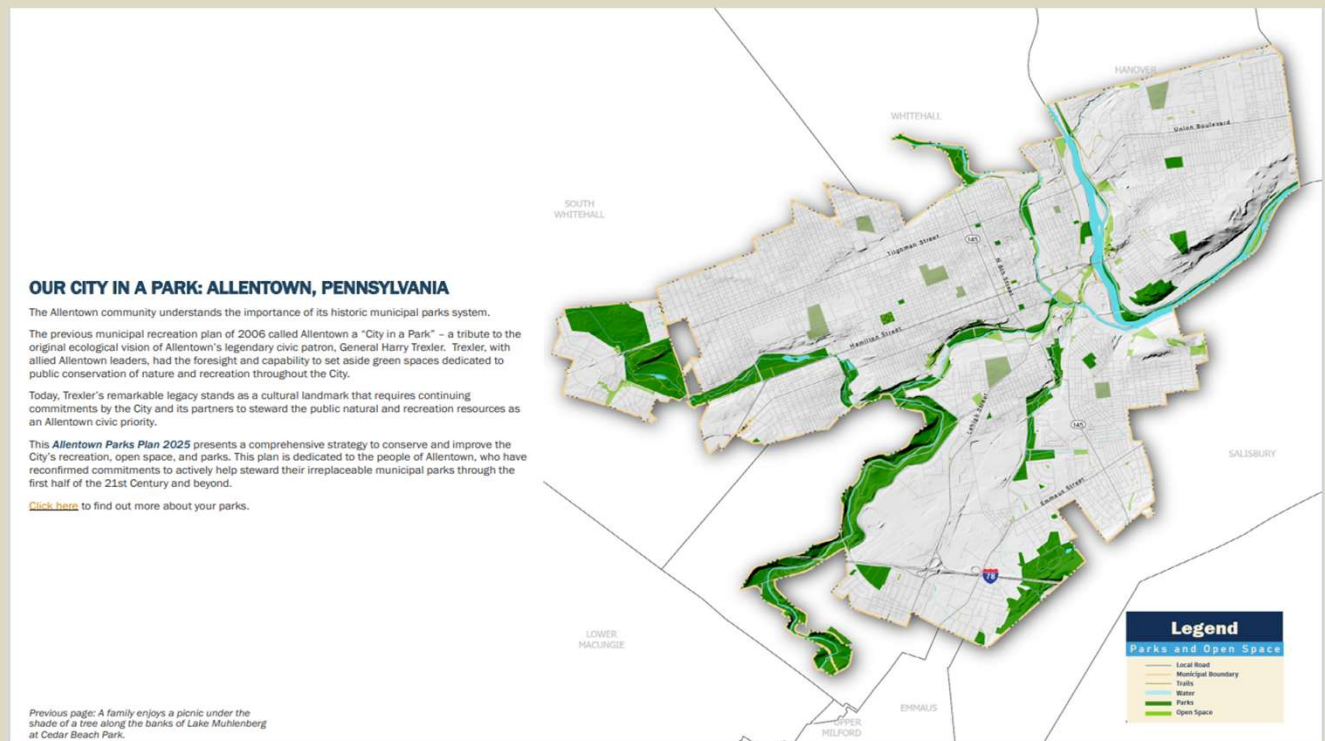


Allentown Parks Plan 2025: Our City in a Park

- Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space, and Parks Plan
- Funded by DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)



Next Steps

Key Dates

- 10/24 - Public and Stakeholder Review Period starts (30 days)
- 11/23 - Public and Stakeholder Review Period ends
- 1/21 - Council Meeting - Presentation of Plan
- 2/4 - Council Meeting – Vote on adoption of Plan (TENTATIVE)



Community Engagement

- 5 public meetings, 15 key interviews, and 2,016 survey responses.
- Top concerns: safety, restrooms, shade, and amenities.
- High participation underscores citywide support for maintaining Allentown's parks system.



Public Meeting #3 at Ripple Church.

Vision & Legacy

- “Our City in a Park” celebrates General Harry Trexler’s vision of a city immersed in nature.
- Parks are essential green infrastructure for health, wellness, and heritage.
- Continued commitment by City, residents, and partners to maintain Allentown’s historic parks system.



HARRY C. TREXLER TRUST

SPECIAL THANKS

The Trexler Trust

General Harry Trexler, considered to be the Father of the Allentown Parks System, bequeathed in his will that the City parks system would receive, in perpetuity, significant contributions from his trust every year for “the improvements, extension and maintenance of all its parks.”

To date, the Trust has awarded nearly \$185 million to the City’s park system as well as many Lehigh County nonprofit organizations that provide services and awareness of education, social services and the arts.

The City recognizes and thanks its long-time partner, the Trexler Trust, for its decades of equity and annual financial commitments to the Allentown Parks system.



The Allentown Parknership

SPECIAL WELCOME

The Allentown Parknership

The Allentown Parknership, formed in 2024 to advance the goals of the Trexler Trust in direct collaboration with the City of Allentown to enhance the City’s parks system. The Trexler Trust provided the guidance and startup funding for the Parknership.

The board of the Parknership includes City leadership and representation from Allentown and Trexler Trust. Projects identified within this Allentown Parks Plan report are eligible to be advanced by the Parknership, where its capability to serve as lead project partner can strategically advance park improvement priorities in coordination with the City.

The Parknership worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to complete its first project by providing a new full court basketball court at Stevens Park.



Partners gather to celebrate park improvements to Stevens Park.

Acknowledgments

This Allentown Parks plan was partially funded by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, and was prepared according to DCNR guidelines.

Commitments

- Citizen Commitments: care for, keep clean, and conserve existing parks.
- Staff Commitments:
 - collaborate across departments and systems to conserve resources and ensure equity.
 - Add and improve accessible public areas; support programs & events



Goals Overview

Nine Major Goals across three stewardship areas:

- Infrastructure (Goals 1–5): Safety, Access, Facilities, Ecology, Open Space.
- Programs (Goal 6): Recreation, education, and cultural experiences.
- Management (Goals 7–9): Operations, Governance, and Finance.

OUR GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES: COMMUNITY IDEAS

Nine (9) major goals were expressed by the Allentown community, and are described under three (3) primary categories of park system stewardship:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is the physical and organizational structures and facilities required for the operation of civic spaces and can be categorized as either grey, green or blue. Grey infrastructure typically includes traditional civic structures, such as roads, sidewalks, stormwater pipes/basins, utilities, dams, water/sewer systems, bridges, transportation systems, and most building structures.

Green infrastructure are natural or engineered sustainable systems that use vegetation and other natural resources. They are used to manage water, temperature, air and water quality and provide social and economic benefits to open space in the City.

Blue infrastructure is a term used to describe a network of interconnected water management systems – including both natural aquatic and man-made and hydraulic systems. Refer to [Blue Infrastructure](#) for additional information.



Bridge and spray ground runoff structure at Old Fairgrounds Park

PROGRAMS

Programs relate to services, activities or events that provide organized recreational or relaxation enjoyment. They include games, sports, camps, classes, social events and other activities and are provided to people of all ages and abilities.

Programs can take place at parks, playgrounds, schools, civic institutions or at private facilities.



Arts Park Festival at Arts Park

MANAGEMENT

Management refers to the daily administration and oversight of the overall park system. It encompasses the work done by Parks and Recreation staff to maintain parks and park apparatus, equipment, fields, courts, support structures and other amenities, such as benches, lighting and water fountains.

Management also includes the planning of park improvements, the development and construction of those improvements, and the management of natural resources. On an administration level, it includes the hiring and training of full-time and seasonal staff and the annual development of the department's budget.



Youth tree planting activity at Delta Creek Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

Key Infrastructure Goals

- Safety – Modern, visible, and accessible parks.
- Public Access – Better ADA, transit, walking, and biking connections.
- Recreation Facilities –aquatics, rec center, inclusive play, restrooms, trails and fields.
- Ecology – Floodplain management, tree canopy, native vegetation.
- Open Space – Address recreation deserts and expand equitable access.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE – Repair / Replace

Repair / replace aging facilities – specifically: restrooms, area lighting, drainage, equipment, and benches.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE – Investments

Make strategic capital improvements – specifically: aquatic facilities, sports fields, additional new restroom facilities, and park "makeovers."

Playground equipment at Keck Park.



Programs & Community Use

- Expand recreational, cultural, and educational offerings.
- Emerging public priorities: nature education, canoeing/kayaking, adult and youth sports, senior programming, fitness.
- Continue partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and neighborhood groups.

3. *PROGRAMS – Provider collaborations*

Deepen partnerships and foster new collaborations with program providers – to expand the effects of COA staff-led programs and services.

Easter Egg Hunt at Bucky Boyle Park



Management & Leadership

- Operations – Increase staff; maintain 16 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Governance – Strengthen ordinances, streamline partnerships, and enhance equity.
- Finance – Continue to leverage City funds with grants

4. **MANAGEMENT** – *Planning with partners*

Conduct a regularly-scheduled planning program with partners – to ensure communication, coordination, and achieving collaborative successes.

5. **MANAGEMENT** – *Equity*

Create an “equity criteria” to advise strategic City investments – about locations where priority capital improvements are needed to ensure that neighborhoods that under-served by existing recreation resources are considered – along with other essential selection criteria, including: safety, partnerships, and financing that all help guide project selections.

*Residents providing ideas at the Allentown
Parks Plan Public Meeting # 3*



City of Allentown NRPA Benchmarking - Budget and Staffing

	Allentown, PA	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 100,00- 250,000 Residents
Median Number of Residents per Park Facility	3,894	3,344
Median Number of Park Acres per 1000 Residents	16.0ac / 1000 residents	7.0 acres / 1,000 residents
Annual Operating Expenses	\$7,319,606	\$13,552,112
Percent of Revenue Generation vs. Operation Budget	4.8%	22.0%
Operating Expenses per Acre	\$3,660	\$8,002
Operating Expenses per capita	\$58.75	\$87.10
Operating expenditures per FTE	\$126,856	\$119,116

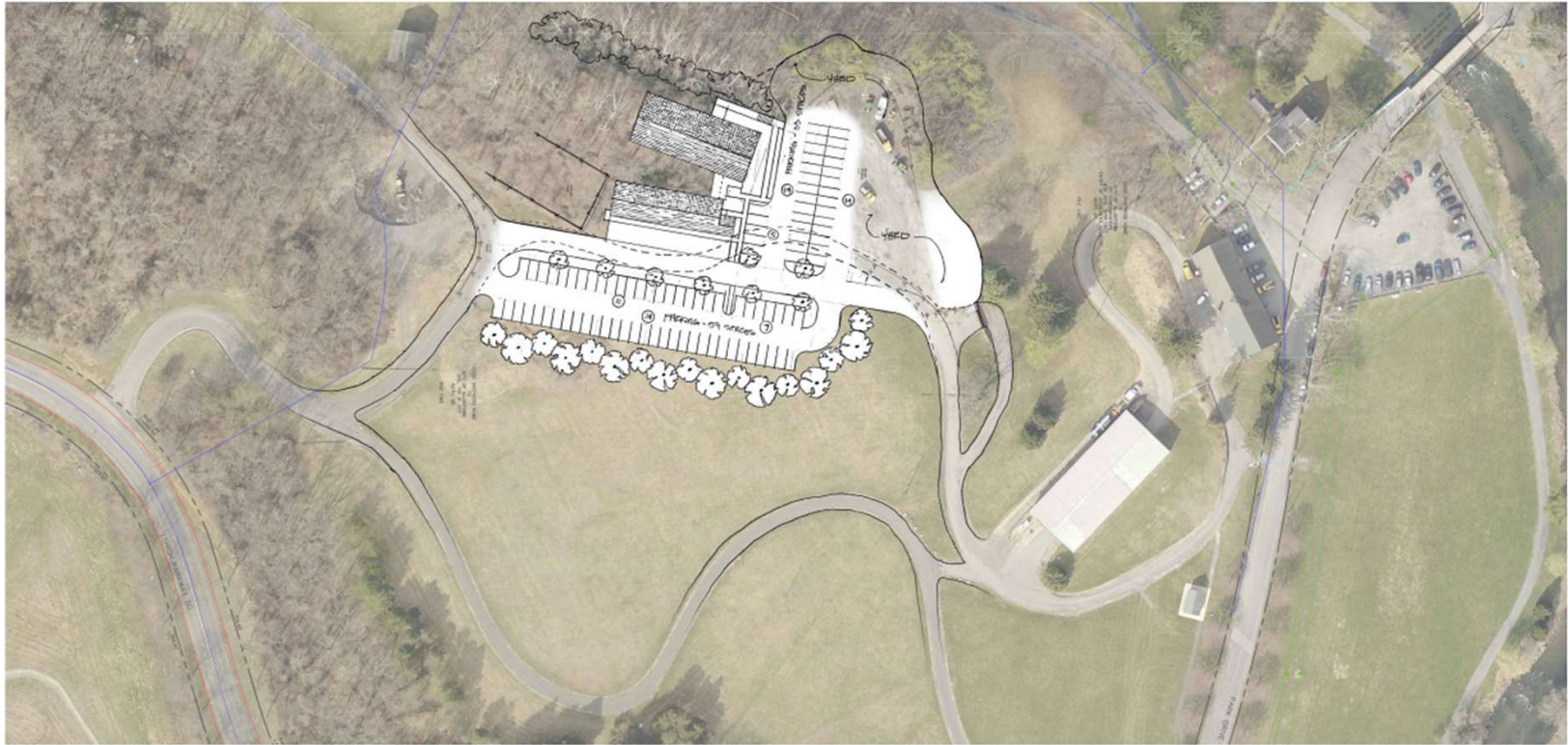
Staffing

Park & Recreation Agency Full Time Employee (FTE) Equivalent Staff Levels / 10,000 Residents	4.6 FTE equivalents / 10,000 residents	7.9 FTE equivalents / 10,000 residents
Park & Recreation Agency Full Time Employee (FTE) Equivalent Staff Levels / 250 acres of parkland	7.2 FTE equivalents / 250 acres of parkland	19.3 FTE equivalent / 250 acres of parkland

Priorities

- Repair and Replace aging facilities.
- Create safe work space for staff (facility construction)
- Strategic Capital Investments – pools, lighting, sports fields, restrooms.
- Collaborate with partners to expand impact.
- Equity Criteria – guide investments in underserved neighborhoods.
- Plan regularly with partners for accountability and adaptability.

Facility



1 SITE PLAN
O-2.1 1" = 100'



PHILLIPS &
DONOVAN
ARCHITECTS, LLC

CITY OF ALLENTOWN PARKS OPERATION FACILITY

SITE PLAN

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGN STUDY

O-2.1

4-28-25

24-68

PhillipsDonovanArchitects.com

Bucks County Office: P.O. Box 160, 3160 Bedminster Road, Bedminster PA 18910, 215-795-2400

Lehigh Valley Office: 210 West Broad Street, Bethlehem PA 18018, 610-317-0221



PHILLIPS &
DONOVAN
ARCHITECTS, LLC

PhillipsDonovanArchitects.com

ALLENTOWN PARKS OPERATION FACILITY

FRONT PERSPECTIVE 1

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

Bucks County Office: P.O. Box 160, 3160 Bedminster Road, Bedminster PA 18910, 215-795-2400

Lehigh Valley Office: 210 West Broad Street, Bethlehem PA 18018, 610-317-0221

P-1

6-27-25

24-68

Visuals

PARK IMPROVEMENT TOOLBOX

The Park Improvement Toolbox delivers options for Parks & Recreation and its partners to consider each time a park enters the active planning and design phases.

This Toolbox identifies "types" of improvement opportunities that might be used at any Allentown park. Every Allentown park is assessed in this section.

SAFETY/ACCESS	RECREATION/FACILITIES	ENVIRONMENTAL/ECOLOGY
 <i>Access to Parks</i>  <i>Speeds</i>  <i>ADA Accessible and Universal Elements</i>  <i>Signage</i>  <i>LANTA Service</i>  <i>Lighting</i>	 <i>Master Planning for Parks</i>  <i>New Equipment</i>  <i>Repair Existing Park Elements</i>  <i>Water Access at Streams and Rivers</i>  <i>Upgrade</i>  <i>Additional Programming</i>	 <i>Riparian Buffer</i>  <i>Habitat</i>  <i>Stormwater Management</i>

PARK IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES - CENTER CITY

C-3

JACKSON STREET PARK

N

(0.7 acre) This neighborhood park was added to the Allentown system in 2015.

Contains:

- 1 pavillion
- 1 playground
- 0.25 miles of walkway

Pictures:

1. Parking lot and pavillion at top of the hill
2. Age 2-5 playground area
3. Age 5-12 playground area with wood ties retaining wall and seating.
4. Bench along pathway approaching the playgrounds
5. View across the long lawn space along the very tight Spring Garden St.



SAFETY/ACCESS



Speed - Traffic calming at active intersection with no stop from Union St, ADA features - has ADA parking but no universal play elements and trails/ play surface are not ADA compliant

RECREATION FACILITIES



New equipment - upgrade old equipment and add new play elements, Repair - benches and walkways, Additional programming - plenty of open space that may be able to have more elements and some parking

ECOLOGY



Habitat - reduce lawn on steep hillside and replace with native plantings, Stormwater management - add more trees

Example of Site Plan: Roosevelt

