

Overcoming Barriers to Active Transportation Planning

PA APA CONFERENCE 2025



Speakers



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Who We Are



- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Local Development District
- Economic Development District

We serve:

- Pittsburgh 10-county region
- Over 7,100 square miles
- 2.57 million people
- 548 municipalities
- 10 Transit agencies
- 3 PennDOT Districts

SPC Region: Multimodal Plans + Policies

- Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC)
Plan Library
 - Combined or stand alone bike-ped plans + AT plans
 - Other plans + studies with a strong AT component
- Multimodal Plans + Policies Inventory (34 ATPs adopted or in-progress)



<https://www.atrc-spc.org/plan-library.html>



https://www.spcregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/20250304_Multimodal-Plans-and-Policies-Inventory_FINAL_05-27-2025.pdf

Who We Are



- Full-Service Civil Engineering Firm
- 60+ Years of Experience
- 11 Offices
- 350+ Employees
- 100% Employee-Owned (ESOP)
- Pennsylvania Firm of Choice





31 responses submitted

What type of organization are you representing?

Scan the QR or
use link to join



<https://forms.office.com/r/5ekxtpWqZq>

Copy link



Treemap

Bar



1 of 2



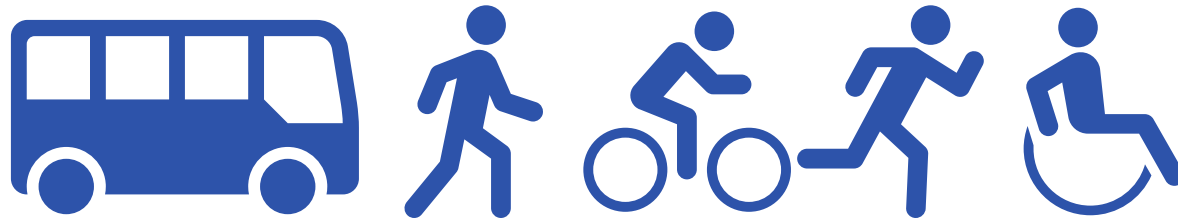
What We'll Cover Today

- What Is Active Transportation Planning and Why is it Important?
- Common Barriers to Active Transportation Planning
- Ways to Overcome These Barriers
- How You Can Get Started



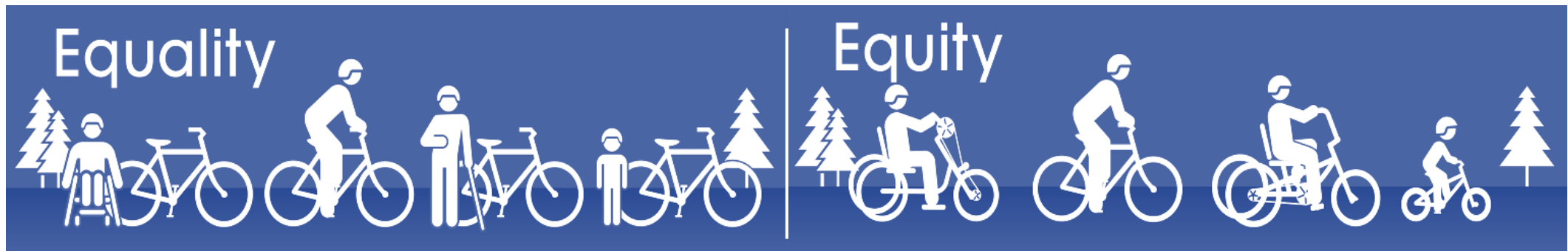
What is Active Transportation?

- The movement of goods and services through non-motorized means.
 - This includes providing connections to transit.
 - Motor assisted transportation devices (e-bikes and scooters) are also considered.



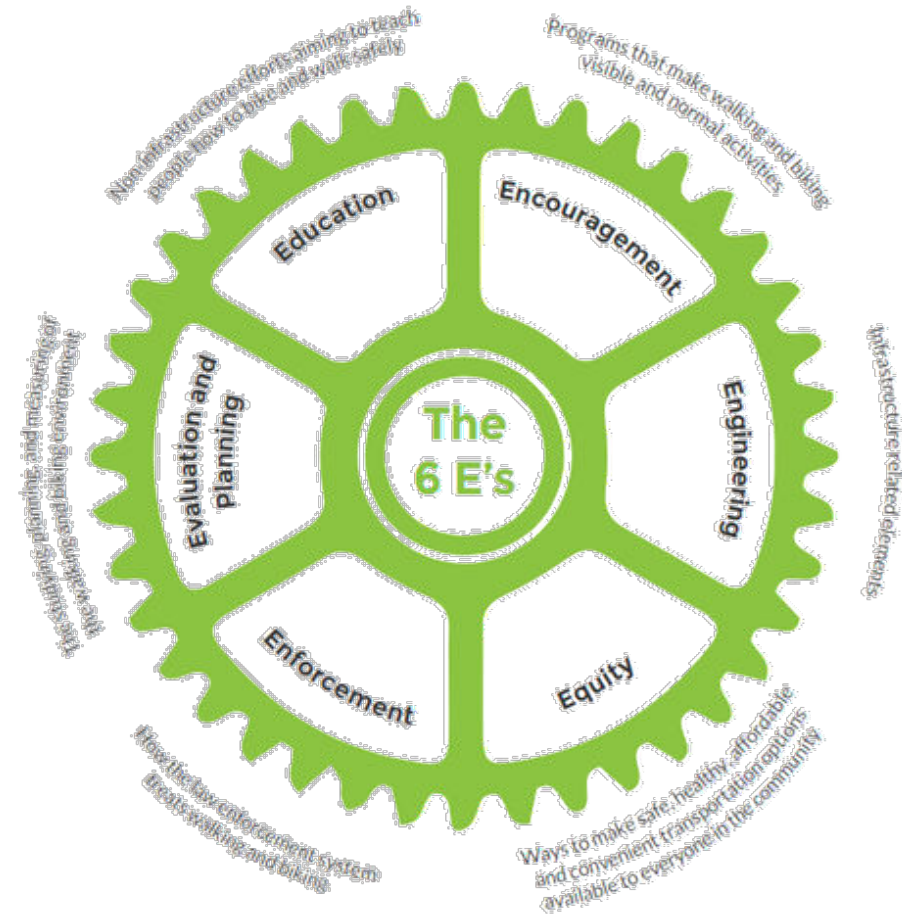
Why Is Active Transportation Important?

- Improves public safety
- Enhances public health
- Increases sustainability and resiliency
- Enables transportation mode choice and creates equitable connectivity



The Goal of Active Transportation Planning

- Establish a framework to create a safe, accessible, connected walking and biking network.
- Implementation incorporates the 6 E's.



Common Barriers

- Lack of Understanding
 - What is it and why is it important?
- Municipal Capacity, Political Will, or Competing Priorities
- Planning Cost

Ways to Overcome These Barriers

- Start with Relatable Goals.
- Frame the Plan as a Funding Tool.
- Integrate active transportation planning into (all) other efforts.
- Explore potential partnerships.
- Consider alternative funding opportunities.
- Break the work into pieces.

Discussion Question

Making the Case:

How have you successfully reframed active transportation to get decision makers on board?

Funding Mindset:

How do you convince elected officials that planning is an investment not an expense?

Breaking The Work Into Pieces

- Define the problem.
- Consider your priorities.
- Does all of the work need to be done at once?
- Examples:

Hummelstown Borough Active Transportation Plan

Adopted in December 2024

Carlisle Pike Corridor Active Transportation Study

Adopted December 2024

Hummelstown Active Transportation Plan

This complete active transportation plan is a good example of the importance of defining your community's problem, goals, and vision.



Hummelstown Active Transportation Plan

B. Sidewalk Condition Assessment

GOAL: The goal of this section is to document relevant condition characteristics of the sidewalk, associated with each property/ street address. This data collection process is intended to document significant sidewalk condition issues that should be prioritized to improve the overall network. It is not expected that reviewers will capture specific details about the sidewalks at every property, but instead highlight the more standout problems. The characteristics assessed will include surface condition, joint condition, heaving, and obstructions. These characteristics and standards for their condition are explained below.

- **Surface condition** refers to the general condition of the sidewalk panels. Poor condition includes cracked panels (without movement or heaving); surface cracking; spalling or scaling, meaning breaking, chipping or pitting associated with the deterioration of the sidewalk slab; or dirt or debris that is clearly from long-term lack of maintenance. Additional pictures of these characteristics are provided below for reference. All of these conditions combined make up the overall surface condition of the sidewalk, and do not need to be called out separately, but additional notes may be included in the comments if deemed necessary.

		
Moderate Cracking	Moderate Spalling/Scaling	Moderate Dirt/Maintenance
		
Major Cracking	Major Spalling/ Scaling	Major Dirt/Maintenance

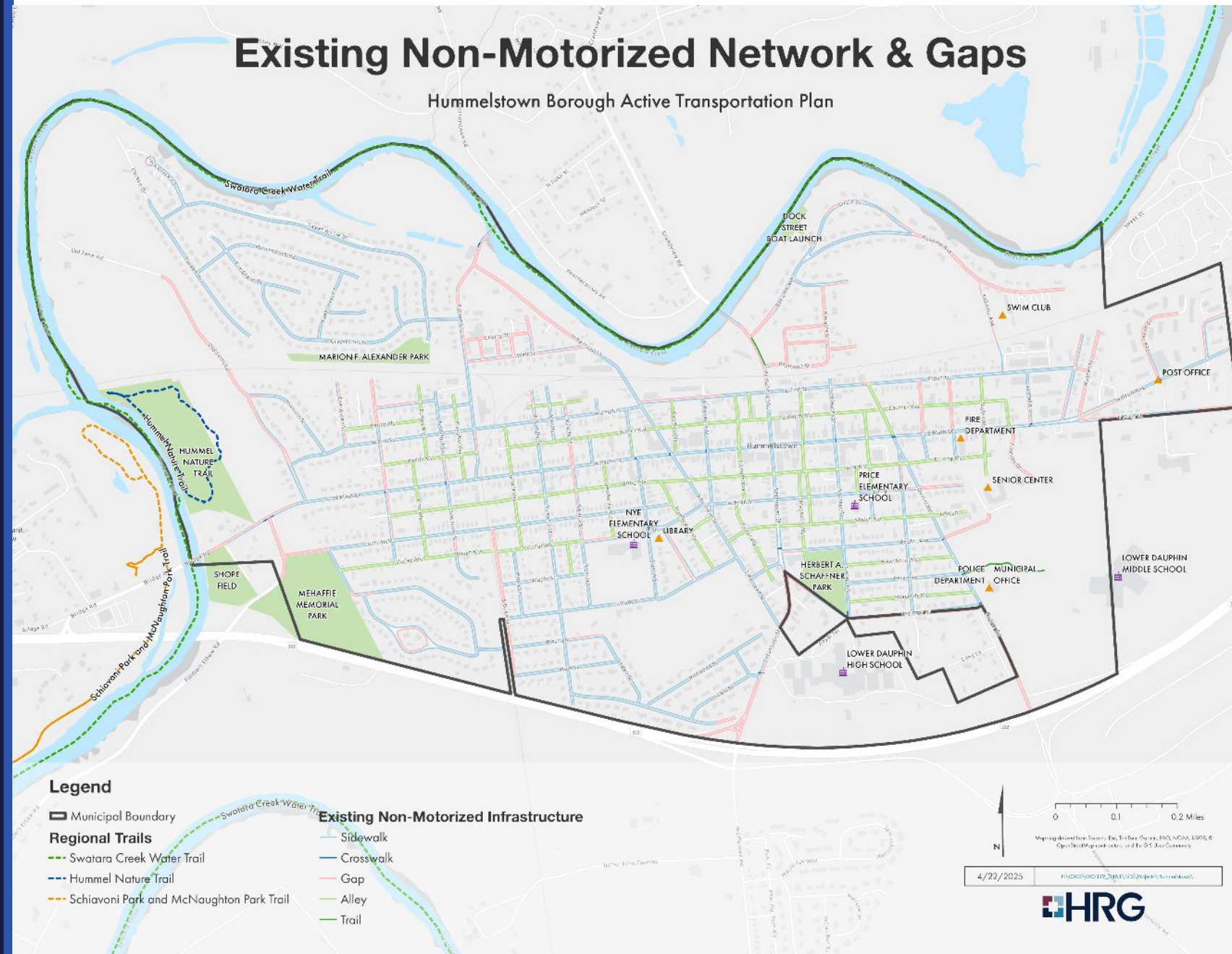
- **Joint condition** refers to the condition of the slab edges at the adjoining slab or roadway. Poor condition would include joint seal failure, meaning the space between sidewalk slabs has spread to create a significant gap; or joint spalling, referring to breaking or chipping at the slab joints. Joint gaps that have already been repaired should not be noted unless they still impact the safety of the sidewalk.

	
Moderate joint seal failure and spalling	Major joint seal failure and spalling

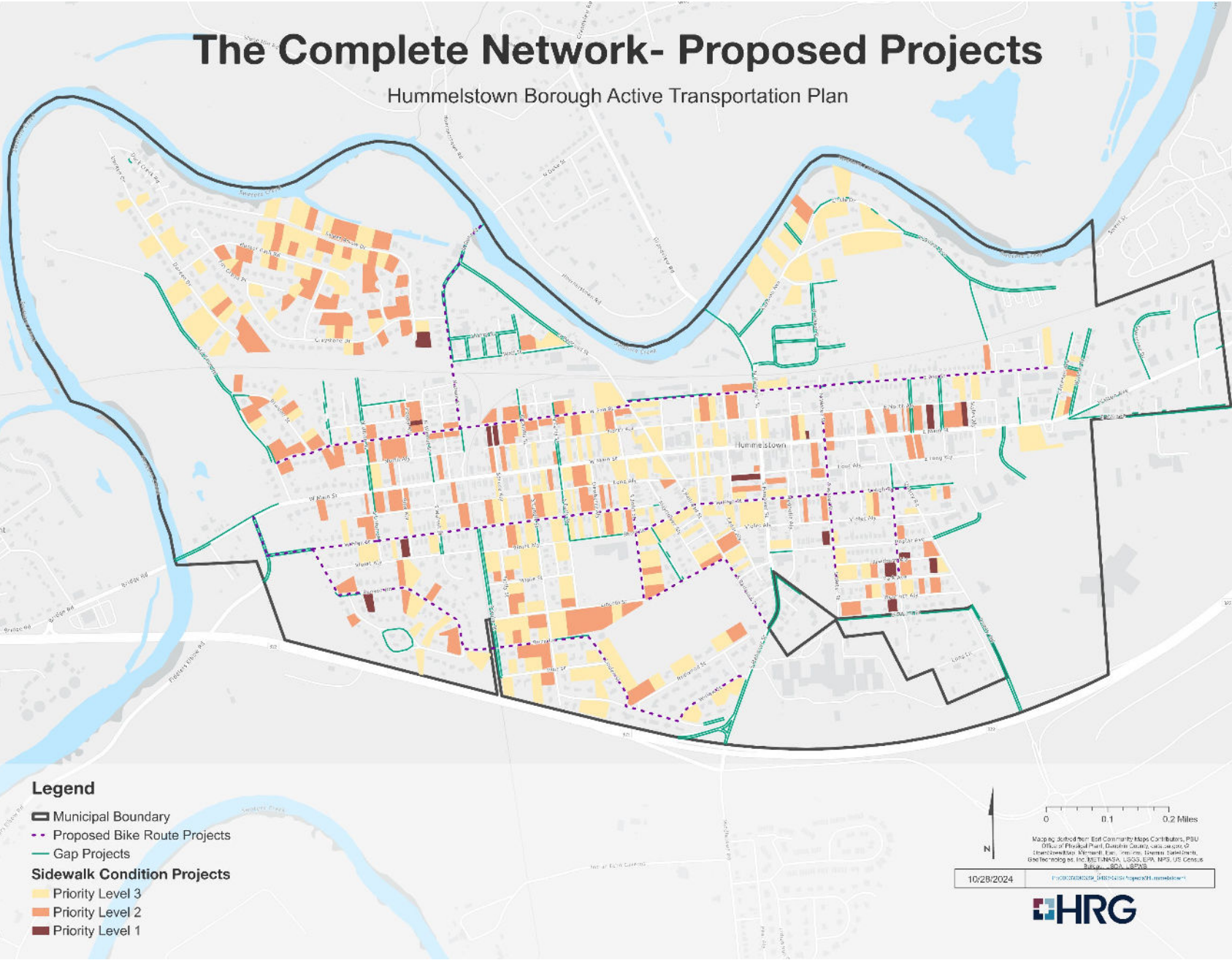
- **Obstructions** refer to any significant blockage impacting the ability to pass on the pavement. This may refer to an obstacle for an able-bodied person or someone using a wheelchair. This should only include permanent obstacles like trees, overgrown bushes, fire hydrants, utilities, signs, etc., and not objects that may be easily removed.

	
Moderate Obstruction	Major Obstruction

Hummelstown Active Transportation Plan

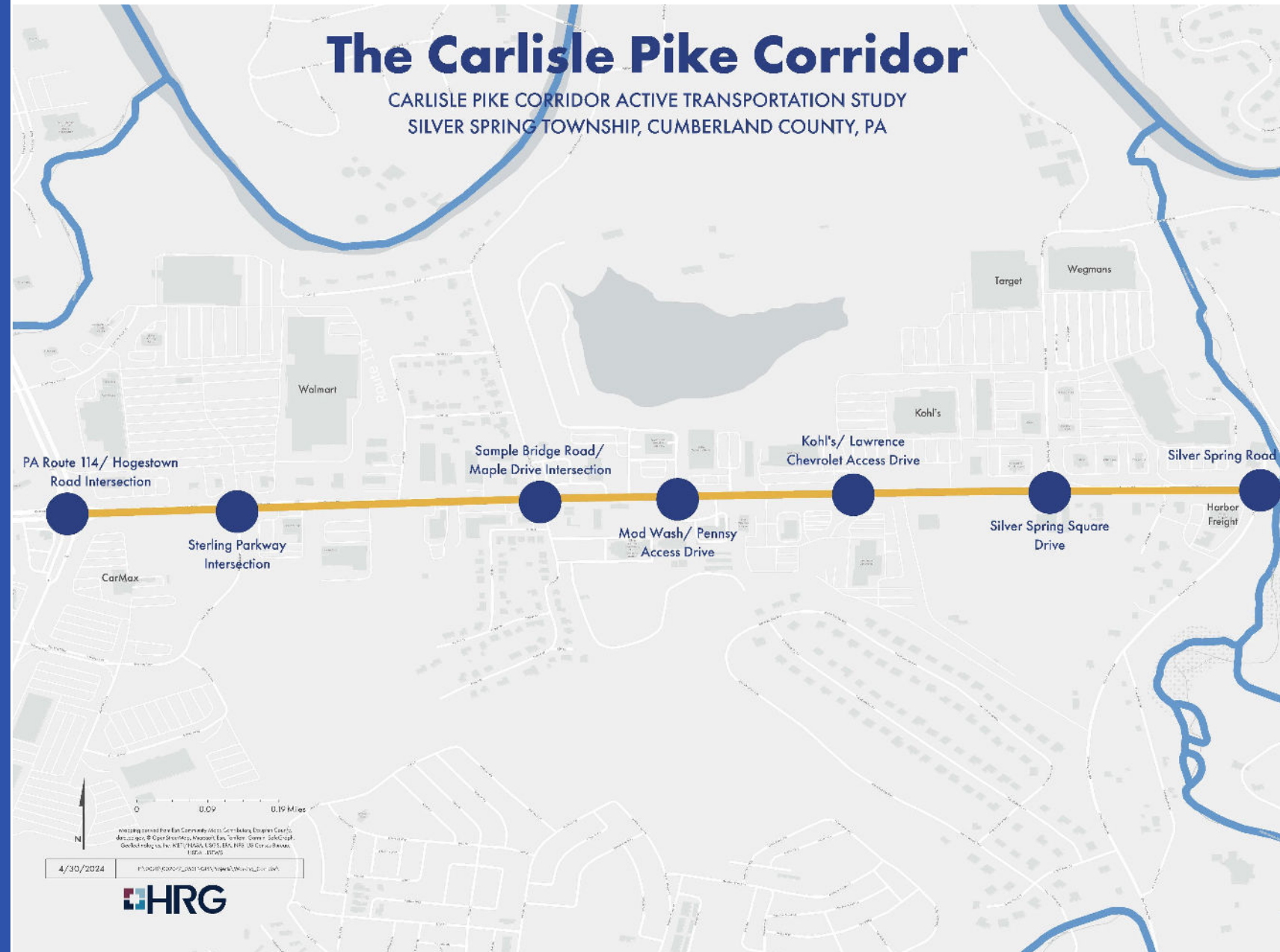


Hummelstown Active Transportation Plan



Carlisle Pike Corridor Active Transportation Study

This corridor study addressed connectivity in a specific area, with specific political and funding goals.





Integrate Active Transportation Planning Into Other Efforts

- Look at other processes and projects and consider how active transportation can be incorporated.
- Examples:
 - Franklin Park Borough & Ohio Township Joint Comprehensive Plan***
Adopted in August 2023
 - Hempfield Township Comprehensive Plan***
Adopted in September 2023
 - Upper Dublin Township Open Space Plan***
Adopted in September 2023

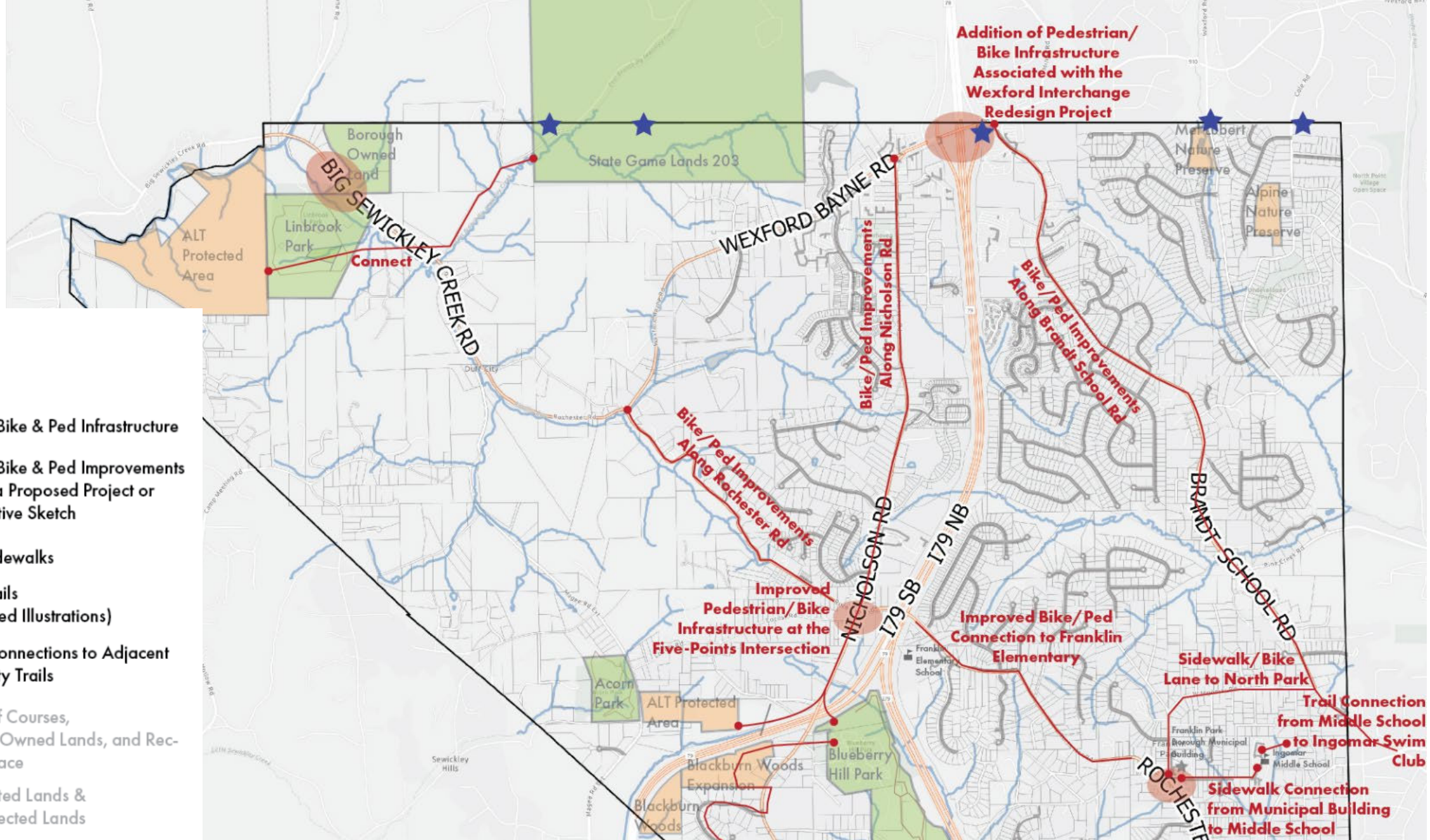
Franklin Park Borough & Ohio Township Joint Comprehensive Plan

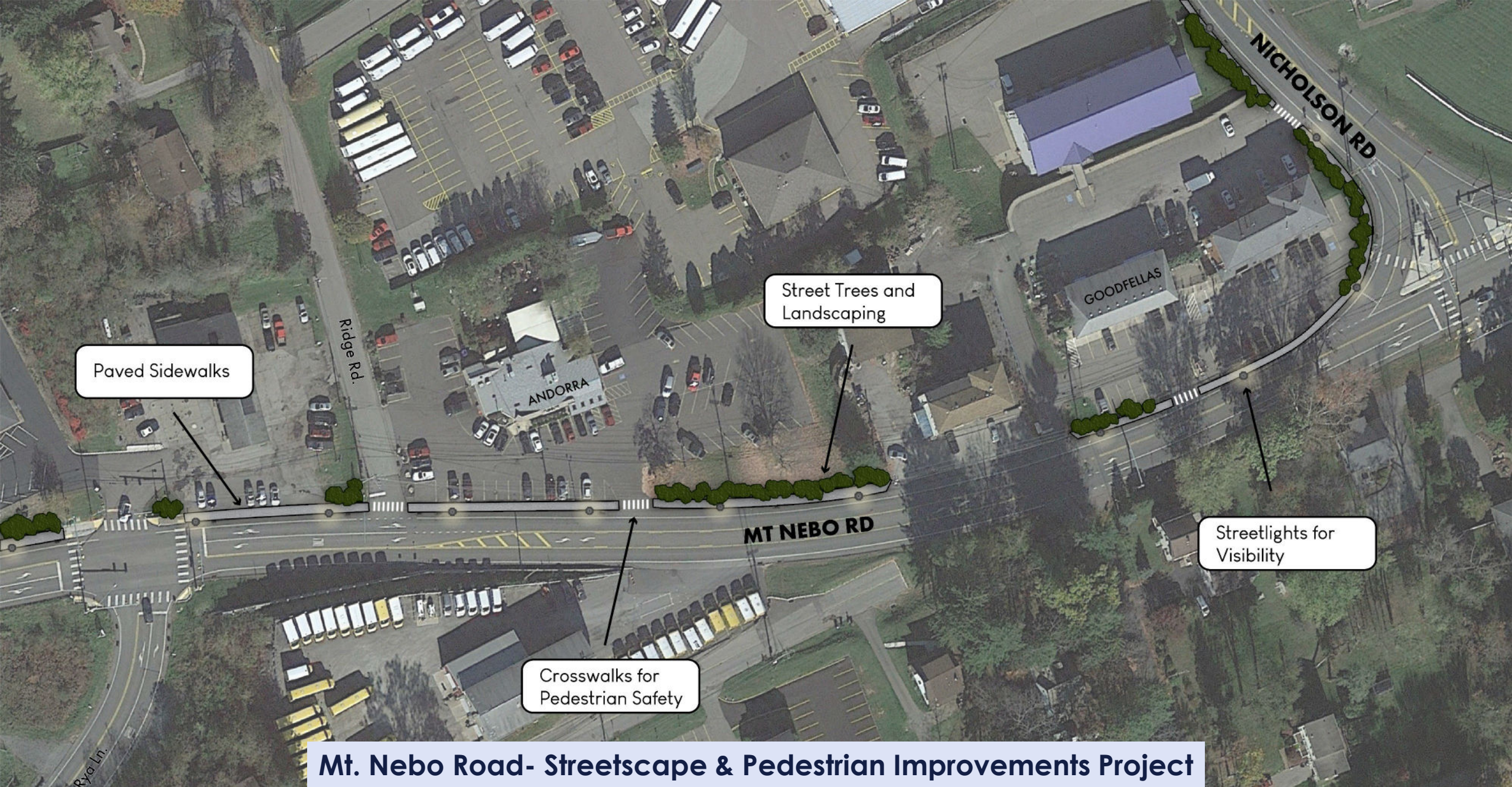
Opportunities for walking and biking connectivity were identified and prioritized by the Plan.

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

Legend

-  Suggested Bike & Ped Infrastructure
-  Suggested Bike & Ped Improvements
Related to a Proposed Project or
Transformative Sketch
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Existing Trails
(Generalized Illustrations)
-  Potential Connections to Adjacent
Municipality Trails
-  Parks, Golf Courses,
Municipal Owned Lands, and Rec-
reation Space
-  ALT Protected Lands &
Other Protected Lands





Street Trees and Landscaping

Paved Sidewalks

Streetlights for Visibility

Crosswalks for Pedestrian Safety

Mt. Nebo Road- Streetscape & Pedestrian Improvements Project



Linbrook Park Area- Pedestrian Improvements and Light Business Development

Hempfield Township Comprehensive Plan

Considerations for future active transportation planning efforts were established by the Plan.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj. No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Enhance and improve safety and connectivity within the Township.	1.1	Engage regional partners in transportation planning and engineering, to ensure consistency in advancements of regional connectivity.	Westmoreland County, PennDOT, SPC, Property Owners	\$	Ongoing	Staff Time, Meeting Time
		1.2	Improve traffic flows and safety along major corridors and at key intersections throughout the Township.	Westmoreland County, PennDOT, SPC, Property Owners	\$-\$\$\$\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		1.3	Improve connectivity throughout the Township.	Westmoreland County, PennDOT, SPC, Property Owners	\$-\$\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
2	Enhance and improve connectivity to regional places and destinations, beyond the boundaries of the Township.	2.1	Contribute to the expansion of the regional trails network.	Area Trail Groups and Organizations, Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation	\$-\$\$\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations
		2.2	Work with area employers, transit agencies, and transportation companies to explore the feasibility of adding transit routes and/or stops as well as a park n' ride facility in the Township.	Westmoreland County Transit Authority, Area businesses and organizations	\$-\$\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time
3	Maintain and enhance area Township-owned roadways to promote increased safety and improve traffic flow.	2.1	Complete annual road paving projects.	Municipal Governance, PennDOT	\$-\$\$	Ongoing	Liquid Fuels Funds, PennDOT
		2.2	Complete miscellaneous annual roadway improvement projects as needed.	Municipal Governance, PennDOT	\$-\$\$	Ongoing	Liquid Fuels Funds, PennDOT



South Greengate Road and Route 136 Improvements



Walking Paths
Connecting
Shopping Center
to Sports Fields

Crosswalks for
Pedestrian Safety

Tree-Lined
Sidewalks

Curb Extensions
and a Raised
Intersection for
Traffic Control

Neighborhood
Welcome Sign

West Point Plaza Façade and Welcome Signage

Upper Dublin Township Open Space Plan

Despite being a PROS plan funded by DCNR, Upper Dublin chose to establish connectivity as a central goal.

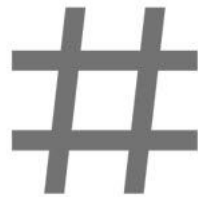
GOALS: 10-MINUTE WALK & CONNECTIVITY

1. Develop a network of sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, greenways and bike lanes to provide safe places for recreation, more community connectivity and improve access to local amenities.
2. Provide safe access to at least one park for passive or active recreation within a 10-minute walk of every Township residence.
3. Provide safe access to a neighborhood or school playground within a 10-minute walk of every Township residence.

Upper Dublin Township Open Space Plan

MISSING CONNECTIONS

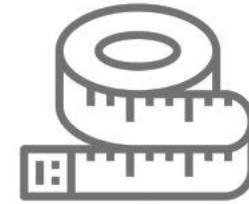
LIST OF MISSING CONNECTIONS IDENTIFY:



Number



Type



Length



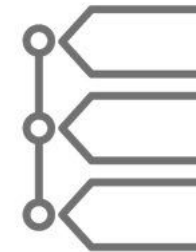
Location



Description



Goal



Status



Additional Notes

Upper Dublin Township Open Space Plan

PRIORITIZATION WORKSHEET

CONNECTIONS CREATED



of Properties
with Access



of Residential
Units in ½ Mile



Connects
to a Park



Connects to
a Local Trail



Connects to a
Regional Trail



Connects to
a School



Connects to
Community
Amenities



Connects to
Adjacent
Neighborhoods



Connects to
Businesses



Connects to
Public Transit



Connects to a
Place of Worship

Integrate Active Transportation Planning Into Other Efforts

- Other things to consider:
 - Zoning and SALDO updates
 - Requiring sidewalks
 - Parking requirements, including bike parking
 - Dense land use patterns to facilitate walking and biking
 - Maintenance ordinances
 - Official Maps
 - Community Engagement Events
 - Walking and biking encouragement during existing events
 - Transit accessible locations
 - And much more...

Explore Potential Partnerships

- Considering partnerships, not only for implementation, but the planning process itself, can help to increase capacity and improve public support.
- Example:
 - Bellevue In Motion***
 - Adopted in July 2025
 - Funded by PAWalkWorks

Bellevue In Motion



Bellevue Borough
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania



Bellevue In Motion

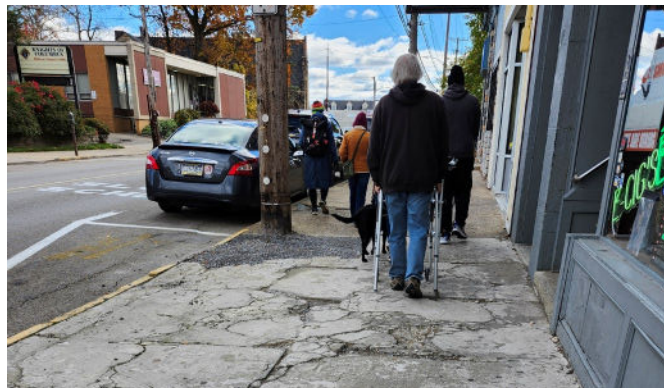


WalkWorks

Grant Application



Community Engagement



Walk and Bike Audits

Vision Statement:

Bellevue is a vibrant, walkable community where people of all ages and abilities can safely and easily get around- whether you bike, walk, take the bus, or drive!

Vision & Goals Development



Active Transportation Committee

Advisory Committee, Capacity Building, & Implementation

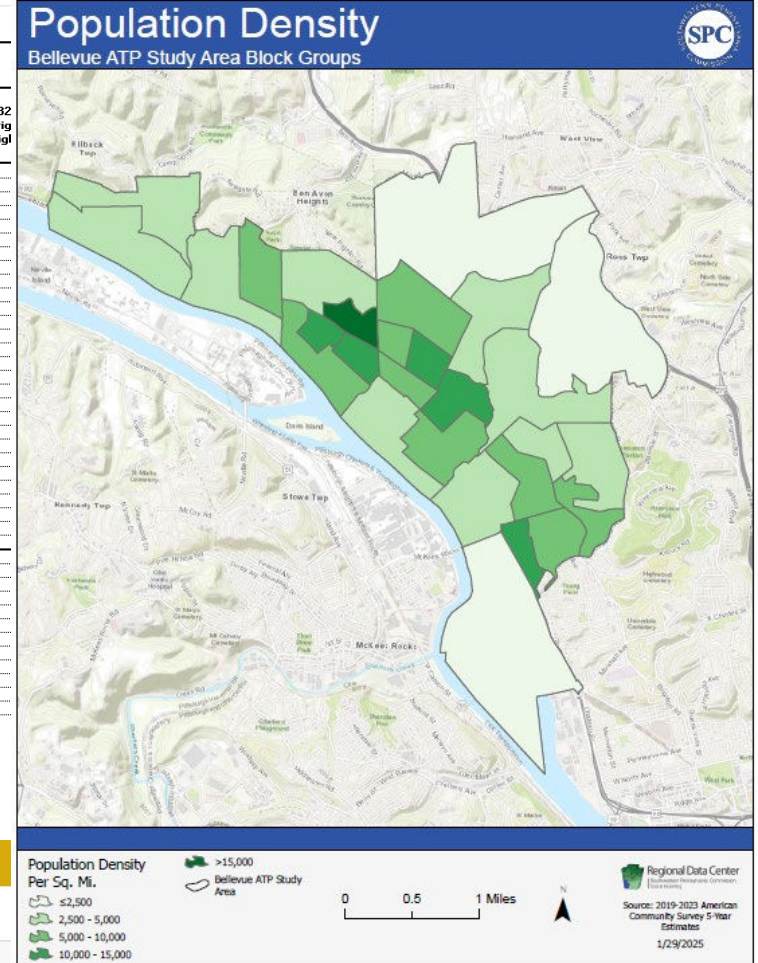
Bellevue In Motion

Bellevue Active Transportation Plan - Origin/Destination Trip Counts

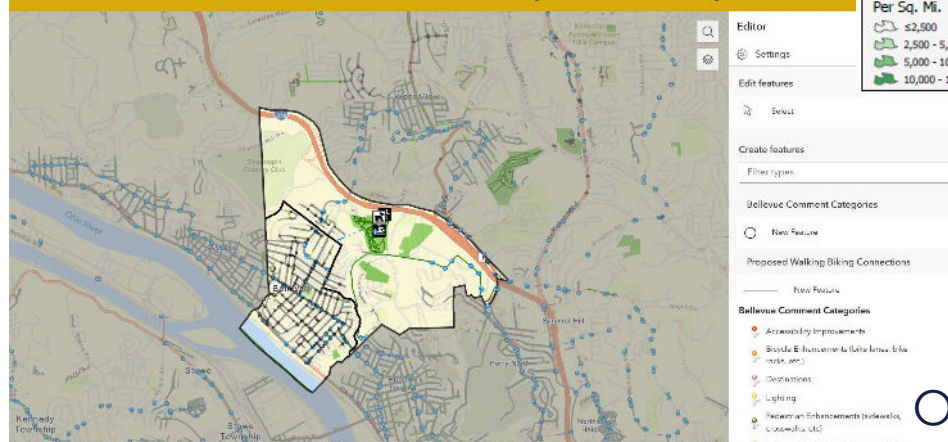
StreetLight Insight Data - 2021 (All Days, All Day Parts, All Trip Types)

From	Geographical Information						
To	Block Group ID	Block Group Name	Municipality/City of Pittsburgh Neighborhoods	4200327010 01 Brighton Heights	4200327010 02 Brighton Heights	4200327030 01 Brighton Heights	4200327030 02 Brighton Heights
Origin Areas	420032701001	Census Tract 2701, Block Group 1	Brighton Heights	144	23	10	
	420032701002	Census Tract 2701, Block Group 2	Brighton Heights	21	123	9	
	420032703001	Census Tract 2703, Block Group 1	Brighton Heights	12	10	79	
	420032703002	Census Tract 2703, Block Group 2	Brighton Heights	12	17	10	
	420032708001	Census Tract 2708, Block Group 1	Brighton Heights	10	5	4	
	420032708002	Census Tract 2708, Block Group 2	Brighton Heights	27	12	8	
	420032708003	Census Tract 2708, Block Group 3	Brighton Heights	12	5	4	
	420034296001	Census Tract 4296, Block Group 1	Ross Township	5	21	2	
	420034296002	Census Tract 4296, Block Group 2	Ross Township	4	9	2	
	420034297001	Census Tract 4297, Block Group 1	Ross Township	6	14	2	
	420034297002	Census Tract 4297, Block Group 2	Ross Township	23	20	13	
	420034311001	Census Tract 4311, Block Group 1	Bellevue Borough	4	8	3	
	420034311002	Census Tract 4311, Block Group 2	Bellevue Borough	13	39	7	
	420034315001	Census Tract 4315, Block Group 1	Bellevue Borough	4	4	5	
	420034315002	Census Tract 4315, Block Group 2	Bellevue Borough	8	18	8	
	420034315003	Census Tract 4315, Block Group 3	Bellevue Borough	8	15	14	
	420034315004	Census Tract 4315, Block Group 4	Bellevue Borough	25	24	20	
	420034323001	Census Tract 4323, Block Group 1	Avalon Borough	1	4	1	
	420034323002	Census Tract 4323, Block Group 2	Avalon Borough	1	1	3	
	420034324001	Census Tract 4324, Block Group 1	Avalon Borough	0	3	4	
	420034324002	Census Tract 4324, Block Group 2	Avalon Borough	15	3	4	
	420034324003	Census Tract 4324, Block Group 3	Avalon Borough	22	26	17	
	420034340001	Census Tract 4340, Block Group 1	Ben Avon Borough	1	2	0	
	420034340002	Census Tract 4340, Block Group 2	Ben Avon Borough	3	1	0	
	420034350001	Census Tract 4350, Block Group 1	Emsworth Borough	5	5	1	
	420034350002	Census Tract 4350, Block Group 2	Emsworth Borough	2	3	2	
	420038609001	Census Tract 3809, Block Group 1	Brighton Heights	2	3	2	
Destination Areas	420032602002	Census Tract 2602, Block Group 2	Summer-Hill	3	4	18	
	420032615002	Census Tract 2615, Block Group 2	Perry-South	3	4	6	
	420032716001	Census Tract 2716, Block Group 1	Brighton Heights	8	8	5	
	420032716002	Census Tract 2716, Block Group 2	Brighton Heights	16	11	26	
	420032716003	Census Tract 2716, Block Group 3	Brighton Heights	16	9	13	
	420032716004	Census Tract 2716, Block Group 4	Brighton Heights	4	5	2	
	420034291002	Census Tract 4291, Block Group 2	Ross Township	7	8	7	
	420034293003	Census Tract 4293, Block Group 3	Ross Township	4	1	0	
	420034301001	Census Tract 4301, Block Group 1	West View Borough	2	2	0	
	420034301002	Census Tract 4301, Block Group 2	West View Borough	2	3	1	
	420034302001	Census Tract 4302, Block Group 1	West View Borough	1	2	1	
	420034302002	Census Tract 4302, Block Group 2	West View Borough	13	8	10	
	420034302003	Census Tract 4302, Block Group 3	West View Borough	5	1	1	

Streetlight Data



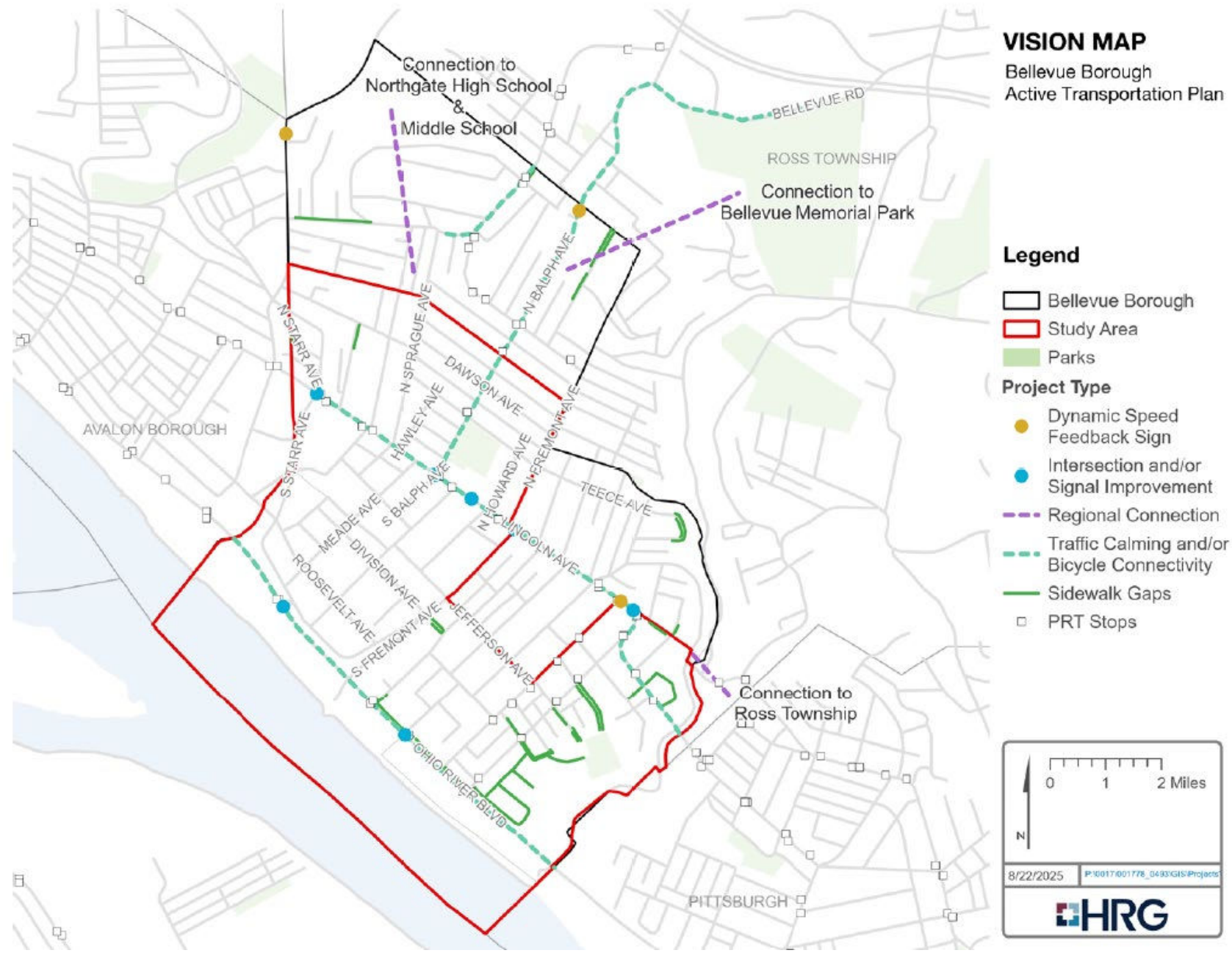
Bellevue's Active Transportation Map



Mapping Support

Online Engagement Support

Bellevue In Motion



Discussion Question

Community Partnerships:

How have you worked with community partners to develop a plan?

What strategies did you engage to facilitate collaboration?

Consider Alternative Funding Opportunities

- Look for funding opportunities outside of conventional grant sources.
- Consider in-kind funding opportunities and how partnerships can contribute to these resources.

Common Funding Sources

Agency	Program Name	Grant (% Funded) or Loan	Brief Description	Open Funding Round (Typical)
Allegheny County Economic Development	Active Allegheny Grant Program	Grant (80-100%)	To develop community plans and design transportation projects that will provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to critical local destinations and transportation systems and increase residents' opportunities for physical activity.	Due in November
Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County	Gaming Economic Development Tourism Fund (GEDTF)	Grant	Distributed from gaming funds to support economic development projects in Allegheny County, including transportation.	Varies
PA WalkWorks	WalkWorks Funding Program	Grant	Development of active transportation plans and related policies – pedestrian, bicycle, and transit transportation systems that increase connectivity (planning projects only).	Varies
PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED)	Municipal Assistance Program (MAP)	Grant (50%)	Community planning efforts, including developing or updating land use ordinances, Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) planning studies, planning studies that support community and economic development, and/or multi-modal planning efforts (planning projects only).	Spring Round- Due in March Fall Round- Due in September
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	Area Development Program	Grant	Projects that create and retain jobs in the Appalachian Region: this program helps communities recover from declines in coal and manufacturing sectors and transition to new industries. Critical infrastructure investments include transportation networks.	Varies

In-Kind Opportunities

- Contributions to the project budget that do not involve cash but provide valuable resources.
- Can take various forms, including:
 - **Tangible Goods:** Items such as office supplies, food, clothing, or equipment donated to support operational needs.
 - **Professional Services:** Uncompensated work provided by professionals, such as legal advice, marketing support, or accounting services.
 - **Volunteer Time:** Contributions of time and effort by individuals who support the organization's mission without financial compensation.

In-Kind Opportunities

- Benefits:
 - Cost Savings
 - Access to Expertise
 - Expansion of Staff Capacity
 - Community Engagement
- Valuation:
 - Establishing the value of the goods or services provided is critical when accounting for these contributions.
 - Both goods and services may be assessed based on fair market value.

Discussion Question

Finding Your Funding:

Is your organization able to use or provide in-kind funding to help fulfill grant requirements?

How to Get Started

- What problem are you facing?
- How can it be broken down into smaller pieces?
- What can you accomplish through existing or planned work?
- How can you leverage partnerships to accomplish your goals?
- What are some unique ways to pursue funding?

Thank you! Questions?

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