

The Lehigh Valley is experiencing a development boom that threatens to destroy much of what residents find appealing. The surrounding market areas of Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey exert strong economic, demographic, social and environmental impacts on the areas resources. The creation of a sound greenways network would help preserve many of the remaining features Lehigh Valley residents treasure.

The development of the Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan (Map 14, located in the pocket at the end of this document) involved many partners and groups that are involved in greenway and conservation efforts for some of the region's major waterways and natural areas. The LVPC worked closely with these entities to encourage the creation of greenway and trail linkages, the long-term preservation and protection of priority natural resources, and the enhancement and creation of natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic areas of interest in the Lehigh Valley.



Shochary Ridge — Lynn Township

Planning Process

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) staff worked with the Study Advisory Committee, municipalities, counties and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to define a vision for the Lehigh Valley Greenway network. The purpose of this vision is to identify greenway components, provide connections and prioritize areas for implementation. Through public meetings, surveys, mapping exercises and hours of staff consultation, the *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan* emerged. The following paragraphs detail the planning process from visioning through prioritization.

Envision the Greenways Network

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Study Advisory Committee (Committee) was created to provide insight and input into the planning process, comment on information and mapping developed by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) staff, act as a resource for localized activities pertaining to open space and greenway planning, and suggest alternatives and make recommendations to the *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan*. Four meetings were held in April, June, August, and October 2005; approximately 15 Committee members attended each meeting. The following is an overview of each of these meetings:

Meeting 1—April 20, 2005

Prior to the initial meeting, a packet of information was sent to all Committee members that included a contact list of Committee members and a draft document entitled “Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan, Background Information.” For the meeting, several maps were posted for reference during the presentation of agenda items including: Important Natural Areas, Natural Resources Plan components, Floodplains and Environmental Zoning Overlays, Parks and Other Outdoor Recreation, Trails, and the *Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan*. Items presented during the meeting included an overview of background information, a status report on the responses to the Municipal Greenways Questionnaire, an overview of the *Comprehensive Plan The Lehigh Valley ... 2030* (Comprehensive Plan), and preliminary greenways report mapping. The LVPC staff requested input from the Committee on what should be included in a greenway and how would they prioritize the greenways. Comments and suggestions by the Committee included a wide range of topics from rail-trail issues and connectivity to the education of local officials and improvements to zoning. The Committee suggested the following topics for the next meeting agenda:

- Examples of zoning ordinances in the Lehigh Valley that effectively protect environmentally sensitive areas
- An identification and overview of threatened areas that conflict with current zoning

Meeting 2—June 22, 2005

Items presented during the second meeting included an update to the Municipal Greenways Questionnaire, an overview of the Natural Resources Plan section from the Comprehensive Plan, a review of municipal ordinances used by townships to protect riparian areas, steep slopes, wetlands, etc., the *Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan*, and the Bushkill Township Official Map. The Committee requested additional information about the:

- Draft *Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan for Upper and Lower Saucon Townships*
- Proposed Macungie-Alburtis trail
- Proposed county greenways map from the *Allentown Parks and Recreation Master Plan*
- Proposed Forks Township recreation trail that uses a utility right-of-way
- Lower Mount Bethel Township Scenic Byway
- New steep slope zoning regulations from Williams Township
- Delaware River Greenway Partnership’s Delaware River Water Trail
- Article IV (Official Map) of the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code*

Meeting 3—August 24, 2005

The LVPC staff presented a draft of the *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan* map. After reviewing the map in detail, the Committee suggested the following edits and additions:

Edits

- Add existing parks and other outdoor recreation to the map
- Extend the northern reaches of the Plainfield Township Recreation Trail
- Change the Plainfield Township Recreation Trail corridor type from Cultural/Recreational to Multi-Use

Additions

- Allegheny Creek
- Cooks Creek headwaters
- East Branch Saucon Creek
- Fry's Run
- Leibert Creek
- Lyon Creek
- Mud Run
- School Creek
- West Branch Monocacy Creek

For the next meeting, the Committee wanted to review the edits and additions to draft map, discuss further the Official Map provisions of the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Code*, receive advice on habitat protection mechanisms, and discuss implementation measures.

Meeting 4—October 26, 2005

Prior to the final meeting, the following information was sent to the Committee members with the meeting notice: updated draft of the *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan* map, draft prioritization ratings for the potential greenway corridors, the "Potential Greenway Ratings Methodology", hubs and spokes concept, and a document entitled *Lehigh River Crossing at Treichlers: A Possibility for Greenway Development*. Agenda items presented during the meeting included the draft prioritization ratings—methods and results, a discussion of hubs and their potential locations, and the Lehigh River Crossing at Treichlers proposal. The Committee had many additions to the interest group portion of the ratings process that gave the LVPC staff a more complete picture of greenway support in the two counties. Other suggestions regarding the greenways and hubs included combining the east and west Sobers Run, adding the Lehigh Gap as a hub, and adding several nodes to the existing list and map.

Inventory Existing Resources

The LVPC has acquired or developed many digital data sets over the years that were available to conduct an inventory of existing resources, both natural (e.g., woodlands, steep slopes, natural areas) and manmade (e.g., schools, historic sites, recreation facilities, population centers). A Geographic Information System (GIS) was a critical tool in preparing maps and analyzing data for this Plan. Many maps of the existing resources were produced to help the LVPC

staff and the Committee decide the location of the greenways network of hubs, nodes and corridors. The Natural Resources Plan from the *Comprehensive Plan The Lehigh Valley...2030* was a key data set used in the mapping, because the data used to develop the Natural Resources Plan (Map 9) included data that would be used in greenway planning (e.g., floodplains, steep slopes, water quality, natural areas and woodlands). Focus was given toward areas in the two counties where the two highest conservation priority values were predominant. Additional data used in these maps included an extensive park inventory, historical resources and base map data (i.e., municipal boundaries, major roads and hydrography).

Identify Greenway Components

Using the maps of existing resources for the two counties, the LVPC and the Committee were able to identify areas that should be included in the greenways network of hubs, nodes and corridors.

Hubs

Hubs, which are large centers of activity, were evident on the maps produced with the GIS. The centers of activity identified ranged from communities (our cities and boroughs) to large recreational facilities and extensive natural areas. Following is a detailed description of each of the eight hubs identified:

City of Allentown

Allentown is home to 106,000 residents who enjoy the abundance of nightlife, art, culture and history that the City provides. Commonly referred to as a “city in a park,” Allentown boasts over 1,500 acres of outdoor recreation land. Additionally, the ridge tops of Lehigh and South Mountains form a beautiful backdrop from many vantage points throughout the city. Its location along the Lehigh River and the arrival of the Lehigh Canal and railroad that once made Allentown an industrial center now adds to the experience that makes this city a destination.



City of Bethlehem

Located directly to the east of Allentown, the City of Bethlehem spans both Lehigh and Northampton counties. The City of 71,000 is well known for its colonial and industrial heritage. Since the first Moravian settlement along the banks of the Lehigh River in 1742, Bethlehem has enticed visitors from around the world to experience the "Christmas City." The Lehigh River also helped shape the industrial heritage that is still present today. The Bethlehem Steel complex covers thousands of acres throughout the City and serves as a reminder of the once booming local steel industry that ended in 1995.



City of Easton

Situated at the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers, the City of Easton prospered as a center of industry, manufacturing and commerce for hundreds of years. Today, 26,000 people call Easton home and enjoy many of its cultural attractions. The heart of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, a nationally significant corridor that includes 165 miles of America's history spanning five Pennsylvania counties, is located in Easton's Hugh Moore Park where the Corridor's office is found.



Coplay/Northampton Boroughs

Four greenway corridors converge at the county line in Coplay and Northampton boroughs. Together the boroughs have nearly 13,000 residents and over 120 acres of outdoor recreation areas. Including historical interpretation opportunities along the Lehigh Canal, the story of the Portland Cement industry is told in Coplay at the cement kilns of Saylor Park.



Slatington/Walnutport Boroughs

Containing approximately five miles of the D&L, Slate Heritage and Lehigh Canal trails, these boroughs are rich with history. In addition to canal locks, an interpretative towpath and the Slatington Historic District, this hub is home to the restored 1829 Lock Tender's House museum that holds an impressive collection of early 19th century artifacts.



Trexler Nature Preserve/Pennsylvania State Game Lands

The collection of open space created by the Trexler Nature Preserve, State Game Lands No. 205, and adjacent Lehigh County land holdings creates over 2,800 acres of wildlife habitat and natural areas that are unmatched anywhere else in the Lehigh Valley. Conveyed to Lehigh County by the philanthropic General Harry C. Trexler, the Trexler Nature Preserve provides a “safe, public space that fosters an understanding of man’s relationship with and impact upon the natural environment.”



Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center/Jacobsburg Historic District

Located along the Bushkill Creek Corridor, the Jacobsburg Hub provides visitors opportunities to relax and recreate and provides habitat for wildlife. Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center (EEC) offers over 1,100 acres of natural land to explore and discover. The EEC provides environmental education programming for students of all ages and promotes an awareness of the natural environment. The



Jacobsburg Historic District lies almost entirely within the park and offers scenic hikes and historical interpretation opportunities along many multiuse trails.

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is 35 miles long from north to south and the southernmost tip sits in Northampton County. The Water Gap provides hundreds of recreational opportunities and is also home to hundreds of black bear. Originally established as an outdoor recreation facility, the area is rich with history and culture, too. The abundance of recreational, cultural, historical and wildlife habitat benefits provided by the Delaware Water Gap is unparalleled by any other recreation facility in the region.



Nodes

Nodes exist where there are natural, recreational, cultural and historical places of interest, origin or destination. Nodes differ from hubs in that they are smaller destinations and typically contain only one facility in addition to the greenway it enhances. Many of the Lehigh Valley's well known parks, outdoor recreation areas, and historical sites are nodes, as well as acres of natural areas and open spaces that provide critical wildlife habitat. The following list of 63 nodes were identified for this plan, however many more places of interest exist throughout the greenway network for all to enjoy.

GREENWAY NODES BY MUNICIPALITY

COUNTY	MUNICIPALITY	GREENWAY	NODE	HUB	
Lehigh	Alburtis Borough	Macungie-Alburtis Trail	Lock Ridge Park and Furnace Museum		
	Allentown City	Cedar Creek	Cedar Creek Parkway Trexler Memorial Park		
		Jordan Creek	Jordan Park		
		Lehigh River	D&L Trail Keck Park	Allentown Allentown	
		Little Lehigh Creek	Fountain Park Little Lehigh Parkway	Allentown	
		Pennsylvania Highlands	Lehigh Uplands Preserve	Allentown	
		Bethlehem City	Lehigh River	D&L Trail	Bethlehem
		Monocacy Creek	Central Bethlehem Historic District	Bethlehem	
	Catasauqua Borough	Lehigh River	Lehigh Canal Park		
	Coplay Borough	Ironton Rail-Trail	Coplay Parkway Keefer Field Saylor Park Cement Industry Museum	Coplay/Northampton Coplay/Northampton Coplay/Northampton	
	Emmaus Borough	Leibert Creek	Emmaus Community Park		
	Hanover Township	Lehigh River	Canal Park		
	Heidelberg Township	Jordan Creek	Conrad Raker Wildlife Reserve		
	Lower Macungie Township	Little Lehigh Creek	Lower Macungie Community Park Pool Wildlife Sanctuary		
	Lynn Township	Blue Mountain	Leaser Lake		
		Ontelaunee Creek	Ontelaunee Park		
	Macungie Borough	Macungie-Alburtis Trail	Memorial Park		
	North Whitehall Township	Lehigh River	D&L Trail		
	Salisbury Township	Pennsylvania Highlands	Lehigh Uplands Preserve/Walking Purchase Park South Mountain Preserve		
	Slatington Borough	Lehigh River	D&L Trail	Slatington/Walnutport	
		Slate Heritage Trail	Kern's Mill Park Slatington Historic District	Slatington/Walnutport Slatington/Walnutport	
	South Whitehall Township	Cedar Creek	Dorney Park		
		Jordan Creek	Covered Bridge Park Jordan Creek Parkway		
	Upper Saucon Township	Pennsylvania Highlands	South Mountain Big Rock Park/ Scholl Woodlands Preserve		
		Saucon Creek	Stabler Center		
	Washington Township	Blue Mountain	Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge		
	Whitehall Township	Ironton Rail-Trail	Whitehall Parkway		
		Jordan Creek	Jordan Creek Parkway		
	Northampton	Allen Township	Hokendauqua Creek	Confluence of Indian and Hokendauqua Creeks	
			Indian Creek	Confluence of Indian and Hokendauqua Creeks	
			Nor-Bath Trail	Weaversville County Park	

GREENWAY NODES BY MUNICIPALITY (cont'd)

COUNTY	MUNICIPALITY	GREENWAY	NODE	HUB
Northampton (cont'd)	Bethlehem City	Lehigh River	D&L Trail	
		Monocacy Creek	Central Bethlehem Historic District Monocacy Complex	Bethlehem
		Saucon Creek	Saucon Park	
		South Bethlehem Greenway	South Bethlehem Downtown Historic District	Bethlehem
	Bethlehem Township	Lehigh River	D&L Trail	
		Monocacy Creek	Archibald Johnston Conservation Area	
	Bushkill Township	Bushkill Creek Corridor	Graver Arboretum Jacobsburg Historic District	Jacobsburg E.E.C.
	East Allen Township	Nor-Bath Trail	Bicentennial Park	
	Easton	Delaware River	College Hill Residential Historic District Delaware Canal State Park Easton Historic District	Easton
		Lehigh River	Hugh Moore Historical Park	Easton
	Freemansburg Borough	Lehigh River	Lehigh Canal Park	
	Glendon Borough	Lehigh River	Hugh Moore Historical Park	
	Hanover Township	Monocacy Creek	Monocacy Complex	
	Hellertown Borough	Saucon Creek	Water Street Park/Grist Mill Park	
	Lehigh Township	Blue Mountain	Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge	
	Lower Mount Bethel Township	Delaware River	PPL Martins Creek Environmental Preserve	
	Lower Nazareth Township	Monocacy Creek	Dutch Springs	
	Lower Saucon Township	Pennsylvania Highlands	Hellertown Reservoirs South Mountain Park	
	Northampton Borough	Lehigh River	Canal Street Park	Coplay/Northampton
		Nor-Bath Trail	Nor-Bath Trail Access	Coplay/Northampton
	Palmer Township	Bushkill Creek Corridor	Hackett Park	
		Lehigh River	Riverview Park	
		Palmer-Bethlehem Bikeway	Riverview Park	
	Plainfield Township	Bushkill Creek Corridor	Gall Farm	
	Upper Mount Bethel Township	Allegheny Creek	Mount Jack	
		Blue Mountain	Appalachian Trail Access	Delaware Water Gap
		Delaware River	Mount Jack	
		Greater Minsi Lake Corridor	Minsi Lake	Delaware Water Gap
		Jacoby Creek	Mount Bethel Fens	
	Walnutport Borough	Lehigh River	Lehigh Canal Park	Slatington/Walnutport
	Williams Township	Delaware River	Delaware Canal State Park Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary	
		Pennsylvania Highlands	Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary	
			Hexenkopf Rock	
Wilson Borough	Palmer-Bethlehem Bikeway	Hackett Park		

Corridors

Corridors are linear connecting elements that act as linkages between the hubs and nodes and communities of the region. After several revisions of the corridor list by the Study Advisory Committee and LVPC staff, 31 greenway corridors were identified. Based on citizen, county and municipal input, these corridors were selected to provide connections to interesting destination points and attractions, increase recreational and tourism opportunities, and to provide connections from population centers to recreation and community facilities. Additionally, this plan aims to provide greenway corridors that serve to preserve open space and protect high priority natural resources while maintaining and enhancing the overall Lehigh Valley experience.

The majority of the corridors identified in this plan were riparian areas along streams and rivers, with the remaining corridors being ridgelines, collections of ridgetops, and significant natural areas. Each proposed corridor was then categorized as one of the following types: Cultural/Recreational, Conservation, Multi-Use and Scenic. The Scenic type was added as an overlay to two locally significant greenway corridors (Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge and Pennsylvania Highlands greenway corridors) that offer remarkable panoramas along the northern and southern boundaries of the Lehigh Valley. Several of the corridors fell into more than one category based on the attributes present along each segment. This list provides the category assignments for each corridor described on the following pages:

Cultural/Recreational

Ironton Rail-Trail
Macungie-Alburtis Trail
Nor-Bath Trail
Palmer-Bethlehem Bikeway
South Bethlehem Greenway

Conservation

Allegheny Creek
Bertsch Creek
Cooks Creek
East Branch Saucon Creek
Fry's Run
Hokendauqua Creek
Indian Creek
Jacoby Creek
Leibert Creek
Lyon Creek
Martins Creek
Mud Run
Ontelaunee Creek
Pennsylvania Highlands (Scenic)
Shochary Ridge

Multi-Use

Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge (Scenic)
Cedar Creek
Delaware River
Greater Minsi Lake Corridor
Lehigh River

Multi-Use and Conservation

Bushkill Creek Corridor
Jordan Creek
Little Lehigh Creek
Monocacy Creek
Saucon Creek
Slate Heritage Trail/Trout Creek

Note: The inset maps on the following pages are extracted from Map 14 located in the pocket at the end of this document. These maps show the corridors in greater detail and provide additional labels not found on Map 14.