelines would suggest design solutions to reconcile historic accuracy and contemporary environmental construction best practices.

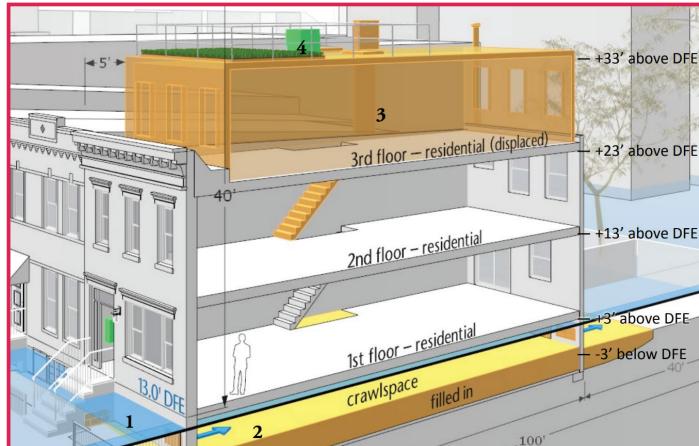


Figure 69. Hoboken's Resilient Building Design Guidelines

### Design Guideline Additions:

- » Establish retrofit flood-proofing measures for historic buildings
- » Elevate electrical and mechanical systems and utilities
- » Create positive drainage, where the grade allows water to drain away from the building

### CASE STUDY:

#### Resilient Building Design Guidelines, Hoboken, NJ

Hoboken's 2013 Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance has taken on a more flexible and practical approach to preservation by sacrificing traditional "historic significance" in the name of climate resilience.

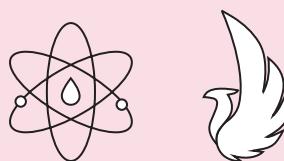
### Action Items:

- » Hire a resiliency consultant to determine which design guidelines would be most appropriate for the Historic District
- » Have the consultant hold a mandatory Resiliency Workshop that all HARB members must attend

### Financing

- » The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Emergency/Intervention Fund Grant
- » FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

### Goals addressed:



## 2.6 Multi-Family Conversions

**Encouraging the conversion of large, single-family homes to multi-family dwellings will better support the current population.**

The Borough should allow the conversion of single-family houses into apartments in certain zoning districts, ensuring that housing supply meets the needs of Phoenixville's many smaller families. This will provide more affordable and sustainable housing without requiring additional construction. This is also an attractive policy for older adults who are interested in aging in place but do not want to maintain a large home.



Figure 70. Schematic partition of multi-family conversions

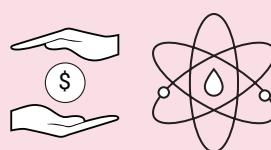
### Action Items:

- » Identify neighborhoods that can accommodate increased density and have housing stock that is well-suited to multi-family housing conversions
- » Waive impact fees for conversions
- » Identify opportunities and partners for providing below-market financing or technical assistance where necessary
- » Encourage neighboring townships, who have a larger share of single-family housing, to pursue a similar policy

### Partners

- » Homeowner associations
- » Affordable housing advocates
- » Local financial institutions

### Goals addressed:



## 2.7 Small Landlord Program

**Limit the combination of units in multi-family buildings through landlord incentives to prevent the loss of naturally occurring affordable housing.**

As Phoenixville attracts more and more residents, there is a risk of multi-family, affordable housing being converted (or reconverted) for luxury single-family use. This can erode the existing affordable stock, a strong asset of the borough. To prevent this, the borough permitting office should impose a moratorium on single-family conversions. To assist impacted landlords, Phoenixville can facilitate access to low-interest repair financing for small landlords who commit to maintain the unit numbers in their properties and have affordable rents.

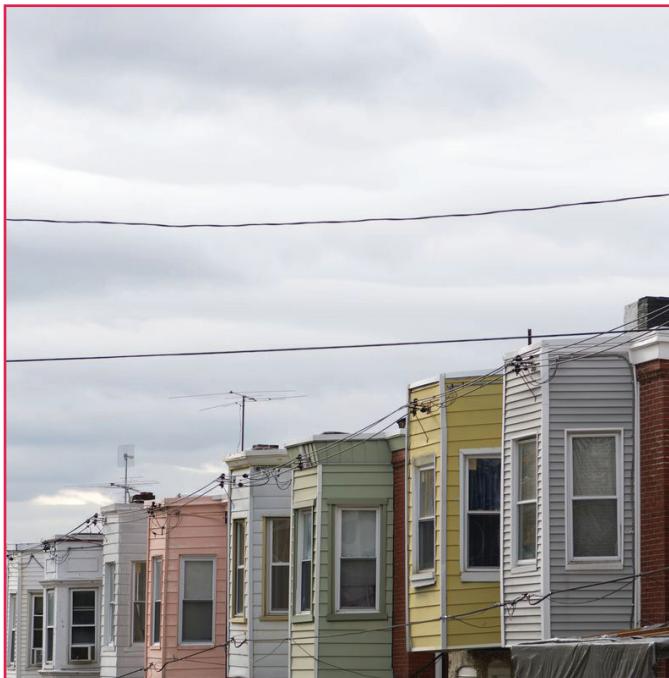


Figure 71. Housing in Philadelphia

### CASE STUDY:

#### Small Landlord Loan Program, Philadelphia, PA

This Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority pilot program extends loans of up to \$25,000 for repairs to rental properties affordable to households at or below the area median income to small landlords (defined as landlords of one to four rental units). The program assists landlords who have smaller revenue streams make necessary health and safety repairs to improve the quality of affordable housing.

### Action Items:

- » Initiate a moratorium on single-family conversions
- » Locate neighborhoods that have a concentration of existing affordable multi-family housing
- » Create a focus group of small landlords to establish details of the program and get buy-in
- » Identify partners for providing affordable financing to landlords through an RFP

### Partners

- » Phoenixville Community Health Foundation
- » Affordable housing advocates
- » Local financial institutions

### Financing

- » Single-family conversions could be subsidized through below-market financing facilitated by the Borough

### Goals addressed:



## 2.8 Affordable Accessory Dwellings

**Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) provide new affordable housing and also raise property values by offering an income stream to homeowners.**

ADUs are helpful in increasing residential density in the existing neighborhood fabric without a drastic change to the community character. Phoenixville's current zoning allows ADU construction throughout the borough.

Phoenixville should incentive ADU construction by implementing a broader program that ties the new supply of affordable units to necessary physical repairs for low- and moderate-income homeowners in the Borough. This would support existing residents of Phoenixville who might be forced from their aging homes because of repair costs, while also providing new affordable supply. Existing ADU programs, like Portland's, tie 0% interest financing together for both ADU construction and renovations to an existing home. A similar approach could support existing residents of Phoenixville who might be forced from their aging homes because of repair costs, while also providing new affordable supply.

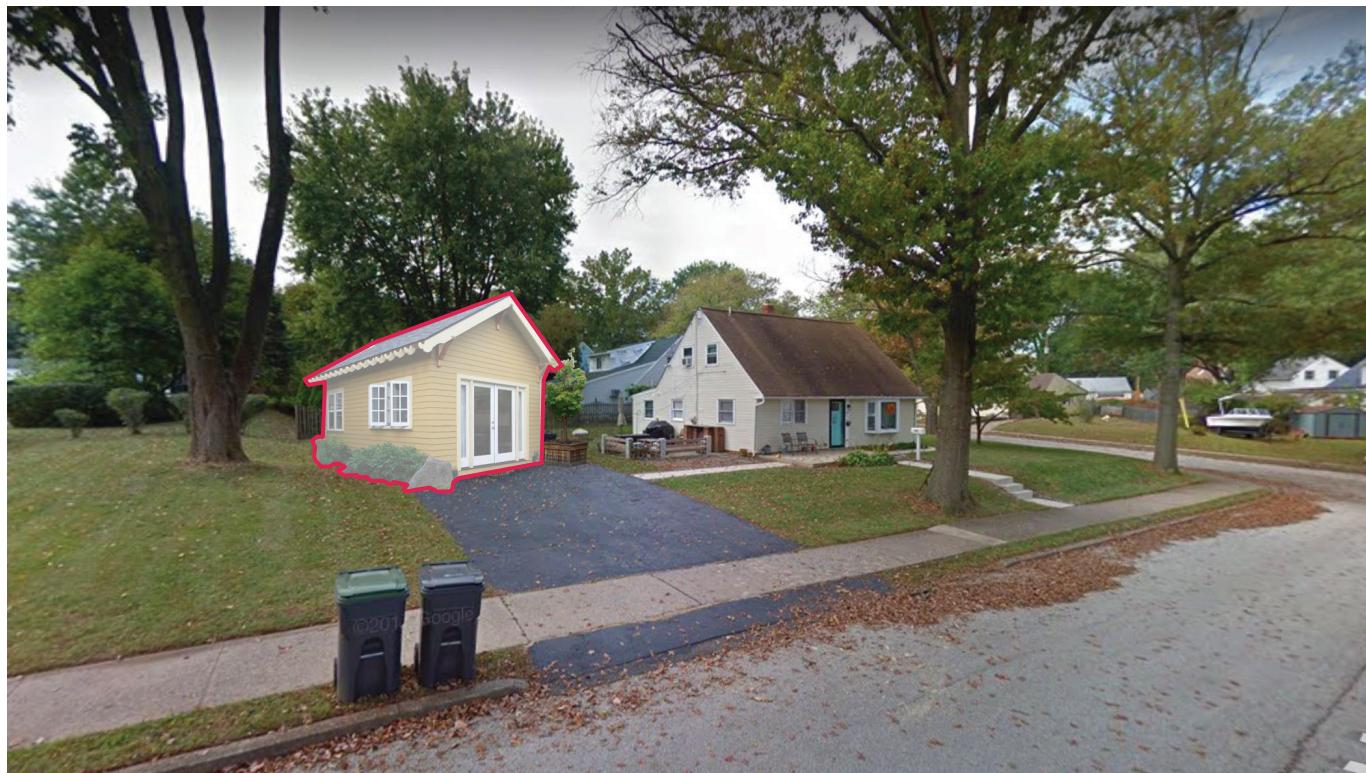


Figure 72. Rendering of an ADU in Phoenixville



### CASE STUDY: Backyard Homes Project, Los Angeles, CA

Through this pilot, homeowners access the resources necessary to build and rent an ADU, offering context-appropriate design, permitting, and construction support along with optional financing. In exchange, homeowners commit to renting the unit to a Section 8 voucher user for at least five years, thus ensuring infill of affordable housing units.

Figure 73. Sketch of an ADU from the Backyard Homes Project

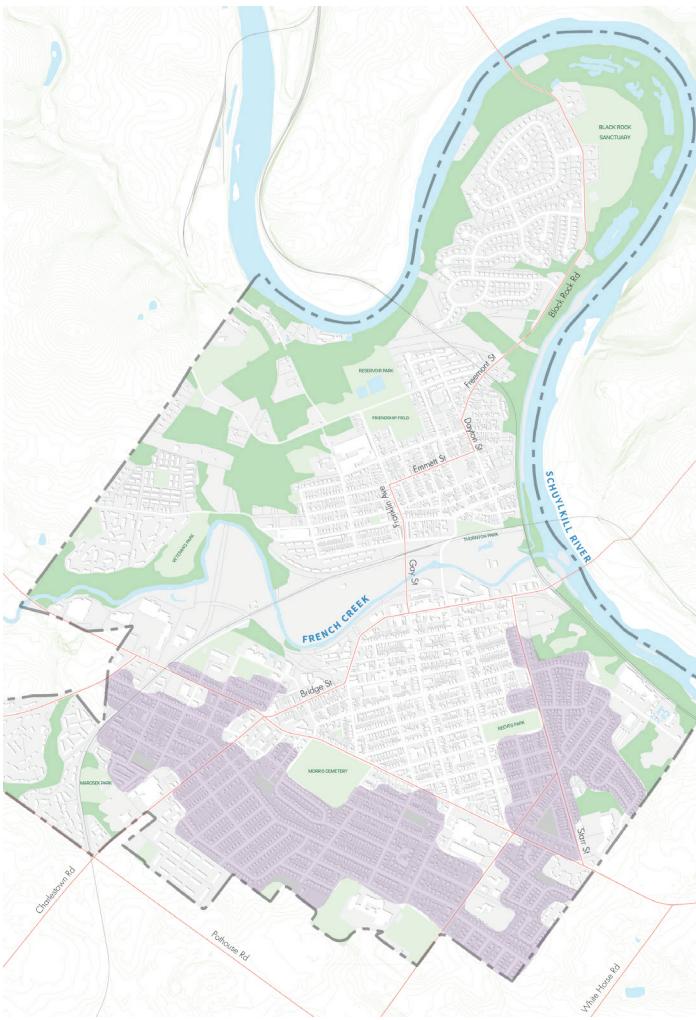


Figure 74. Single-family areas eligible for affordable ADU program (highlighted)

## WHAT IS AN ADU?

An ADU is a secondary housing unit on a single-family residential lot. It may take the form of a smaller apartment within a home, detached from the primary structure in a separate building, or constructed within an existing accessory structure like a garage or basement.

## CASE STUDY:

### Portland ADU Loan Program, Portland OR

This pilot program mitigates displacement threats against moderate-income homeowners by providing a passive rental income, promoting aging in place, and linking financing to repairs that can increase housing quality and safety. Homeowners at 80 to 120% of the area median income qualify for interest-free loans up to \$80,000 loan to convert their basement into an ADU. They can also receive a loan for home repairs, and access to lead abatement grants.

## Action Items:

- » Create a Phoenixville-wide public awareness program about the opportunity to build ADUs as passive income streams for those who can finance their ADU construction traditionally
- » Send out an RFP to designers and contractors skilled in micro-home design or construction
- » Create a guide of qualified designers and contractors for Phoenixville residents to consult
- » Waive all impact and permit fees for ADU construction in exchange for a commitment by homeowners to not use the unit for short-term rentals
- » Explore a program with Chester County Housing Authority to provide new units to housing choice voucher users by leveraging community financial institutions, PCHF's Community Benefit Dollars, and philanthropies and/or Pay for Success investment partners
- » Encourage neighboring townships to explore areas where they could institute a similar policy

## Partners

- » Chester County Housing Authority
- » Phoenixville Community Health Foundation
- » Home Builders Association of Chester/Delaware Counties
- » Phoenixville Federal Bank & Trust
- » Bryn Mawr Trust

## Goals addressed:





## FOCUS AREA III: THE REGION

The Phoenixville region is an area in Chester and Montgomery Counties currently experiencing a tremendous amount of growth. The recommendations here look to integrate Phoenixville residents within the borough and to the greater region. The recommendations will also establish Phoenixville as a leader in the region for transportation and environment initiatives.

## 3.1 Regional HARB

**Collaborating with other communities while re-energizing the preservation community within Phoenixville will ensure the sustainability of the HARB and the protection of Phoenixville's historic fabric.**

Created by state and local laws, Phoenixville's Historic Architecture Review Board (HARB) is a public advisory body that works to protect the cultural heritage within a historic district by evaluating proposed exterior changes such as renovations, adaptive reuse, and demolition. Currently, Phoenixville is considering dissolving the HARB due to lack of funding, volunteer time, and the added pressure of mandatory trainings from The Pennsylvania Historical Museum & Commission.

Because Historic Districts can be defined at the county or municipal level, Phoenixville can establish a Regional HARB for Chester County through partnerships with other municipalities such as West Chester. Phoenixville can serve as a progressive and flexible model for historic preservation. Furthermore, Phoenixville can secure the future of the HARB by engaging in partnerships with interdisciplinary intra-community groups to energize the HARB with a diverse group of experts and advocates.



Figure 75. UCare Ursinus

### Action Items:

- » Adjust the Borough's Municipal Code, Ordinance 2232 Section C, to allow for HARB members from outside of the borough
- » Partner with neighboring HARBs in Chester County, such as West Chester, to form a Regional HARB
- » Work with the Phoenixville Area Historical Society to ensure the sustainability of a strong preservation community and other potential funding sources through partnerships with Community Arts Phoenixville and UCare Ursinus, two groups who are already engaged with history and the built environment

### Zoning can account for:

- » Setbacks
- » Scale
- » Massing
- » Density

### Zoning cannot account for:

- » Architectural significance
- » Intangible heritage

### Financing

- » National Trust Preservation Fund
- » Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation
- » Ursinus College

### Partners

- » West Chester Borough
- » Community Arts Phoenixville
- » UCare Ursinus

### Goals addressed:



## 3.2 Divert Heavy Traffic

### Diverting heavy traffic away from downtown Phoenixville can improve congestion, safety, and local air quality.

The three state highways that converge on Phoenixville bring a large amount of heavy thru traffic into the borough. Tractor trailers frequently pass through downtown Bridge Street, causing congestion and safety issues. Connecting Fillmore Street, in the north of Phoenixville, to Crossover Boulevard to the northwest with a short, 2000-ft diversionary road could siphon heavy thru traffic away from Phoenixville's downtown. The Borough should work with PennDOT to secure funding and perform the necessary studies to identify and build potential bypass routes like the one described here.

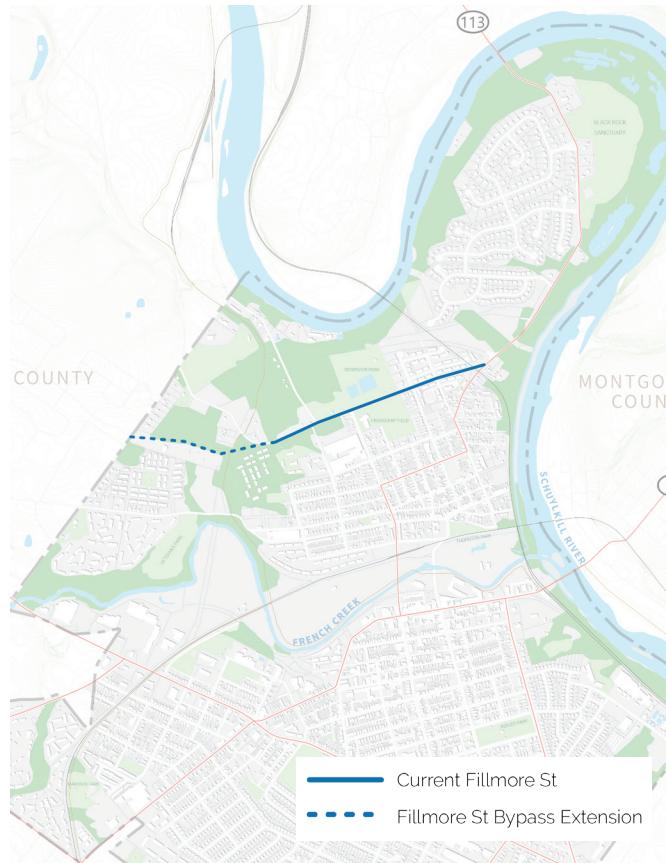


Figure 76. Proposed diversion route

#### Action Items:

- » Conduct a traffic study to understand the volume of heavy thru traffic in Phoenixville
- » Identify potential bypass routes, such as the proposal above adapted from the Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan
- » Apply for grant funding from PennDOT and US DOT to finance construction of the bypass

#### Partners

- » PennDOT
- » US DOT

#### Financing

- » PennDOT Transportation Infrastructure Investment Funds (TIF)
- » US DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grants Program

#### Goals addressed:



## 3.3 Better Bus Service

Phoenixville can take advantage of SEPTA's comprehensive bus network redesign to improve transit service in the borough.

Currently, two SEPTA routes run through Phoenixville, but their low frequency means only a small number of riders use them. SEPTA is currently undertaking a complete redesign of their bus network, presenting an opportunity for the Borough to work with SEPTA to create better bus service for Phoenixville and better connect the borough to the region.



Figure 77. Route 99



Figure 78. Exton Transportation Center, a potential mode for Phoenixville

### Action Items:

- » Lobby SEPTA to create more frequent bus service that connects the borough directly to nearby rail stations like Malvern
- » In exchange, invest in creating a small transit center in the downtown to improve ridership and demonstrate to SEPTA the Borough is willing to invest in transit service
- » Provide tax incentives for local employers to subsidize employee commutes on transit

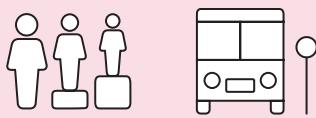
### Financing

- » PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund
- » Parking meter revenue

### Partners

- » SEPTA
- » PennDOT
- » Phoenixville Area Business Association

### Goals addressed:



## 3.4 Regional & Local Shuttle

**A free local shuttle system can connect residents to job and shopping centers in the borough.**

As part of its larger efforts to introduce a multimodal transportation system, the Borough should leverage grant funding to create a community shuttle program. It would function as an intra-borough local shuttle during most days, but for events like the Blob Fest, it would run between nearby Regional Rail stations to bring visitors to the borough.



Figure 79. Shuttle in Plainview, NE

### CASE STUDY:

#### Plainview, NE

Plainview, NE leverages FTA Rural Formula Grants (for municipalities with populations under 50,000) to provide a free community shuttle for its residents. Phoenixville can supplement existing SEPTA routes by providing a low cost intra-borough shuttle to connect residents to high demand areas like schools, the hospital, downtown, and shopping centers.

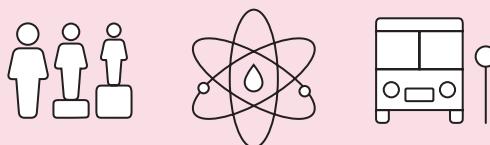
### Action Items:

- » Gather community feedback for routes
- » Pursue grant funding and finalize non-grant financing mechanisms
- » Build shuttle shelters in downtown stops in line with SEPTA bus shelter standards so they may serve SEPTA buses as well
- » Create an RFP for creators of an app to track the shuttle

### Financing

- » Advertising
- » FTA Rural Formula Grants & Healthcare Grants
- » Reduce minimum parking requirements in exchange for a tax to fund the shuttle

### Goals addressed:



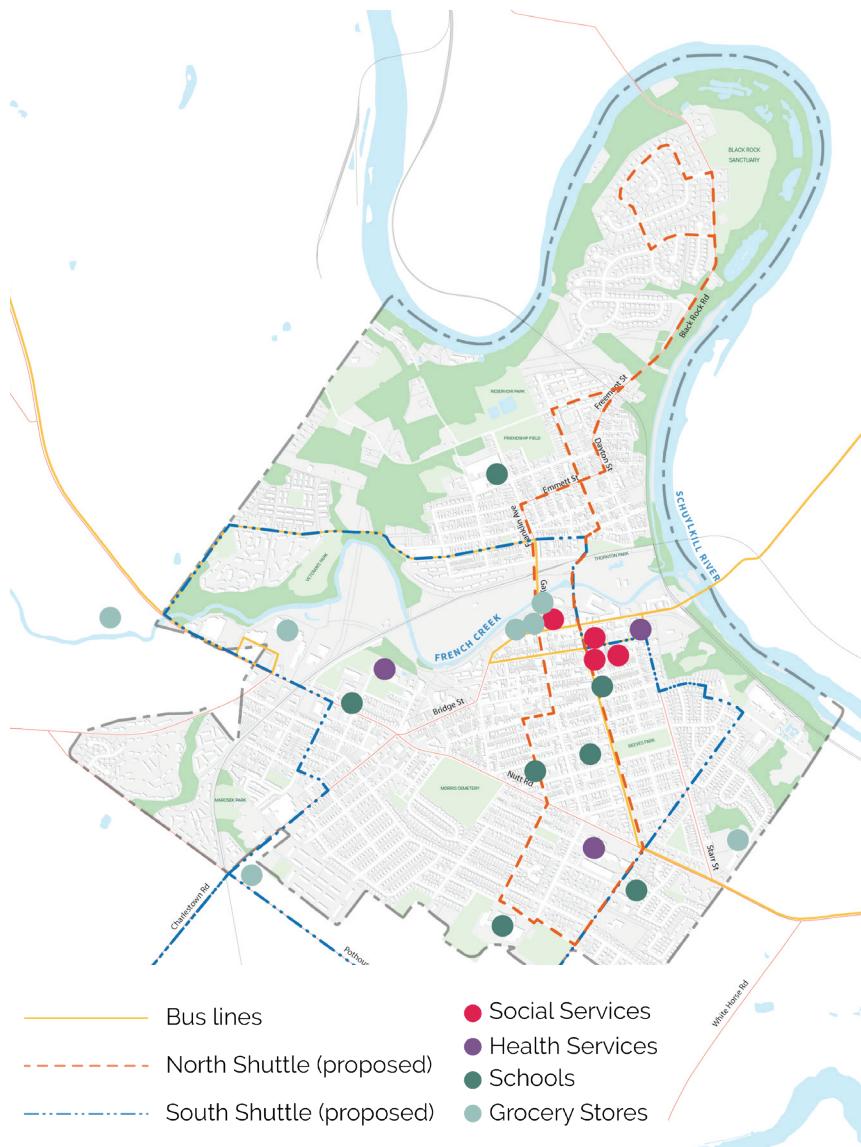


Figure 80. Proposed shuttle routes



Figure 81. Phoenixville Senior Center



Figure 82. Phoenixville Hospital

As SEPTA prepares for its comprehensive bus network redesign, Phoenixville should demonstrate to the agency that it is committed to transit. The Borough can do so by building bus shelters to improve the rider experience and widely marketing the new community shuttle service. Taking such actions will show SEPTA that adding new, more frequent service to the borough will be a worthwhile investment, increasing the likelihood that transit becomes an important, widely used part of Phoenixville's transportation system.



## 3.5 Health-Centered Community Engagement

**Phoenixville should increase community engagement in partnership with local organizations to address social determinants of health.**

Economic stability, physical and social environments, education, food access, and health care access are all important in determining health outcomes. Phoenixville can apply resources to increase capacity and coordination among area social service and health groups to ease the burden of accessing resources for Phoenixville residents.

### CASE STUDY:

#### NYC311-211, New York City, NY

New York City's combined call center is city-operated with support from United Way, but seamlessly responds to requests for both government and nonprofit services. This corresponds well to the resource delivery structure in the city, where 85% of the human services programs are contracted through nonprofits.

Economic Stability	Physical Environment	Education	Food	Social Context	Health Care System
Employment	Housing	Literacy	Hunger	Social integration	Health coverage
Income	Transportation	Language	Healthy food access	support systems	Provider availability
Expenses	Safety	Early childhood education		Community engagement	Provider linguistic and cultural competency
Debt	Parks	Vocational training		Discrimination	
Medical bills	Playgrounds	Higher education		Stress	Quality of care
Support	Walkability				
	Zip code/geography				

Figure 83. Social determinants of health

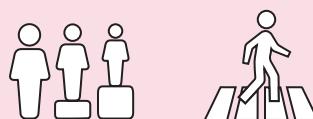
### Action Items:

- » Offer workshop space in Borough Hall and on Bridge Street for community education
- » Create a Borough position dedicated to capacity building among health and social services organizations, community education, and liaising between social service organizations and the Borough
- » Operate a 311 line to refer community members in need to appropriate community providers
- » Increase the number of community-led workshops generating health care signups and create or amplify public programming about common issues like tobacco use, second-hand smoke, housing quality, and obesity

### Partners

- » Phoenixville Community Health Foundation
- » Health Care Access
- » Alianzas de Phoenixville
- » Orion Communities
- » Phoenixville Area Community Services
- » United Way of Chester County

### Goals addressed:





## FOCUS AREA IV: THE BIOSPHERE

Phoenixville has committed to transition to 100% clean and renewable electricity by 2035 and 100% renewable energy for heat and transportation by 2050. Our recommendations build on this forward-thinking commitment and push Phoenixville ahead as an environmental and sustainable model for other boroughs in the region.

## 4.1 Green Building Policies

**Green buildings can help conserve energy, resources, and recycling materials, while contributing to the local and global ecosystem throughout the building's life.**

In the United States, buildings account for 39% of total energy use, 12% of total water consumption, 68% of total electricity consumption, and 38% of carbon dioxide emissions. Introducing green building standards would significantly aid Phoenixville in achieving its goal of carbon neutrality by 2035 and establish the Borough as a steward and champion of the natural environment. All new development and/or rehabilitation of existing development should strive towards LEED Platinum, US EPA Energy STAR, or Living Building Challenge certification and standards.



Figure 84. Frick Environmental Center

### CASE STUDY:

#### Frick Environmental Center, Pittsburgh PA

The Frick Environmental Center is a Living Building-Certified center dedicated to experiential environmental education. The Center embraces rainwater and utilizes it in both “technical and celebratory ways.” Through design, the building captures and stores enough rainwater to offset all of its potable and non-potable water use (the core principles of Net Zero Water). Other treatments include rainwater harvesting from large photovoltaic array canopies, which is passed through rain barrels and collected in a 15,000 gallon underground cistern to be treated. The Center is also not connected to the City sewer system. Wastewater is treated and discharged on-site using an underground treatment system and drip irrigation field.

### Action Items:

- » Provide income tax incentives to commercial developments incorporating specific green strategies informed by LEED
- » Require all applicants for a building permit for any new construction of commercial buildings, office buildings, industrial buildings, or multi-residence over 4,000 square feet to submit a LEED checklist or pay a fee of \$0.03 per square foot of the project to a Phoenixville Green Building Fund
- » Establish an Office of Sustainability to help develop a thorough sustainability plan for Phoenixville

### Financing

- » U.S. Economic Development Administration: Regional Innovation Strategies Grant
- » Building PA

### Partners

- » Phoenixville Area Business Association
- » Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- » Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation

### Goals addressed:





PLATINUM



## LEED:

» LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a national certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to encourage the construction of energy and resource-efficient buildings that are healthy for inhabitants.

» LEED is a voluntary, market driven building rating system, where a rating of Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum is based on the number of points.

» Ratings are based on Innovation and Design; Location and Linkages; Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; Indoor Air Quality; Awareness and Education.

## US EPA ENERGY STAR:

» ENERGY STAR is a voluntary program developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help reduce environmental degradation through improved energy efficiency.

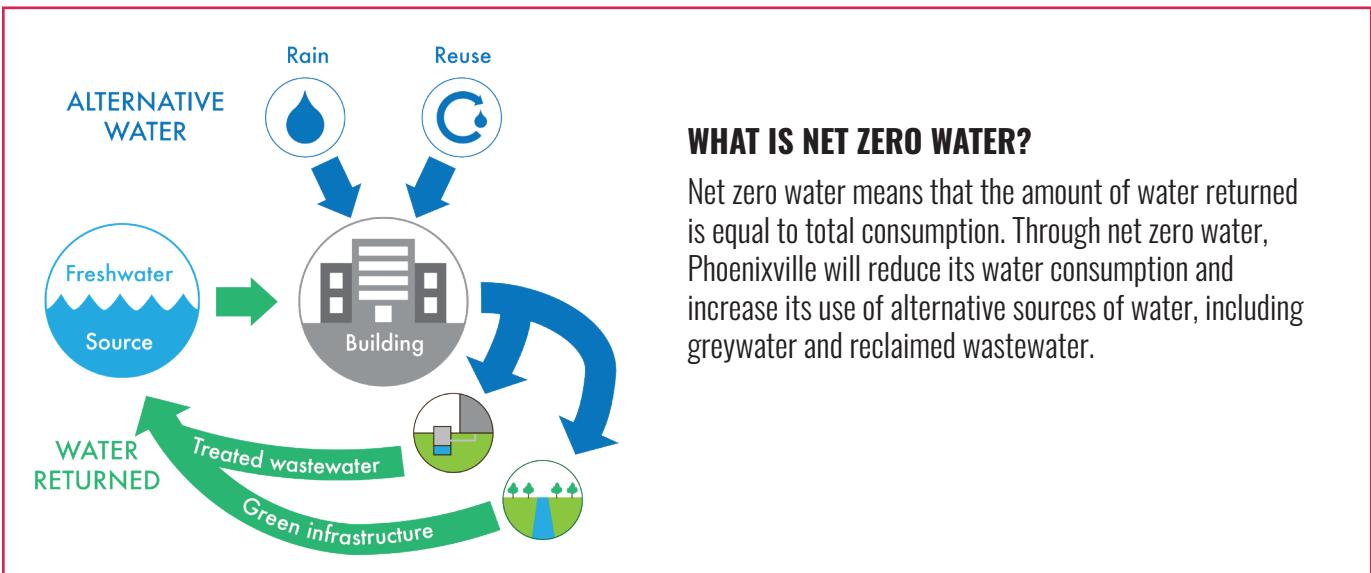
» New homes that earn ENERGY STAR Certification deliver up to 30% greater energy savings than a typical new home.

» Commercial buildings that earn EPA's ENERGY STAR Certification perform in the top 25% of similar buildings nationwide.

## LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE:

» Living Building Challenge is one of the most rigorous sustainable building certification programs, developed by non-profit International Living Future Institute.

» LBC's three main goals are: 1) Regenerative spaces that connect occupants to light, air, food, nature, and community; 2) Self-sufficient buildings that remain within the resource limits of their site; and 3) Healthy and beautiful buildings.



## 4.2 Floodplain Overlay Zone

**Phoenixville should institute an overlay zone for the areas of the borough that lie in the floodplain.**

Roughly 17% of Phoenixville's total commercial area, including much of Bridge Street, lies in the floodplain, leaving it vulnerable to future flooding. To improve its flood resilience, Phoenixville should create an overlay zoning district that would require development in the floodplain to include flood management and prevention strategies.

### CASE STUDY: Douglas County, CO

Douglas County adopted a “Wildfire Hazard Overlay District” as part of its zoning code. The first item listed in the purpose statement for the overlay district is “to develop and maintain a map of Douglas County that allows for preliminary identification of Wildfire Hazard Areas.”

The regulations within the overlay district also apply to land areas assessed as potential hazard areas. In the overlay, land use applications must conform to general mitigation and forest management provisions, street design criteria, water supply provisions, and structural design elements.

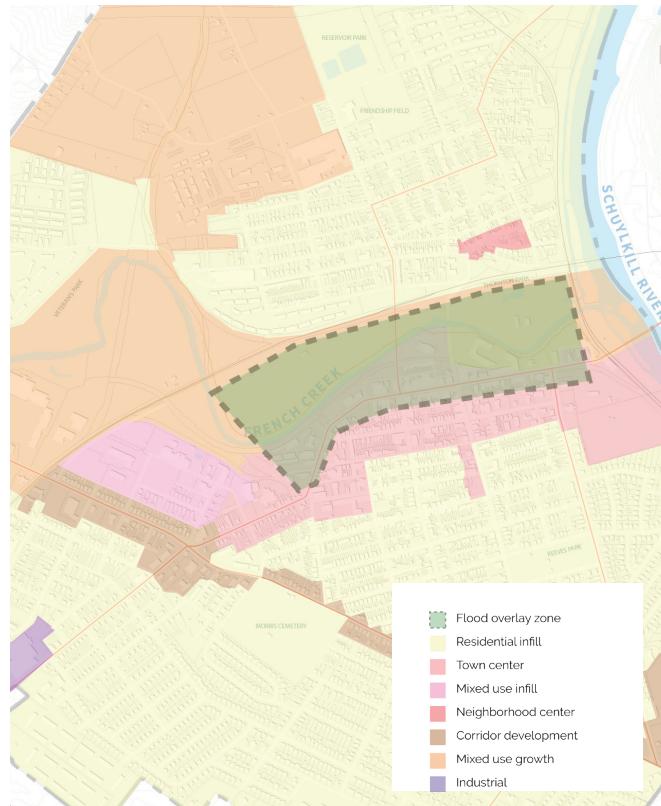
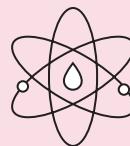


Figure 85. Proposed flood overlay

### Action Items:

- » Reactivate vacant land in the overlay zone as flood buffer zones to slow runoff and absorb excess water
- » Implement flood management and prevention strategies for buildings in the overlay
- » Renew and improve buildings in the overlay district through flood resilient construction
- » Regulate land development in the overlay to conform with flood mitigation provisions

### Goals addressed:



## 4.3 Phoenixville Environmental Education Center

**Open to the public, the Phoenixville Environmental Center will improve the overall environmental literacy and strengthen the green culture already present.**

Phoenixville has strong environmental culture. In order to grow and strengthen environmental leadership in the community, Phoenixville should establish an Environmental Education Center. The Center, inspired by the success of the cultural learning center at Schuylkill Heritage, will function as an educational hub for visitors of all ages and will be the first net zero water building in Phoenixville. The Education Center will bolster community development and education through programming in the Center itself as well as environmental literacy workshops at various green spaces throughout the borough. In addition, the Center will house the Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center, which will monitor and predict flooding and its impacts and make recommendations to the Borough Council.



Figure 86. Students from The Philadelphia School visit the Schuylkill Center

### CASE STUDY:

**Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia, PA**

Founded in 1965, the Schuylkill Center is one of the first urban environmental education centers in the country. The Center invites visitors into nature, using its surroundings as a laboratory to foster appreciation of the environment.

### Action Items:

- » Explore site ownership and identify developer(s) for the Phoenixville Environmental Center, the first Net Zero Water building in the borough
- » Organize regular environmental workshops and field trips, particularly for students

### Partners

- » FEMA
- » United States Geological Survey
- » Chester County Water Resources Authority
- » Penn State Agricultural and Environmental Center
- » Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds

### Financing

- » Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds
- » Penn State Agricultural and Environmental Center

### Goals addressed:

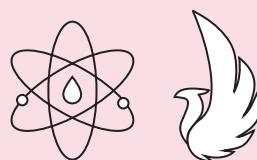
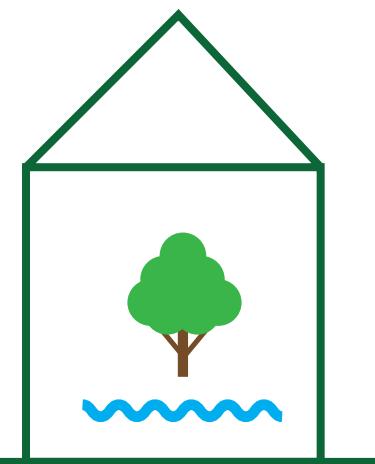




Figure 87. Rendering of a potential Phoenixville Environmental Education Center



## ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSHOPS

The Education Center will bolster community development and education through programming in the center itself as well as environmental literacy workshops at various green spaces throughout the borough. These workshops can give residents information on climate change, stormwater management, and ways to reduce carbon emissions in their everyday lives.

## 4.4 Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center

FIMPC is a research and education hub for flooding- and flood-related issues throughout Chester County.

To combat the flood risks associated with recent development in the floodplain and the effects of climate change, Phoenixville should create a Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center (FIMPC) to monitor and predict flooding and make recommendations to regulate future development. As a vital resource for local governments as they prepare for future floods, FIMPC will also be an education hub for all-age learners about flood-related knowledge and involves college students in research.

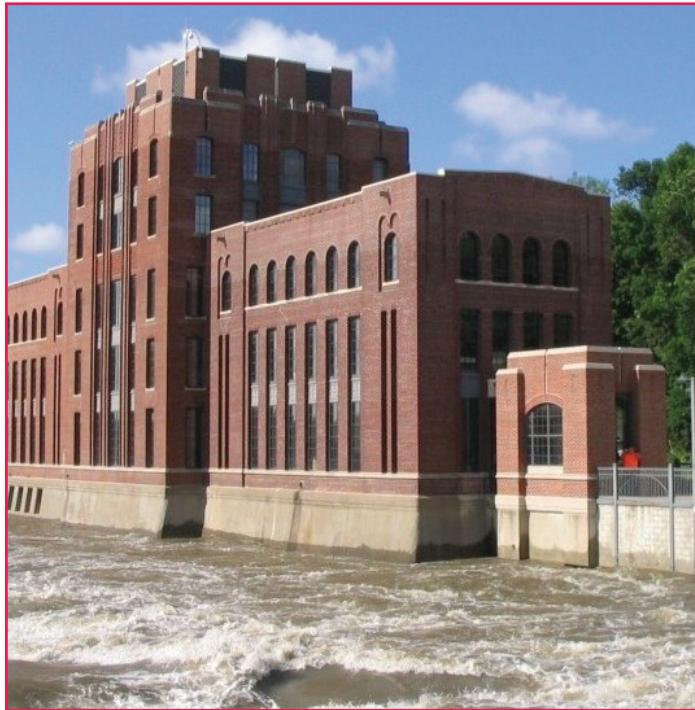
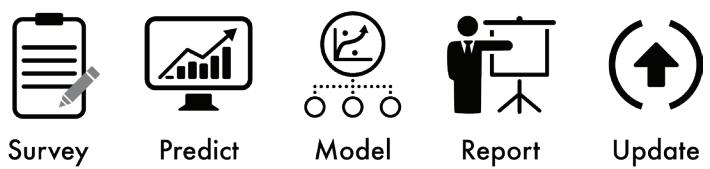


Figure 88. Iowa Flood Center



### CASE STUDY:

#### Iowa Flood Center, Iowa City, IA

Housed in the C. Maxwell Stanley Hydraulics Lab, the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa conducts scientific research to better understand flood risk, and it is the nation's first academic center committed solely to the study of floods.

### Action Items:

- » Establish a new position within Borough Hall for an expert on flood modeling to study potential flooding and the impact of future development
- » Involve college students in the flood-related research and provide them with hands-on training
- » Deliver findings and recommendations for flood mitigation to the Borough Council and County government

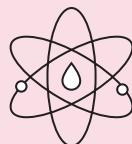
### Partners

- » FEMA
- » Phoenixville Environmental Center

### Financing

- » FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant program
- » Phoenixville Environmental Center

### Goals addressed:



## 4.5 Reactivate Vacant Lots

### Engage with the community and re-energize currently vacant lots with the best suitable uses.

Phoenixville should reactivate its vacant properties by establishing a community task force on vacant lots. This task force would practice community engagement in order to determine the best use for each individual lot. This process of reactivation could improve community and economic development and offer additional opportunities for greening, affordable housing, and creative programming.



Figure 89. Rendering of a community garden on Lot 54

#### Action Items:

- » Establish a Vacant Lot Task Force composed of one member of the Phoenixville Green Team, one member of Borough Council, one landscape architect, one architect, one real estate broker, and one member from Community Arts Phoenixville
- » Identify vacant and underutilized lots and explore ownership of those sites
- » Hold town halls to discuss what community members envision on each lot
- » Set up a booth at popular community events such as the Phoenixville Farmers' Market or Dogwood Festival to solicit feedback
- » Create an interactive Google Map of vacant spaces to gather additional community feedback

#### Financing

- » Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Project Stream
- » NPS Community Assistance in Conservation and Recreation Grants
- » National Association of Realtors Placemaking Micro Grant
- » Home Depot Foundation Community Impact Grants

#### Partners

- » Phoenixville Green Team
- » Community Arts Phoenixville
- » Chester County Housing Authority Corporation

#### Goals addressed:



# Implementation

## Programming

Reinvigorate Historic Programming (1.2)

2020 2022 2024 2026 2028 2030

Health-Centered Community Engagement (3.5)

Reactivate Vacant Lots (4.5)

## Policy

Inclusionary Zoning Downtown (1.3)

Overhaul Parking Policy (1.5)

Resilient Historic Preservation Guidelines (2.5)

Multi-Family Conversions (2.6)

Small Landlord Program (2.7)

Regional HARB (3.1)

Green Building Policies (4.1)

Floodplain Overlay (4.2)

Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center (4.4)

## Infrastructure

Bike Share Program (2.1)

Streets Redesign - Key Intersections (2.2)

Streets Redesign - Neighborhood Slow Streets (2.2)

Complete Sidewalk Network (2.3)

Green Infrastructure (2.4)

Divert Heavy Traffic (3.2)

Better Bus Service (3.3)

Local Shuttle (3.4)

## Development

East High Street Revitalization (1.1)

Rail Expansion Bond (1.4)

Adaptive Reuse Arts Space (1.6)

Affordable Accessory Dwellings (2.8)

Phoenixville Environmental Center (4.3)

	<u>Financing</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<b>Programming</b>		
Reinvigorate Historic Programming (1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Membership fees and ticket sales</li> <li>» Merchandise sales</li> <li>» NPS Preserve America Grant Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Historical Society for Phoenixville Area</li> <li>» Ursinus College UCare</li> <li>» Community Arts Phoenixville</li> </ul>
Community Health Liaison (3.5)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» PCHF</li> <li>» Health Care Access</li> <li>» Alianzas de Phoenixville</li> <li>» Phoenixville Area Community Services</li> <li>» United Way of Chester County</li> </ul>
Reactivate Vacant Lots (4.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Project Stream</li> <li>» NPS Community Assistance in Conversation and Recreation Grants</li> <li>» National Association of Realtors Placemaking Micro Grant</li> <li>» Home Depot Foundation Community Impact Grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Phoenixville Green Team</li> <li>» Community Arts Phoenixville</li> <li>» Chester County Housing Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>		
Inclusionary Zoning Downtown (1.3)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Housing advocates</li> <li>» Real estate developers (e.g., DeMutis Group)</li> </ul>
Overhaul Parking Policy (1.5)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» PABA</li> </ul>
Resilient Historic Preservation Guidelines (2.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Emergency/Intervention Fund Grant</li> <li>» FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program</li> </ul>	
Multi-Family Conversions (2.6)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Homeowner associations</li> <li>» Housing advocates</li> <li>» Local financial institutions</li> </ul>
Small Landlord Program (2.7)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» PCHF</li> <li>» Housing advocates</li> <li>» Local financial institutions</li> </ul>
Regional HARB (3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» National Trust Preservation Fund</li> <li>» Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation</li> <li>» Ursinus College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» West Chester Borough</li> <li>» Community Arts Phoenixville</li> <li>» Ursinus College UCare</li> </ul>
Green Building Policies (4.1)		
Floodplain Overlay (4.2)		
Flood Inundation Modeling and Planning Center (4.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» FEMA</li> <li>» Phoenixville Environmental Center</li> </ul>

## Infrastructure

Bike Share Program (2.1)

## Financing

Streets Redesign - Key Intersections (2.2)

- » Corporate sponsorship
- » Membership fees
- » Downtown parking revenue

Streets Redesign - Neighborhood Slow Streets (2.2)

- » DVRPC Transportation and Community Development Initiative Grant
- » PennDOT Automated Red Light Enforcement Funding Program

Complete Sidewalk Network (2.3)

- » Safe Routes to School
- » Transportation Alternatives Program

Green Infrastructure (2.4)

- » EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- » Public-private partnerships via Stormwater Financing and Revenue Program
- » Impact or special user fees

Divert Heavy Traffic (3.2)

- » PennDOT Transportation Infrastructure Investment Funds
- » US DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grants

Better Bus Service (3.3)

- » PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund
- » Parking meter revenue

Local Shuttle (3.4)

- » Advertising
- » FTA Rural Formula Grants & Healthcare Grants
- » Exchange minimum parking requirements for a funding tax

## Development

East High Street Revitalization (1.1)

- » Phoenixville Green Team
- » PABA
- » Zagster

Rail Expansion Bond (1.4)

- » DVRPC
- » PennDOT

Adaptive Reuse Arts Space (1.6)

- » FIMPC
- » Chester County Water Resources Authority

Affordable Accessory Dwellings (2.8)

- » PennDOT
- » US DOT

Phoenixville Environmental Center (4.3)

- » SEPTA
- » PennDOT
- » PABA

- » US Economic Development Administration Regional Innovation Strategies Grant
- » Building PA Program
- » Communities and Opportunities Grant

- » East High Street business owners
- » Regional Chamber of Commerce
- » PABA
- » Phoenixville Area EDC

- » SEPTA & Norfolk Southern
- » King of Prussia & Schuylkill Township
- » Transportation infrastructure and real estate developers

- » PABA
- » Regional Chamber of Commerce
- » Phoenixville Area EDC

- » Chester County Housing Authority
- » PCHF
- » Home Builders Association
- » Local financial institutions

- » Foundation for PA Watersheds

- » FEMA
- » USGS
- » Chester County Water Resources Authority
- » Penn State Agricultural and Environmental Center





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- » Page 67: Adam Coppola, for the Green Lane Project.
- » Page 68: Ursinus College.
- » Page 70, Figure 78: Wikimedia user li2nmd.
- » Page 71: Plainview Community.
- » Page 72, Figure 81: Borough of Phoenixville.
- » Page 72, Figure 82: Mainline Today.
- » Page 73: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.
- » Page 74: BrightMLS.
- » Page 75: Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.
- » Page 76: U.S. Green Building Council, Energy Star, International Living Future Institute.
- » Page 78: Schuylkill Center.
- » Page 80: Iowa Flood Center.

## Appendix

- » Page 86-87: Flickr user Buzz Stuff.



