

Upper Gwynedd Township

Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan

Public Meeting 2

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

6:30 - 8:00 PM

Meeting Agenda

- Public Meeting 1 Summary
- Questions to Consider
- Public Opinion Survey Update
- KPI & Focus Group Update
- Parks & Rec Staff Interview Summary
- Plan Goals
- Conceptual Park Diagrams
- Open Space & Connectivity
- Next Steps



Project Committee

Anthony Hoxie
Jeff Zoll
Mark Methlie
Robert Kelly
Isabella Juarez
Thomas Alvarez

David Kratz
John Pyle
Mary Burns
Stephen Finley
Thomas Duffy

Township Staff / Representative

Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Sarah Prebis	Director, Parks & Recreation
Liz McNaney	UGT Commissioner



Project Team

Simone Collins Landscape Architecture

- Peter Simone, RLA, FASLA
- Tim Adams, Staff Planner
- Michelle Armour, Staff Landscape Architect

Certified Park & Recreational Professional

- Derek Dureka, CPRP

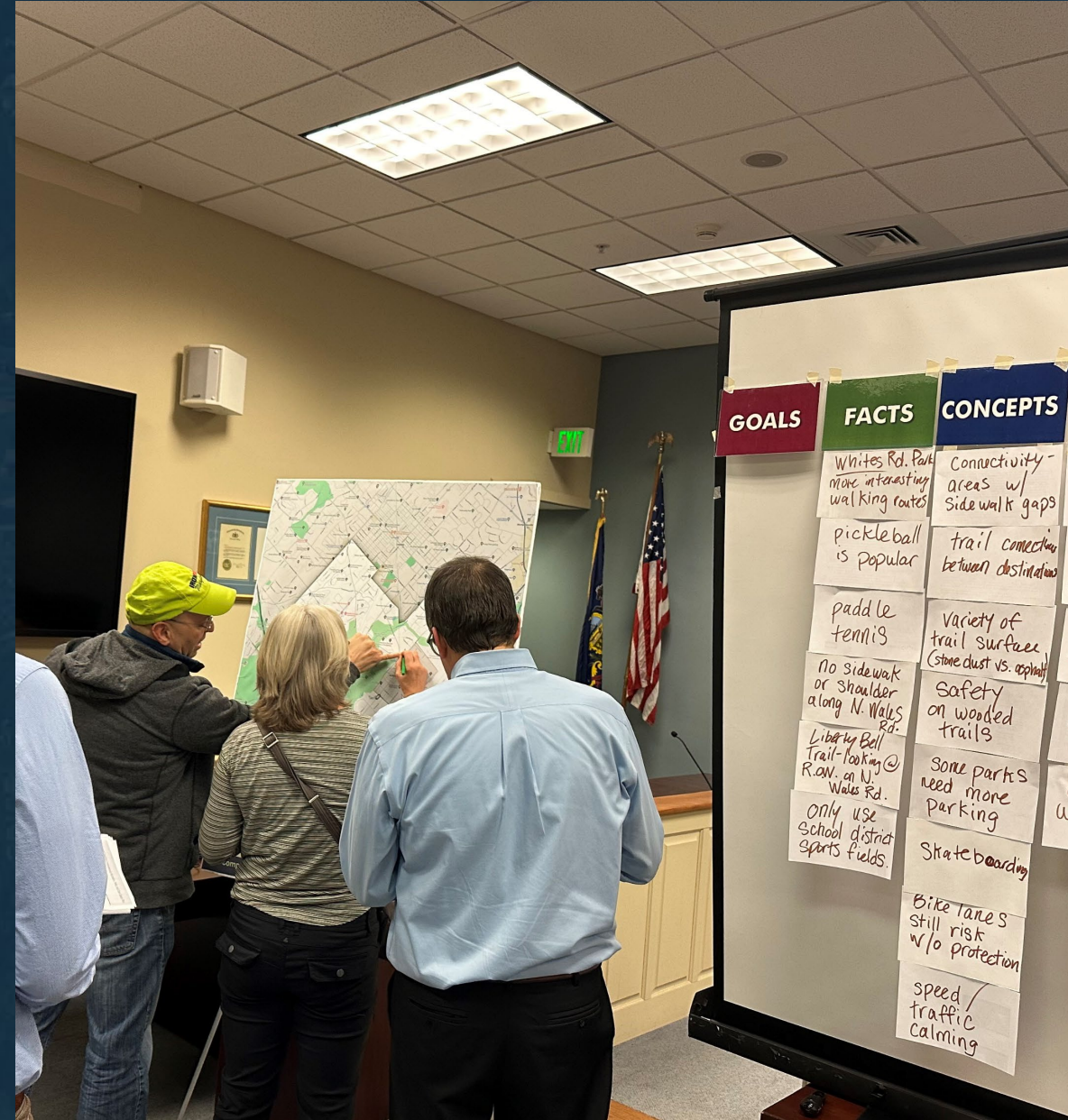


Project Schedule

Meeting	Purpose	Date	Time	Location
Study Committee Meeting #1	Kick off, Goals & Brainstorming	Thursday, November 16th, 2023	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #1	Programming & Brainstorming	Wednesday, November 29th, 2023	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Online Public Survey	November 29 – March 31			
Study Committee Meeting #2	Data Collection & Analysis	Wednesday, January 24, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #3	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, February 22, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Focus Group Meeting #1	Organized Sports Groups	TBD	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Township Building
Focus Group Meeting #2	Teens and Seniors	Monday, March 25, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Township Building
Key Person Interviews	February – March 2024			
Public Meeting #2	Initial Concepts	Wednesday, March 27, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Study Committee Meeting #4	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, April 18, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #5	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, May 16, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #6	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, June 20, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #3	Draft Plan Preview	Thursday, September 12, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Public Review Period (60-Day)	September 5 – November 5			
Study Committee Meeting #7	Review Public Comment, Draft Plan	Thursday, October 3, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting - Board of Commissioner's	Draft Plan	Tuesday, October 15, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Study Committee Meeting #8	Pre-Final Plan	Thursday, November 7, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #4	Final Plan	Wednesday, December 4, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building

Public Meeting 1 Summary

- November 29, 2023, 28+ attendees
- Reviewed the basics of Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Planning
- Reviewed existing data and base mapping
 - Land Use, Sidewalks and Trail Connections, Tree Canopy, Hydrology
 - STRAVA Run and Ride heatmaps
- Township Tour of Parks and Recreation Facilities
 - Discussed opportunities for active recreation, aquatics, naturalization, partnerships
- Some wanted change, some wanted no change



Public Mtg. #1 – Summary - cont

- Brainstorming session
 - Naturalization (meadows) and shade trees
 - Trail/Sidewalk connections to park destinations
 - Off-road paths for children to walk to active recreation facilities
 - Baseball/Softball fields for municipal use
 - Parking at satellite parks
 - Additional water features and expanded pool service
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Nature/walking paths
 - Safety and Lighting
 - Don't want organized sports at satellite parks

Big questions to consider

- Does the Township wish to expand / add to its active sports facilities? If so, how?
- Does the Township wish to expand its passive open space facilities?
- How to/should we use the small 40+ township-owned open space parcels?
- Does the Township wish to explore the development of a multi-purpose indoor recreational space?
- Should the Township explore cooperation (sharing programming, facilities, staff) with neighboring municipalities?
- How can the Township increase cooperation and facility – sharing with the School District (and with partner SD communities)?
- Should satellite parks remain as is, or should they change? Is township willing to "promote" more utilization?



Public Opinion Survey Progress

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan

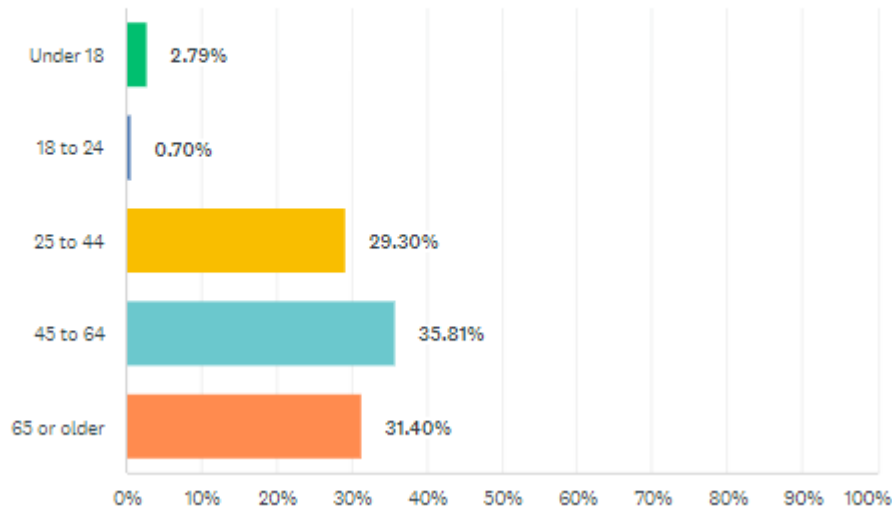
Age and Households

430 total Responses as of March 27, 2024

- 29.3% are between 25 and 44 years old
- 35.8% are between 45 and 64 years old
- 31.4% are 65 years or older

What is your age?

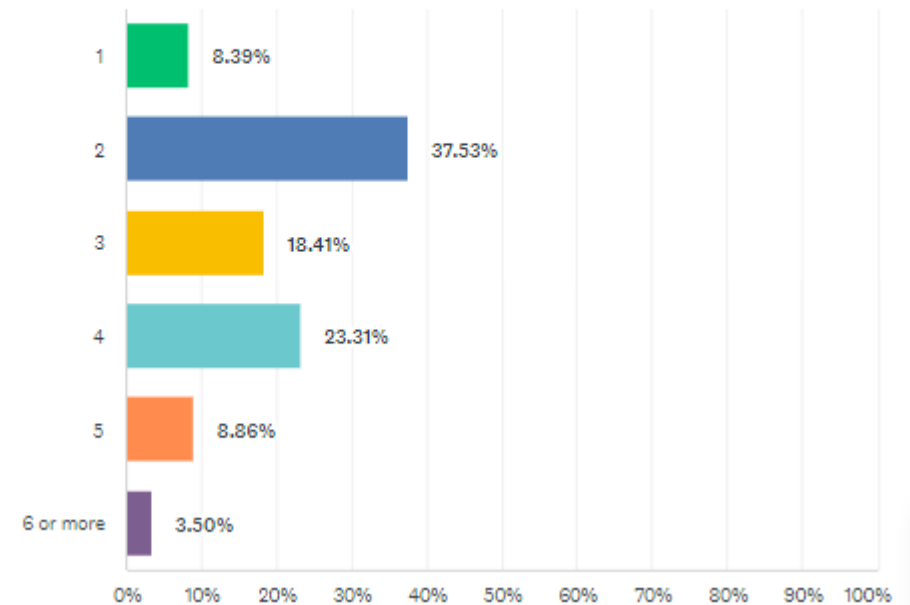
Answered: 430 Skipped: 2



- 45% of households are 1 or 2 members
- 55% of households are 3+ members

How many people currently live in your household?

Answered: 429 Skipped: 3



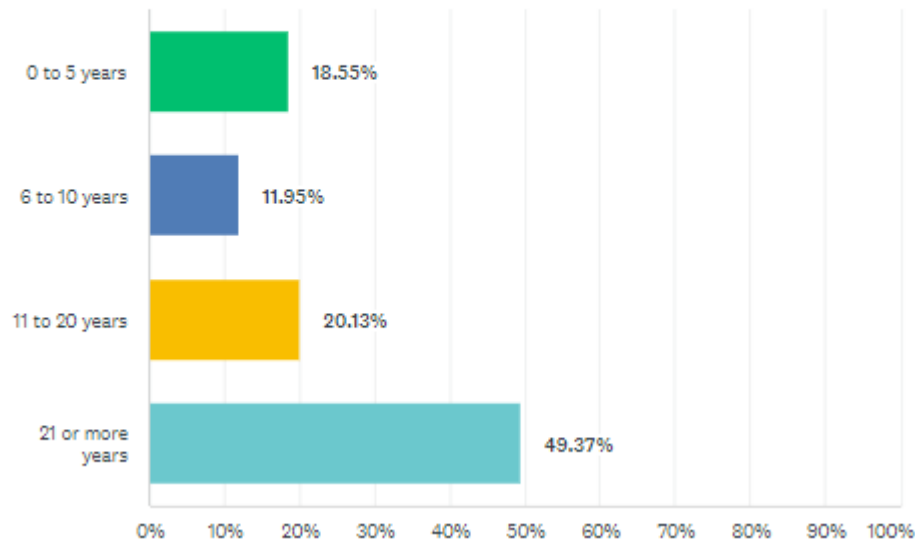
Living in Upper Gwynedd

- UGT is home to many long-term residents, and is attracting new residents as well
 - 18.5% have lived in UGT for less than 5 years
 - 30% have lived in UGT for less than 10 years

- Most popular reasons for moving to UGT:
 - Location
 - Schools
 - Environment

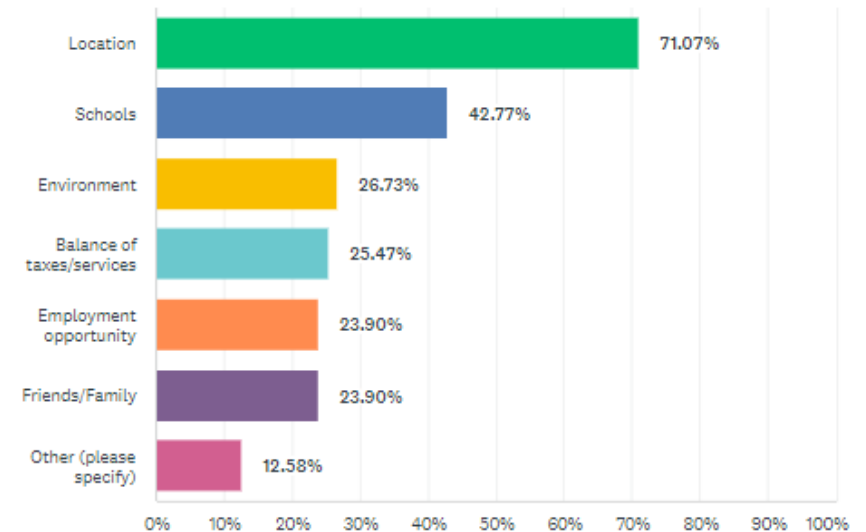
If you live in Upper Gwynedd, how long have you lived in the Township?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 114



If you are a resident of Upper Gwynedd Township, why did you choose to move here? (Please check all that apply.)

Answered: 318 Skipped: 114



Why visit Upper Gwynedd?

- The most popular recreation opportunities:
 - Trails for walking, jogging, or biking
 - Outdoor relaxation space
 - Access to nature
- Non-residents are visiting Upper Gwynedd for recreation, parks, and open space

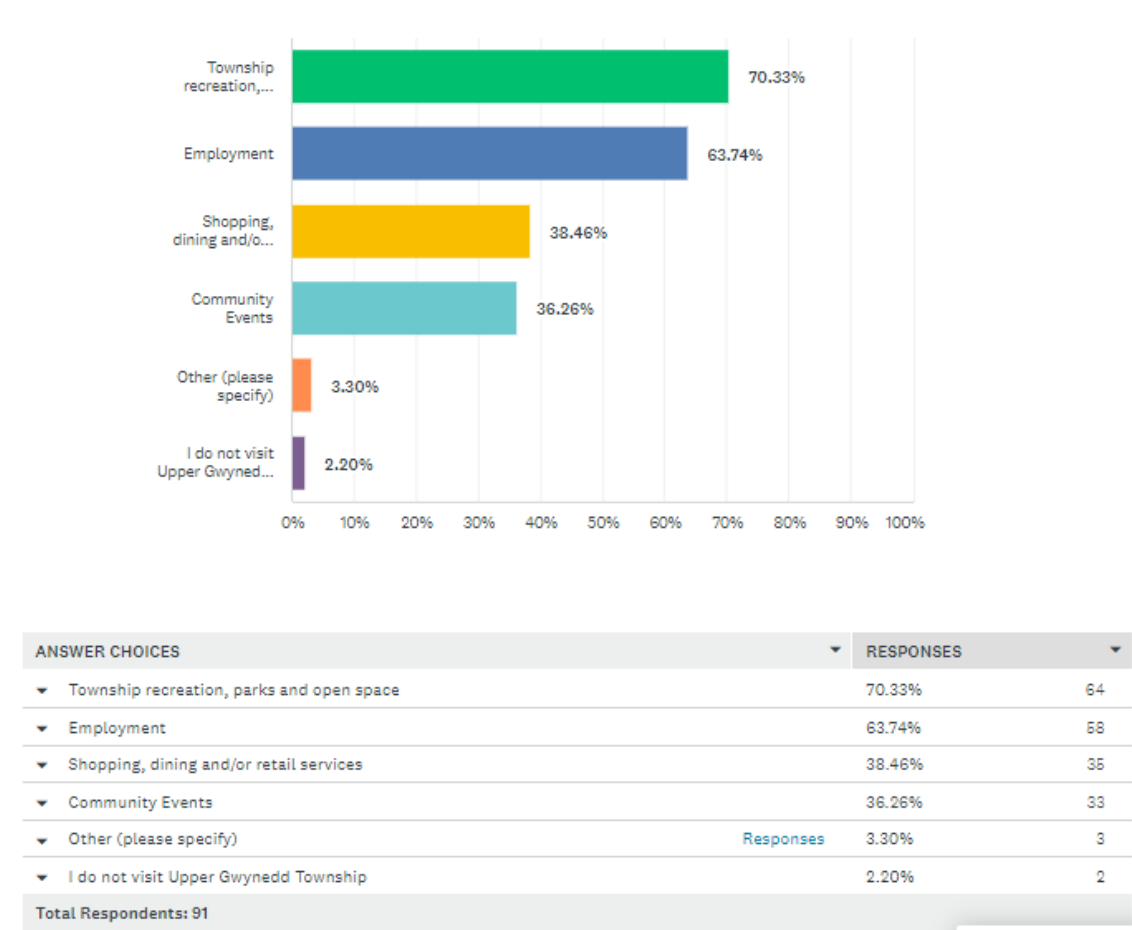
Select the recreation opportunities you take advantage of in Upper Gwynedd Township. Check all that apply.

Answered: 351 Skipped: 81

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Trails for walking, jogging or bicycling	83.48%	293
A place to relax or enjoy the outdoors	59.83%	210
Access to nature (open space, wildlife habitat, outdoor education, etc.)	57.26%	201
A place to exercise	46.44%	163
A place to play or take children to play	41.88%	147
A place to gather with neighbors, friends, and/or family	31.05%	109
A place to participate in or watch sports	24.79%	87
Other (please specify)	9.97%	35
Total Respondents: 351		

What are the primary reasons you visit Upper Gwynedd Township? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 91 Skipped: 341

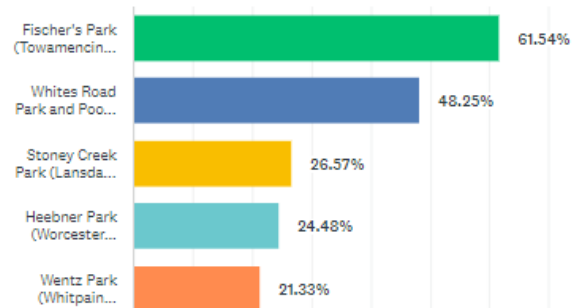


Popular Recreation Destinations

- Top Township recreation locations:
 - Parkside Place
 - Green Ribbon Trail
 - Gwynedd Preserve
 - Garfield Park
- Parks in neighboring municipalities are also highly popular:
 - Fischer's Park in Towamencin
 - Whites Road Park (Owned by Lansdale Borough)

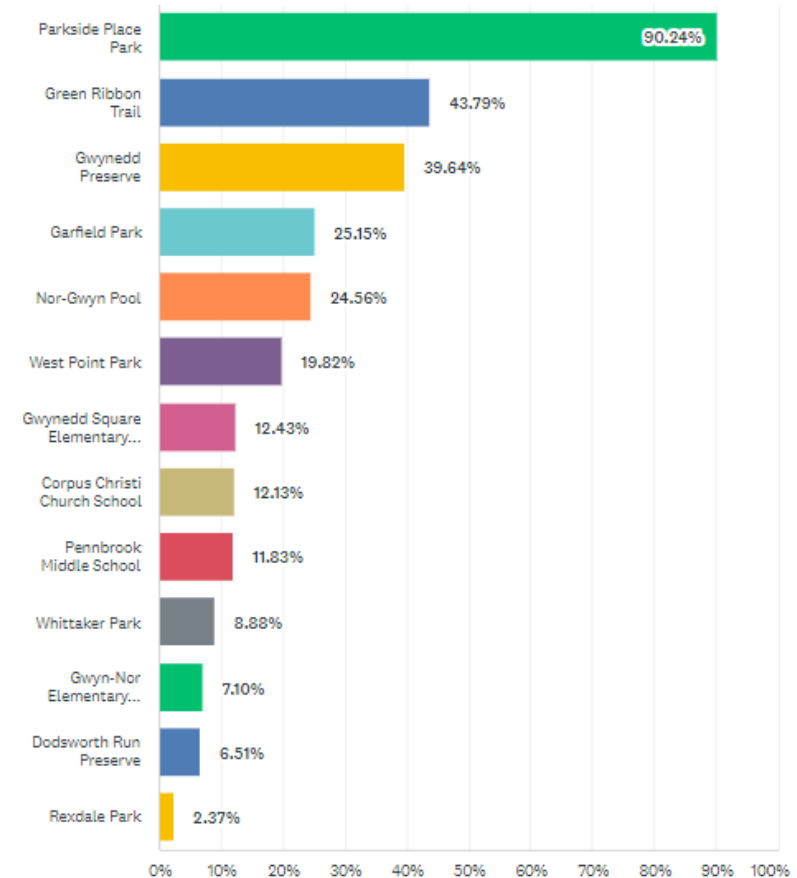
Which public parks, natural areas, trails, or recreational facilities do you visit for recreation purposes? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 286 Skipped: 146



In the past 12 months, which parks, natural areas, trails, or facilities have you visited for recreation purposes in or around Upper Gwynedd Township? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 338 Skipped: 94

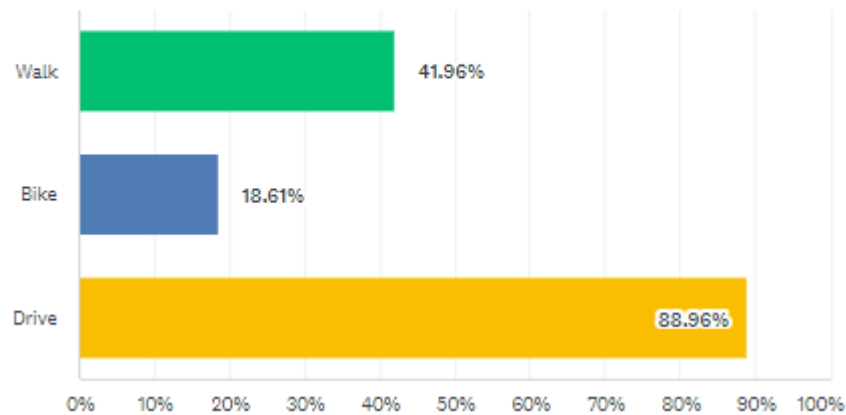


Recreation Access

- Most people drive to local parks, and 42% usually walk
- People generally feel comfortable walking to local parks, but do not feel comfortable biking

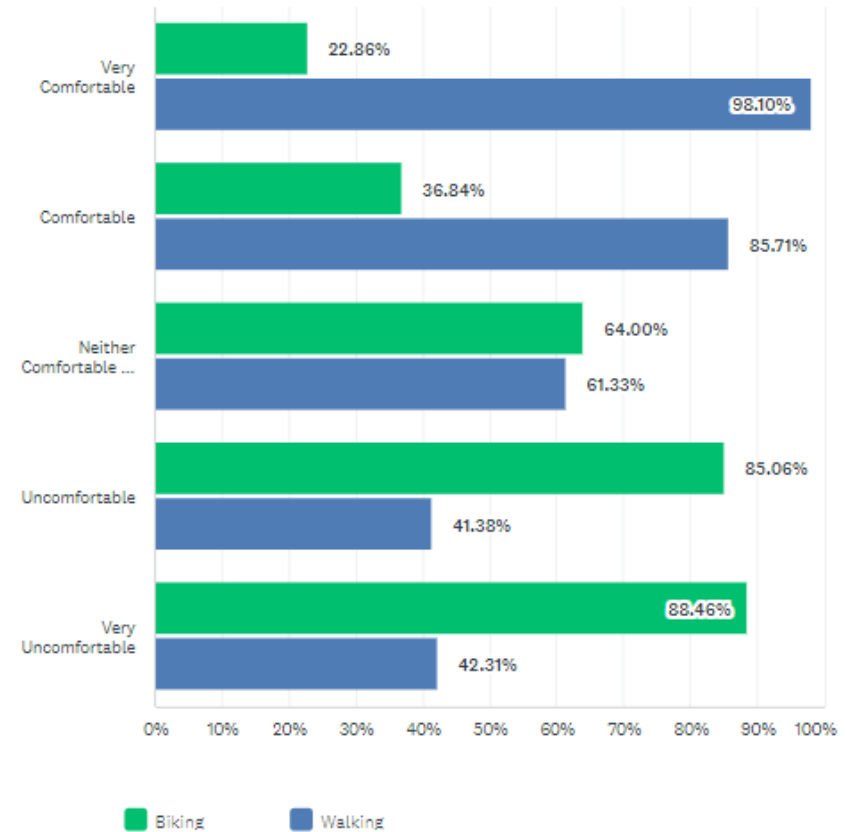
How do you usually travel to area parks? (Please check all that apply)

Answered: 317 Skipped: 115



From a traffic safety perspective, how comfortable do you feel biking or walking in Upper Gwynedd Township?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 122



Pedestrian/Biking Improvement

- People would feel encouraged to walk if there were:
 - More Sidewalks
 - Better connectivity to existing sidewalks
 - Safer street crossings
- People would feel encouraged to bike if there were:
 - Bike paths or trails
 - Connectivity to neighborhoods
 - Street facilities (bike lanes)

What would encourage you to walk more? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 286 Skipped: 146

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Additional sidewalks	54.20%	165
Better connectivity to sidewalks	49.65%	142
Safer street crossings	42.31%	121
Less traffic	29.37%	84
Better street lighting	28.67%	82
Other (please specify)	Responses 17.48%	50
Wider sidewalks	15.73%	45
Additional benches / places to rest	11.54%	33
N/A - I do not walk	3.15%	9
Total Respondents: 286		

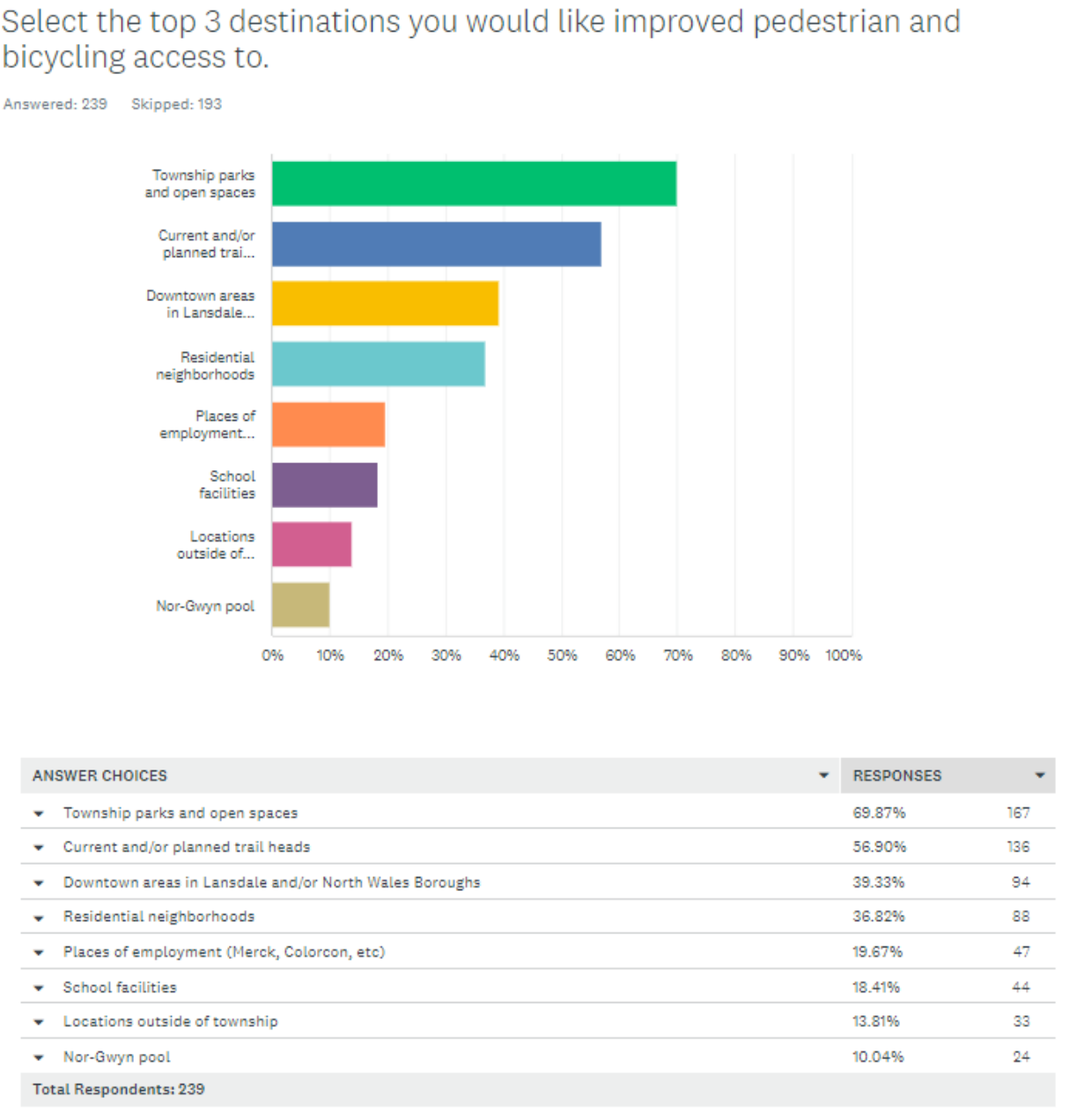
What would encourage you to bike more? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 301 Skipped: 131

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Availability of bike paths or trails	50.50%	152
Connectivity to existing neighborhoods / bike paths or trails	46.84%	141
N/A - I do not bike	36.88%	111
Street facilities (shared lanes, dedicated bike lanes, etc.)	30.56%	92
Availability of bike parking	14.95%	45
Other (please specify)	Responses 8.97%	27
Total Respondents: 301		

Improved Accessibility

- The top destinations for improved pedestrian and bicycle access:
 - Township parks and open spaces
 - Current and/or planned trails
 - Downtown Lansdale/North Wales

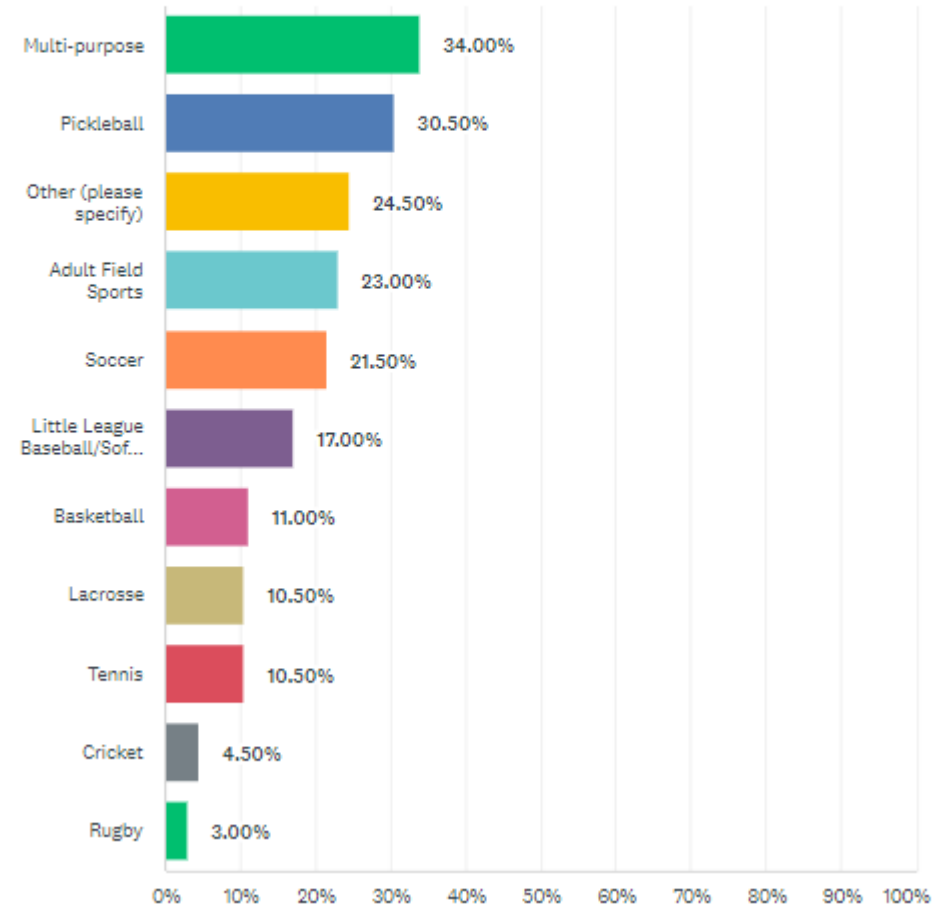


Desired Facilities

- Survey respondents want more:
 - Multi-purpose fields
 - Pickleball courts
 - Soccer Fields
 - Adult fields
 - Little League Baseball and Softball
- “Other” includes:
 - Volleyball, Bocce, Disc Golf, Tennis Wall

Which sports do you feel are in need of fields or courts? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 200 Skipped: 232



Plan Priorities

Top Plan Priorities include:

1. Hiking or Nature Trails
2. Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation
3. Bike Lanes or Trails
4. Pedestrian Connections
5. New or Expanded Community Parks

Please rank the priorities that you feel Upper Gwynedd Township should focus on in this recreation, parks and open space plan. (1 = Highest Priority, 5 = Lowest Priority)

Answered: 289 Skipped: 143

Rank						
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
▼ Hiking or Nature Trails	37.25% 95	18.82% 48	14.12% 36	11.37% 29	18.43% 47	255
▼ Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation	35.56% 85	16.32% 39	17.15% 41	11.30% 27	19.67% 47	239
▼ Bike Lanes or Trails	29.55% 73	13.77% 34	22.67% 56	12.15% 30	21.86% 54	247
▼ Pedestrian Connections	25.31% 61	21.16% 51	17.01% 41	15.77% 38	20.75% 50	241
▼ New or Expanded Community Parks	21.31% 52	18.85% 46	23.77% 58	13.93% 34	22.13% 54	244
▼ Improvements to Existing Facilities	20.32% 51	17.53% 44	31.47% 79	16.73% 42	13.94% 35	251
▼ New or Expanded Neighborhood Parks	20.78% 48	19.48% 45	25.54% 59	11.69% 27	22.51% 52	231
▼ Veterans Memorial Park	16.99% 35	14.56% 30	24.27% 50	12.62% 26	31.55% 65	206
▼ Additional Programming	14.29% 30	12.86% 27	30.95% 65	14.76% 31	27.14% 57	210

Open Ended Responses

- Most frequent comments:
 - The lack of pedestrian/cyclist accessibility and safety considerations
 - A common theme is being forced to drive to parks/trails because they don't feel safe walking or biking with their children.
 - Strong desire for Open Space Preservation
 - Activating neighborhood parks
 - Bike/Pedestrian connectivity to neighborhood parks



Key Person Interview List

Completed Key Person Interviews:

- Merck (Tom Alvarez)
- Roads Department (Willard Troxel)
- Township Engineer (Nick Cross, Remington Vernick)
- Wissahickon Trails (Margaret Rohde)
- Nor-Gwyn Pool (Ginny Oldt)
- MontCo Cycling and Bike North Penn (Bill Jackson)
- Local Developer (Dan Wallace)
- Upper Gwynedd Parks Board (Cory Lippert)

Currently being scheduled:

- First Responders (Shane Wheeler VMSC, Eric Geiger UGFD)
- Tom Duffy (Committee Member)
- Boy Scouts (Kim Bauer)



Nor-Gwyn Pool – The Future

- Nor-Gwyn Pool is a vitally important community anchor – 4200 members annually.
- Pool is operated and maintained totally by volunteers.
- A \$500,000 replastering project will be done in the near future.
- Pool was built in 1976 and can only be repaired for another 10+ years until a new pool is needed.
- Ability to run pool with only volunteers is waning.
- Need to plan for the future of the pool now.
- Develop a master plan for a new pool facility so that a fundraising strategy can be developed (\$7-10million?)



Focus Group List

Sports Organizations – Date TBD

- Nor-Gwyn Baseball & Softball (Bob Dantzer)
- Towamencin Youth Association (Chad Shaw)
- North Penn Little League (Erin Thurston)

Teens and Seniors – Completed March 25th





Parks & Recreation Department Interview Summary

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan

Jan 22 – Meeting with P&R Staff

- Sarah Prebis, Parks and Recreation Director
- Leigha Getty, Program Coordinator
- John Chabala, Park Foreman
- Lori Hammel, Park Staff
- Christian Pepe, Park Staff



Existing conditions

- Strong reputation for recreational programming
 - Robust participation - programs usually reach capacity
- Lack of active recreation facilities at satellite parks
 - Basketball courts and pickleball courts at Parkside Place are heavily used
 - Local organizations provide action recreation programming
 - Nor-Gwyn Baseball
 - Towamencin Soccer
 - North Penn Squires

Key Takeaways - Strengths

- Customer Service and “resident-first” attitude
- Special Events and Recreation Programming
- Resident Participation/Attendance
- Supportive Park Board and Township Manager
- Flexibility and Creativity within limits of existing recreation space
- Supportive and Responsive Maintenance Staff
- Strong Communication/Support between all Department Staff



Key Takeaways - Challenges

- Lack of Consistent Indoor Recreation Space
- Aging Park Infrastructure/Equipment
- Limited Active Recreation Facilities
- Seasonal Staffing Pressure on Maintenance Staff
- Lack of Dedicated Administrative Staff
- Pavilion Rental Inefficiencies
- Volunteers – Hard to find (special events)
- Lack of Storage and Garage Space
- No Formalized Database for Institutional Knowledge



Key Takeaways - Opportunities

- Facility Improvements at Satellite Parks
 - Trails, Active Recreation, Bathrooms, Parking?
- Consistent Indoor Recreation Space
- Departmental-wide Storage / Garage for Parks Crew
- Generate Additional Revenue
 - Streamline/Expand Pavilion Rentals (Additional Pavilions?)
 - Expand Programming
 - Sponsorships/Partnerships
 - North Penn SD, Merck, Adjacent Munis, Recreation Organizations
- Formalize Staff Succession Planning
- Daily Operations Efficiency Improvements
- Acquisition of vacant Church at West Point Park?
- Plan for a post-volunteer future of the Nor-Gwyn Pool



An aerial photograph of a town, likely Upper Gwynedd, showing a river winding through the center, various residential and commercial buildings, and a large, modern building on the left. The image is darkened with a blue overlay to serve as a background for the title.

Plan Mission and Goals

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan

Suggested Mission Statement

Enhance and protect the Township's parks and open spaces to ensure that they are connected, accessible and are able to meet current and future recreational demands as they improve the health and quality of life of the community.



Plan Goals

1. Create a sustainable and implementable plan for parks, recreation, and open space
2. Build upon existing strengths including recreation programming and regional trail access
3. Preserve open space and maintain an accurate inventory
4. Enhance existing neighborhood parks with appropriate active recreation facilities or naturalization
5. Plan for safe multi-modal connections between Township park, recreation, and open space resources and regional trail facilities



An aerial photograph of a city, likely San Francisco, with a dark blue overlay. The image shows a mix of urban buildings, green spaces, and a winding road or path. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Conceptual Park Diagrams

Initial Ideas for Discussion and Comment

Rexdale Park

Concept

1. Walking trail (connections to neighborhoods and Hancock St. Park to south)
2. Pedestrian improvements (crosswalks)
3. Riparian buffer enhancement plantings along Wissahickon Creek
4. Meadow plantings/mixed buffer along trail & adjoining residences



Garfield Park

Concept

1. Loop trail
2. Softball/L.L. Field (60' base path, reoriented per DCNR standards)
3. Football / Multi-use field (160' x 360')
4. Lawn conversion to reforestation (around existing play area)
5. Expanded Parking Lot (approx. double existing)



Whittaker Park

Concept

1. Loop trail
2. Riparian buffer plantings
3. Buffer plantings along adjoining residences
4. Lawn conversion to reforestation
5. Open play lawn



West Point Park

Concept

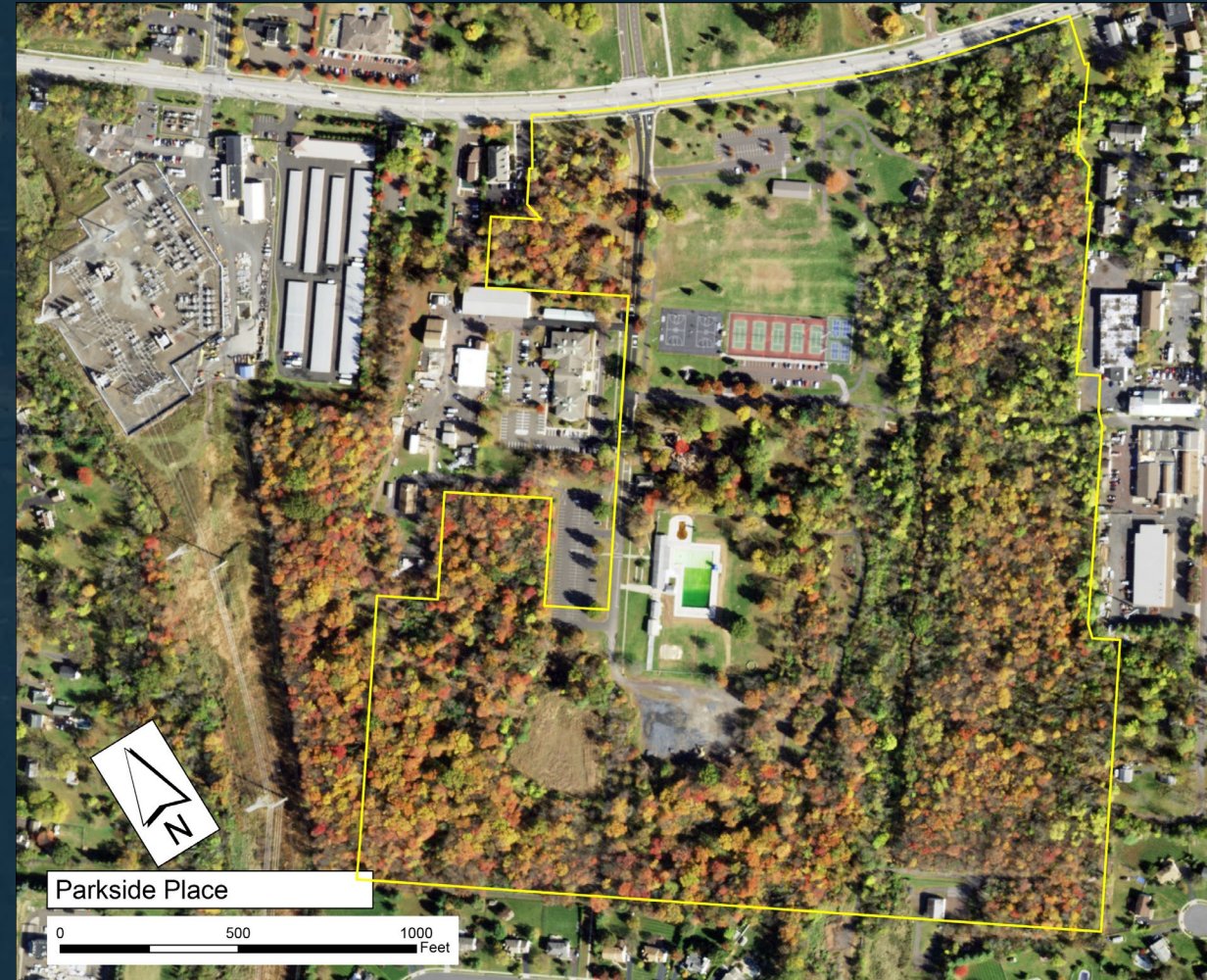
1. T-Ball field (50' base path, reoriented per DCNR standards)
2. Acquisition of adjacent church parcel?



Parkside Place

Possible Improvements

1. Plan for the replacement of the Castle
2. Consider additional options for seating throughout park
3. Consider additional pavilions
4. Additional basketball courts would be well used
5. Additional pickleball courts have been suggested
6. If indoor recreation facility is to be considered, is this the best location for it?





Open Space and Connectivity

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan

Trail Types



Sharrow



Bike Lane



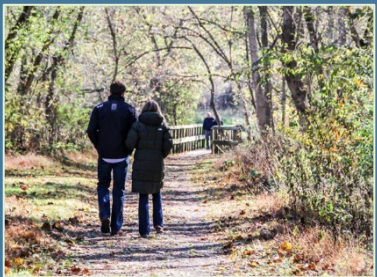
Paved Multi-Use



Earthen Path

User Groups

Pedestrians



Active Lifestyles



Experienced



Cyclists

Casual



Child



Other Users



Connectivity Goals

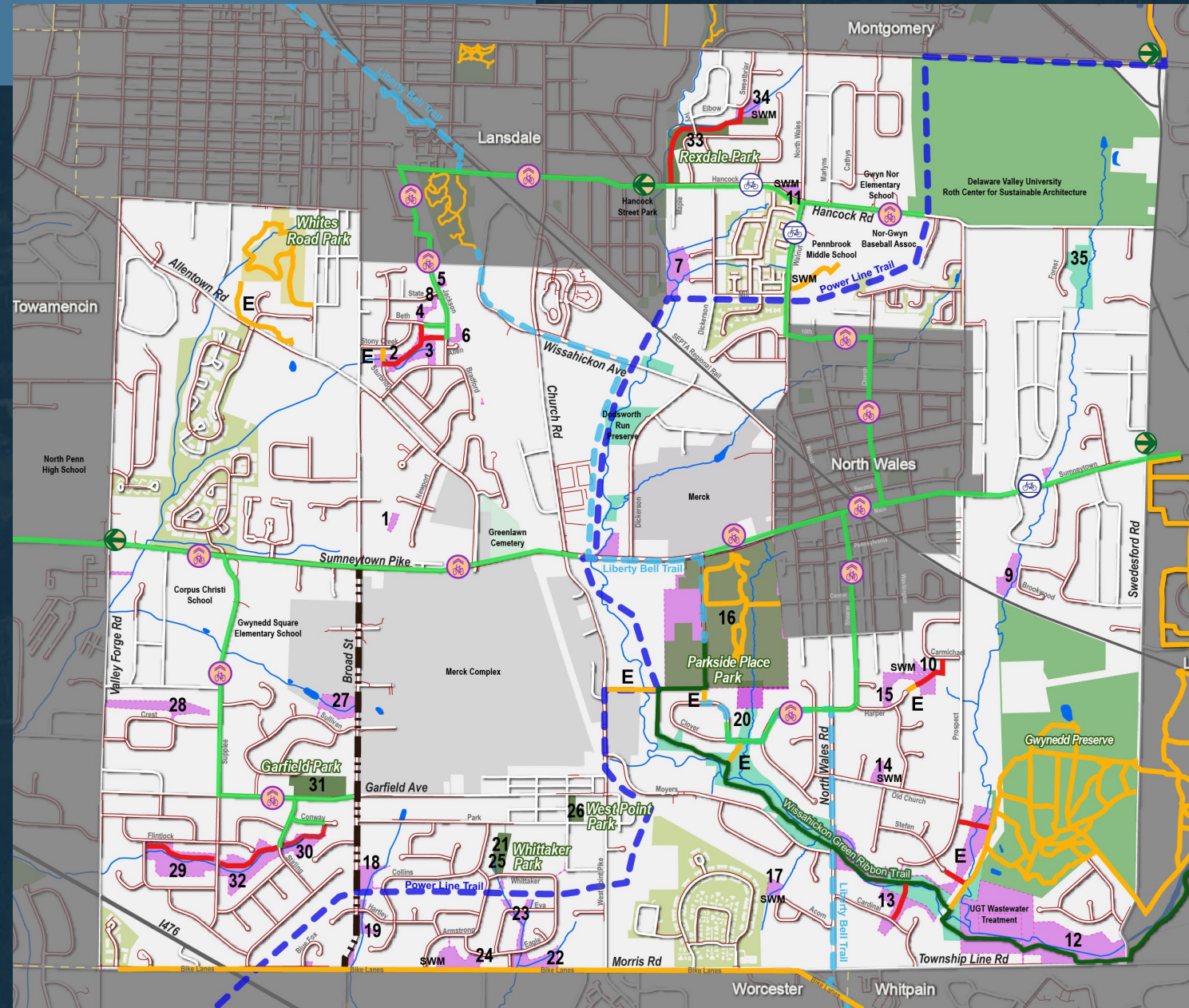
- Show existing and planned parks, open space, stormwater BMPs, sidewalks, and trails
- Show all parcels owned by Upper Gwynedd Township
- Identify possible off- and on-road trail connections within neighborhoods and to regional trails, parks, and schools
- Identify possible connections to neighboring municipalities



Initial Concepts

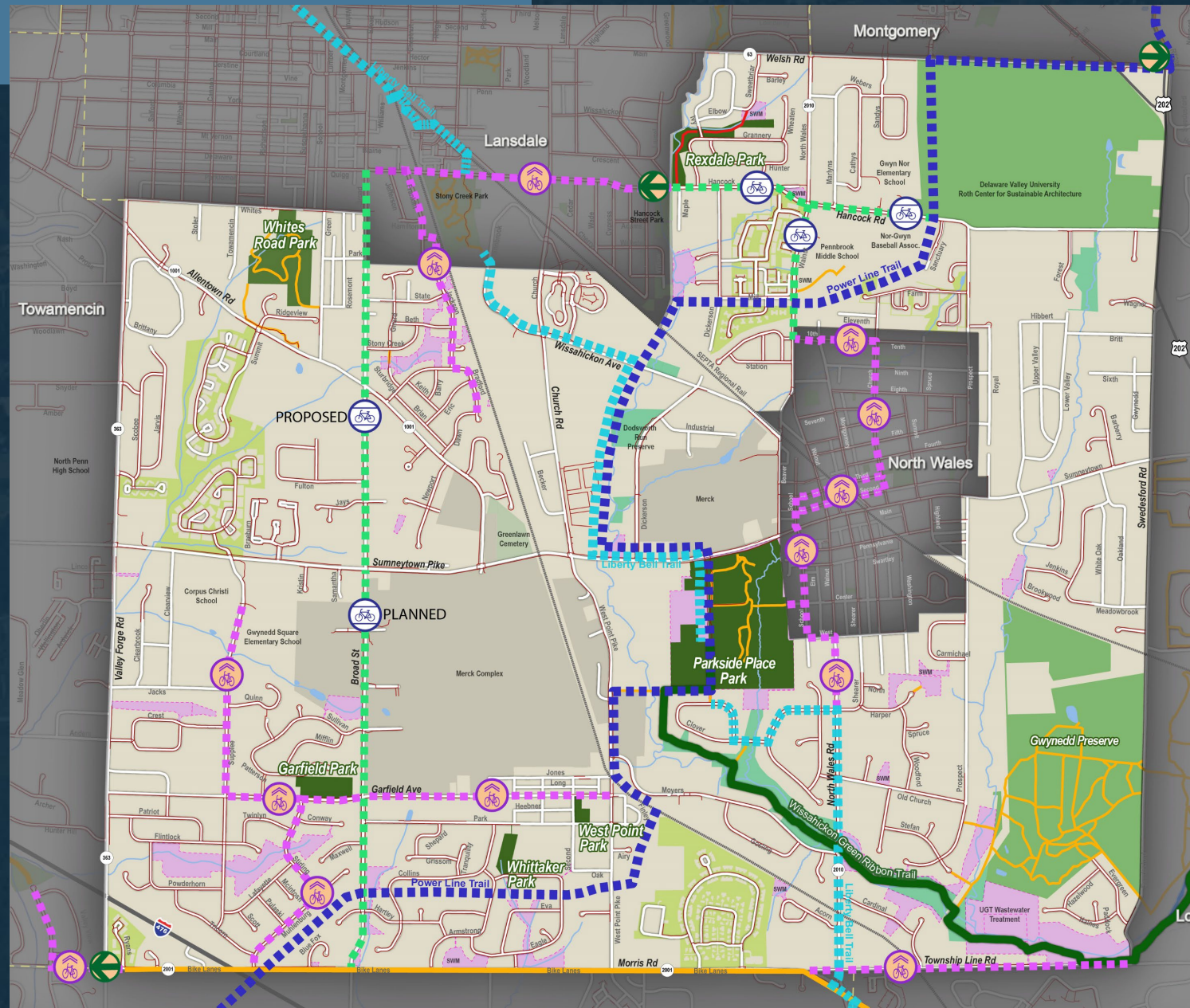
Explored wide range of possible connections based upon key person interviews and field reconnaissance. Some of these concepts were eliminated.

- Neighborhood trails on open space parcels were considered but were for the most part eliminated
- On-road bicycle connections on Sumneytown Pike were considered but eliminated due to safety and feasibility concerns
- Connections into North Wales and Lansdale will be advisory to those communities (Lansdale is in the process of developing an active transportation plan)

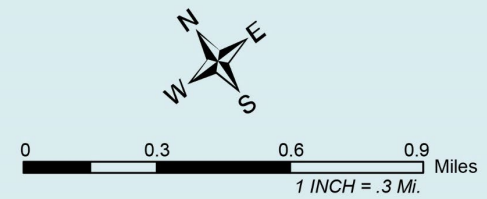


Refined Concepts

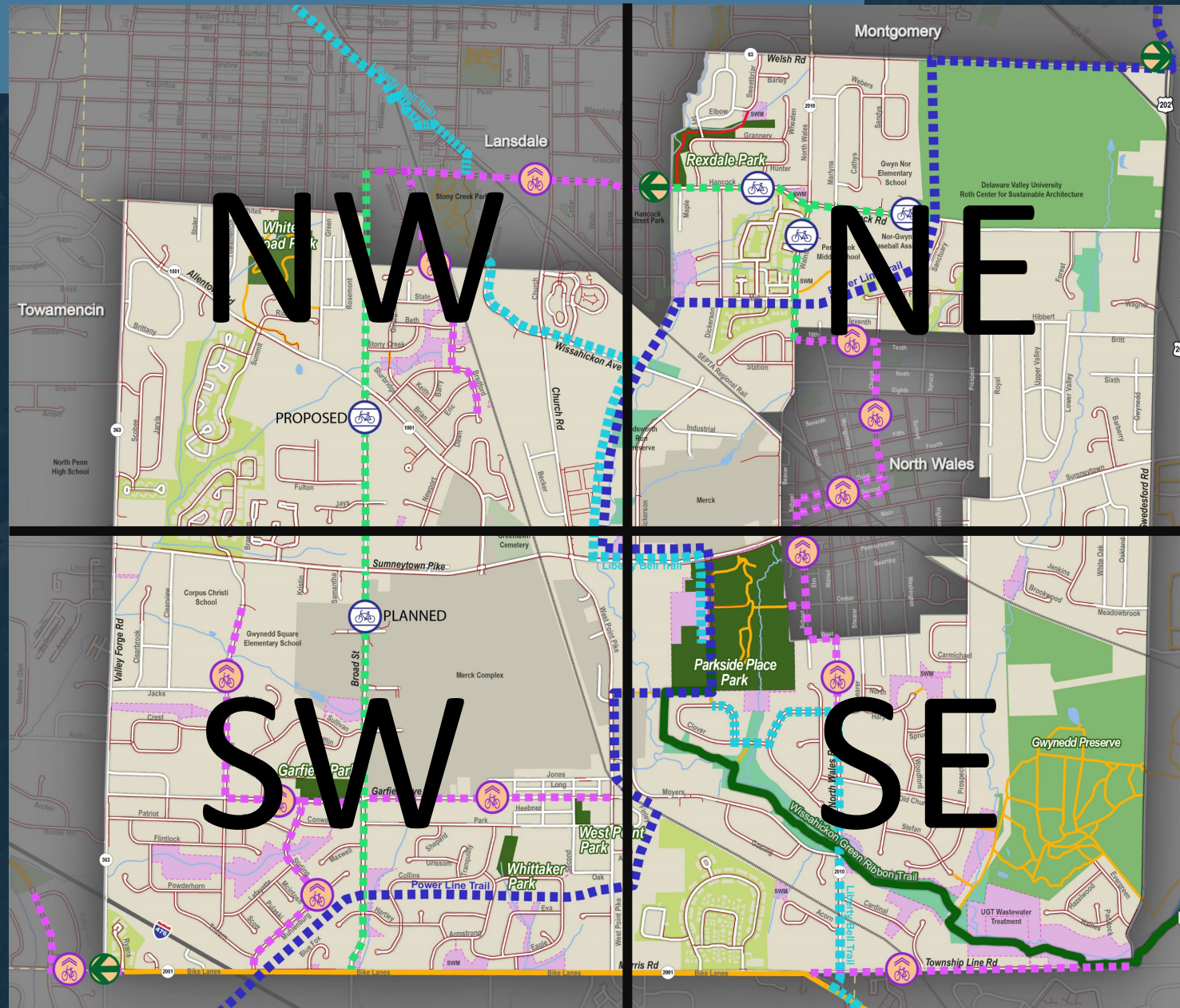
- Local connections to planned Liberty Bell Trail and Powerline Trail
- Extension of South Broad Street Bike Lanes to North Broad Street
- On-Road Bicycle connections on low-stress/low-volume roads in North Wales Borough
- Morris Road sharrow connections to Towamencin and Kriebel Road Trail (To Fischer's Park)
- On-Road sharrow Bicycle connections to Gwynedd Square Elementary School
- Hancock Road Bike Lanes (Township) to sharrow routes into Lansdale



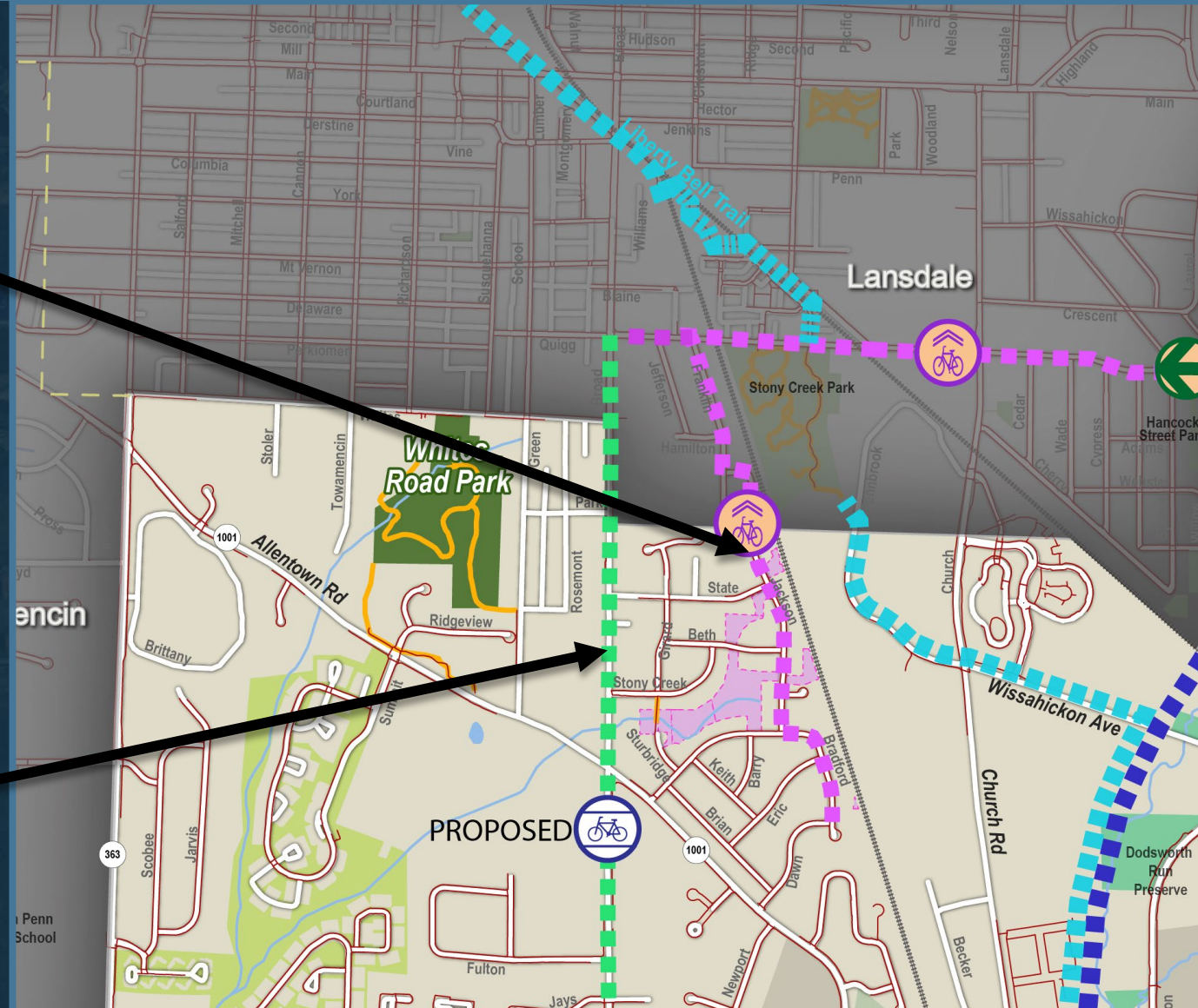
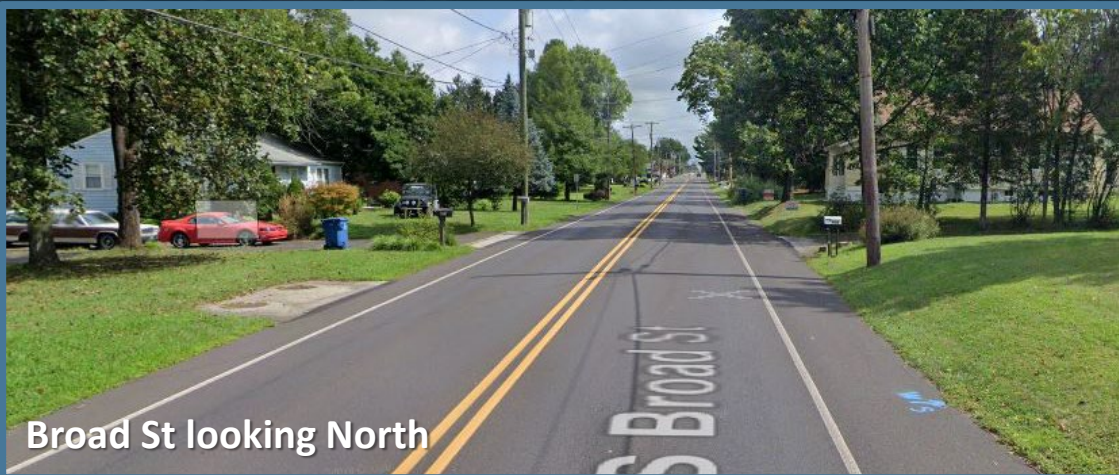
Upper Gwynedd Township
Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan
Draft Connectivity Plan - March 25, 2024



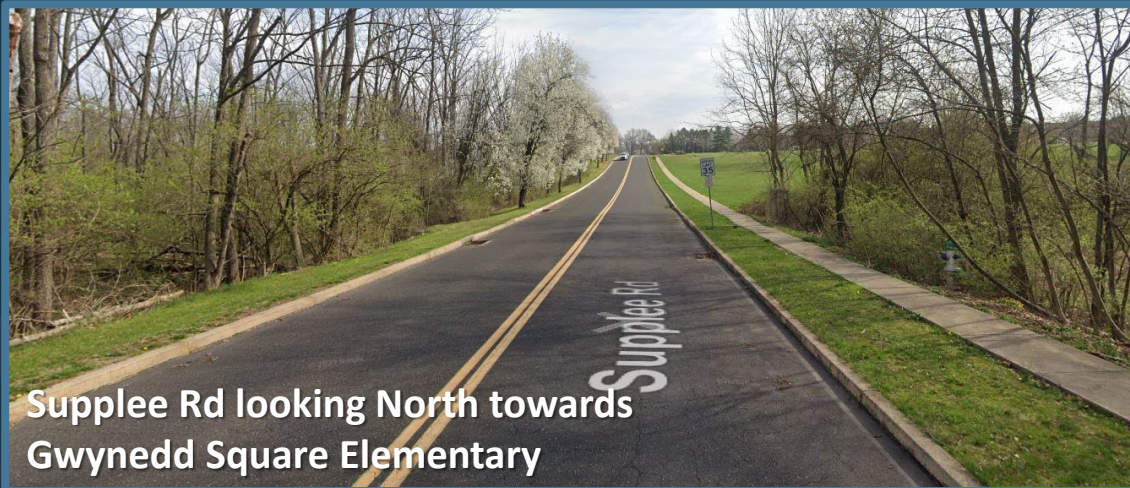
Quadrants



Broad St and Jackson St



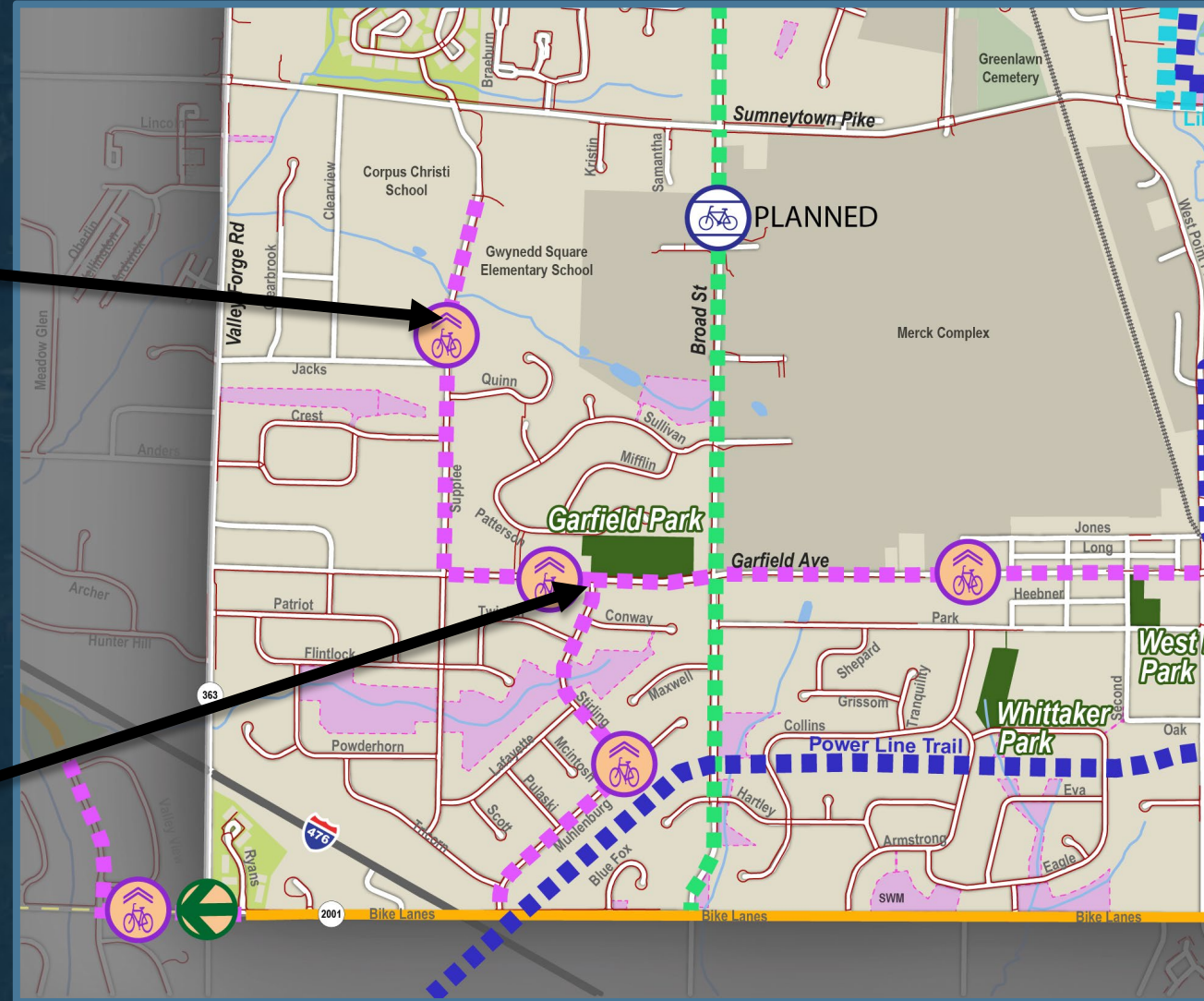
Supplee Rd and Garfield Ave



Supplee Rd looking North towards Gwynedd Square Elementary



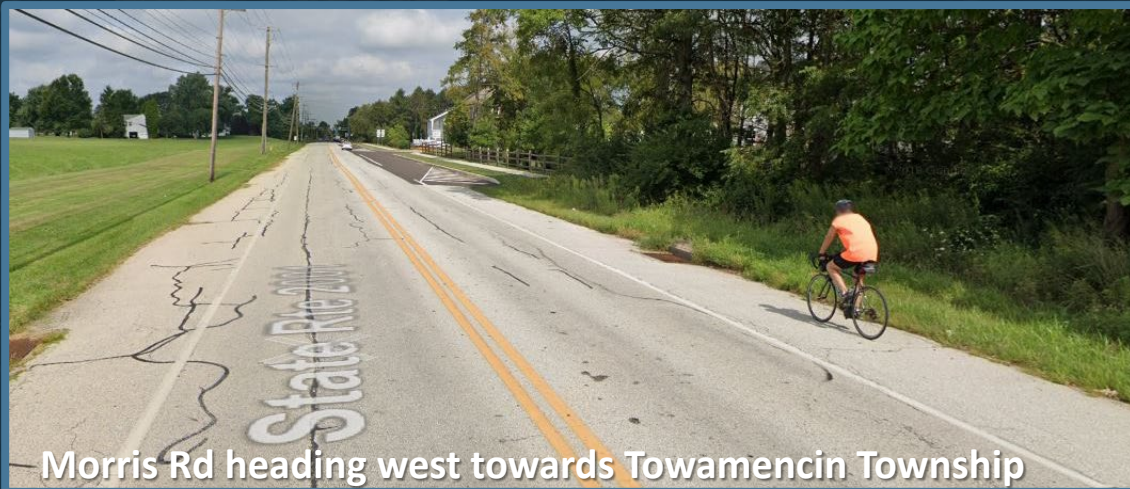
Intersection at Garfield Ave and Stirling Dr



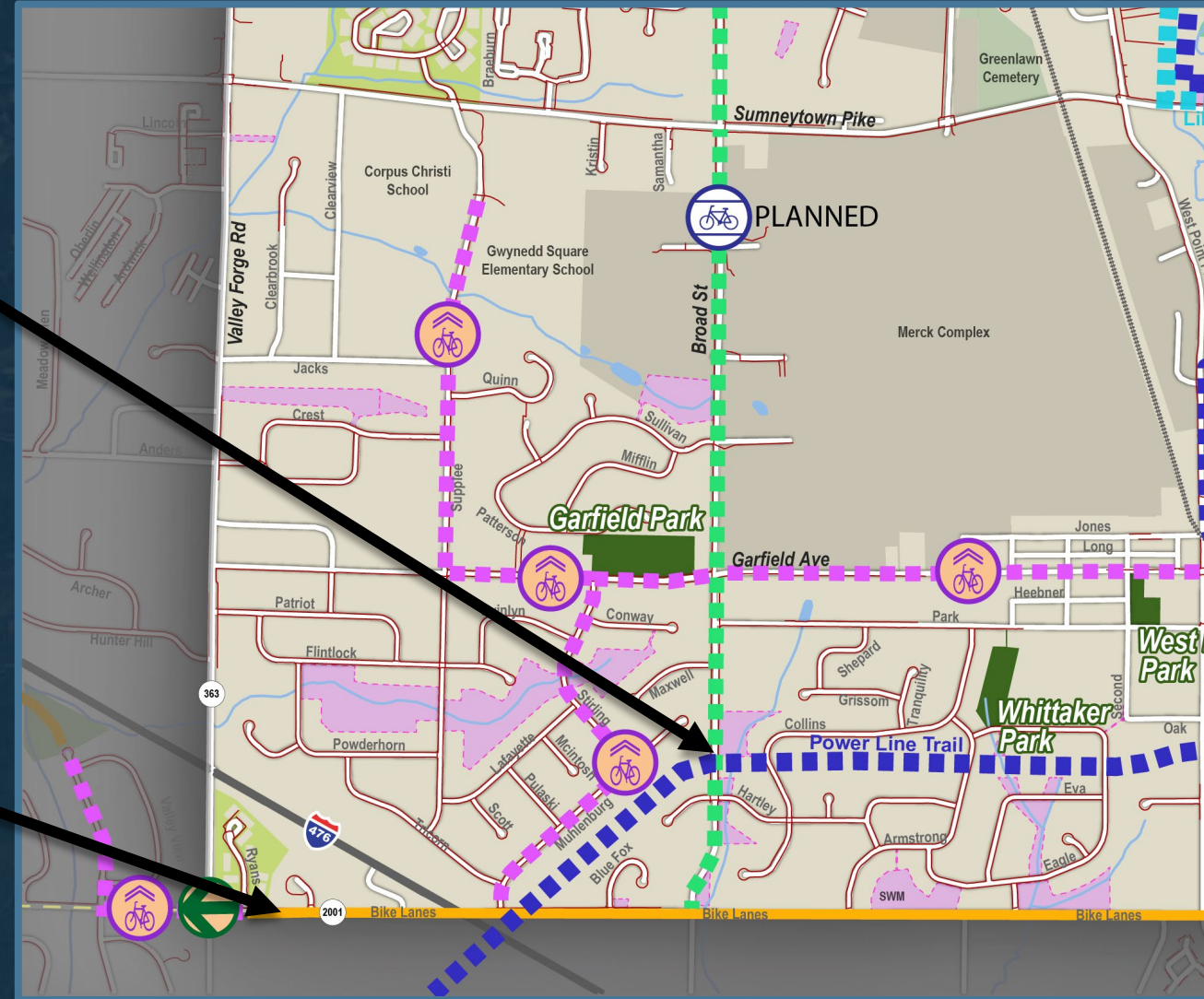
South Broad St and Morris Rd



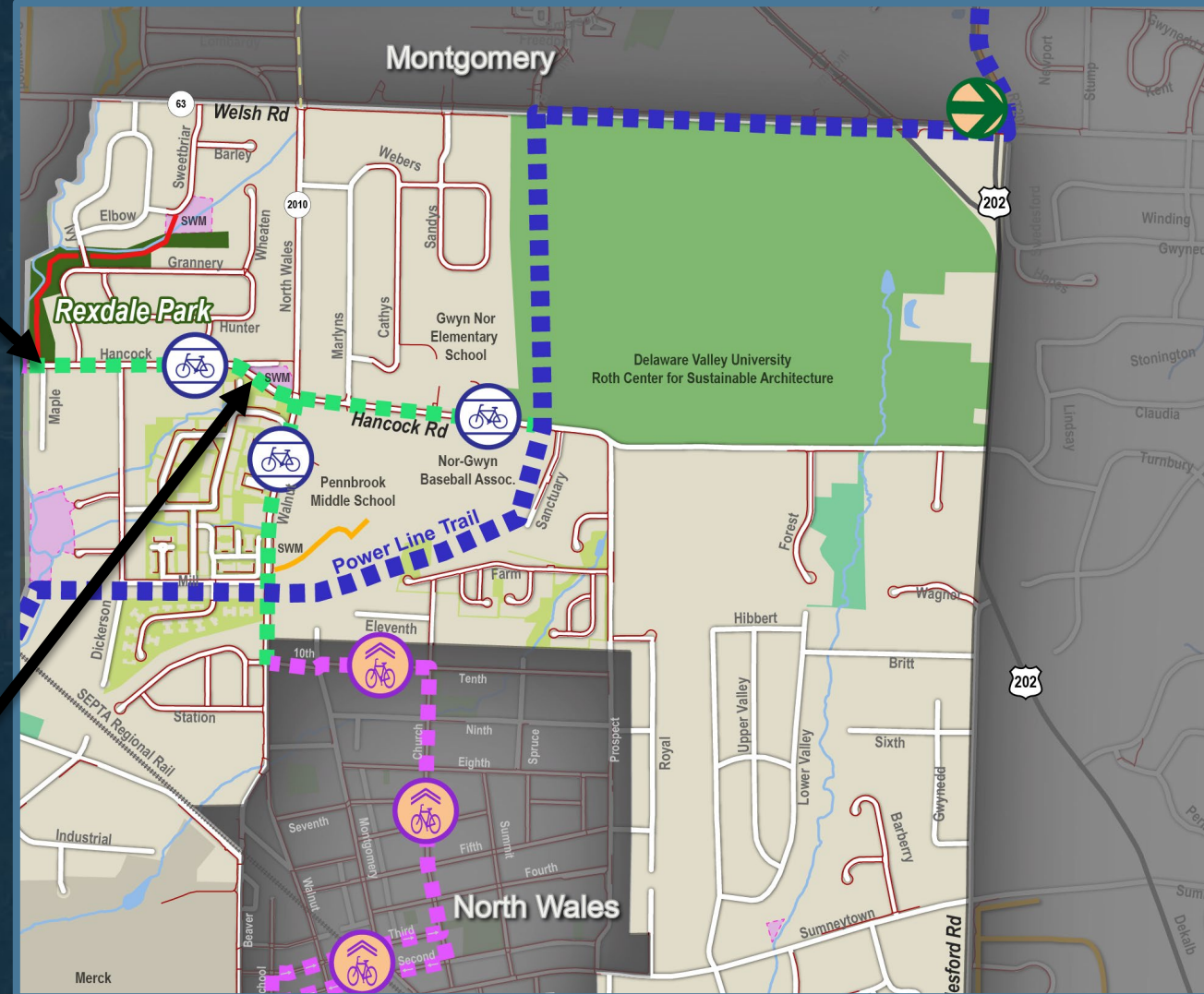
Broad St looking south at intersection with Powerline Trail



Morris Rd heading west towards Towamencin Township



Rexdale Park and Hancock St



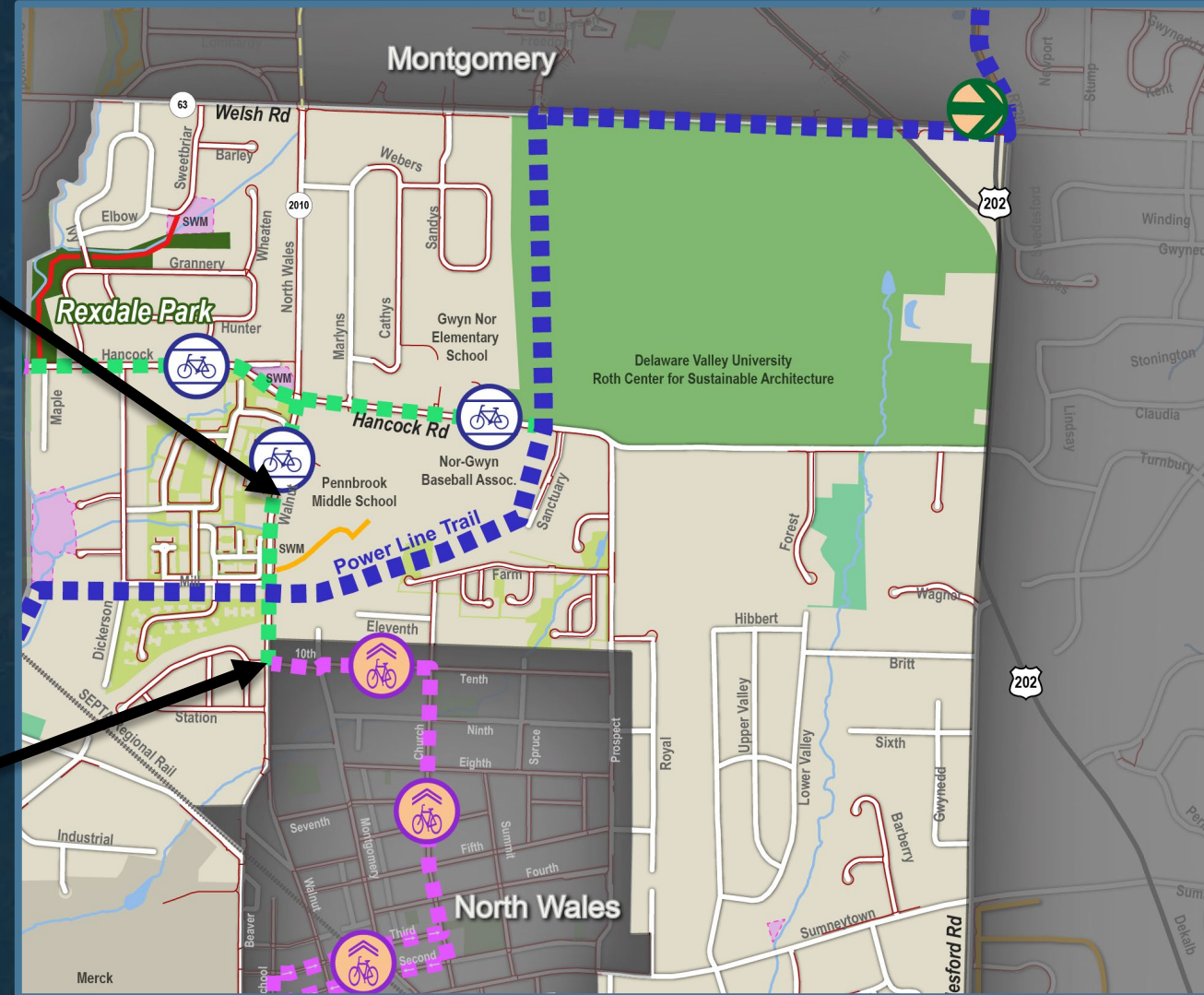
Walnut St



Walnut St with Pennbrook Middle School to the right



Walnut St and 10th St intersection



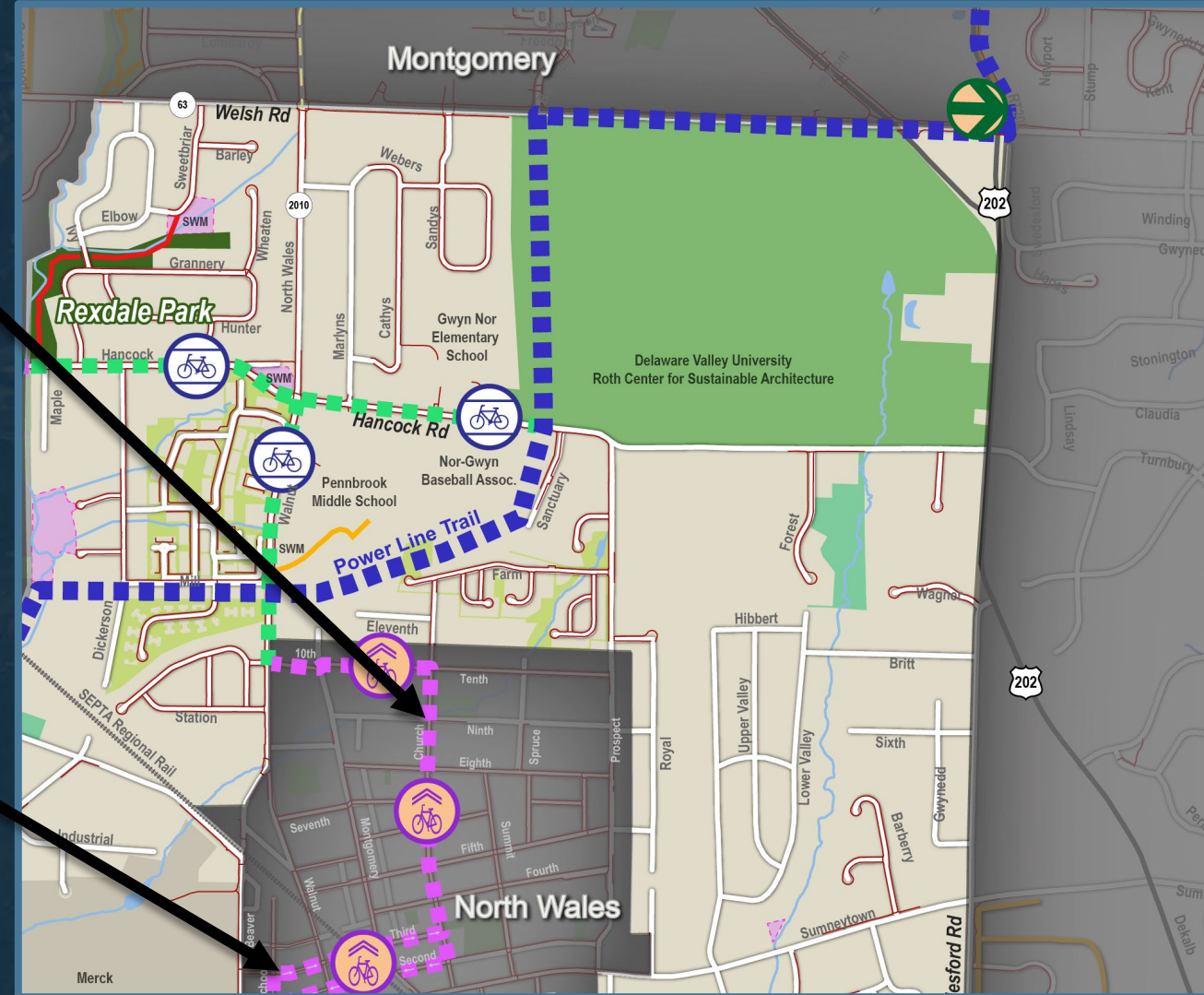
Church St & 3rd St



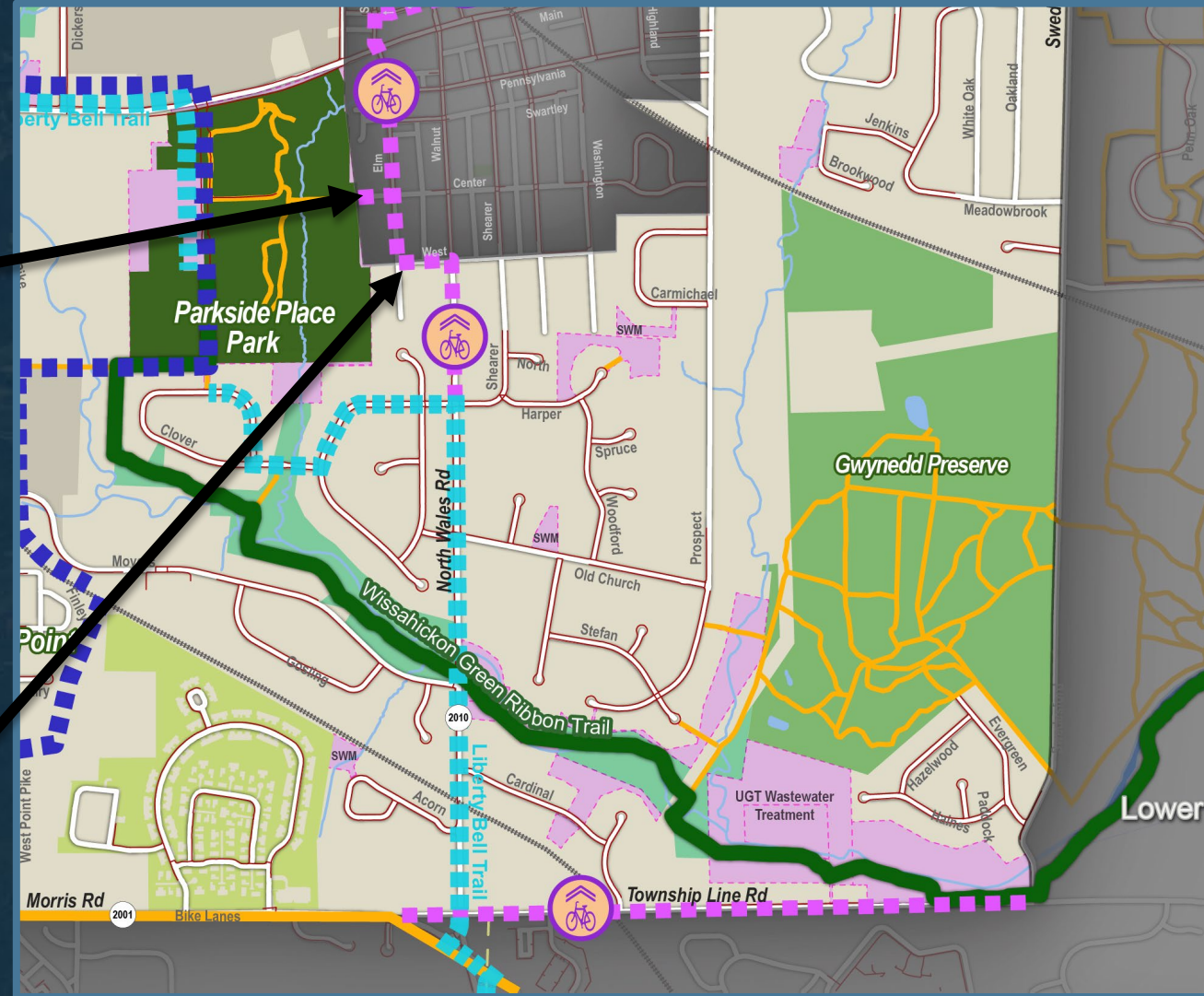
Church St looking North next to 9th St Park



School St and 3rd St Intersection



Elm Ave



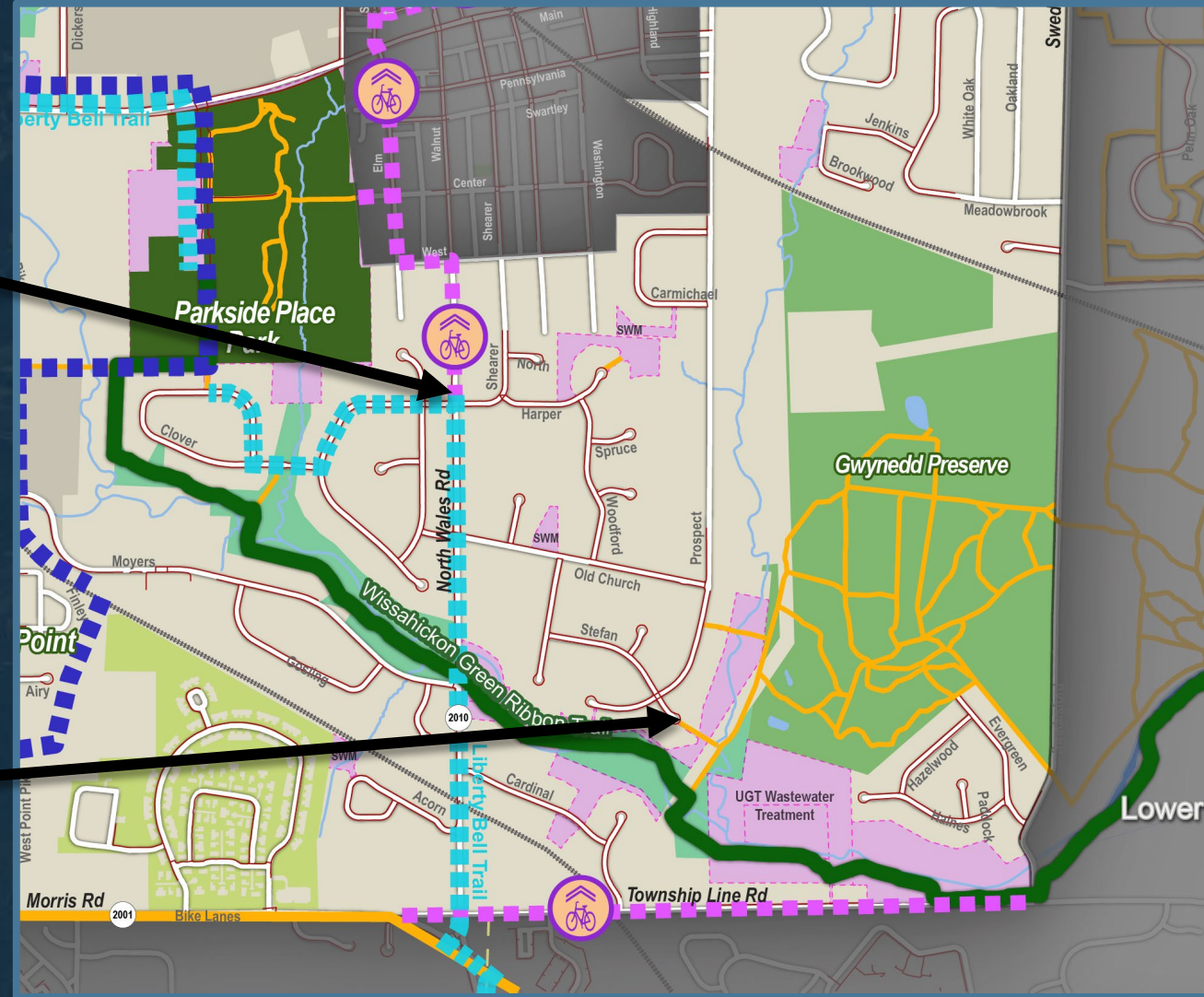
North Wales Rd



North Wales Rd and Shearer St intersection
connection to future Liberty Bell Trail



Stefan Pl connection to Green Ribbon Trail





Discussion

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan



Next Steps

Upper Gwynedd Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park & Open Space Plan

Next Steps

- Complete Focus Group and Key Person Interviews
- Refine concepts and recommendations
- Committee Meetings on 4/18, 5/16, and 6/20
- Prepare Draft Plan for Public Meeting 3 (September 12, 2024)

Public Meeting 3

- UPCOMING: Public Meeting 3 – Draft Plan
Thursday, September 12th, at 6:30PM
- Public meeting information; like the meeting agenda, notes, and slide presentation, can be found on the Township website to review after each meeting.
- <https://www.uppergwynedd.org/parks-recreation/pages/comprehensive-recreation-park-and-open-space-plan>



Project Schedule

Meeting	Purpose	Date	Time	Location
Study Committee Meeting #1	Kick off, Goals & Brainstorming	Thursday, November 16th, 2023	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #1	Programming & Brainstorming	Wednesday, November 29th, 2023	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Online Public Survey	November 29 – March 31			
Study Committee Meeting #2	Data Collection & Analysis	Wednesday, January 24, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #3	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, February 22, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Focus Group Meeting #1	Organized Sports Groups	Thursday, February 29, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Township Building
Focus Group Meeting #2	Teens and Seniors	Thursday, February 29, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Township Building
Key Person Interviews	February – March 2024			
Public Meeting #2	Initial Concepts	Wednesday, March 27, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Study Committee Meeting #4	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, April 18, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #5	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, May 16, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Study Committee Meeting #6	Work in Progress Reviews	Thursday, June 20, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #3	Draft Plan Preview	Thursday, September 12, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Public Review Period (60-Day)	September 5 – November 5			
Study Committee Meeting #7	Review Public Comment, Draft Plan	Thursday, October 3, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting - Board of Commissioner's	Draft Plan	Tuesday, October 15, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building
Study Committee Meeting #8	Pre-Final Plan	Thursday, November 7, 2024	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Hybrid
Public Meeting #4	Final Plan	Wednesday, December 4, 2024	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Township Building



Thank You!

Please feel free to contact us with any questions:

Simone Collins Landscape Architecture
(610) 239-7601

Pete Simone, Principal
psimone@simonecollins.com

Tim Adams, Staff Planner
tadams@simonecollins.com

Michelle Armour, Staff Landscape Architect
marmour@simonecollins.com

Certified Park and Recreational Professional
Derek Dureka
derekdureka@gmail.com

