

CITY OF ALLENTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

THE 1ST & 6TH WARDS

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN - DRAFT
MAY 12, 2022





CITY OF ALLENTOWN

1st & 6th Wards Neighborhood Plan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Planning Area	1
Plan Process	5
Urban Systems	27
Economic Development.....	29
Housing + Neighborhood Character	43
Accessibility + Connectivity	57
Services + Amenities	79
Living Systems	93
Next Steps	115



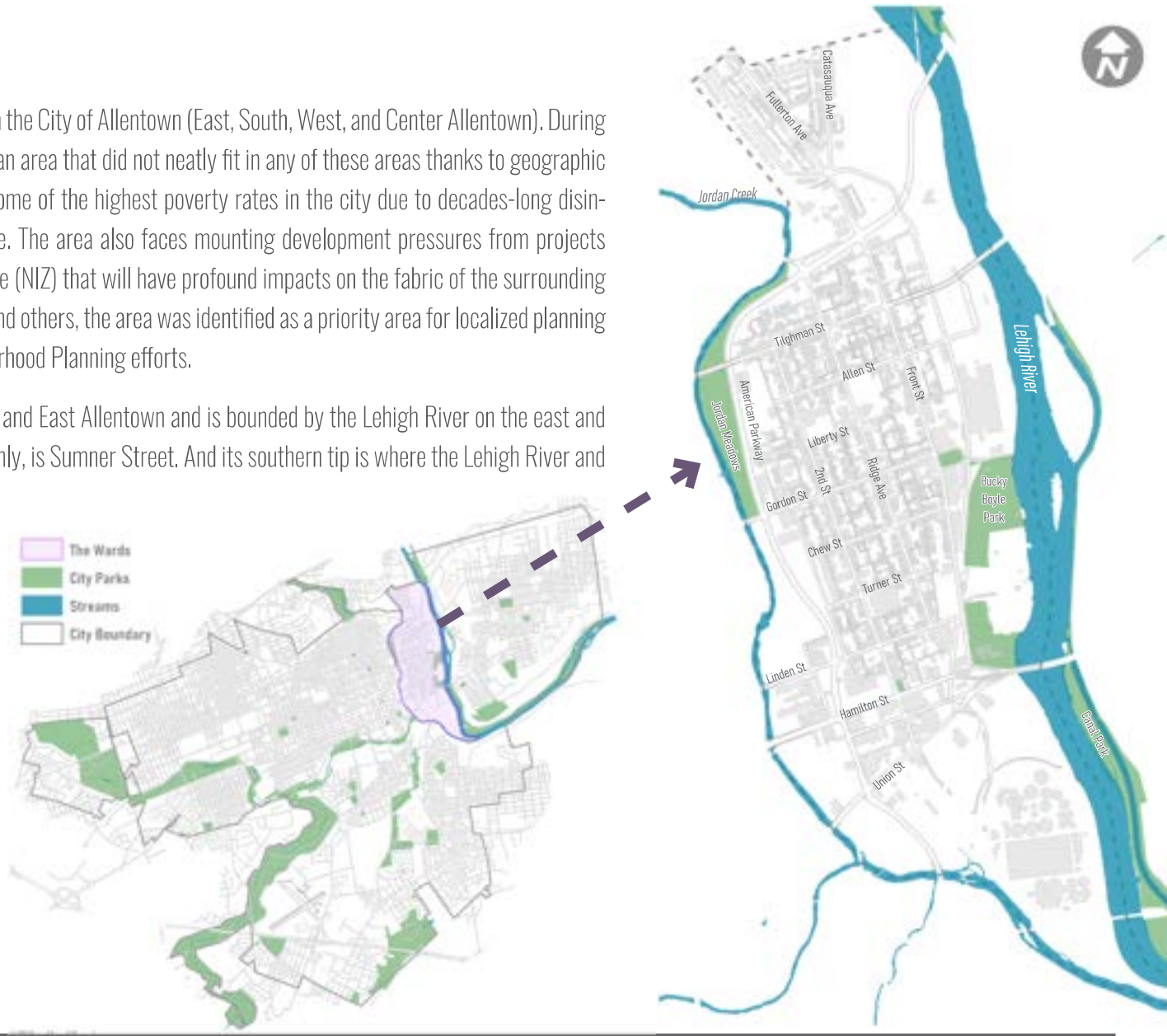
PLANNING AREA

GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY

Vision 2030 identified four major planning areas within the City of Allentown (East, South, West, and Center Allentown). During this process, the 1st and 6th Wards were identified as an area that did not neatly fit in any of these areas thanks to geographic and historic factors. In addition, the area is home to some of the highest poverty rates in the city due to decades-long disinvestments and postponement of property maintenance. The area also faces mounting development pressures from projects related to the Riverfront Neighborhood Investment Zone (NIZ) that will have profound impacts on the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods in years to come. Due to these factors and others, the area was identified as a priority area for localized planning and an excellent candidate for the city's initial Neighborhood Planning efforts.

The study area is located in between Center Allentown and East Allentown and is bounded by the Lehigh River on the east and the Jordan Creek on the west. Its north boundary, roughly, is Sumner Street. And its southern tip is where the Lehigh River and Jordan Creek meet. Among Allentonians, this area is commonly referred to as the 1st and 6th Wards. Among lifetime residents in the area, however, it is fondly called the Wards.

Compared to other neighborhoods in Allentown, the Wards is an older area, with a rich and diverse history centered around generations of working class immigrants that have called the area home through the years. This history is reflected in the cultural identity of the neighborhood and stands as a point of pride, especially among its longtime residents.



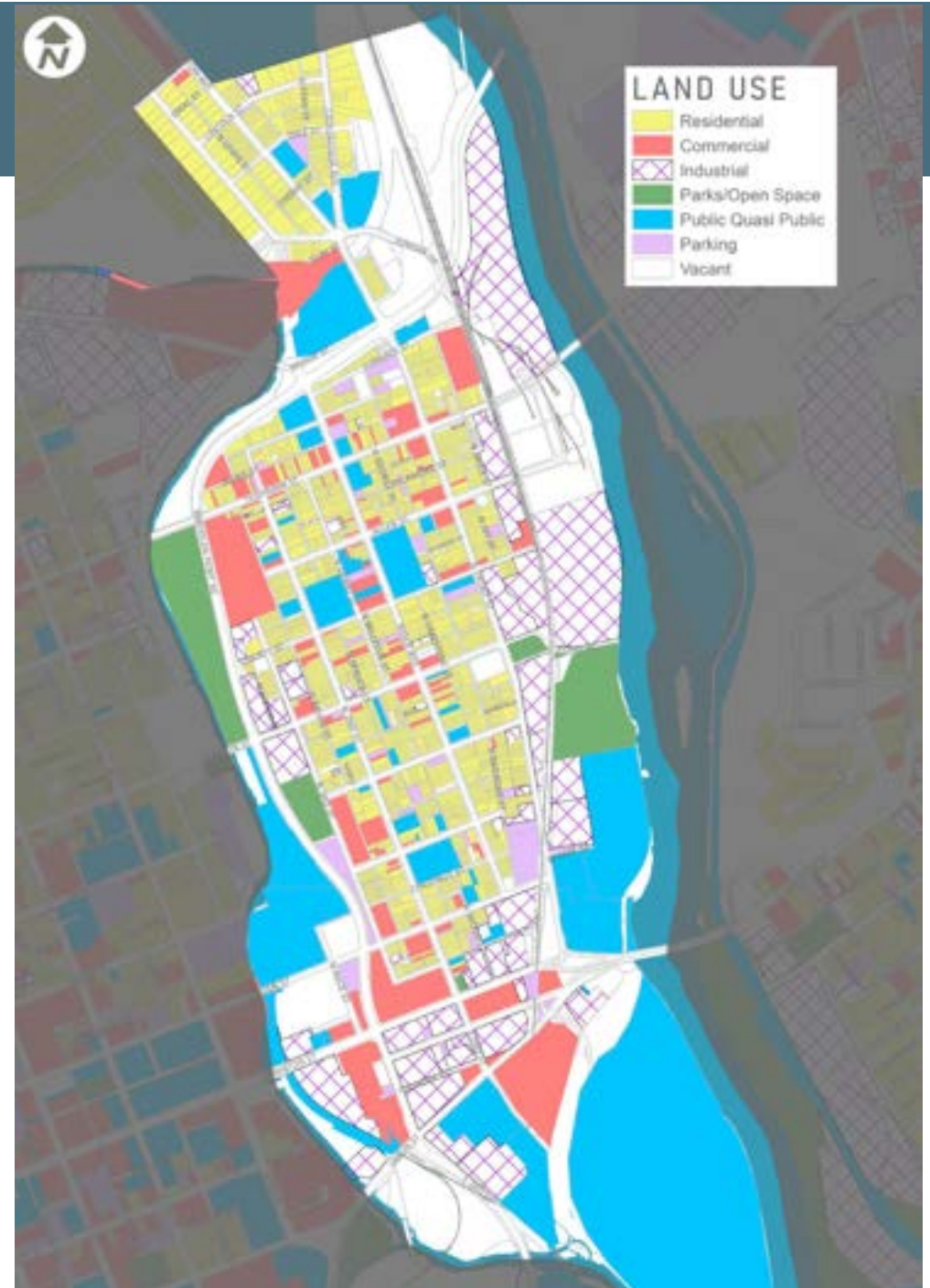
LAND USE

Combined, the 1st and 6th Wards consist of roughly 348 acres and features a highly dense, urban landscape. Based on Lehigh County’s land use classification, about 25% of this acreage is used for residential purposes, most of which are single family units built as row houses and duplexes. The other major land uses are industrial (19%) and Public/Institutional (26%).

A large portion of the Public/Institutional category is comprised of utilities including the water treatment plant in the southern tip of the planning area and those various parcels owned by the railroads. Not surprisingly, owing perhaps to years of disinvestment, more that 10% of the land is classified as vacant, most of which are zoned for residential use in scattered sites.

Distribution of Land by Use

LAND USE TYPE	Area	%
Residential	86.67	25%
Commercial	36.44	10%
Industrial	66.54	19%
Parks/Open Space	23.28	7%
Public/Institutional	91.72	26%
Parking	8.58	2%
Vacant	35.16	10%
Total	348.42	100%



DEMOGRAPHICS

Like much of Allentown, the Wards experienced sustained growth over the 10-year period between the 2010 and 2020 US Census with a population gain of +305 residents over that time period representing a growth rate of nearly 5%. Although this may not seem like a large number overall, due to limits on available space due to its confined geography, even modest increases in population can have a large impact on a wide variety of factors including available housing and distribution of services and amenities. These pressures are set to expand as new development within the Wards brings additional population in coming years

RACE + ETHNICITY

The Wards are also distinct in terms of the demographics of residents who call the community home. Thanks to a rich working class history, the Wards is one of the most racially and culturally diverse areas in the city and has followed the citywide trend of increased diversity over the past 10 years. This is especially true among populations identifying as two or more races (+11.8%) as well as the percentage of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin which has seen an increase of roughly 6% between 2010 and 2020.

RACE DISTRIBUTION - DECENNIAL CENSUS

RACE CATEGORY	The Wards			Allentown		
	2010	2020	DIF.	2010	2020	DIF.
White	49.6%	34.1%	-15.5%	58.5%	38.3%	-20.2%
Black or African American	13.3%	13.4%	+0.1%	12.5%	13.2%	+0.7%
American Indian	0.6%	1.3%	+0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%
Asian	1.5%	0.9%	-0.6%	2.2%	2.1%	-0.1%
Some other race	28.4%	32.1%	+3.7%	21.0%	30.1%	+9.2%
Two or more races	6.5%	18.3%	+11.8%	5.0%	15.5%	+10.5%
	100%	100%		100%	100%	

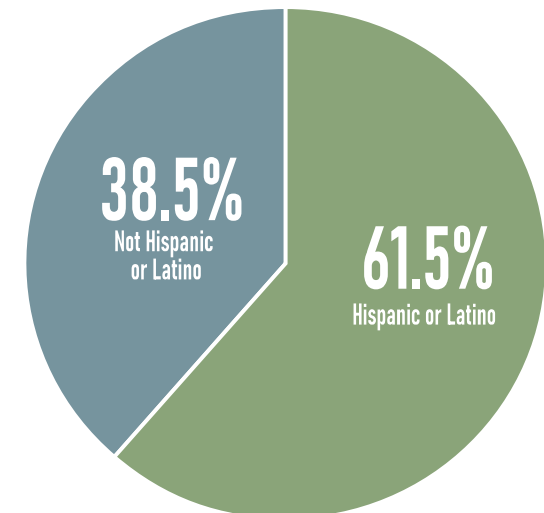
TOTAL POPULATION

2010: 6,194

2020: 6,499

+305

ETHNICITY 2020



+6% INCREASE
2010 TO 2020

AGE DISTRIBUTION

In terms of age distribution, the Wards is home to one of the highest percentages of younger populations within the city with a median age of 26.7 based on 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates. This is nearly five years younger than the citywide median age and roughly 14 years younger than that of the state. Furthermore, this difference is most dramatic in the age 5-19 age bracket which was a full 10% higher than the city median age for this group. This factor is very important in terms of planning for the future development of the Wards as the needs of the youth will need to be considered and addressed at each step of the planning process.

INCOME AND POVERTY

The Wards is also one of the most distressed areas in the city in terms of both median income and poverty levels. The roughly 65% of the population falls between the \$25,000 - \$75,000 range for median household income with an overall median income of \$36,503/year. This is roughly \$5,000 less than the median income for the city and nearly \$25,000 less than the statewide average. Furthermore, roughly 31% of the population within the Wards falls below the poverty level, more than 6% higher than the city and close to 20% higher than the statewide figure.

POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (2019)



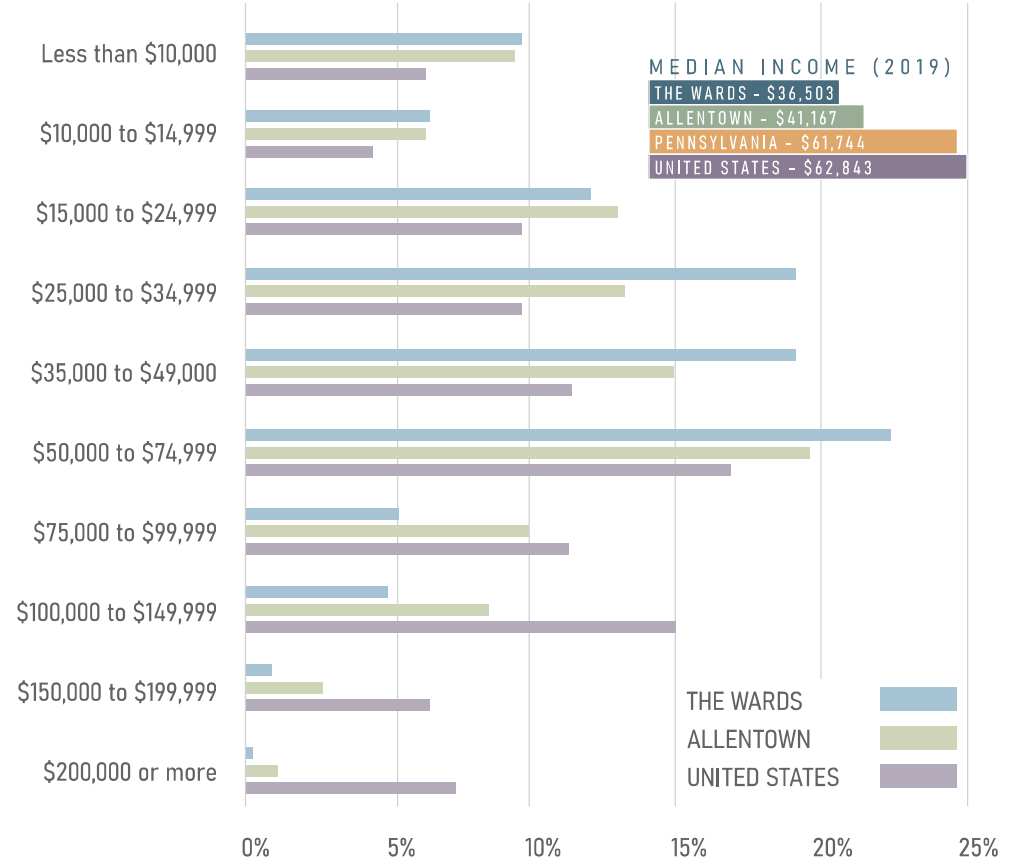
MEDIAN AGE (2019)



AGE OF RESIDENTS (ACS - 2019)

AGE BRACKET	The Wards	Allentown	DIF
Under 5 years	7.5%	7.6%	-0.1%
5 to 19 years	32.8%	22.8%	+10.0%
20 to 39 years	28.7%	30.9%	-2.2%
40 to 59 years	20.3%	22.5%	-2.2%
60 to 79 years	8.6%	12.6%	-4.0%
Over 80 years	2.1%	3.7%	-1.6%
	100%	100%	

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2019)



PLAN PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The 1st & 6th Wards Neighborhood Plan is the result of a multifaceted planning process with efforts developed by city staff to gather input from a diverse collection of stakeholders that make up the unique fabric of the local community. Throughout this evolving process, city staff has designed engagement opportunities to meet the needs of this community by gathering input from community advocates, focus groups, and public feedback.

These efforts began with the formation of the 1st & 6th Wards Steering Committee in October of 2020. At this initial meeting, the Steering Committee outlined their goals and objectives for the plan while providing their own personal knowledge and perspectives gained through their connection to the 1st & 6th Wards. This group has played an integral part in the plan's development by participating in monthly Steering Committee meetings, attending events, and providing input on throughout the process.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the adaptation and modification of public engagement techniques. Throughout this evolving process, city staff designed a number of engagement opportunities to determine the needs of this neighborhood by gathering input from community advocates, focus groups, and public feedback, with due regard to COVID-19 safety protocols.

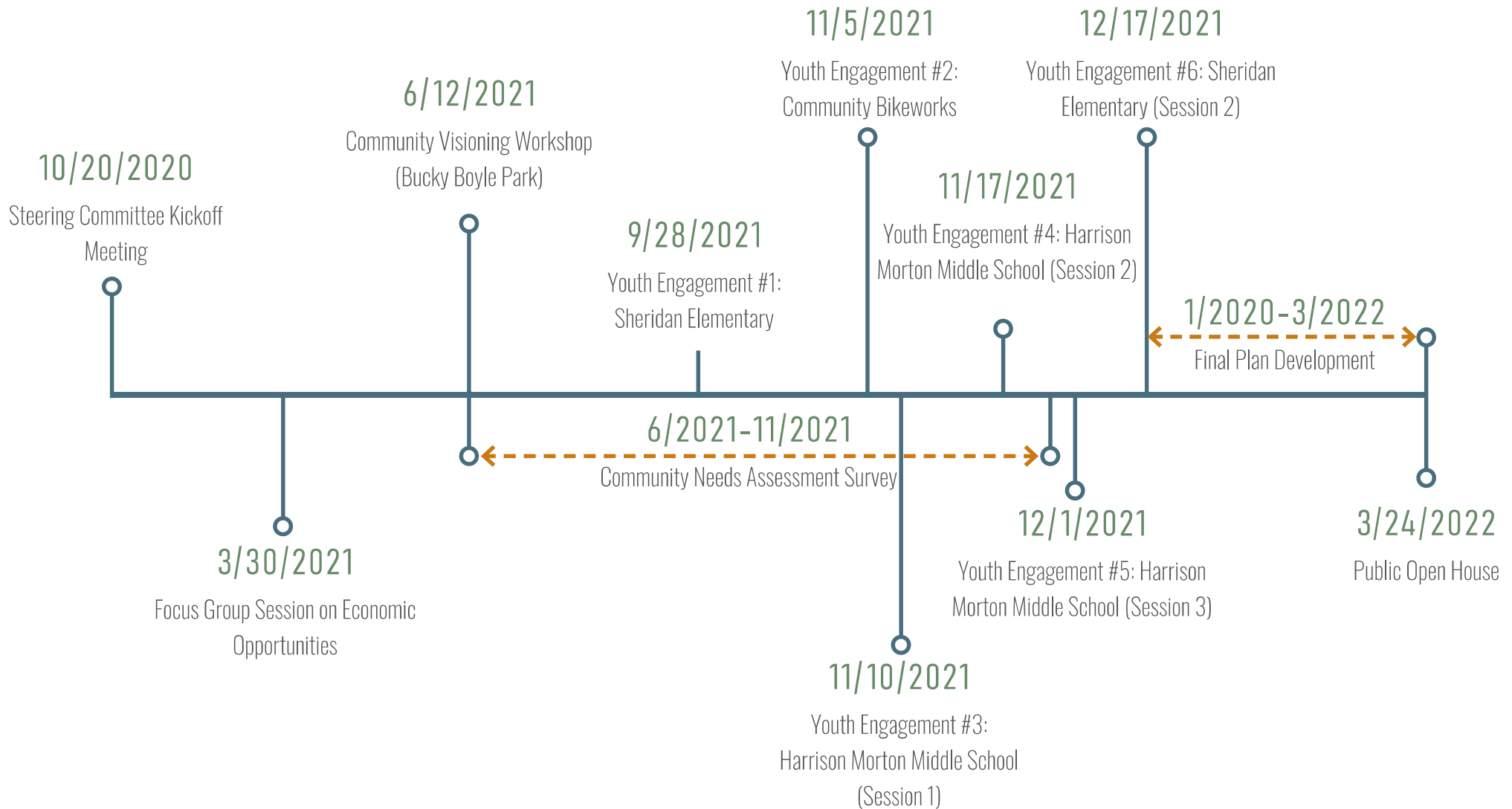
To assist in goal setting and in identifying projects the original idea was to set up working groups corresponding to the five Urban Systems espoused in Vision 2030. However, recruiting enough people to participate in the working groups proved difficult due to scheduling conflicts and lack of interest.



An alternative to the working group was to convene one-time focus group sessions on the five Urban Systems. Likewise, similar difficulties were experienced, and as a result, only one focus group session (on economic opportunities) was convened. The attendance concerns and safety protocols brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the difficulty in forming working groups and convening the other focus group sessions.

In view of these challenges, the other engagement options explored to obtain good information included holding an open-air community workshop, an extended no-contact survey, and special focus group sessions with the youth.

PROJECT TIMELINE



PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Neighborhood Plan for the 1st and 6th Wards is to provide a reliable situational analysis of the neighborhoods' conditions and to identify a series of either stand-alone or complementary recommendations that will help guide future neighborhood-level planning activities and initiatives. The specific goals of the plan that were identified and developed throughout the planning process include:

- 1) Analyze community trends and conditions in a way that provides a good understanding of the current existing conditions within the Wards and provide a baseline for future efforts
- 2) Outline a future direction for the community that reflects the needs and desires of current and future residents.
- 3) Provide actionable strategies that give guidance to stakeholders such as residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, and public officials when making decisions regarding growth and development of the Wards.
- 4) Identify strategies for improving neighborhood programs, encouraging and expanding homeownership, and revitalizing critical neighborhood commercial areas and public spaces.





COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

On June 12, 2021, the Allentown Planning Department hosted a community visioning workshop for the 1st & 6th Wards at Bucky Boyle Park in Allentown. The workshop represents a component of the ongoing neighborhood planning efforts within the 1st & 6th Wards. Community focused neighborhood planning was highlighted as an important next step in the Vision 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan and the 1st & 6th Wards were identified as a priority area to spearhead the process.

The community visioning workshop was the culmination of extensive planning and collaboration between city planning staff and the 1st & 6th Ward Steering Committee comprised of local stakeholders including The Riverside Neighborhood Association, local nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and places of worship.

The 1st & 6th Ward Community Visioning Workshop took place on June 12th from 2:00-5:00 PM at Bucky Boyle Park. More than 100 participants took part in the workshop including residents of the 1st & 6th Wards as well as people who visit the area on a regular basis. The visioning workshop featured stations with interactive activities centered around five main themes:

- 1) Community Visioning
- 2) Housing
- 3) Public Health + Safety
- 4) Access + Mobility
- 5) Local Economy

Participants were provided a passport encouraged to visit each station to receive a stamp to be entered in a series of raffle drawings throughout the event. In addition to Planning Staff, volunteers from multiple city departments including Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and Allentown Police Department along with members of the steering committee, local stakeholders, and Community Ambassadors assisted in efforts throughout the day.

After checking in, attendees were directed to the Community Visioning station where they were asked to share their feedback and opinions regarding the 1st & 6th Wards. In one activity, participants were asked to provide 1-3 words about what made their community unique. The responses were then combined to form a “Word Cloud” with the size of the words/phrases indicating the number of responses. Responses varied with positive common themes such as “Community” and “Multicultural” as well as responses that pointed to potential needs such as “Expensive” and “Deteriorated” related to the current affordability and condition of housing options.

Additional activities included prompts such as “Things I like about my community” and “Things my community needs”. Based on community feedback, some common themes arose regarding things people liked about their community. These themes included the availability and quality of parks, friendly and supportive neighbors that help build a sense of community, and a diverse mix of cultures among residents.

In terms of community needs, respondents pointed to issues such as resources/activities/safe spaces for youth, need for more police presence with a connection to the community, more community events, grants and assistance for home renovations/upkeep and community development, resources for mental health/drug abuse/ homelessness, and concerns about street safety.

Additional community feedback gathered from the visioning workshop has been compiled and integrated into the corresponding chapter theme in the plan. Such feedback has played an important role in understanding and prioritizing the current needs of the community as well as guiding potential strategies to address these issues.

“To connect and regain the feeling of a community neighborhood”

“A better connection between police, residents, and business owners. Building relationships very vital to improving this neighborhood”

“More community events for families & children”

“Develop community gardens please!”



COMMUNITY SURVEY

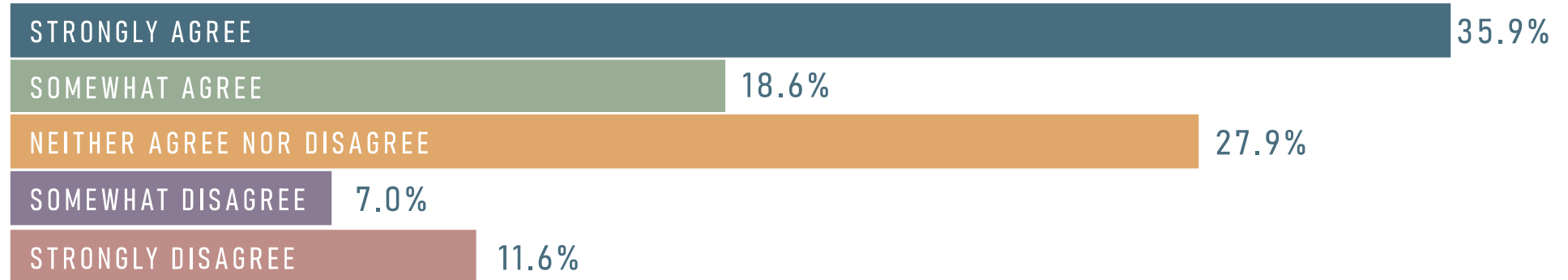
Understanding the needs of the community from the perspective of current residents is an essential component of any neighborhood plan. In order to accomplish this, planning staff developed a community needs assessment survey to gain a better understanding of existing community assets and needs to better plan for future efforts in the area. The survey was launched as part of the June 12th Community Visioning Workshop and responses were collected through October 31, 2021.

The survey covered a wide range of topics including Housing + Neighborhood Character, Local Economy, Health + Public Safety, Access + Mobility, and Neighborhood Amenities. In addition, the survey also asked a series of demographic questions to gain a snapshot of respondents. These insights have helped inform planning staff on the current assets and needs within the community and has helped shape the recommendations, goals and objectives of the plan. Similar to data from the visioning workshop, findings from the survey have been integrated into the corresponding chapters of the plan.

CONNECTION TO 1ST/6TH WARDS

I am a Resident of the 1st/6th Wards	45.7%
I work in the 1st/6th Wards	7.1%
I own or operate a business in the 1st/6th Wards	2.9%
I regularly visit the 1st/6th Wards	38.6%
None of the above	12.9%
	100%

I FEEL CONNECTED TO AND INVESTED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD



WHAT DO YOU LIKE

Although the survey looked at a wide range of topics, one of the most fundamental questions simply asked residents what they liked about their neighborhood. While there were a couple negative responses, the vast majority expressed a sense of pride for the history of the Wards and a shared desire to see it grow into a thriving, close knit community. Some of the responses shared in the survey are displayed below.

“Neighbors are concerned about each other. Close unity”

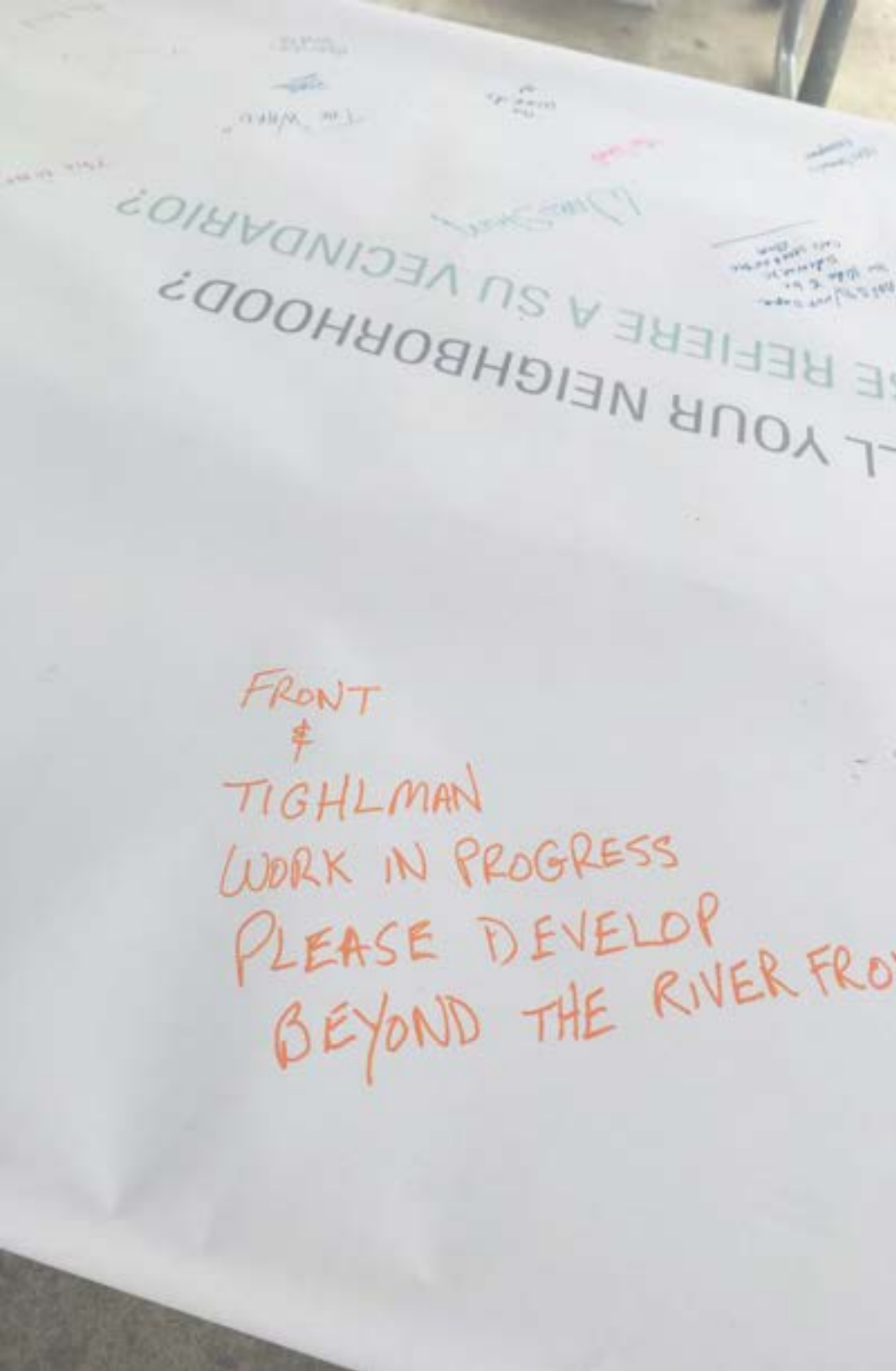
“Muchos somos una familia”

“The parks”

“Convenience”

“My church is in walking distance, My neighbors”

“Not too much crime or noise”



MOST ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

“Muy tranquilo”

“My house”

“It feels like home”

“The history”

“It’s clean, not a lot of
violence”

“The people there are
family”

“Near to health care,
near to stores”

“La tranquilidad”

“The history neighborhood
continuity”

“Less congested
than center city”

“It is home”

“Cultured”

“Nice people”

“Good neighbors”

“Seguridad y tranquilidad”

“Culture”

“Friends”



YOUTH OUTREACH

One of the major pieces of feedback that was received throughout the planning process was a desire for more opportunities for youth involvement within the community. With this in mind, planning staff made a concerted effort to engage youth in a variety of manners within the formation of this report and build relationships for continued, ongoing efforts beyond the scope of this plan.

LEARNING THE PLANNING PROCESS

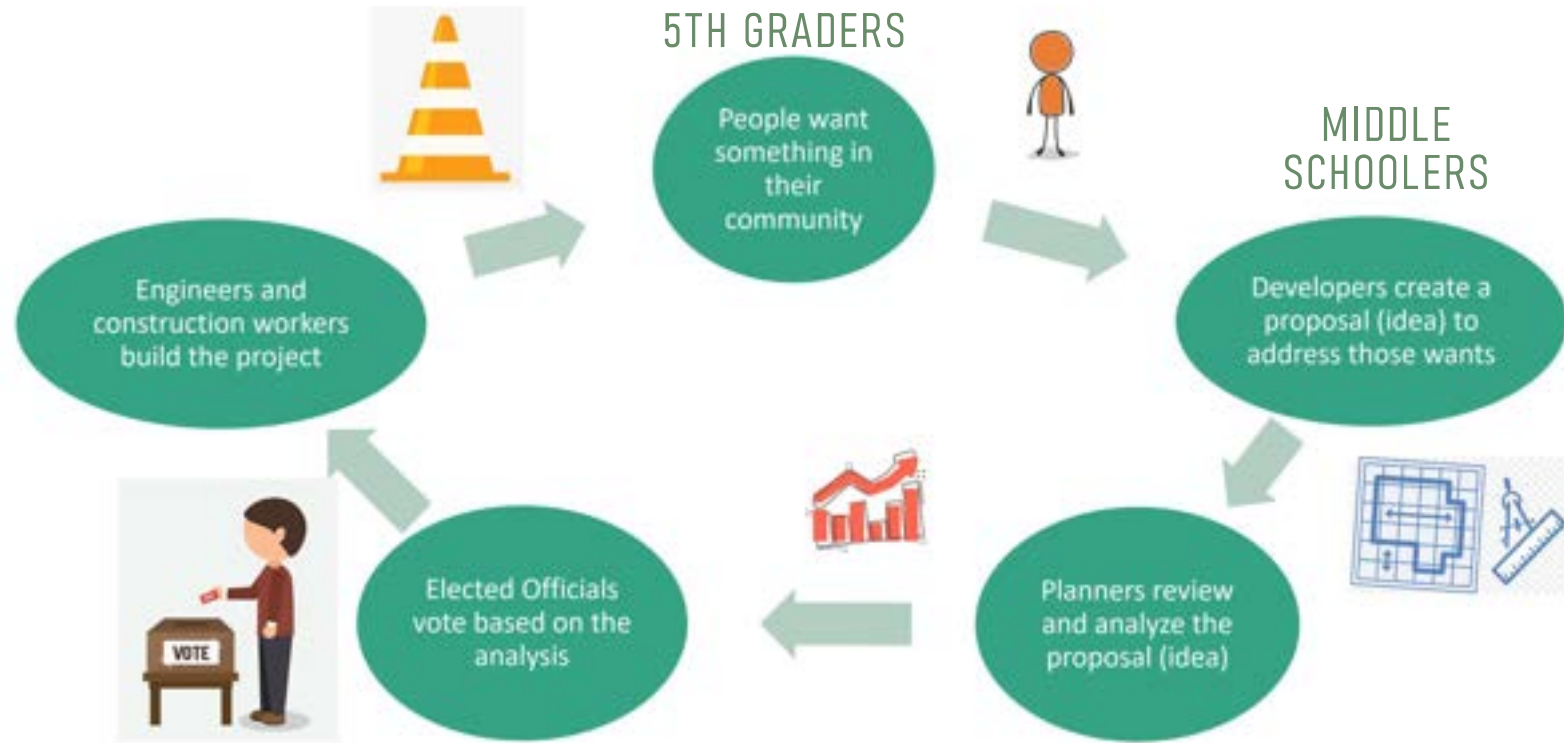
All too often, in community planning, the youth perspective is not fully taken into account or approached after the fact. Planning staff wanted to ensure that these important perspectives were captured early on in the planning process and developed a curriculum to achieve this goal.

The goal of the curriculum was to introduce students to planning by participating in a mock planning process with 5th Grade Sheridan playing the role of the public and Harrison Morton Middle Schoolers serving as developers/planners to bring the public vision to life. The program also served as an important opportunity to collect input and observations from a youth perspective that can often be overlooked.

The first phase of the exercise took place at Sheridan Elementary School and engaged 15 students from the 5th Grade class over a 2-hour period. The curriculum included various hands-on activities centered around themes of transportation access/mobility and park planning. These activities were designed to serve as an engaging, interactive medium to involve young students in the planning process and ensure that their unique opinions and perspectives were heard and taken into account.



THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS



The planning staff began the activity with a brief presentation explaining the community planning process and the role each group plays. Students participated in the discussion providing their definitions of planning and how they participate in planning within their community.

The process begins with the public advocating for a change within their community followed by project proposals from developers (or similar groups) to address the needs of the community. These plans are then reviewed by planners before being approved by

elected officials. Once approved, projects move on to the engineering and construction phase before the finished product is utilized and assessed by the public.

Staff explained that the 5th Graders would be playing the role of the Public in the process and that their opinions and observations would be utilized to help inform the developers (Harrison-Morton Middle School Students) as they conceptualize potential community based projects.

MY TRIP TO SCHOOL

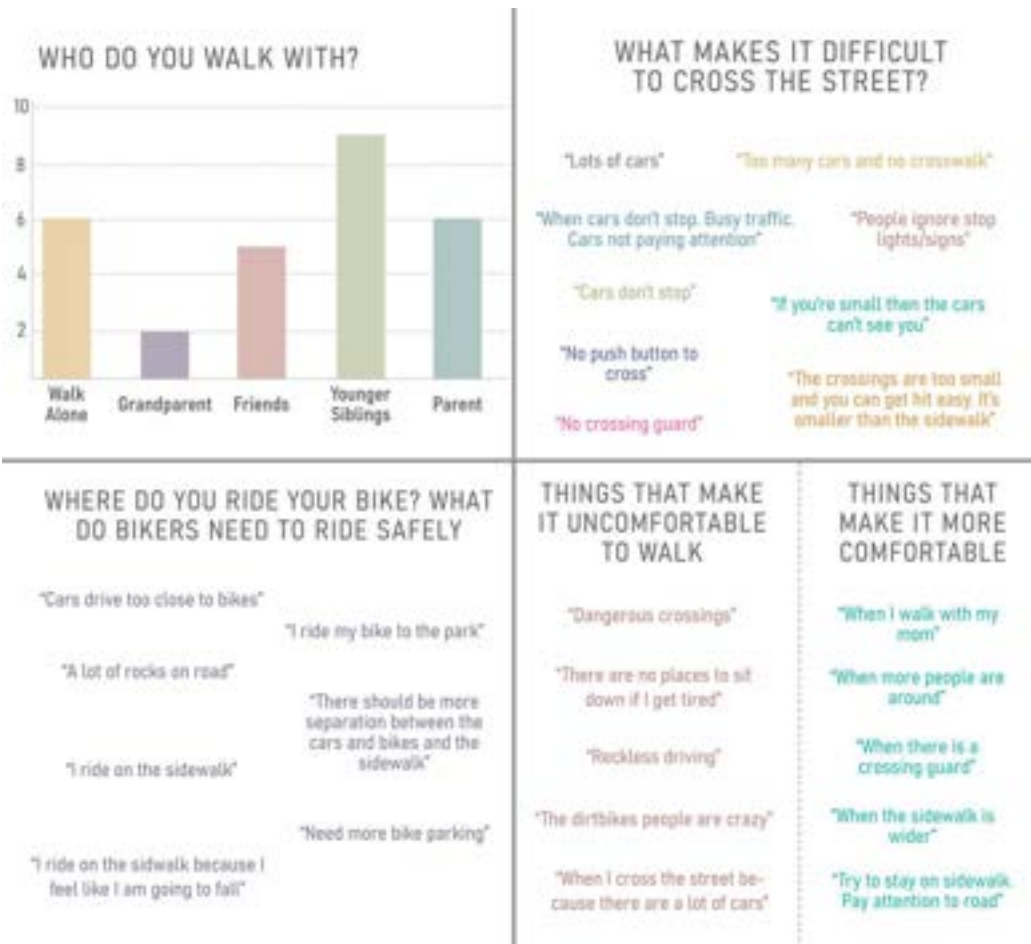
During the Community Visioning Workshop, attendees indicated that the majority of students (at both Sheridan Elementary and Harrison-Morton Middle School) walk to school. With this in mind, planning staff designed an interactive activity to help students think about their journey to school and identify barriers that might make it unsafe for walking and biking.



Students followed along through a guided workbook to visualize their trip to school. At each step, students provided their own personal insights about things they encounter on a daily basis.

Some major takeaways were that there are too many cars on the roads, vehicles drive too fast and ignore stop signs/traffic signals. Students also mentioned that the lack of crosswalks make it difficult to cross at many intersections. Students also mentioned that they often walked with their younger siblings (and sometimes grandparents) indicating a need to plan for people of all ages and abilities when thinking about street design.

Students then learned about different strategies planners can use to make streets safer for all users. The activity concluded with a “virtual walk” via Google street-view to see the barriers discussed in real world conditions.



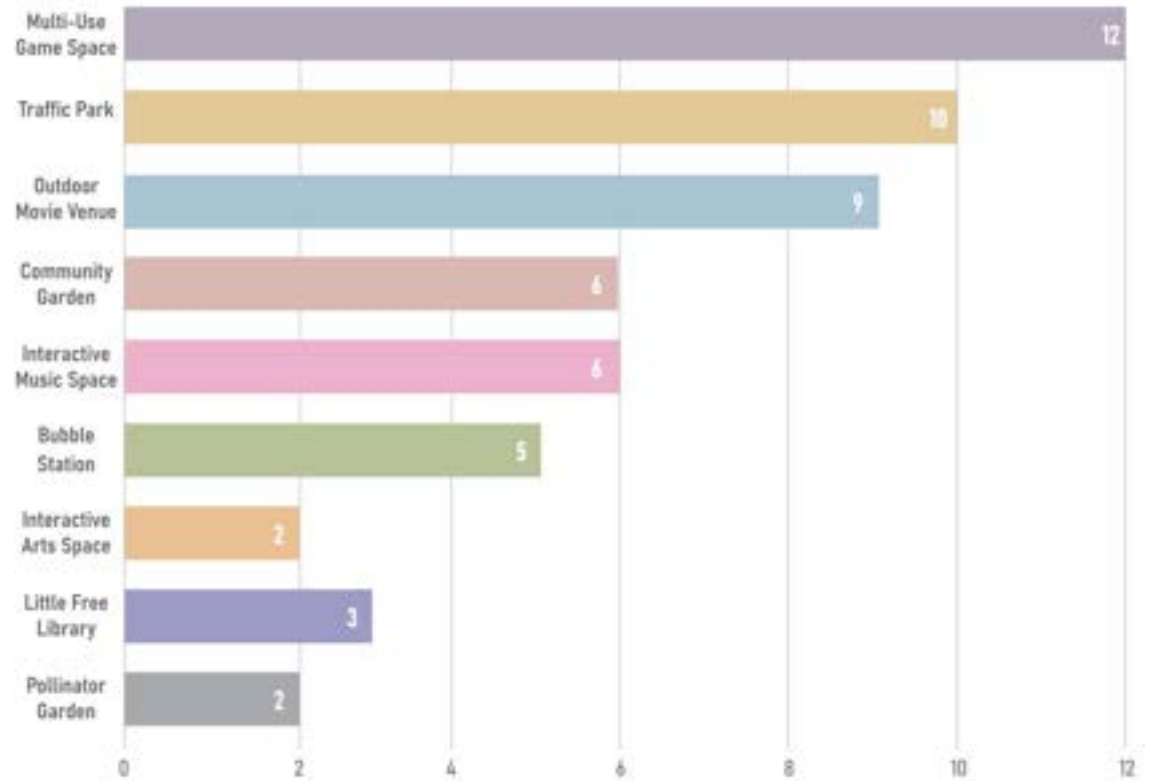
PLAN YOUR PERFECT PARK

Students then participated in a park planning activity to vote on what elements they would want to include in their perfect park. Students were given a sheet with different potential park elements along with 12 sticker dots. Students then used the stickers to vote on which elements they would include in their perfect park. Students were allowed to spread their votes across multiple elements or group them on elements they really want to prioritize. Elements included:

- 1) Multi-Use Game Space
- 2) Traffic Park
- 3) Outdoor Movie Venue
- 4) Community Garden
- 5) Interactive Music Space
- 6) Bubble Station
- 7) Interactive Arts Space
- 8) Little Free Library
- 9) Pollinator Garden

Based on the voting, multi-use game space was the most popular element followed closely by traffic park and outdoor movie venue. Community garden and interactive music space also received multiple votes.

WHAT ELEMENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE IN YOUR PARK?



Multi-Use Game Space



Traffic Park



Outdoor Movie Venue



Community Garden



Interactive Music Space



Bubble Station



Interactive Arts Space



Little Free Library



Pollinator Garden





HARRISON MORTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

The second phase of the program took place at Harrison Morton Middle School over the course of three separate sessions. Planning staff worked with members of the schools student government club to learn about the planning process by playing the part of developers and planners to take the big picture ideas provided by the 5th Graders and turn them into real world concepts.

During the first session, planning staff introduced the planning process and then presented the ideas the 5th Graders came up with related to road safety and park planning in the Wards. The middle schoolers were then given two real world sites:

- 1) Empty lot on Ridge Avenue
- 2) Intersection of Ridge Avenue and Gordon Street

The group then used tracing paper to create concepts for how the site could be adapted. The students utilized the comments and feedback from the 5th Graders at Sheridan to inform their concepts. This feedback served the role of public feedback in the planning process.



HARRISON MORTON SESSION #2

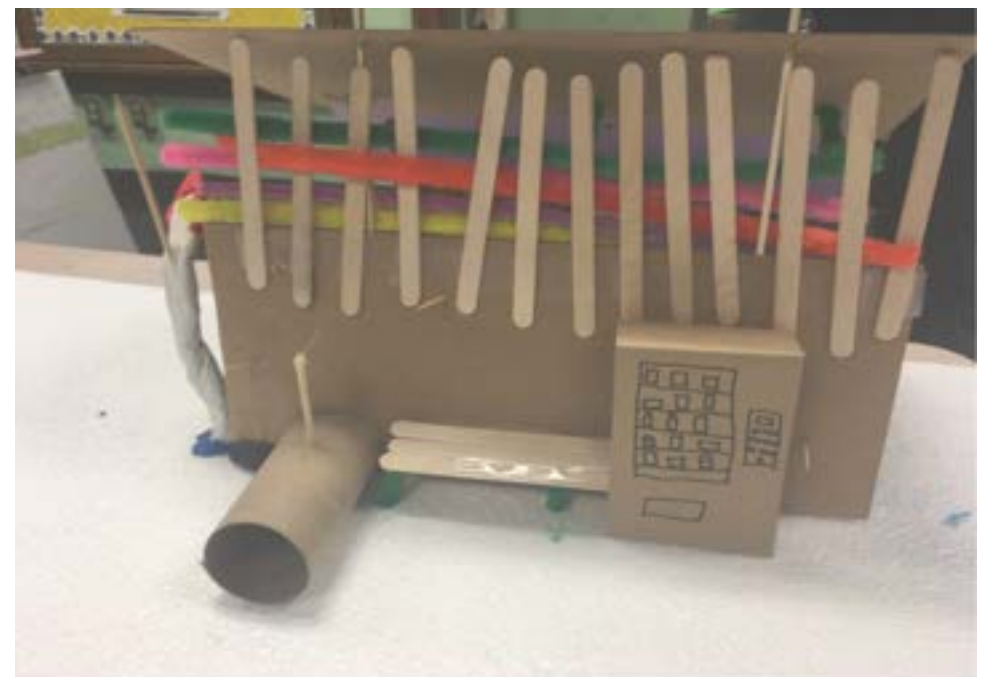
During the second session, Harrison Morton students were given a mystery box of recycled materials and arts supplies and given 45 minutes to turn their concept sketches into three-dimensional renderings. Students worked together to determine the layout, design, and elements to include in their design. The group learned how to prioritize their resources and navigate the challenges of the sites all while attempting to address then needs and desires of the public (Sheridan 5th grade students).

At the end of the program, Harrison Morton students gathered together to present their models and discuss the things they learned, and challenges they faced throughout the process. The students talked about difficulties including all the visions proposed by the 5th grade students due to limits on time and resources and acknowledged how this mirrors planning challenges in the real world. Most importantly, the group agreed on how important it is to have a voice in the decision making process and how inclusion and equity are essential elements to good planning.

Planning staff recorded these discussions and created a video presentation that was then presented to the original group of 5th grade students from Sheridan Elementary. The students were excited to see their visions on display in the 3D concepts and provided feedback on which elements they liked the most.

For the final phase of the project, planning staff hopes to work with the community to host a demonstration project at the site locations to highlight the work by the students and test their proposed concepts in real world settings.





COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

On March 24, 2022, the Allentown Planning Department hosted a community open house at the America On Wheels Museum in Allentown. The event served as the culmination of the neighborhood planning process within the Wards and highlighted the various elements of the neighborhood plan and gathered additional public feedback from those in attendance.

Overall, more than 100 people attended the open house including local residents, visitors to the wards, public officials, city employees, and local media. Attendees were encouraged to visit seven stations each highlighting the specific chapters of the plan where they learned about the findings from the plan and offered their feedback.

- 1) Existing Conditions + Plan Process
- 2) Housing
- 3) Economic Development
- 4) Services + Amenities
- 5) Living Systems
- 6) Accessibility + Connectivity
- 7) Youth Engagement
- 8) Community Visioning





After signing in, attendees were directed to follow around the perimeter of the room in a counter-clockwise manner stopping at each of the themed stations in the process. At each station, city staff was on hand to explain the existing conditions and analysis for each topic as well as the community input gathered throughout the planning process.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendees were then encouraged to provide input regarding their priorities for future projects and initiatives that were presented as implementation tables outlining potential goals and subsequent next steps for each topic. Some of the recommendations that were particularly popular are listed below:

HOUSING

- 1) Ensure that all residential units are inspected within the parameters of HUD's decent, safe and sanitary housing standards.
- 2) Encourage the inclusion of an affordable housing component in any new project to replace housing lost as a result of clearance activities
- 3) Encourage setting up more community gardens and home-based vegetable gardens
- 4) Increase homeownership pipeline in the neighborhood
- 5) Study the feasibility of creating and implementing Inclusionary Housing Overlays in the area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Prioritize and facilitate the reuse of vacant and under-utilized properties for mixed residential/retail or office uses.
- 2) Create incubator spaces that offer below-market-rate rents for locally owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and cultural spaces.
- 3) Encourage area employers to hire area residents and develop mentoring aimed at providing training for area youth.

SERVICES + AMENITIES

- 1) Improve communications among residents and community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and city staff.
- 2) Continue to support initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education and parent participation in education.
- 3) Improve internal neighborhood structure among community partners to build and maintain relationships and effective communications with all stakeholders
- 4) Strengthen relationships between residents and public safety professionals.
- 5) Enhance programs and activities in music, arts mindful of the diverse cultural heritage in the area and the city.



LIVING SYSTEMS

- 1) Promote more and regular outlets for farmer's markets and mobile produce trucks.
- 2) Continue to market the Wards as potential location for a neighborhood-scale grocery store.
- 3) Encourage setting up more community gardens and home-based vegetable gardens
- 4) Determine and monitor problem area for littering and illegal dumping and implement program to cut down on behavior
- 5) Identify and inventory vacant/underutilized areas to expand access to parks and open space

ACCESSIBILITY + CONNECTIVITY

- 1) Enhance bus service throughout the Wards and improve transit amenities to provide more comfort and ease of access for passengers.
- 2) Conduct comprehensive parking study to identify existing issues and potential solutions to alleviate parking concerns for residents and businesses. Study should include bicycle parking.
- 3) Explore potential infrastructure improvements at priority intersections to improve safety, awareness, predictability and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Planning Staff also presented a station dedicated to youth engagement and outreach efforts that were completed as part of the neighborhood planning process. Throughout the process, community feedback indicated a strong need for engaging local youth to ensure that their insights and opinions were captured and considered during the formulation of the plan.

The station outlined the series of activities staff conducted with students from Sheridan Elementary School and Harrison Morton Middle School to learn about the planning process and gain perspectives from local students. Attendees viewed the student's concepts for turning an abandoned lot into a new pocket park and heard directly from students about their experiences and what they learned through the process.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH OUTREACH

my trip to school

The infographic details the youth outreach process. It includes a section titled 'YOUTH OUTREACH' with a circular diagram showing various activities. A section titled 'my trip to school' shows a flowchart of the process. A bar chart displays the number of youth engaged in different activities. The bottom section features a row of small circular images representing different youth groups and a larger image of a group of youth sitting around a table.

COMMUNITY VISIONING

COMMUNITY VISIONING

The final station encouraged attendees to reflect on information presented throughout the open house and share their vision for the future of the Wards. Attendees viewed feedback from past community engagement where people were asked “What do you like most about your neighborhood?” and “What do the Wards need?”. After reviewing past responses, attendees were encouraged to add their own answers to these questions to help shape the future vision of the Wards.

Responses to these questions can be seen on the following page and covered a wide array of topics ranging from environmental health, public safety, sustainable development, community cultural events, and traffic safety/accessibility. This feedback is a key component of this neighborhood plan and provides essential guidance to help shape the direction of the Wards for years to come.



Attendees were also presented with a set of values (developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Design for the Just City Project) and asked to identify values that currently exist in the Wards and those that are absent/needed. The results of this exercise can be seen above and offer some insight into resident’s perception of their neighborhood.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

“The Waterfront”

“Good neighborhood”

“History”

“I like the history of the 1st + 6th Wards”

“Community”

WHAT DO THE WARDS NEED?

“Nice scale of properties (it’s important to keep the parcels and frontages conducive to small businesses)”

“Save Neuweiler’s”

“Stricter speed laws and accountability for offenders”

“Bridge to be open”

“A serious look at vehicle particulates and our high asthma rates”

“Community gardens”

“Connecting D & L Trail and the Whitehall Parkway via the Jordan Green Corridor”

“Flagship store in downtown”

“More parking. No more apartments until ample parking is available”

“Parking. Stricter littering laws. Clean Team to help here”

“Lighting. More parking”

“Community spaces. Light manufacturing”

“Affordable housing”

“Neighborhood clean ups”

“Multi-cultural festivals”

“Events, retail”

“Install cameras in intersections”

“More recreation for kids. Banning of off road vehicle”

URBAN SYSTEMS

Vision 2030 introduced the concept of an Urban Systems approach as a comprehensive way to understand the many unique factors that influence planning within the City of Allentown. Instead of viewing each system in a vacuum, this approach emphasizes the intersections, overlap and influence each have on one another in forming the mosaic of the City. The five Urban Systems identified within the plan are listed below and, like Vision 2030, form the basis of this report.

- 1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 2) HOUSING
- 3) ACCESSIBILITY + CONNECTIVITY
- 4) SERVICES + AMENITIES
- 5) LIVING SYSTEMS

The following chapters provide detailed analysis related to each of the five Urban Systems within the 1st & 6th Wards. This analysis includes an examination of existing conditions, community feedback, and recommendations for future efforts with a focus on consistency and concurrency with the city-wide goals and principles identified within Vision 2030. The chapters are structured to allow readers to focus on a particular topic of interest as well as recognize the overlapping relationship of each Urban System within the wider context.





HOTEL STERLING
1890

343

VIP ROOM
SPORT BAR

VIP ROOM

MATCH 22
BOWLING SOCIAL HALL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The economy in the 1st and 6th Wards represents a wide variety of businesses from retailing, food services, to offices, to general contracting, automotive-related, light manufacturing, and medium industry. In 2019, there were 147 such business establishments in the Wards. The map on the following page illustrates the distribution of such business-types in the area. Indeed, the selection is not your typical array of businesses found in any residential neighborhood in Allentown.

The presence of industrial lands and buildings in several properties in the area, within walking distance of residential neighborhoods where people who worked in these industries lived, is largely attributed to the Wards' proximity to the river – where back in the late 1800s and early 1900s – was a choice location for manufacturing and heavy industry, and served as the primary transit point for raw materials and finished products. These industrial concerns are mostly gone now but for their obsolete buildings and zoning.

Today, most businesses are found along the well-traveled North-South arterials of Front Street, Ridge Avenue, and 2nd Street, and the East-West arterial streets of Hamilton Street and Tilghman Street.



VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Increase Local Employment
- 2) Increase Access to Training and Skill Building
- 3) Foster Small Business Growth and Entrepreneurship
- 4) Enhance Land Value
- 5) Connect to Regional Markets

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The economy in the 1st and 6th Wards represents a wide variety of businesses from retailing, food services, to offices, to general contracting, automotive-related, light manufacturing, and medium industry. In 2019, there were 147 such business establishments in the Wards. The map to the right illustrates the distribution of such business-types in the area. Indeed, the selection is not your typical array of businesses found in any residential neighborhood in Allentown.

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The presence of these buildings presents both challenges (deteriorating structures, vandalism, safety hazards, etc.) as well as opportunities for adaptive reuse that could retain the character and historic significance while repurposing the space to better fit the evolving needs of the community.



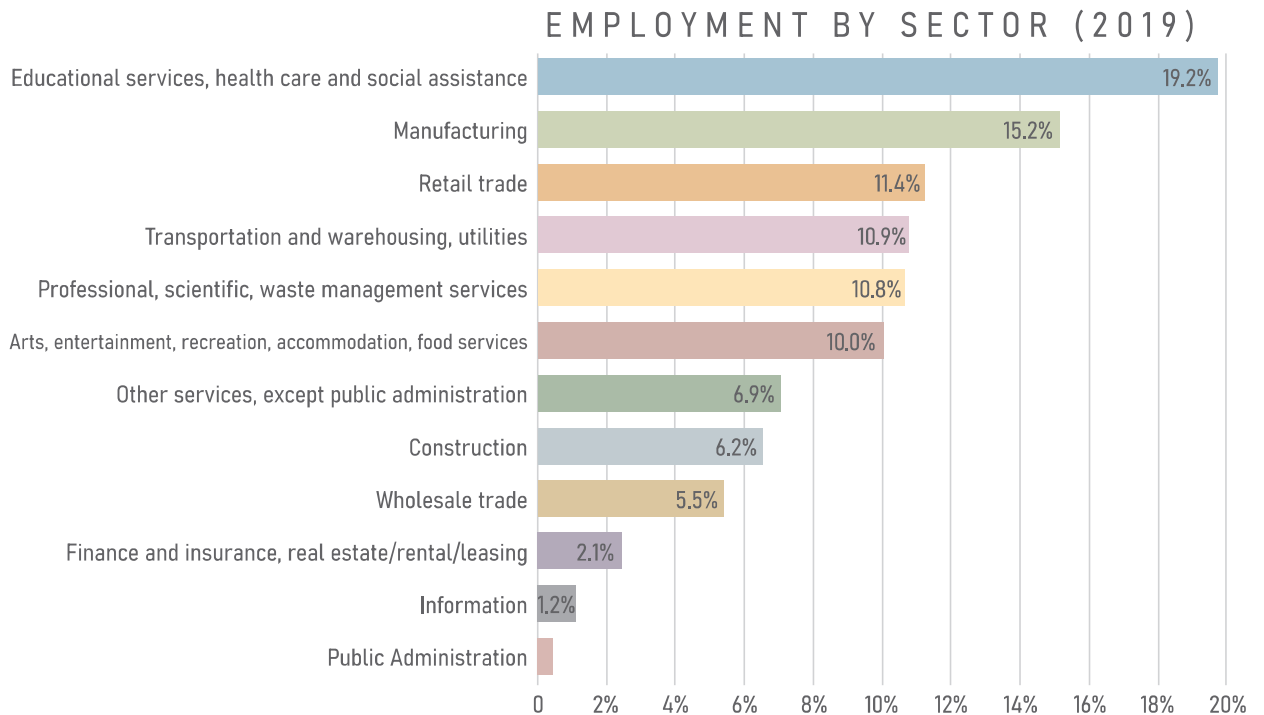
CENSUS DATA

Although there are ample job opportunities in the Wards, the travel pattern of its workforce might be interesting to take note of in terms of trying to match or improve the skill sets of the residents and those needed by employers – both local and outside the area. In 2019, the Census estimated that 98% (2,512) of the residents in the 1st and 6th Wards travel outside of the Wards to work. In contrast, 96% (1,206) of the workforce in jobs in the Wards are from outside the area. Only 43 people who reside in the Wards also work here.

Based on the Census-ACS 5-Year estimates ending 2019, the top three sectoral employers within the 1st & 6th Wards were:

- 1) Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance (19.2%)
- 2) Manufacturing (15.2%)
- 3) Retail trade (11.4%)

The businesses that mostly cater to area residents are retail oriented (convenience stores, bodegas, groceries, etc.), office, personal grooming, childcare, and food services (restaurants, taverns, delis). Those engaged in general contracting, automobile related services, and manufacturing serve regional (and national) clientele.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

In the Community Visioning Workshop at Bucky Boyle, participants were asked what business types they patronize and how frequently they visit such establishments, both within and outside the Wards. The table below tabulates the responses, which seems helpful in identifying important economic assets within the Wards as well as assets that may be lacking including Bars/Taverns, Gas stations, and Grocery stores.

Business Type	IMPORTANCE					SATISFACTION						
	daily	2-3 times per week	weekly	bi-weekly	monthly	rarely	daily	2-3 times per week	weekly	bi-weekly	monthly	rarely
Retail			2	1		4		1				
Personal Services			2		2	3					3	
Grocery Store	1		2		2	3			1	3	1	
Restaurant/Café	1		1		5	1	1	2	1			
Bar/Tavern					5				2	1		
Bank			1			3				1	2	
Gas Station			2	2	1	1	1	4	2			
Auto Repair					1	3					1	2
Convenience Store	1	1	1	1	2	1						
Pharmacy				2	1	1				1	2	
Arts/Entertainment					1	4			1		2	
Gym	1	1				2		1	1			
Specialty Food Store					4						1	
Farmers Market	1			2	2	1			1			

Participants were also asked to identify existing businesses and amenities that they considered a important community assets within the Wards. The map to the right shows responses from participants, broken down by category, with numbers in the key representing the number of people that indicated the location as an important asset within the community.

Participants also provided ideas for new businesses they thought would be beneficial additions to the Wards. Ideas included: Active Life Center (exists in West End), Local Pub, and Laundromat.

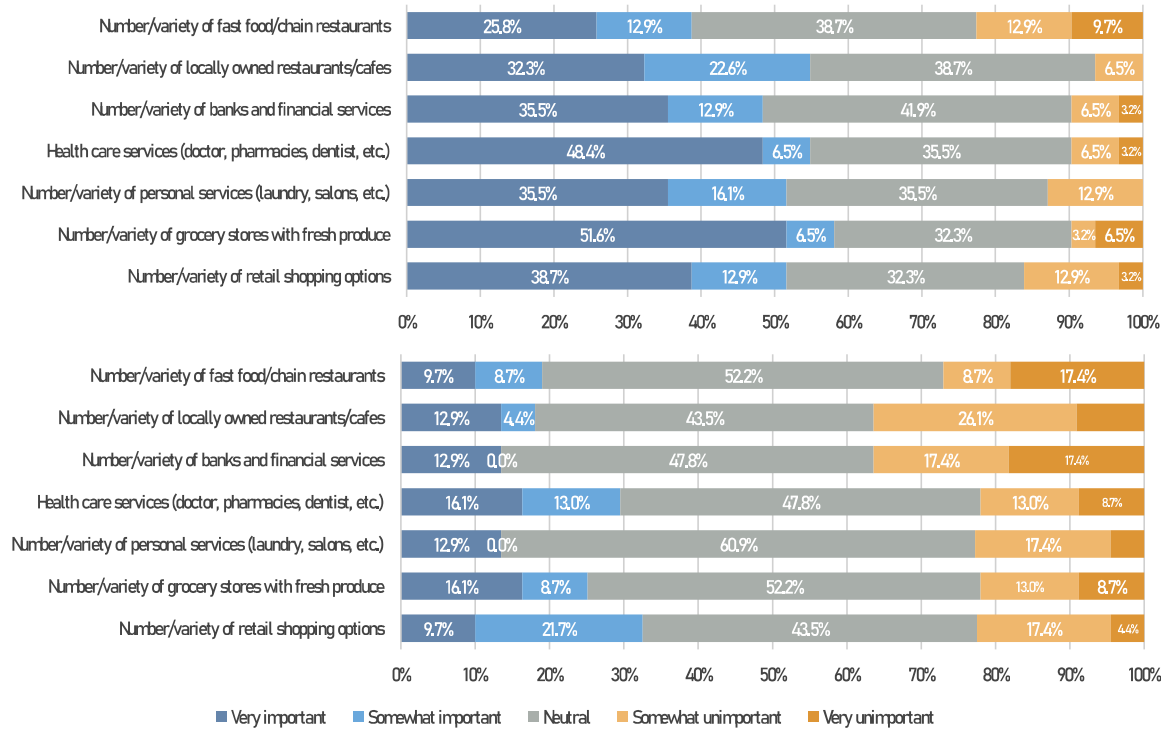


COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

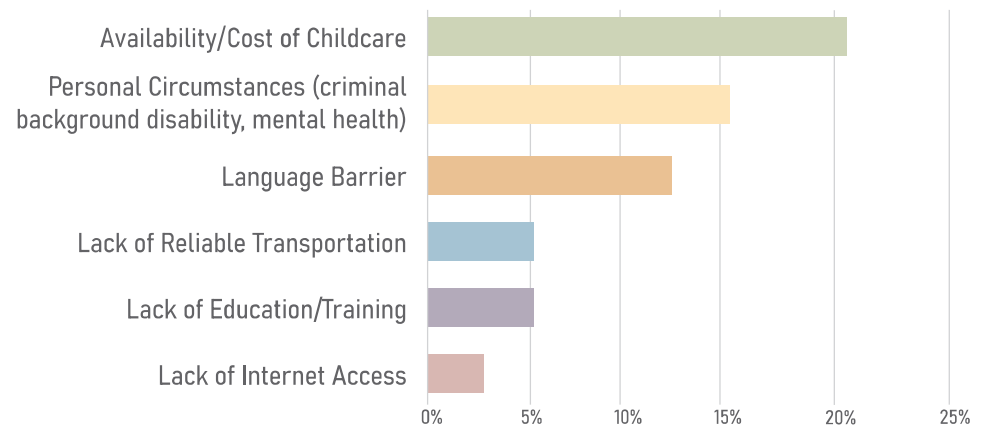
As part of the Needs Assessment Survey, respondents were asked how important and currently satisfied they were with certain neighborhood-based businesses within their neighborhood. Based on responses, nearly 52% felt that the number/variety of grocery stores with fresh produce within their neighborhood was “Very Important”. In terms of current satisfaction, just under 25% were Somewhat or Very Satisfied whereas roughly 22% were Somewhat or Very Unsatisfied with more than half of respondents unsure (Neutral). This could indicate that while there are some fresh food options available, people may be unaware or they may be inaccessible to many residents.

Respondents also indicated that health care services (doctors, pharmacies, dentists, etc.) were an important (over 48% “Very important). While nearly 22% indicated they were Somewhat or Very Unsatisfied with the current availability of health care services.

The survey also revealed that while more than half of the respondents were employed (+56%), those who responded as not working said they were either still in school or hampered by a disability or taking care of a loved one. Among the reasons cited that affect the respondents’ ability to find and maintain employment were the availability and cost of quality childcare (~20%), personal circumstances -- like criminal background, disability or mental illness (15.4%), and language barrier (13%).



FACTORS THAT AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO FIND AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

Planning Staff also sought input from businesses in the Wards. In early Spring 2021, a focus group comprised of 10 business owners (engaged in retail, food service, manufacturing) was convened to hear about their experiences in working with the city staff and processes (like permitting and inspections) and how this may be improved.

Additionally, they were asked to share their insights on the Wards as a business location. It is helpful to note that almost all business owners who participated had no problems dealing with city permitting processes and staff. The discussion pointed to issues related to parking, littering, trash, noise, and loitering as factors that made it difficult to operate a business in the Wards. Attendees also cited speeding in streets, and safety (personal and general road safety) as additional concerns that need to be addressed.



IDENTIFIED ISSUES

“Need awareness campaign on existing programs”

“Create Community Resource Team”

“Litter/Trash issues - cigarette butts, more frequent pickups, more trash/recycling receptacles”

Revamp home inspection process

- Inspections should cover the entire neighborhood (not just homes, vacant lots, parking lots, commercial structures, property surroundings)
- Change inspection 5-year cycle to an annual cycle

“Landlords need to be held more accountable and take responsibility for the upkeep of their properties”

CURRENT PROGRAMS

The city benefits from numerous programs aimed at promoting the growth and development of businesses – small and large. For the most part these programs are funded through federal grants and state programs. There are land-based incentives that offer tax credits like the NIZ and the Enterprise Zone. There is also financial assistance to create and grow businesses (like the Rising Tide, loans to minority-led businesses, and capital assistance for large industrial concerns). The following is a list of these programs and a brief description of each.

1) Rising Tide Loan Fund

Rising Tide was created to meet a need in the community for accessible financing options to business owners whose risk factors make it difficult to obtain funds from traditional lenders. RTCLF serves prospective, start-up, and established businesses in Lehigh and Northampton counties by providing a full range of one-to-one business counseling and micro-loans to business owners where resources and opportunities for growth are limited.

- Website: <https://therisingtide.org/contact-us/>
- Telephone: 484-893-1039
- Mailing Address: 1337 East Fifth Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015

2) Allentown Small Business Stabilization Program

Through this program, grants of up to \$5,000 will be offered to neighborhood businesses who are suffering financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary objective of the program is to help neighborhood businesses survive this health crisis and assist employers with emergency cash flow needs during this time. The program hopes to help retain and continue to pay employees, where possible and to continue to provide goods and services to Allentown's residents to the maximum possible extent. Funding for this program has been made possible through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development – CARES Act. For details:

- Website: <https://www.allentownpa.gov/Community-and-Economic-Development/Business-Development-Office/Small-Business-Stabilization-Program>
- Email: CDBGReliefFund@allentownpa.gov
- Telephone: (610) 439-5964

3) Retail Mosaic

The Retail Mosaic is a self-forgiving loan program that supports new retail business growth in Allentown. The Retail Mosaic will provide a financial award of up to \$15,000 with the requirements that the business create a minimum of two low-moderate income jobs over the next three years. Businesses must remain in the City of Allentown for five years after receiving the loan. For details:

- Website: <https://www.allentownpa.gov/Work/Capital>
- Email: retailmosaic@allentownpa.gov
- Telephone: (610) 439-5964

4) Allentown Economic Development Loan Fund

Allentown City offers low interest rate (1-3%) flexible loans available to commercial, industrial, and mixed use properties located within the City of Allentown. Loan funds may range between \$50,000 and \$100,000 depending on project size. In order to apply, a project budget must be minimally \$100,000; job creation and/or retention must occur; and 10% equity is required. All other sources of funding must be identified and client must be working on securing funding. Work with an economic development professional to help leverage your investment with other public funding programs for job creation projects. For details:

- Website: <https://allentownedc.com/urban-made/>
- Email: info@allentownedc.com
- Telephone: 610-435-8890
- Mailing Address: 905Harrisin Street, Allentown, PA 18103

5) Enterprise Zone Revolving Loan Fund –

AEDC provides economic development lending assistance through a number of local funds. Companies are eligible to apply for up to \$100,000 loans for equipment, real estate purchases/improvements, and in special cases, up to 40% of inventory or working capital. AEDC will competitively finance up to 75% of eligible project costs for terms ranging from one to 10 years. Job creation and retention are essential components of these loan funds. For details:

- Internet: <https://allentownedc.com/urban-made/>
- Email: info@allentownedc.com
- Telephone: 610-435-8890
- Mailing Address: 905Harrisin Street, Allentown, PA 18103

6) Pennsylvania Minority Business Development Authority

Loan funds are available for minority owned businesses (51% or more) as defined by program guidelines. Loan amounts range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 up to 75% of eligible project costs. Eligible uses include real estate improvements or construction, machinery/equipment purchases, and working capital. Terms and conditions vary based on credit worthiness of applicant. For details:

- Internet: <https://allentownedc.com/urban-made/>
- Email: info@allentownedc.com
- Telephone: 610-435-8890
- Mailing Address: 905Harrisin Street, Allentown, PA 18103

7) Allentown Development Company Loan Program (ADCO)

Loans ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000 may be available to eligible Allentown businesses for land acquisition, construction, equipment or working capital. Aspiring loan candidates must be meeting the following criteria: (1) creating or improving job opportunities for low and moderate-income people in economically distressed areas; or (2) projects for the construction or rehabilitation of ancillary local commercial facilities necessary to provide goods or services principally to persons residing in low or moderate-income areas. For details:

- Internet: <https://lehighvalley.org/>
- Email:
- Telephone: (610) 266-6851
- Mailing address: 2158 Avenue C, Suite 200, Bethlehem, PA 18017

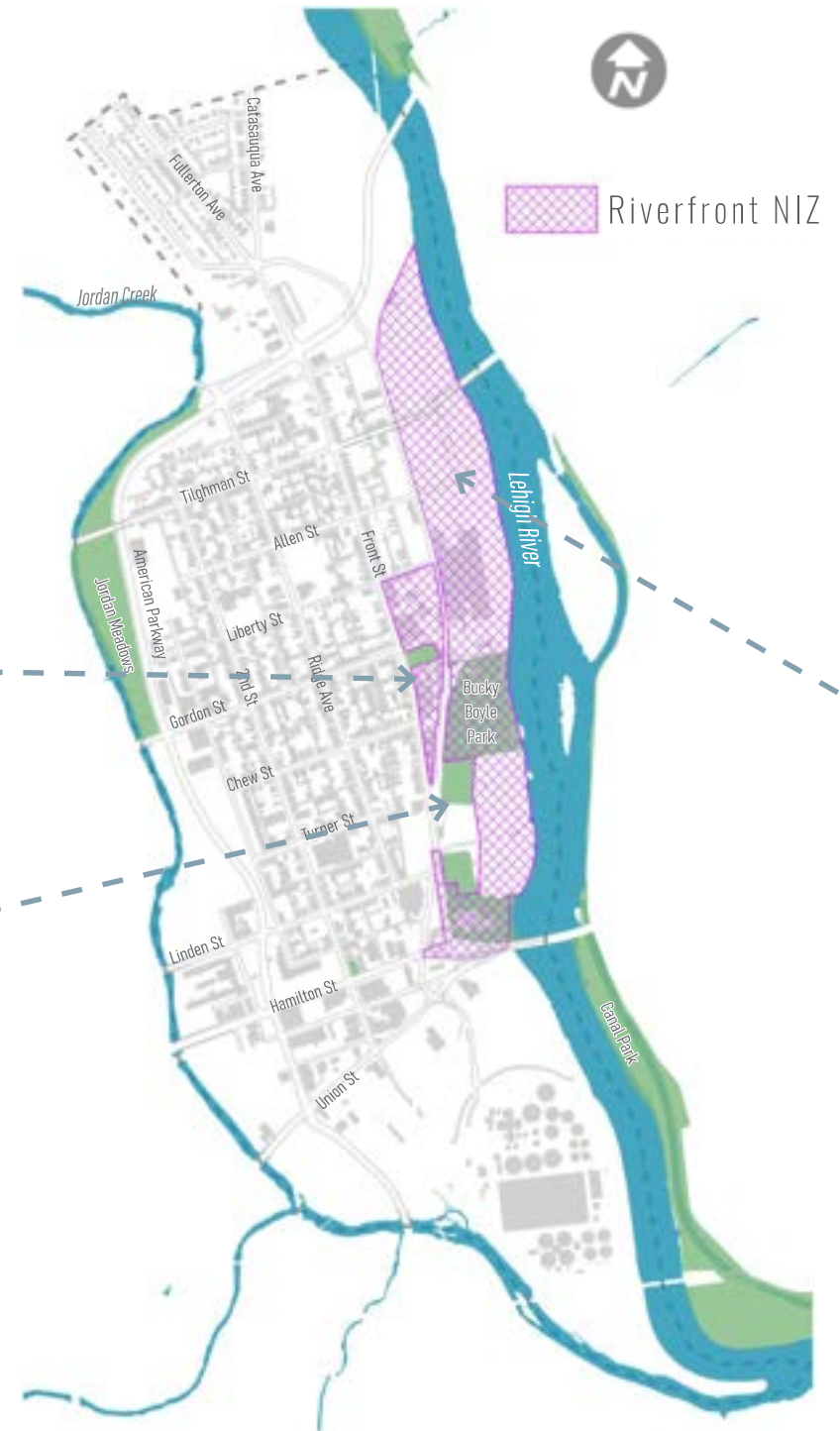
8) Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ)

A special taxing district created by PA state law in 2012 to encourage development and revitalization along the western banks of the Lehigh River and in center city Allentown. In total, the Allentown NIZ covers about 128 acres. The riverfront NIZ is within the planning area. Specifically, the riverfront NIZ covers an area of about 90 acres along the west side of Lehigh River from American Parkway to Hamilton Street. At present:

a) New Jersey-based Manhattan Building Company is looking forward to re-purpose an obsolete building that used to be a furniture-making facility on the 200-block of Front Street. This re-purposed building will house a mix of uses like residential apartments, offices and ground floor retail. More projects may be expected from this developer in view of the builder's large-scale re-zoning of lands in the 500-block of N. Front Street from residential to commercial zoning, and the builder's interest in taking over the redevelopment of the parcels of the former Neuweiler Brewery.

b) Another development prospect to look forward to is the envisioned flex-warehouse on the 200-block of N. Front Street. While there are no firm building plans for this project yet, the project site for this has recently been re-zoned to accommodate the proposed warehouse.

- Website: <https://allentownniz.com/>
- Email: info@allentownniz.com
- Telephone: (610) 467-8810



THE WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



c) Jaindl Enterprises is engaged in a \$300-M project to develop 26 acres of mix-use complex that will include office buildings, luxurious residences a lively restaurant and retail shops. In addition, the Waterfront will feature open space plazas walking and riding paths along the river, and new ways to reconnect with the water and the surrounding natural environment.



Images courtesy of The Waterfront Development Company

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL #1: FOSTER GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF AREA BUSINESS ENTERPRISES WITH

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
1A	Develop a marketing program that promotes all businesses within the planning area.	This involves setting up an organization (like DABA) with the mission to promote and market all area businesses.
1B	Create incubator spaces that offer below-market-rate rents for locally owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and cultural spaces.	This calls for an inventory of vacant and underused commercial /industrial and institutional structures and spaces that can host business incubators.
1C	Increase the opportunity for area residents to find employment in and around the planning area.	This will entail the creation of a program that provides incentives hiring of qualified low/moderate income area residents for employment opportunities.
1D	Continue and improve the delivery of a technical assistance program to develop neighborhood-level small businesses and entrepreneurs.	
1E	Create a working partnership between the Allentown School District, the Casa Guadalupe and other relevant non-profits to develop programming and initiatives to increase the educational attainment of area children and adults.	
1F	Encourage area employers to hire area residents and develop mentoring aimed at providing training for area youth.	This will entail the creation of a program that prioritizes hiring of qualified low/moderate income area residents for employment opportunities.
1G	Develop more after-school programming options for children and youth that align with local goals.	Increased funding for after-school activities on leadership, arts and craft, active sports and passive leisure.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

STRONG COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit organization for business promotion and development. 	LV Chamber of Commerce, CADCA, COA	P	- - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning ordinance update. • Partnerships with non-profits 	AEDC, Chamber of Commerce, CADCA, COA, Colleges		P	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive program for preferred hiring. • Enhanced outreach efforts. 	COA, Area businesses, Workforce Board of LV, Casa Guadalupe, LCTI, LCCC	P	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More small businesses created. 	COA, SBDC, Local banks	○	- - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased educational attainment among residents. 	ASD, Casa Guadalupe, LCCC, TLC		P - - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased resident participation in the local workforce. 	COA, Area businesses, Workforce Board of LV, Casa Guadalupe, ASD, Community Bikeworks, Bis Brothers, Big Sisters, APD	P	- - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More kids and youth actively engage in productive after-school programs rather than in gang membership and gang violence. 	ASD, area non-profits that offer after-school programs.	P	- - - - ->	

GOAL #2: SUPPORT LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ALONG NORTH FRONT

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
2A	Enhance the promotion and implementation of Retail Mosaic.	Allocate more grant funding to Retail Mosaic to also make its promotion more aggressive and effective.
2B	Prioritize and facilitate the reuse of vacant and under-utilized properties for mixed residential/retail or office uses.	Create and maintain a portfolio of vacant and underused commercial and industrial building that can be offered to prospective developers.

GOAL #3: DESIGNATE AND PROMOTE NORTH FRONT STREET AS NEIGHBORHOOD RE

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
3A	Create more attractive corridor and programmatic linkages between the Lehigh River and the adjacent east-west residential neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design attractive banners and signage, install pedestrian streetlights, street furniture. • Branding /Placemaking
3B	Strengthen the commercial presence and function of North Front Street as the area's primary commercial corridor.	
3C	Continue to support existing small businesses on Hamilton Street while creating a strong retail corridor between the Lehigh River and the central business district.	

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

STREET TO BENEFIT FROM NEW GROWTH FROM THE RIVERFRONT NIZ.

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participation in Retail Mosaic and Rising Tide. 	LV Chamber of Commerce, CADCA, COA	○	----->	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic database of developable properties 	COA, GLV Realtors, LVEDC		P I	----->

RETAIL CORRIDOR AND IMPORTANT GATEWAY TO THE RIVERFRONT AND DOWNTOWN

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized installation of wayfinding signage, banners. • Improved pedestrian experience. • Neighborhood identity 	COA, Area businesses, Private developers, Neighborhood groups	P I	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-zoning of N. Front Street to properly accommodate mix-use residential /commercial activities. • Amend zoning text to reduce or eliminate parking requirements for new commercial uses along North Front Street. 	COA, CADCA	P I		●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust retail corridor. • Improved pedestrian experience. 	COA, CADCA, Chamber of Commerce	○	----->	----->

HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this section is to provide information and insights about existing housing conditions, identify challenges and possible opportunities. By utilizing both existing data and neighborhood feedback, this section not only establishes goals and recommends projects to ensure housing equity in the 1st and 6th wards but also provides possible funding, program, and partnership opportunities.

VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Improve the Quality of Allentown Housing
- 2) Increase the Quantity of Healthy, Safe, and Affordable Housing
- 3) Expand Pathways to Homeownership
- 4) Preserve Allentown's Historic Legacy Housing



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Housing within the 1st & 6th Wards is unique not only in Allentown but also to Pennsylvania and the U.S. As such it presents both opportunities and challenges not seen in other areas.

CENSUS

To begin, while Allentown generally has a higher rental rate at 59.2% than the remainder of Pennsylvania and the U.S. with 31.1% and 36% respectively, rental units in the wards represent nearly 67% of housing tenure. The majority of these units are single-family attached units likely due to the high amount of pre-WWII row homes constructed in Allentown to accommodate workforce housing during its industrial expansion.

HOUSING TENURE (2019)

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
THE WARDS	33.3%	66.7%
ALLENTOWN	40.8%	59.2%
PENNSYLVANIA	68.9%	31.1%
UNITED STATES	64.0%	36.0%



HOUSING COST BURDEN

While this housing was originally created to accommodate the working class the cost of rent for nearly half of these units has surpassed 35% of household income, meaning renters in the 1st and 6th wards are “cost burdened” (paying more than the recommended 30% of income for housing) compared to averages across Allentown, Pennsylvania and the U.S. Functionally, this leaves residents with less disposable income to pay for other necessities and build wealth.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE

THE WARDS - 3.65

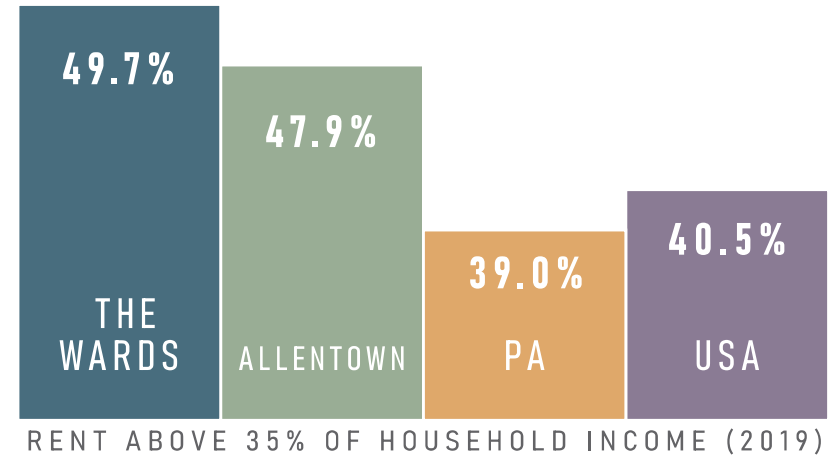
ALLENTOWN - 2.80

PENNSYLVANIA - 2.42

UNITED STATES - 2.61

HOME VALUES

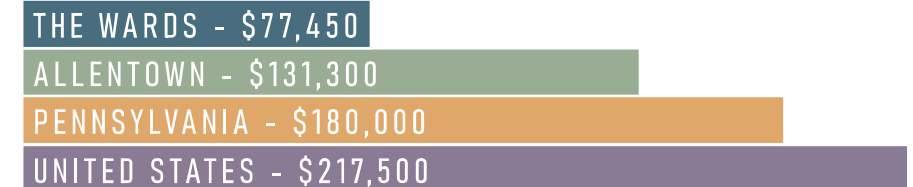
In addition to the topics discussed above, another factor that impacts the housing market within the Wards is the relative low average home values within the community. The Wards have a median home value of roughly \$77,450, which is nearly 52% less than the median home value for the city as a whole (\$131,300) and nearly 80% less than the state average. Such low home values make it extremely difficult for residents to grow wealth through home equity creating a distinct economic disadvantage for residents within the Wards



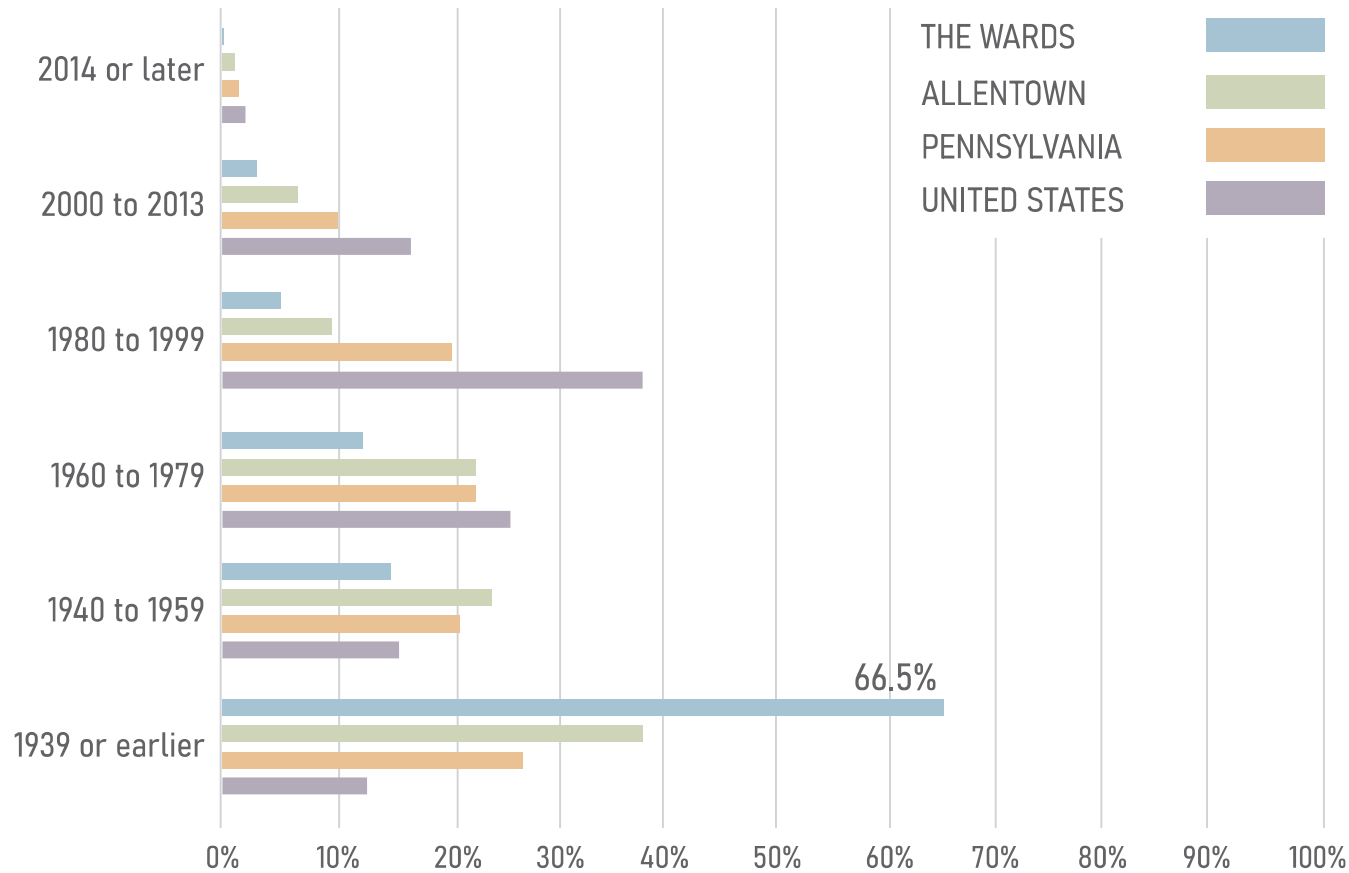
HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Perhaps exacerbating cost burden is that the average household size in the first and sixth wards is 3.65 which is higher than average, with the rest of the county falling under 3. Moreover, the wards have a slightly younger population on average with over half of residents under the age of 18, making them dependents.

MEDIAN HOME VALUE (2019)



AGE OF HOUSING STOCK (2019)



AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

The overall age of the housing in the first and sixth wards as mentioned was primarily constructed prior to 1939 and new housing unit construction quickly tapered off, becoming almost nonexistent after 2014. This means the housing stock is older in the wards, presenting both challenges and opportunities.

Older housing often suffers from deferred maintenance leading to increased rehabilitation costs. Additionally, there is a higher probability that safety hazards such as lead

and asbestos which can be especially problematic for small children.

However, older housing stock presents more opportunity for first time homeowners by offering generally lower purchase costs and the ability to begin building generational wealth through sweat equity. They also provide a unique identity and sense of place within a neighborhood.

CURRENT PROGRAMS

The City of Allentown and several non-profit organizations have active programs and funding opportunities focused on housing. They include a broad spectrum of initiatives, available funding, and timelines. This section is intended to provide a broad overview of currently available housing programs and not an exhaustive list. We encourage those in need of housing assistance to contact these entities for updates on new programs.

CITY OF ALLENTOWN

1) Community and Economic Development-Department-Housing and Urban Development Grants

In 2020 a five-year consolidated plan, for a period beginning January 1, 2020, until December 31, 2024, for the city was approved by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The plan identifies housing and community development needs and is designed as a tool to develop specific goals and objectives to address those needs.

Each year Allentown is responsible for issuing an annual action plan for the year within which the city presents proposed activities and funding sources. The strategic plans can be found on the City website and while 2022 has not been issued (as of the writing of this plan) the plans for 2020 and 2021 are currently available.

The five-year consolidated plan did not identify priority geographic areas, meaning that opportunity exists for the first and sixth wards to capitalize on funding including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Programs, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) as it becomes available to meet housing needs that align with priorities identified within the plan. Among identified high priorities are creating and preserving affordable housing as well as reducing homelessness.

2) Office of Community Housing, Lead Hazard Control Program

While several programs have been available in previous years, and may again

be available in the future, the current focus is the Lead Hazard Control Program. The program is administered by the office and funded by a HUD grant program targeted to low- and moderate-income households with children under the age of 6 who live in pre-1978 homes. The goal of the program is to make these homes lead-safe and healthy.

Qualified households receive a Lead Hazard Risk Assessment which utilizes a special machine called an XRF, essentially a portable X-ray that reads through many layers of paint, to determine if lead paint is present in the doors, windows, walls, and other painted surfaces. Dust wipes are taken in specific locations throughout the house and then sent to a lab to measure how much lead dust children might be being exposed to. The data found in the Risk Assessment is used to develop a scope-of-work that includes abatement and interim lead hazard control methods designed to make the home lead-safe.

Some examples of this type of work include paint stabilization, painting with an EPA approved encapsulate, enclosure of lead painted surfaces, and/or replacement of components such as windows and doors. Lead hazard control work is then scheduled with program approved PADOLI licensed lead abatement contractors. Household occupants are relocated during lead work and only return to the home once a clearance set of dust wipes is received from the lab.

Contact Information:

Yadeliz Velez, Program Coordinator

CommunityHousing@allentownpa.gov

610-437-7610 ext. 2710

3) Building Standards, Residential Rental Unit Inspections

All residential rental units are required to be registered and must follow the City of Allentown's Property Rehabilitation and Maintenance Code which establishes residential property maintenance standards and procedures for requiring the inspection, rehabilitation, repair, abatement of nuisances or compulsory demolition of buildings, structures and housing essential to the public health, safety and welfare of Allentown residents and the community.

4) Building Standards, Pre-Sale Inspections:

Designed to protect and improve the public health and safety of Allentown, anyone who offers their property for sale or title transfer, whether voluntary or involuntarily, must have their property inspected for compliance with the City of Allentown Property Rehabilitation and Maintenance Code and the Zoning Ordinance.

Contact Information:

435 Hamilton Street, 3rd Floor

610.437.7694 or 610.437.7695

ALLENTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (ARA)

1) Blighted Properties

The Redevelopment Authority works closely with the City of Allentown's Bureau of Building Standards and Safety to address blighted properties within the city limits. After a multi-step certification process, as per the Urban Redevelopment Law 1712, the Redevelopment Authority has the jurisdiction to acquire Certified Blighted properties through the eminent domain process to assist with the elimination of blight. Once acquired, the Authority can start the rehabilitation process and bring properties back to code compliance.

Because ARA is primarily funded through Community Development Block Grants administered through the City of Allentown, the organization works closely with the City to acquire and rehabilitate blighted properties within the City. Following the rehabilitation, ARA sells properties to low- and moderate-income homebuyers following HUDs income limit requirements. ARA has also awarded properties to firms seeking to develop senior housing as well as low- and moderate-income housing projects.

2) Mow & Maintain to Own:

Through this program vacant properties owned by ARA can be acquired by adjacent property owners who commit to maintaining and improving lots for a period of three years.

Contact Information:

Megan Hart, Associate Director

610-437-7733

Allentown Redevelopment Authority (ARA) of Allentown

COMMUNITY ACTION LEHIGH VALLEY (CALV)

1) Community Action Financial Services

Primarily an education tool designed to support the growth of individual and community wealth. Services include pre-purchase & pre-settlement counseling, first-time home buyer seminars, financial fitness education, home ownership savings accounts, and mortgage foreclosure prevention counseling.

2) Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust

Focused on eliminating barriers to homeownership by providing permanently affordable housing to income-qualified applicants along with the support needed. Properties are acquired and held by the organization and leased out through a 99-year ground lease, affording homeowners the same while providing the homeowner with every legal right to use, occupy and enjoy the land including passing the home on to his or her heirs.

3) Weatherization

This home improvement program provides a wide range of assistance but is designed to reduce energy costs. Activities include diagnostics as well as repairs to features that are often the sources of energy loss, heating system replacement or repair as well as financial assistance for heating bills.

Contact Information:

Michael Handzo, Housing Business Manager

484-893-1061

mhandzo@caclv.org

Housing Assistance – Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. (caclv.org)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

1) Habitat Homeownership Program:

This program works with qualifying families to secure a home. Families are selected using a criterion that includes income and credit requirements, documentation of demonstrated need due to current living situation and residence within the Lehigh Valley. Additionally, families must be willing to put in 250 hours of sweat equity and participate in homeownership and budgeting classes.

Contact Information:

610-776-7737

office@habitatlv.org

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Providing quality, affordable housing is an essential feature of any thriving community. This can be a difficult proposition, especially in an area as developed and dense as the Wards where available space is limited. Gaining local insight is a vital piece of the housing puzzle. Throughout the planning process, planning staff endeavored to engage residents through a variety of efforts including a community visioning workshop and community needs assessment survey. These results (as well as additional input provided over the course of the project) has provided critical insight into the current trends and future housing needs within the Wards.



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

During the June 12th Community Visioning Workshop, Planning staff created multiple interactive activities to gain feedback from the community concerning housing. The primary focus of the activities was to gain additional insight and strengthen information gathered from the survey results including preferred housing types and current living situation.

Based on the census data, the event participants were not necessarily representative of the majority of the ward's residents in terms of home tenure, representing a 50/50 split between renters and homeowners. The majority of renters lived in duplex/twin/two family followed by 3-5 unit and apartment complexes respectively. None of the participants lived in single family detached dwellings. Of the homeowners, 20% owned a single family and 33.3% owned a duplex/twin/two family.

What type of residence to you currently live in?

Type of Housing	Rent	Own	Total
Single Family Detached	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Duplex/Twin/Two Family	26.7%	33.3%	60.0%
Multi-Family (3-5 Units)	13.3%	0.0%	13.3%
Apartment Complex (5+ Units)	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
	46.7%	53.3%	100%

Based on event participant feedback, the most beneficial housing type in the wards would be single family detached with 42.9%, followed by multifamily (3-5 units) with 23.8% and apartment complexes (5+ units) with 14.3%. Although not included as choices, participants wrote in “affordable”, “renovate existing” and “senior housing”

While the small sample size is not necessarily indicative of an outstanding need, based on the community feedback and census data, need exists for additional study. There has historically been limited construction of single-family detached units and over the past few decades there has been an overall lack of investment in new construction. Given the age of the housing stock and input, creating more robust housing rehabilitation programs for homeowners may also be warranted.



Types of housing most beneficial to The Wards?

Type of Housing	%
Single Family Detached	42.9%
Duplex/Twin/Two Family	23.8%
Multi-Family (3-5 Units)	14.3%
Apartment Complex (5+ Units)	4.8%
Affordable Housing*	4.8%
Renovate Existing Stock*	4.8%
Senior Housing*	4.8%
*Option added by participants	100.0%

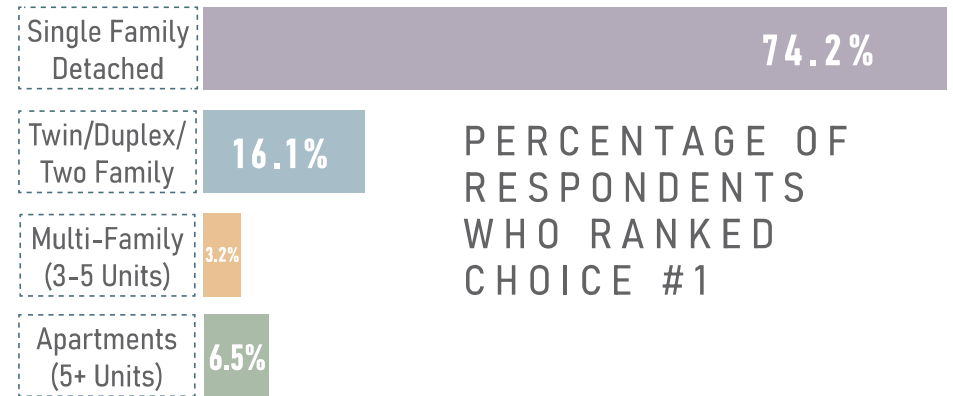
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

In order to better gauge the current state and future needs related to housing in the Wards, a number of housing and neighborhood character questions were included as part of the community needs assessment survey.

Similar to the community visioning workshop, respondents were asked what type of housing would be most beneficial in their neighborhood. Survey participants were given four choices (Single Family Detached; Twin/Duplex/Two Family; Multi-Family (3-5 Units); or Apartments (5+ Units). Also similar to results from the workshop, the majority of respondents selected Single Family Detached as their top choice (74.2%) followed by Twin/Duplex/Two Family (16.1%) which also received roughly 68% of second place votes. This result, combined with feedback from the community visioning workshop, indicates a desire for this type of housing within the Wards as well as an apparent lack within the existing housing stock.

Survey respondents were also asked about what they planned to do from a housing perspective within the next year. Based on responses, a slight majority indicated that they intended to stay at their current residence. Roughly 16% said that they planned to purchase a new home within the Wards and an additional 3% indicated that planned to do the same for a new rental

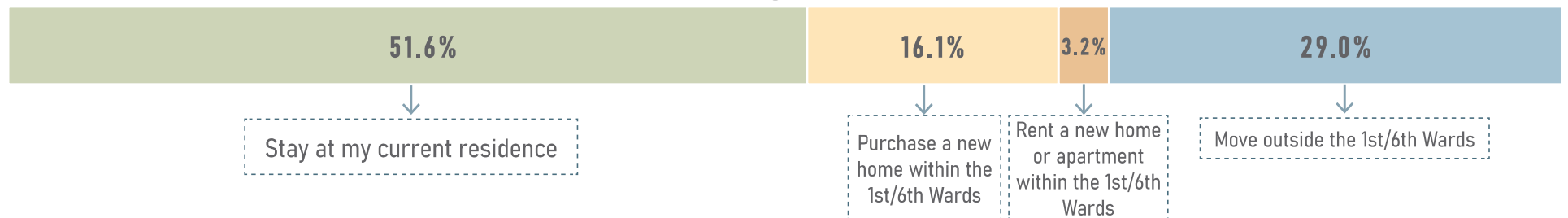
What type of housing would be most beneficial within your neighborhood? (Rank 1-4)



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO RANKED CHOICE #1

property within the Wards. The most impactful takeaway was the nearly 1/3 of respondents who said they planned to move outside the Wards within the next year. This finding reinforces earlier indications of a lack of appropriate housing options within the Wards and warrants further study to determine why this may be the case and what can be done to help people find the housing they need and remain in the Wards.

IN THE NEXT YEAR I PLAN TO:



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

GOAL #1: INCREASE NEW MARKET RATE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
1A	Identify and market available properties for new market rate residential opportunities.	Develop a marketing strategy targeting residential housing developers with an urban portfolio.
1B	Encourage the inclusion of an affordable housing component in any new project to replace housing lost as a result of clearance activities	Formulate policy that encourages the inclusion of affordable housing in new residential developments

GOAL #2: UPGRADE EXISTING HOUSING AND BUILDING STOCK

2A	Ensure that all residential units are inspected within the parameters of HUD's decent, safe and sanitary housing standards.	Formulate policy and develop a program that allows the city to inspect owner-occupied housing based on public safety
2B	Encourage setting up more community gardens and home-based vegetable gardens	Identify /consolidate vacant parcels where community gardens may be set up and maintained.
2C	Increase homeownership pipeline in the neighborhood	Implement more aggressive outreach programs to attract and encourage renters to aspire for homeownership in the neighborhood
2D	Conduct a Housing Inventory Assessment	Requires collaborative work between the City and relevant non-profits to start a housing fund for rehabbing and constructing affordable housing for owner-occupancy and renting.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of relevant parcels. Marketing plan. 	COA /local real estate associations	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy study aimed at formulating an ordinance to assign a portion of new residential development for affordable housing as replacement to those units lost demolition /clearance 	COA (Planning), Developers		P ----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy study aimed at determining ways and means to inspect owner-occupied housing based on public safety concerns and code violations. 	COA		P ----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of vacant parcels as candidate sites for community gardens with assessment of feasibility. 	COA (Public Works, Health, Planning) /relevant property owners.		P ----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase owner-occupied to at least 40% by Year 10 (at present the ratio is 32% owner-occupied). 	COA, CACLV, NHS, AHA		○----->●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new program and funding for creating and preserving affordable housing for owner- and renter-occupancy. 	COA (CED) / CACLV /NHS /AHA, foundations / developers		P	I

GOAL #2: UPGRADE EXISTING HOUSING AND BUILDING STOCK... CONTINUED

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
2F	Identify areas available for new construction with a concentration on single-family detached development	Cavass the neighborhoods (by street) to identify parcels and areas where Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) may be encouraged.
2G	Identify opportunities to incorporate requirements for affordable and senior housing as part of land developments.	Study the feasibility of setting aside a portion of new housing development for affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income households (as in Inclusionary Zoning). Work with developers to incorporate affordable and senior housing into their developments.
2H	Bring awareness to existing programs on homeownership, housing repair and rehabilitation, lead paint abatement /remediation, and rental assistance.	Create a resource with all current programs that is consistently maintained and updated to reflect funding and timelines.
2I	Create program to identify and promote potential properties for Adaptive Reuse	Area-wide survey and inventory of under-used non-residential building to be marketed for Adaptive Re-Use purposes (with incentives).
2J	Study the feasibility of creating and implementing Inclusionary Housing Overlays in the area.	Explore zoning options to encourage affordable housing
2K	Encourage sustainable building and rehabilitation practices through educational programs for developers and general public	Design educational campaigns and expert led trainings in sustainable design practices and smaller scale rehabilitation for residents.

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A database of candidate sites that can be regularly updated, for new residential construction, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of underutilized commercial structures, and promotion of ADUs where possible. 	COA (Planning CED-BEAR, IT) /real estate association /ACIDA /LVEDC	P ----->		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive program to encourage a given share of new residential construction to be affordable by low/mod income people, especially families. 	COA (Planning), Developers		P ----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A city-sponsored website that lists current housing-related programs and their respective funding cycles 	COA /CACLV /NHS /AHA	P ----->		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program effectively promoting adaptive re-use of underutilized non-residential buildings. 	COA (Planning, CED-BEAR) /real estate association /developers	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement zoning ordinance update that incorporates ways to encourage affordable housing. 	COA (Planning)		P	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing program for builders and residents • Enhanced knowledge and awareness of sustainable building/rehab processes 	COA(Planning, HUD, CED), Area experts, Neighborhood Groups		P	I

ACCESSIBILITY + CONNECTIVITY

OVERVIEW

Access and mobility are vital factors for the health, vibrancy and wellbeing of a community. Ensuring that people are able to travel safely via a wide range of travel modes to access amenities and services is crucial to the overall health and functionality of the community. On the other hand, poor mobility has debilitating effects on an area leading to limited access and increased isolation, especially for those without reliable access to a personal vehicle.

Many factors, ranging from geographical to policy-based, influence access and mobility and must be taken into account when planning for a community. Furthermore, mobility is not limited strictly to vehicle traffic and must be viewed through the lens of pedestrian (including those in wheelchairs, parents with strollers, and joggers) transit, and bicycle access as well. Balancing the needs of each mode to create a safe, interconnected transportation network will increase access and mobility for users of all ages and abilities.



VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Create Safe and Efficient Routes
- 2) Connect Places in the City
- 3) Welcome People to the City
- 4) Create Mobility Choices
- 5) Prepare Allentown to be a Smart City

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In order to plan for improved access and mobility it is important to identify the existing conditions of an area to determine a baseline to build upon. For the 1st and 6th Wards this analysis is broken down into (5) main components:

- 1) Geography
- 2) Census data
- 3) Community Feedback
- 4) Crash history
- 5) Intersection analysis

GEOGRAPHY

The geographical location of 1st & 6th Wards presents unique challenges related to access and mobility for both residents and visitors to the area. Situated between the Lehigh River to the east and Jordan Creek to the west, the wards form a peninsula that require crossing bridges to reach East Allentown (to the east) or Center City (to the west). These bridge crossings force traffic (vehicle and pedestrian) to these locations and creates critical choke points that lead to traffic congestion and difficult crossings for pedestrians.

In addition to the geographical features, American Parkway (which prohibits pedestrians along the roadway) also serves as a barrier to access and mobility within the 1st and 6th Wards. Due to its high traffic volume (>20,000 vehicles per day) and speeds (40 MPH but vehicles often exceed posted limit) this corridor creates a functional moat around 3/4 of the neighborhood cutting off access to Center City to the west. This is also important considering ongoing development along the riverfront that will increase traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) in coming years. Identifying east/west corridors that can be enhanced to create an improved network for pedestrian and bicycle circulation will be essential to provide safe, comfortable travel routes for users of all ages and abilities.



CENSUS DATA

American Community Survey (ACS) 5 - Year Estimates were utilized to help establish a baseline for the existing conditions related to travel, access and mobility within the 1st and 6th Wards. These estimates provide a useful snapshot of transportation related trends that can also be compared to similar data at the city, county, and state levels to identify patterns and trends.

TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

The ACS Means of Transportation to Work dataset provides important information about travel mode share. Within the Wards, the majority of workers (67.8%) reported driving alone to work, similar to the percentage for the City of Allentown as a whole. While this number is relatively high, it is actually lower than both the county (80.6%) and the state (75.9%) indicating that there is less of a reliance on personal vehicles in the Wards than in other areas.

Public transportation utilization in the Wards (8.4%) is nearly double the city average (4.9%) and more than 4x that of the county (2.1%). This finding points towards a need for additional improvements to public transportation infrastructure. Additionally, nearly 5% reported walking to work (slightly below Allentown but double the rate for Lehigh County) indicating a need for improving pedestrian infrastructure throughout the Wards.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK (2019)

TRANSPORTATION TYPE	The Wards	Allentown	Lehigh Co.	PA
Drove alone	67.8%	67.4%	80.6%	75.9%
Carpooled	17.3%	17.2%	9.5%	8.5%
Public Transportation	8.4%	4.9%	2.1%	5.6%
Taxicab/Rideshare	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Motorcycle	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Bicycle	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Walked	4.5%	5.4%	2.3%	3.6%
Other Means	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%
Worked From Home	0.7%	3.9%	4.6%	4.9%
	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

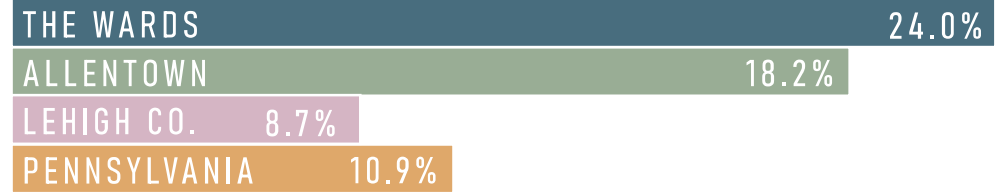
VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

Another factor for the discrepancy in the number of workers driving alone could be the lower rate of vehicle availability among households within the Wards. Roughly 24% of households did not have reliable access to a vehicle compared to 18.2% for the city and 8.7% for Lehigh County. In addition to a limited access to jobs (especially with so many employers located outside the Wards) lack of access to a reliable vehicle has far reaching negative socioeconomic effects for residents as well. This includes lack of access to essential social services, childcare, fresh and healthy food options, and others. This underscores the need to enhance public transportation and ensure that essential services and amenities are accessible through a safe, connected network of pedestrian infrastructure.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK (2019)

TRAVEL TIME	The Wards	Allentown	Lehigh Co.	PA
Less than 5 minutes	1.1%	2.7%	2.6%	3.1%
5 to 19 minutes	44.5%	43.6%	41.5%	37.4%
20 to 34 minutes	47.1%	40.6%	38.8%	33.8%
35 to 59 minutes	5.3%	6.8%	9.2%	16.4%
60 or more minutes	2.0%	6.2%	8.0%	9.4%
	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE (2019)



TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

Travel time to work is also an important factor to consider when assessing access and mobility. This is especially important for the 1st & 6th Wards because roughly 98% of residents travel outside of the Wards for work (ACS - 2019).

Nearly half of workers (47.1%) reported traveling between 20-34 minutes to work compared to roughly 40% for the city and approximately 39% for the county. The necessity for long distance travel to work, combined with the lower rate of vehicle availability, indicates a possible issue for reliable job access.

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

During the June 12th Community Visioning Workshop, participants worked with Planning and Parks and Recreation staff to identify issues related to access and mobility within the 1st & 6th Wards. Participants were presented maps illustrating transportation related themes including vehicular crashes, traffic volumes, public amenities, and parks and green spaces. Participants then worked with staff to identify current/desired walking and biking routes, and existing barriers to each. Through this process, several roadways and intersections were identified as particular problem spots/corridors that can serve as priority areas for future planning improvements.

TRAVEL PATTERNS

Participants were also asked about their travel patterns and mode choice when traveling within their neighborhood. Among respondents, driving alone was the most common mode choice with 64.3% reporting doing so on daily basis and 21.4% on a weekly basis. Walking presents an interesting case as 38.5% reported traveling within their neighborhood by foot daily while another 46.2% reported rarely doing so. Similarly, 25.0% reported biking daily while 50.0% indicated that they never bike. These findings indicate that while driving is currently the preferred method there may be a desire for expanded pedestrian and biking infrastructure.

Travel mode when traveling within your neighborhood

Travel Mode	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
Walk	38.5%	15.4%	0.0%	46.2%	0.0%
Bicycle	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%
Bus	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%
Taxi, Rideshare	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%
Drive alone	64.3%	21.4%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%
Carpool	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%



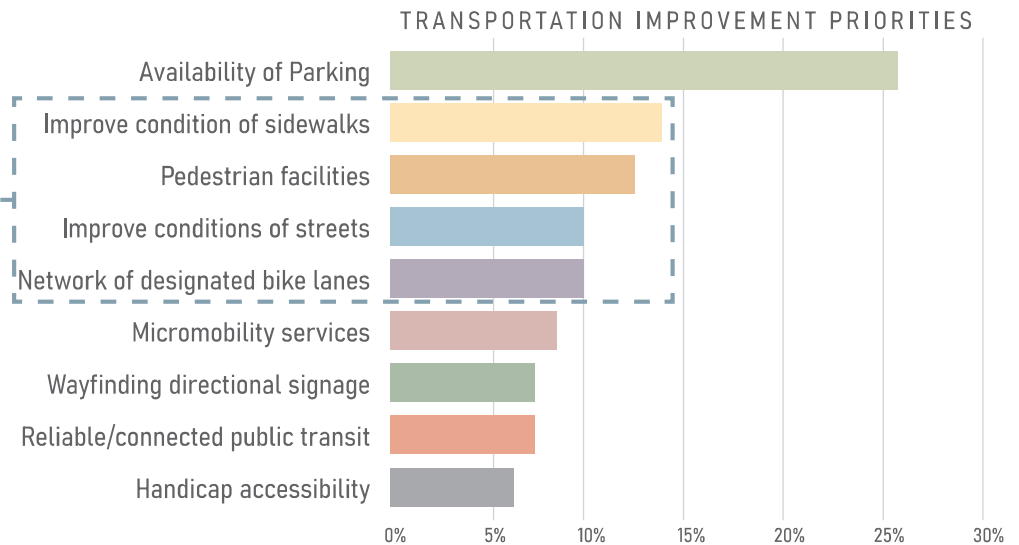


PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

Respondents were also asked to prioritize their preferred transportation improvements by placing three dots on the initiatives they most want to see implemented (all dots could go to one item or spread over multiple). “Availability of parking” received the most votes (roughly 26%) followed by “Improve conditions of sidewalks” (14%), “Pedestrian facilities”, “Improve conditions of streets” (10%), and “Network of designated bike lanes” (10%).

Although it is not surprising for parking to be on forefront of transportation concerns, the fact that the next four indicated priorities relate to walking or biking infrastructure (combined 34%) indicate a need and shared desire for these types of improvements.

→ **34%** of desired improvements related to walking/biking infrastructure



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Participants in the Community Needs Assessment Survey were asked a series of questions related to transportation, access, and connectivity similar to activities from the Community Visioning Workshop and aimed to assess need related to accessibility + connectivity within the Wards.

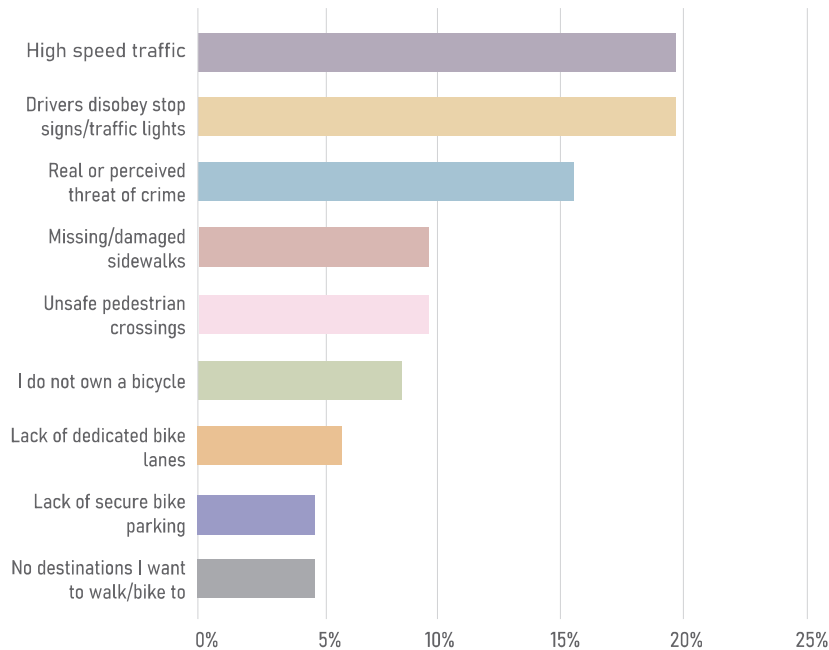
TRAVEL MODE CHOICE

Respondents were asked how often they use certain travel modes when traveling within their neighborhood. While around half indicated they drove alone on a daily basis there were also a fair amount that said they walked (26.7%) and biked (10.0%) daily when running errands, visiting local destinations, etc. These findings could indicate a desire to do more walking/biking within the neighborhood but a lack of comfort among residents doing so.

Travel mode when traveling within your neighborhood

Travel Mode	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
Walk	26.7%	16.7%	3.3%	46.7%	6.7%
Bicycle	10.0%	3.3%	3.3%	23.3%	60.0%
Bus	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%	33.3%	60.0%
Taxi, Rideshare	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%
Drive alone	50.0%	13.3%	3.3%	20.0%	13.3%
Carpool	0.0%	3.3%	3.3%	40.0%	53.3%

WHAT BARRIERS PREVENT YOU FROM SAFELY WALKING AND BIKING?



BARRIERS TO WALKING AND BIKING

Along these lines, the survey also asked what types of barriers prevent residents from safely walking and biking. Around 40% of responses were pointed to traffic safety issues (even split between “High speed traffic”; Drivers disobey stop signs/traffic lights”) as their main deterrent to walking and biking. This was followed by “Real or perceived threat of crime” with roughly 16%.

Taking steps to improve traffic safety through a multi-tiered approach that includes not only enforcement and education (among all road users) but also analysis of the existing built environment and how infrastructure changes and passive traffic calming techniques can increase safety and comfort for users of all ages and abilities.

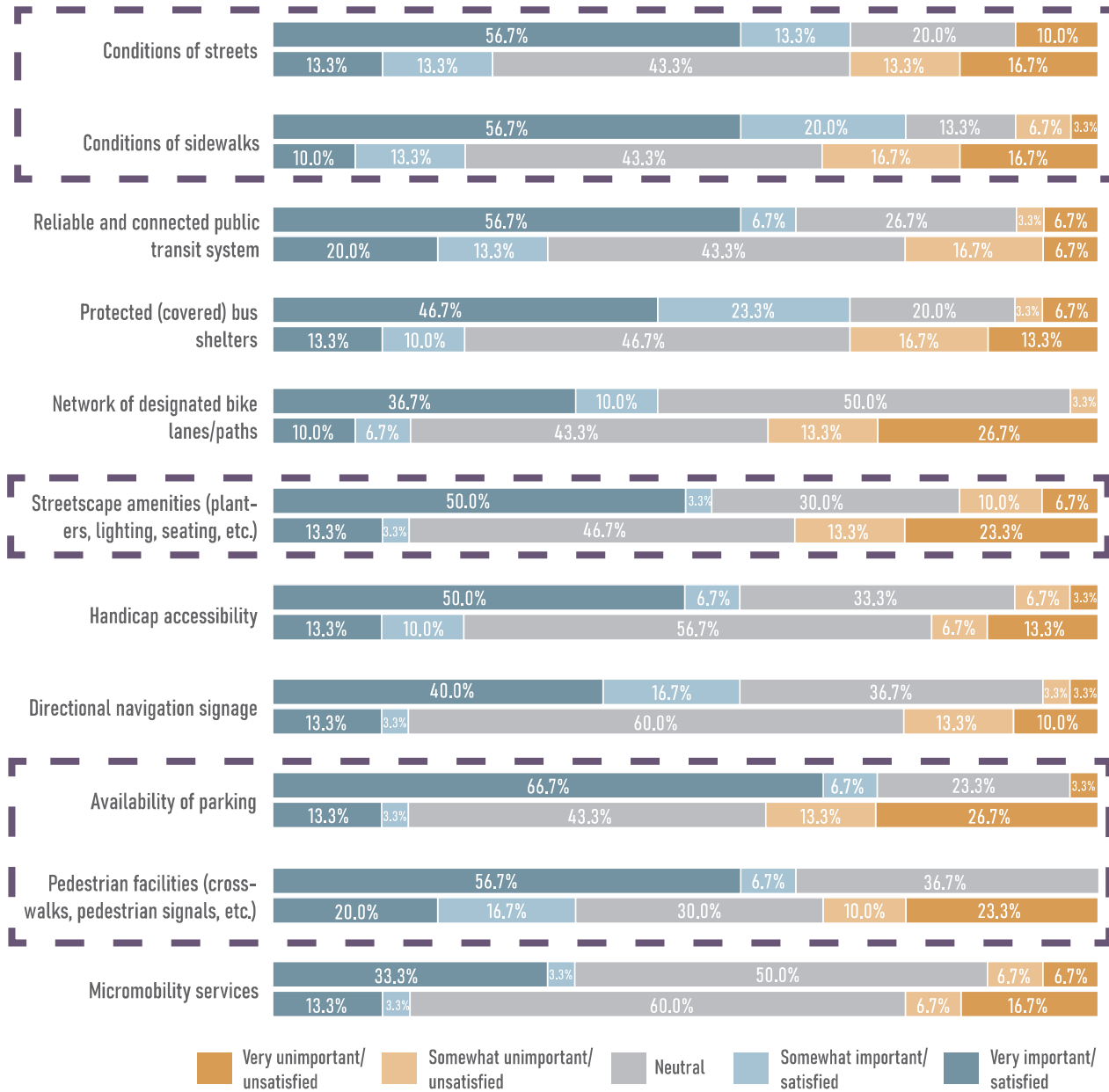
TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

The survey also asked respondents to rate their perceived importance and current satisfaction regarding a set of transportation related factors within the Wards. Factors that received high importance rankings combined with low satisfaction levels indicate existing needs that should be prioritized when addressing future transportation related projects within the Wards.

Similar to the Community Visioning Workshop, “Availability of parking” ranked highest in terms of importance (roughly 67% rated as “Very important”) and lowest in satisfaction (roughly 27% indicated they were “Very unsatisfied”).

Although parking was clearly an important issue for residents, there were other factors related to pedestrian comfort and safety that also stood out as clear priority needs. These include “Pedestrian facilities”; “Condition of streets”, “Conditions of sidewalks”, “Streetscape amenities”. These findings add to the narrative that there is a desire for more safe, comfortable, and connected pedestrian network within the Wards and future planning decisions should prioritize these enhancements moving forward.

TOPICS WITH HIGH IMPORTANCE AND LOW SATISFACTION



CRASH ANALYSIS

Crash records were obtained from the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT) for the past ten years (2011-2020) to help identify crash incident trends and patterns within the Wards. Overall there were 1,139 total crashes within the Wards from 2011-2020 for an average of roughly 114 crashes per year. While crashes were somewhat consistently distributed over the ten year period, there was a low in 2014 (95 crashes) and a high of 137 crashes in 2016.



COLLISION TYPE

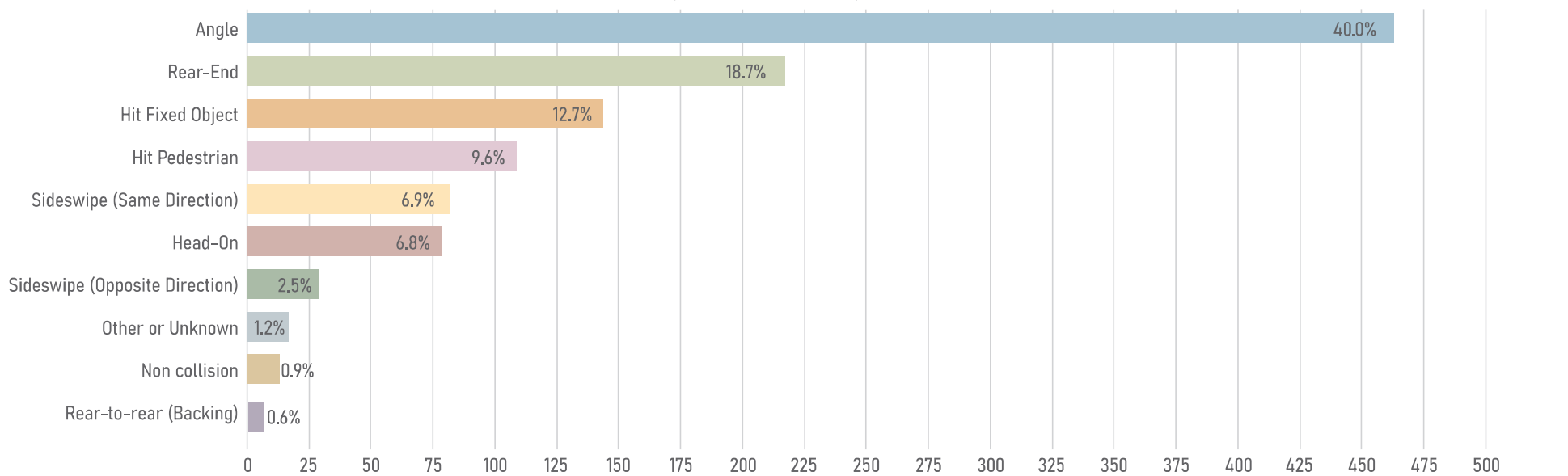
Beyond crash totals, the types of collision can provide additional information about existing conditions and possible trends and strategies to improve safety and mobility. From 2011-2020, there were 456 reported “Angle” accounting for roughly 40% of all collisions.

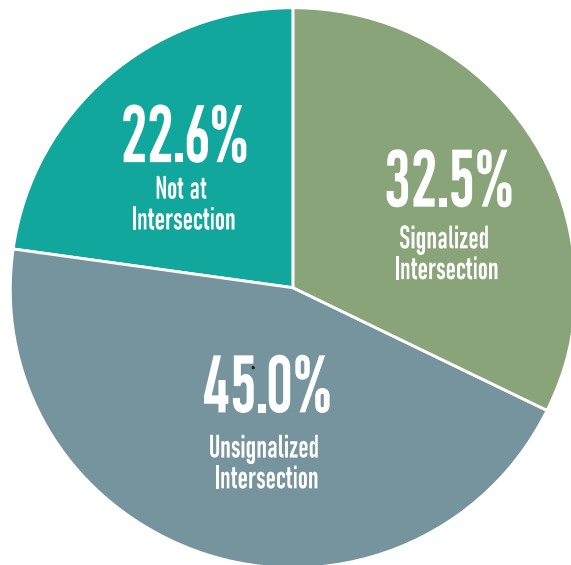
Of the angled crashes, approximately 45% occurred at an unsignalized intersection whereas roughly 33% took place at a signalized intersection. This type of crash can be the result of limited sight distances (parked cars too close to intersection), crossing or making left turns from a stop at a busy cross street, running stop signs or red lights.

Rear-end crashes were the second most frequent type of crash accounting for 213 (18.7%) of total crashes over the ten year period. These types of crashes can often be attributed to distracted drivers, limited sight lines, speeding, and improper following distance.

Another notable trend was number of pedestrian crashes within the Wards accounting for nearly 10% of total crashes in the past ten years. Of the pedestrian crashes, nearly 69% took place at an intersection. This could point towards a need for enhanced pedestrian infrastructure at intersections to increase pedestrian visibility and safety and decrease vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

TOTAL CRASHES BY TYPE (2011-2020)



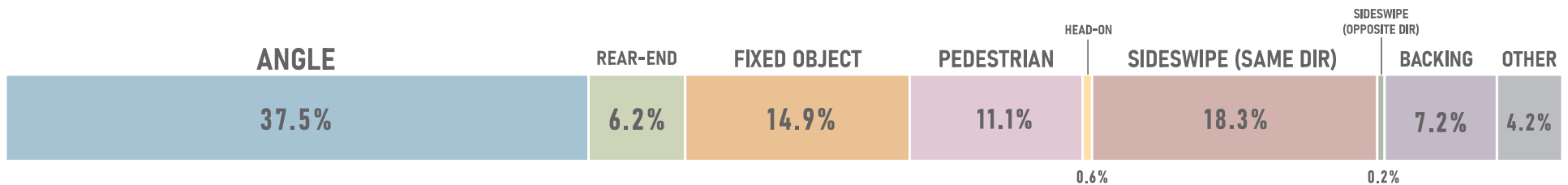


CHANGES OVER TIME

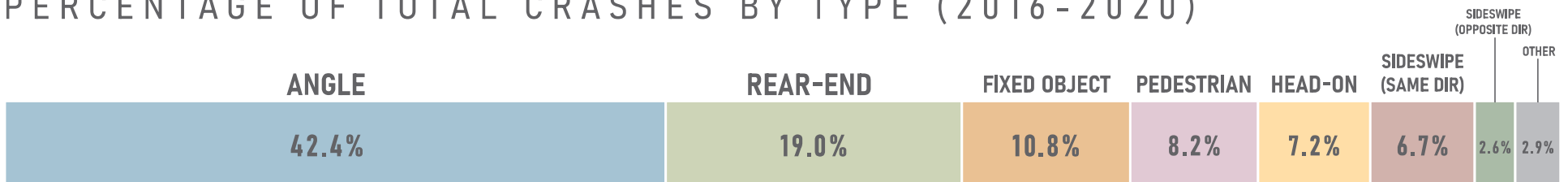
It is also useful to compare the crash data over different five-year periods (2011-2015 vs 2016-2020). When looking at the data this way, “Angle” crashes were still the highest over both time frames but there was a noticeable increase of roughly 5% in 2016-2020. This could be attributed to increases running red lights/stop signs and limited sight distance.

Furthermore, “Rear-End” crashes saw the most significant increase going from 6.2% (2011-2015) to 19.0% (2016-2020). Possible causes for this could be increases in distracted driving, limited sight distance, speeding, and improper following distances. “Sideswipe (Same Direction)” had the largest decrease going from 18.3% to 6.7%.

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CRASHES BY TYPE (2011-2015)



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CRASHES BY TYPE (2016-2020)



COLLISION SEVERITY AND PEDESTRIAN INVOLVEMENT

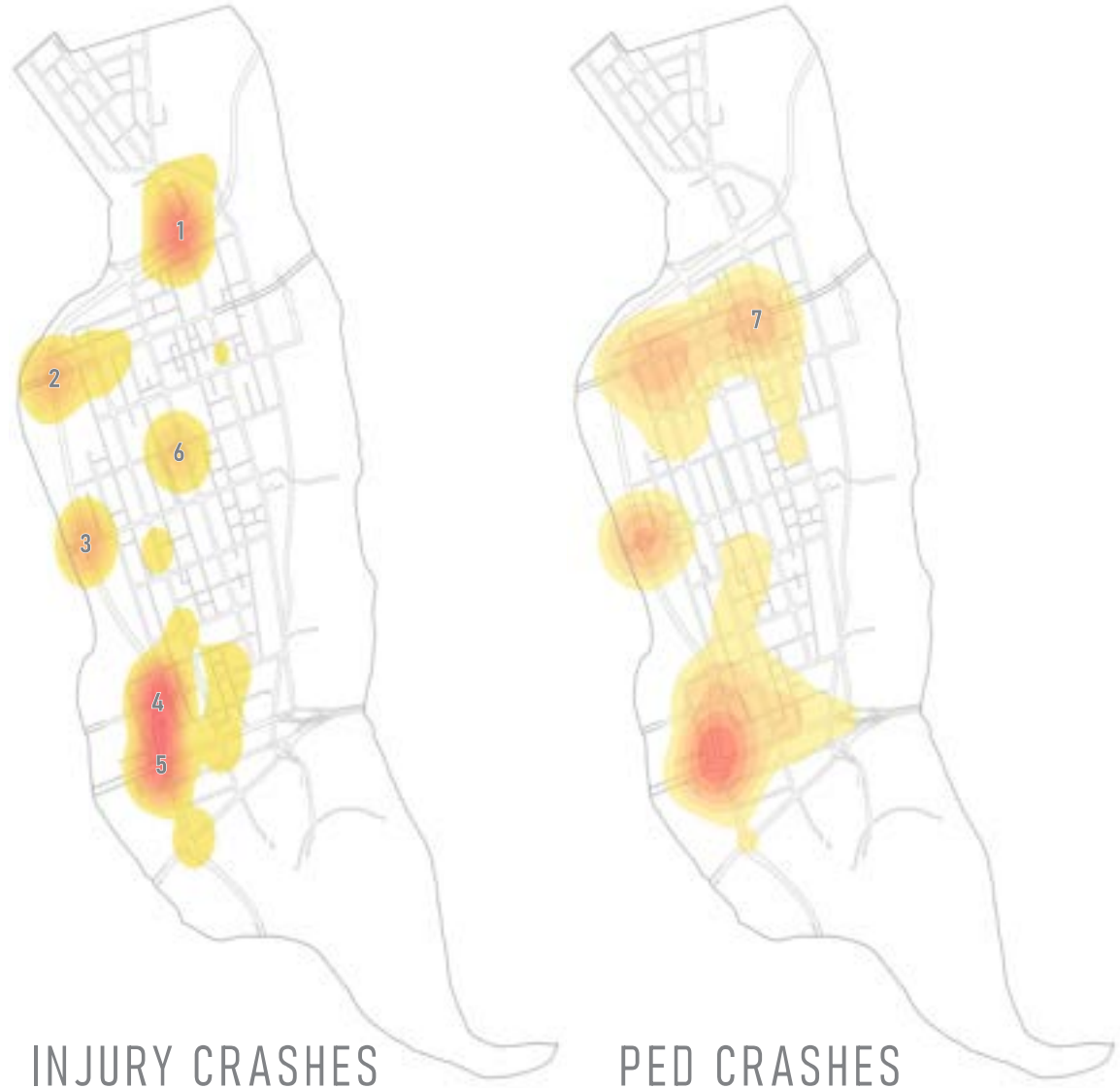
Heat maps are a good way of displaying crash information to identify hot spots that can become priority areas for interventions. In addition to total crash numbers, PennDOT also tracks the injury severity of each reported crash. This information can be very useful in further identifying priority areas with high rates of serious injuries. The database also captures whether pedestrians are involved in a crash and this information can help inform where enhanced pedestrian infrastructure might be needed.

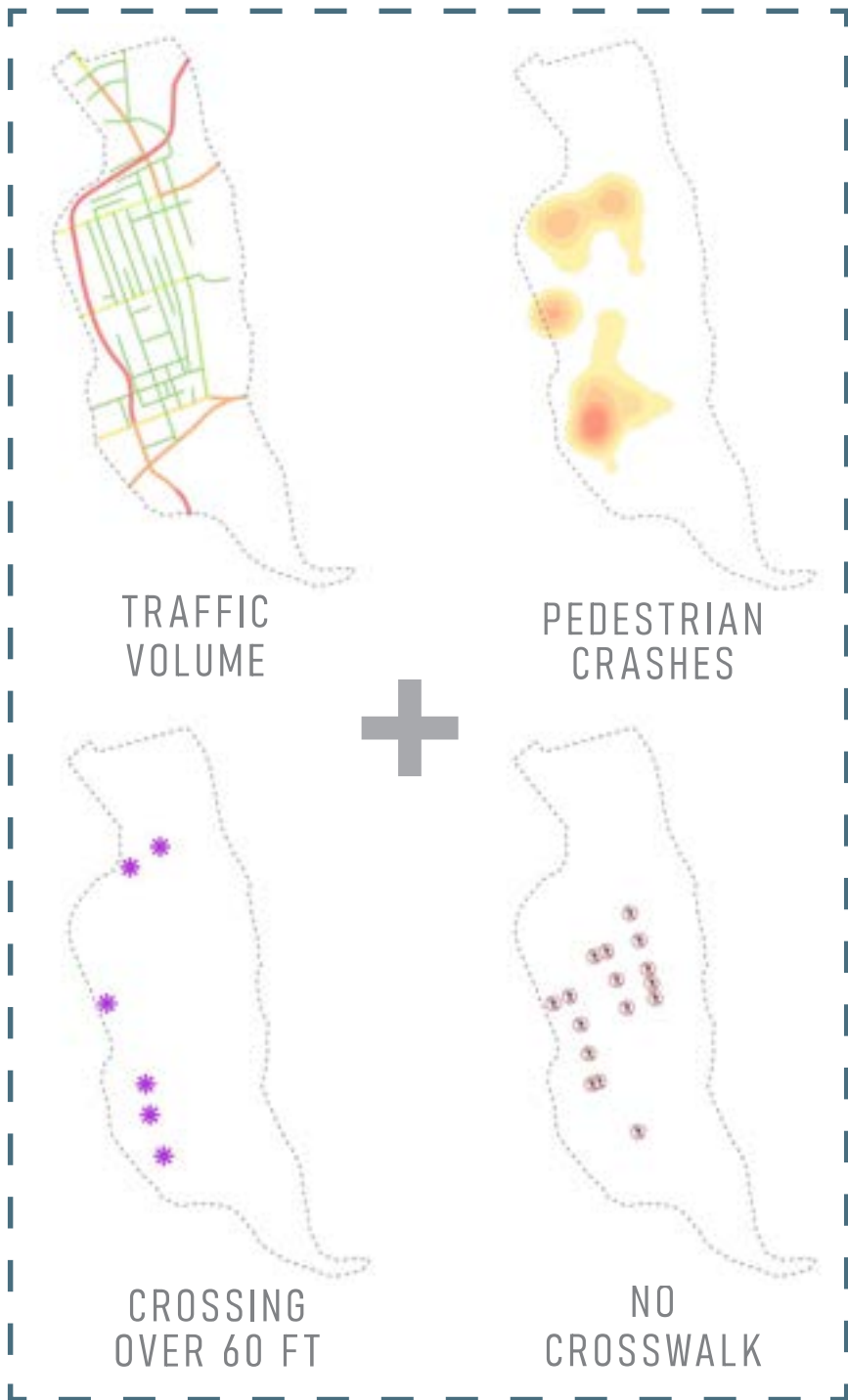
Of the 1,139 crashes that occurred within The Wards between 2011-2020 there was one fatal injury and 24 crashes that resulted in a suspected serious injury. In total, nearly 50% of crashes resulted in some degree of injury. Diving deeper into crashes that involved an injury of some type (map on left), the following intersections had high crash concentrations:

- 1) American Parkway & N Front Street
- 2) American Parkway & Tilghman Street
- 3) American Parkway & Gordon Street
- 4) American Parkway & Linden
- 5) American Parkway & Hamilton Street
- 6) Ridge Avenue & Liberty Street
- 7) Tilghman Street & Front Street

In terms of pedestrian crashes, intersections #2-#5 also had high concentrations of pedestrians crashes with an additional problem intersection identified at Tilghman Street & Front Street. These intersections present a good starting point for potential priority focus areas when considering improvements to increase safety for road users of all travel modes.

CRASH CONCENTRATION 1ST & 6TH WARDS





INTERSECTION ANALYSIS

Although a helpful first step, desktop analysis can only show so much about roadway conditions, pedestrian infrastructure and how those factors influence the safety and comfort for users of all ages and abilities. In order to supplement this information, planning staff conducted an intersection analysis to better determine the real world conditions and factors that affect pedestrian safety and comfort within the Wards.

The assessment utilized GPS collection technology to assess all major intersections within the Wards based on a variety of factors including: crossing distances, pedestrian amenities (painted crossings, signals, curb ramps, etc.), ADA accessibility, and traffic conditions. Among the factors analyzed, two primary characteristics were chosen that are most pivotal to pedestrian safety

- 1) Crossings distance greater than 60 Feet
- 2) Lack of painted crosswalk

These layers were then combined with traffic volumes and the pedestrian crash heat map. The resulting map was then analyzed to identify crossover among the different layers resulting in a set of priority intersections where factors overlapped:

- **American Parkway/Front Street**
- **American Parkway/Linden Street**
- **American Parkway/Ridge Avenue**
- **American Parkway/Hamilton Street**
- **Tilghman Street/Front Street**
- **American Parkway/Union Street**
- **American Parkway/Gordon Street**

These intersections represent potential priority locations to focus future traffic safety and pedestrian infrastructure enhancements.

PRIORITY INTERSECTIONS



BICYCLE NETWORK

Bicycling can provide an affordable, healthy, and reliable transportation option for users of all ages and abilities. The benefits of bicycling are only possible when cities have a safe, interconnected network of low stress streets and bicycle infrastructure where people can ride comfortably. Determining the state of the existing bicycle network, through a bicycle network analysis, is an important first step to establish a baseline for bicycle infrastructure improvements.

Completing a bicycle network analysis can be an involved process with many factors including traffic volumes, speed limits, crash history, etc. Luckily, People for Bikes has created an integrated “Bicycle Network Analysis” tool that utilizes data from the US Census and OpenStreetMap (OSM) to determine roadway network stress and overall network connectivity for cities throughout the US. Cities are scored from 0-100 (with 100 the highest).

Citywide, Allentown had a score of 23 indicating limited access and connectivity due to a lack of a connected, low stress bicycle network. The map on the right highlights the existing bicycle network within the 1st & 6th Wards. Based on the map, there are a fair amount of low stress streets within The Wards. However, these low stress roadways are bounded and cut off by high stress corridors running both east/west and north/south. These corridors create impediments that disrupt the network and make for uncomfortable bicycling

The map to the right shows some examples of high stress roadways within the Wards that make bicycling uncomfortable for all but the most confident riders.



All too often bicycling is viewed less as a means of transportation and more as a means of exercise or leisure for only the most confident cyclists. This perception is often due to a lack of integrated bicycle infrastructure that increases safety and comfort among users of all ages and abilities.

Multiple studies have attempted to differentiate the

different types of bicyclists in terms of comfort level and eagerness to ride. A landmark study (Geller, 2006) investigated bicycling in the City of Portland, OR by surveying residents on their biking habits and asked where they ranked their biking confidence among four proposed categories:

- 1) Strong and Fearless
- 2) Enthused and Confident
- 3) Interested but Concerned
- 4) No Way No How

A more recent study (Dill, McNeil, 2016) utilized the same categories and applied it to sample of residents from the 50 largest US metropolitan areas. Results from the study indicated that 13% identified as either “Strong and Fearless” or “Enthused & Confident” while 37% fell into the “No Way No How” category.

What’s most interesting is the fact that the majority (51%) stated that they were “Interested but Concerned” when it comes to bicycling within their respective city. This finding is encouraging in that it highlights a latent desire and willingness to bicycle, provided a safe and comfortable environment for riding.

Investing in a safe, interconnected network of bicycle infrastructure is the key to creating a comfortable bicycling environment that is accessible and inviting riders of all ages and abilities.

DISTRIBUTION OF CYCLISTS - TOP 50 METRO AREAS



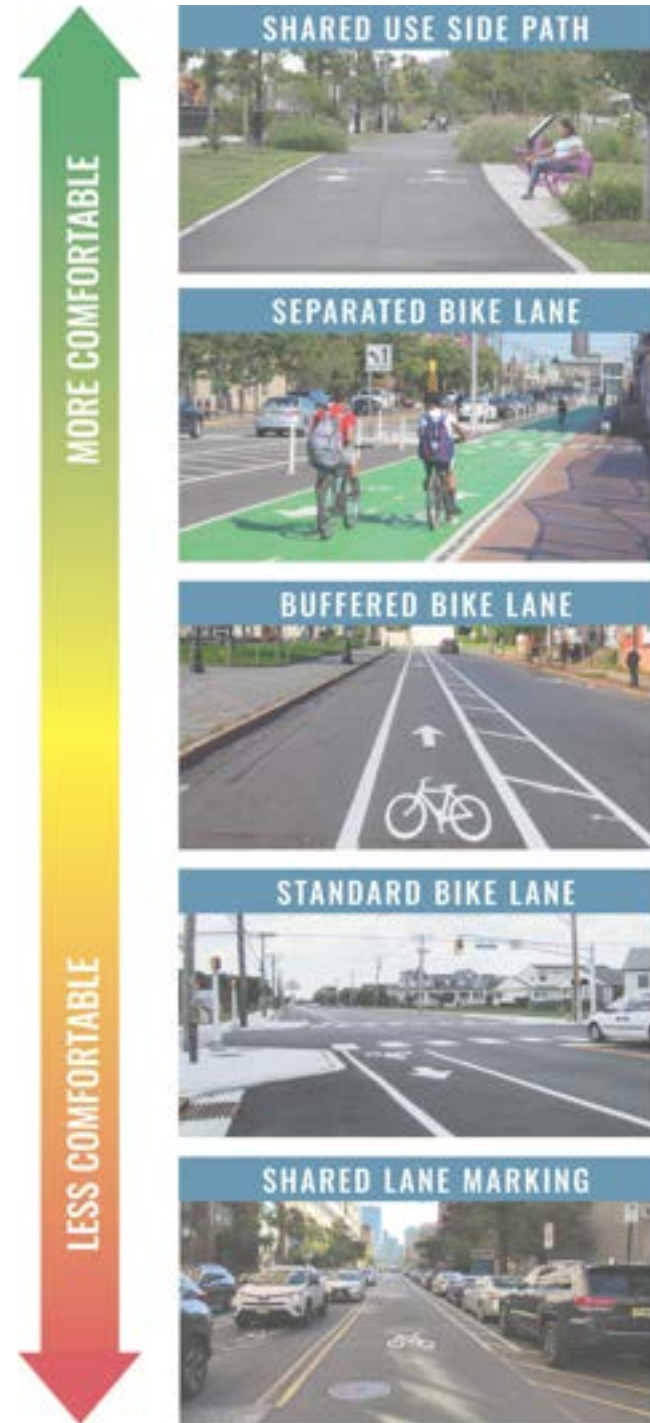
BICYCLE FACILITY COMFORT

When planning for bicycle networks that provide safe, comfortable riding experience for users of all ages and abilities it is important to realize that not all bicycle infrastructure is created equally. While some riders might be comfortable sharing the road with vehicles, the vast majority of riders are not confident enough to brave these conditions. When planning for appropriate bicycle facilities the two key components are limiting traffic stress (through separation from vehicles) and increasing comfort for riders (including wide/even riding surfaces with adequate visibility for riders and drivers)

The graphic to the right shows the relative levels of comfort that can be achieved based by utilizing different types of bicycle facilities. Facilities that limit traffic stress and provide the most comfort for riders are Shared Use Paths where bicycles and pedestrians are completely separated from traffic (such as the D & L Trail). This is followed by Separated Bike Lanes where a physical barrier (bollards, planters, parked cars, etc.) provide separation from vehicle traffic. Similarly, Buffered Bike Lanes also provide a buffer from traffic but without the physical barrier.

Shared Lane Markings fall at the bottom of the spectrum in terms of separation from traffic and subsequent rider comfort. While these treatments may be appropriate for low-speed (25 MPH and below) neighborhood bikeways (often referred to as bicycle boulevards) they are not appropriate for higher speed higher volume roadways.

Unfortunately, Shared Lane Markings have become the default for bike facilities in Allentown despite often not being the appropriate treatment for a given roadway. While it is not feasible to install high comfort facilities on all roadways, identifying and creating a network of well-connected, high comfort/low stress routes is essential to increasing access and connectivity throughout the city.



BICYCLE AUDIT

To better determine the bikeability and assess the level of comfort for cyclists within the Wards, planning staff worked with local nonprofit Community Bike Works to conduct a bicycle audit in the area. Staff joined a group of student and instructors for a group ride throughout the Wards to assess roadway status, traffic conditions, driver behavior, and intersections along the route. The route was developed based on community feedback gathered through the Community Visioning Workshop and Community Survey) regarding road safety concerns within the Wards. After each segment, the group stopped to discuss their experience and what issues they encountered and how they could be improved.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Section	Road(s)	Issues Identified
Section 1	Front St	Pot holes; debris; uneven/bumpy roadway conditions
Section 2	Tilghman St	Long delay for crossings; narrow riding area due to parking; heavy traffic
Section 3	2nd St	Pot holes; debris; uneven/bumpy roadway conditions; lack of space; aggressive drivers; no slow speed sign ins school zone
Section 4	Linden St/ Hamilton St	No turn signal (left turn on Hamilton very difficult), uneven/un-marked roadway; heavy traffic; aggressive drivers
Section 5	Ridge Ave/ Chew St	Limited visibility due to parked vehicles too close to intersections; cracked roadway; debris; no painted shoulder lines
Section 6	Gordon St	Narrow roadway; double parked vehicles and limited sight lines; high speed aggressive drivers; no signage for Bucky Boyle Park



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: ACCESSIBILITY + CONNECTIVITY

GOAL #1: CREATE SAFE AND EFFICIENT MULTI-MODAL ROUTES

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
1A	Explore potential infrastructure improvements at priority intersections to improve safety, awareness, predictability and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists	Utilize intersection analysis as starting point to identify priority intersections and potential improvements based on additional investigations of existing conditions and potential intervention strategies
1B	Explore traffic calming strategies for major corridors within the 1st and 6th Wards to slow traffic and create safer, more inviting environment for all users.	Utilize existing data (crash reports, speeding, roadway conditions, etc.) and observational analysis to identify potential traffic calming measures and locations.
1C	Update Safe Routes to School planning documents for local Schools (Sheridan Elementary, Harrison Morton Middle School) to aid in creating safe, connected walking network for students.	Safe Routes to School Plans completed in 2015 but in need of revisit and update.
1D	Improve access to recreational trails and greenways through enhancement of connections to existing trails and identification and development of new trailway opportunities.	Update to trails plan and work with local and regional partners to combine efforts to identify trail opportunities and funding sources

GOAL #2: CREATE WELCOMING SPACES FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

2A	Conduct comprehensive parking study to identify existing issues and potential solutions to alleviate parking concerns for residents and businesses. Study should include bicycle parking.	Collaboration with Allentown Parking Authority to determine current/future parking needs in the area
2B	Create wayfinding and directional signage that highlights community assets and increases navigability for residents and visitors.	Active participation in newly underway Master Wayfinding Plan to ensure the Wards is incorporated as an important destination. Reexamine neighborhood branding strategies.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of priority intersections and possible interventions Safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure 	Department of Planning, Public Works, Engineering	P	I - - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low stress network of pedestrian/bicycle corridors Decrease in vehicular crashes (especially those involving pedestrians) 	Department of Planning, Public Works, Engineering	P	I - - - - ->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer walking and biking routes for students and local residents Decrease in pedestrian crashes 	ASD, Department of Planning, Public Works, Engineering, PennDOT,	P I	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded trail network Increases access and connectivity to destinations within the Wards and throughout the city 	COA, The LINK Trail Network, D & L Trail, Local Developers	P	I	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in illegal parking Appropriate siting of parking Increased bicycle parking opportunities 	Allentown Parking Authority, COA, Area businesses, Local Developers	P I	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased navigability for residents and visitors Highlight community assets and businesses 	COA, Consultants, ASD, Local nonprofits, Businesses, Parks and Recreation	P I	●	

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: ACCESSIBILITY + CONNECTIVITY

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
GOAL #3: EXPAND MOBILITY CHOICES + IMPROVE SAFETY/AWARENESS		
3A	Enhance bus service throughout the Wards and improve transit amenities to provide more comfort and ease of access for passengers.	Convene focus group sessions or conduct a special survey of area residents and riders to assess /determine further needs to improve bus ridership and comfort.
3B	Explore micro-mobility options such as bike/scooter share, bike library/maintenance supplies, car share/carpool options to increase transportation mode options all ages and abilities.	Create an ad-hoc working group/s on micro-mobility options to look into best practices in implementing these new modes of mobility in the city as a whole
3C	Promote and expand existing programs for increasing bike access and ownership among residents	Work with community partners (such as Community Bike Works) to rehab old bikes and provide transportation options for residents
3D	Develop educational campaign on pedestrian and bicycle safety to improve awareness and promote road safety among all road users	Work with community partners (nonprofits, local schools) to develop educational materials and spread awareness through seminars and social media.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ridership in the area and city-wide. • More comfortable transit infrastructure 	LANTA, Neighborhood Association, Places of workship, area businesses.	PI	●	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations and strategies for possible micromobility options • Pilot programs 	COA (Public Works, Planning, Health), LANTA, LVCAT, APA, ASD, LVPC, colleges/universities, other non-profits		PI	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded promotions and awareness of existing programs • Resources for bike repair and ownership 	COA(Planning, Health, APD) ASD, Community Bike Works, Area Nonprofits	PI	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational materials and videos that can be shared via social media • In school curriculum for pedestrian/bicycle safety 	COA (Planning, Public Works, APD), Area Non-profits, ASD	PI	----->	

SERVICES + AMENITIES

OVERVIEW

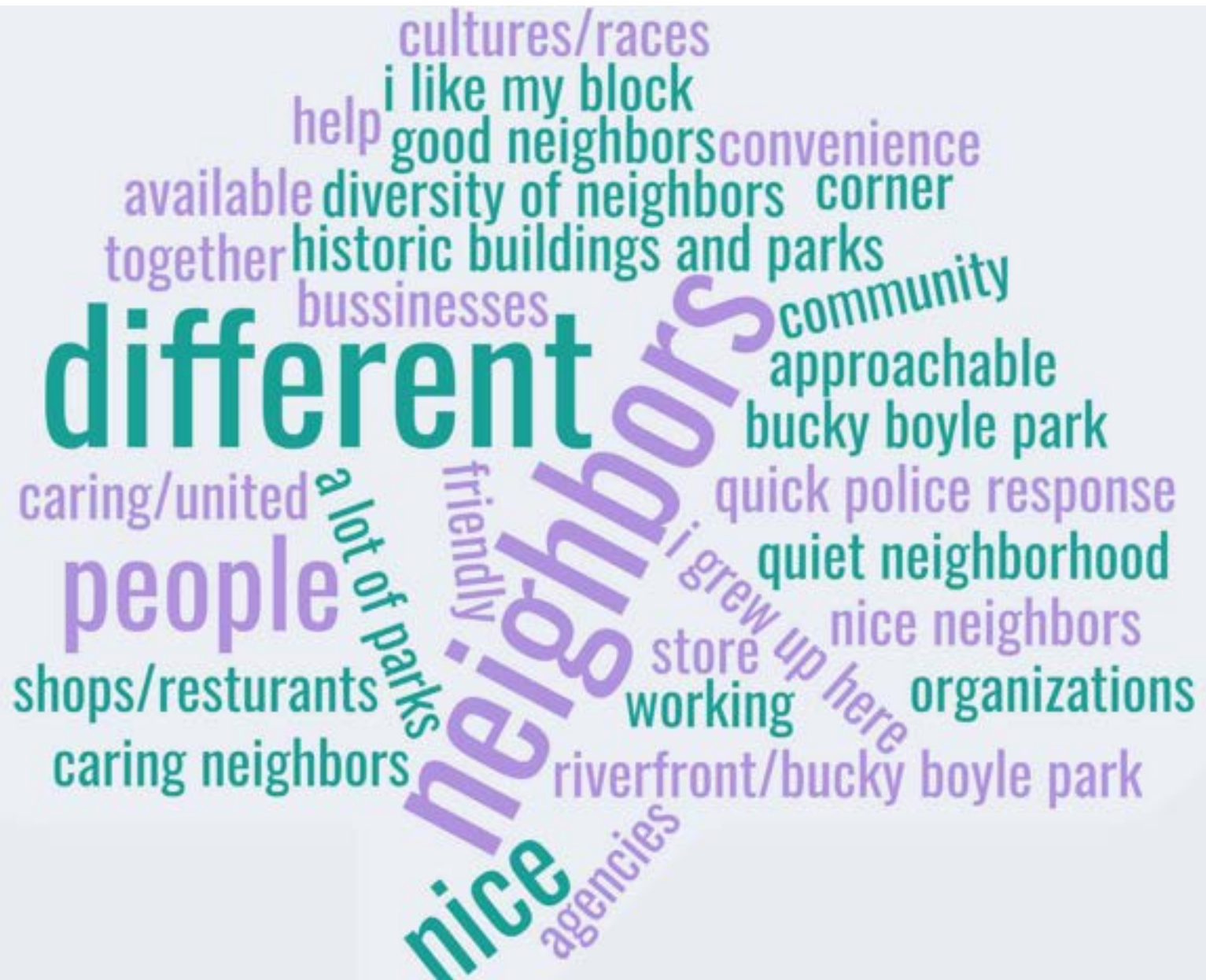
People looking to move into residential neighborhoods make decisions based on several factors, among which are the availability and accessibility of services and amenities. “Services and amenities” are varied, and these mean different things to different people. Their number, quality and location in a neighborhood says something about quality of living in that neighborhood and how welcoming an area might seem to people who either live there, visiting or just passing through.

VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Support Neighborhood Identify and Organizational Capacity
- 2) Enhance Access to Local Essential Services and Amenities
- 3) Foster Inclusive and Welcoming Communities



For instance, in the community visioning workshop at Bucky Boyle, participants were asked what they liked most about the neighborhood they live in or happen to be visiting. The responses obtained were indeed varied but certain themes were apparent due to the number of mentions of the word. From the word cloud on the following page, people who live in the Wards obviously love their parks – notably Bucky Boyle – and their neighbors, and they embrace the diversity in culture that has characterized the 1st and 6th Wards through its history



LOCAL ASSETS

Residents of the Wards benefit from services provided by organizations that have citywide coverage and beyond such as Allentown Health Bureau, Meals on Wheels, Allentown Housing Authority, Community Services for Children, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, Community Bikeworks, and a host of others.

In addition, the Wards host a number of non-profit organizations providing a variety of services from education, cultural appreciation, religious facilities /amenities, and social services. The map and table on the following page provides a list of notable not-for-profit entities in the planning area and the major services they provide. Except for the two public schools – whose respective service areas are limited to the planning area and its immediate environs – all the non-profits listed have a citywide coverage and beyond.



The map illustrates the general location of these non-commercial assets. Their distribution in the planning area seems dispersed – that is, not clustered or concentrated in any one or two particular areas.

Casa Guadalupe and Allentown Rescue Mission are social service providers. The Rescue Mission provides emergency shelter and food to homeless men. It also has supportive programs that aim to transform participants into responsible individuals through counseling, case management and preparing for eventual employment.

Casa Guadalupe, on the other hand, has a broader service scope but it is primarily a WIC (Women, Infants, & Children) agency that provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk. Casa also has stand-alone programs for seniors, mentoring and after-school programming for elementary, middle and high school students.

The agency also extends referral and technical services to access resources on rental assistance, household heating, health care, substance-abuse prevention, ESL and GED classes. Originally established to meet the needs of primarily Latino residents, Casa has since evolved into a social service agency that takes in any income-eligible resident, regardless of heritage, needing to avail of its services when such services are available. Casa estimates that its monthly visitations range between 4,000 and 5,000 families that go through its doors seeking assistance.

COMMUNITY SERVICES MAP



ORGANIZATION

SERVICES OFFERED

Non-Denominational

1	Casa Guadalupe	Social services/Community center
2	Allentown Rescue Mission	Emergency shelter
3	America on Wheels Museum	Cultural appreciation
4	Cohesion Network	After-school program/Community organizing

Faith Based

1	Immaculate Concepcion Church	Worship/Community center
2	City Limits Assembly of God Church	Worship/Food Pantry/Community center
3	St George's Antiochian Orthodox Church	Worship/Syrian community center
4	St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	Worship/Ukrainian community center
5	Spanish Pentecostal Church	Worship/Community center
6	Catholic Charities Ecumenical Kitchen	Soup kitchen/community center

Education

1	Sheridan Elementary School	Primary education (K to 5th Grade)
2	Harrison-Morton Middle School	Primary education (6th to 8th Grade)

Cultural

1	Syrian Arab American Cultural Assoc.	Cultural preservation/Food pantry/Charity
2	Polish American Citizens Society	Cultural preservation



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

During the June 12th Community Visioning Workshop at Bucky Boyle Park, attendees participated in a number of exercises related to health and public safety and the roles each play in the lives of residents and visitors to the 1st & 6th Wards. Allentown Public Works as well as representatives from the Allentown Police Department were on hand to listen to concerns and feedback from attendees and engage in meaningful dialog regarding community needs and potential improvements.

Workshop attendees were asked about their relative comfort under certain circumstances (during the day or at night) both within the 1st & 6th Wards in general and in their immediate neighborhoods.)Based on responses, people were relatively comfortable during the day (both in their immediate neighborhood and within the 1st & 6th Wards in general).

On the other hand, respondents indicated considerable discomfort during nighttime conditions both in their immediate neighborhood (29.4% Very Uncomfortable; 35.3% Somewhat Uncomfortable) as well as in the 1st/6th Wards in general (18.8% Very Uncomfortable; 50% Somewhat Uncomfortable).



Although the exact causes of discomfort are not certain, the discrepancy between night/day could indicate a lack of adequate lighting (both street lighting and pedestrian scale) within the 1st/6th Wards.

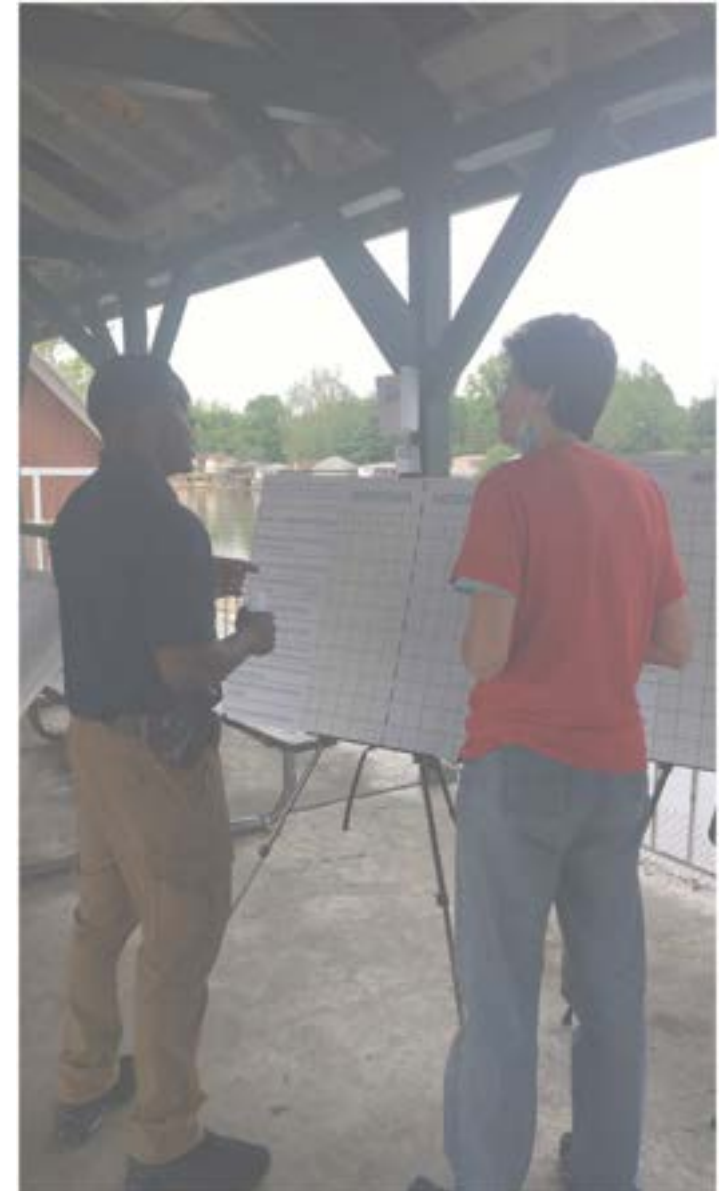
How comfortable are you in the following situations?

Scenario	Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Neutral	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable
In the 1st/6th Wards during the day	13.3%	0.0%	40.0%	26.7%	20.0%
In the 1st/6th Wards at night	18.8%	50.0%	12.5%	12.5%	6.3%
In your immediate neighborhood during the day	0.0%	7.1%	21.4%	14.3%	57.1%
In your immediate neighborhood at night	29.4%	35.3%	11.8%	11.8%	11.8%

Respondents were also provided a list of topics related to public health + safety and asked to indicate (using dots) how important each topic was to them and how currently satisfied they are with each (scale of 1-5 with 5 being most important/satisfied). In terms of importance, respondents felt that most of the topics ranked very highly with “Neighborhood watch groups” receiving the most “5” votes (18) followed by “Community intervention services” and “Police visibility and presence” (16 each).

While respondents generally agreed that most of the topics presented were very important, their current satisfaction with those aspects of health + public safety ranked much lower. Some topics that stood out were “Community intervention services” where 10 respondents indicated a satisfaction level of 2 or lower, “Traffic enforcement” and “Community beautification and litter cleanups” where nine respondents rated their satisfaction at two or lower). “Well-lit streets sidewalks, and public spaces” also received the lowest satisfaction rating (1) from five respondents. This combination of high importance/low satisfaction indicates that these topic represent community needs that should be prioritized.

Public Health + Safety Topic	IMPORTANCE					SATISFACTION				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Community beautification and litter cleanups				2	15	4	5	2		
Neighborhood watch groups			1	4	18	2	3	3		1
Community intervention services				2	16		10	1	1	1
Police visibility and presence				2	16	2	2	4	3	1
Traffic enforcement				4	13	7	2	4	1	
Emergency services response time				3	13			8	3	1
Well-lit streets, sidewalks, and public spaces				6	13	5		5	1	1
Public trash/recycling receptacles				4	12	1	3	5	1	
Animal control services		1	4	4	5	2		9		1



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

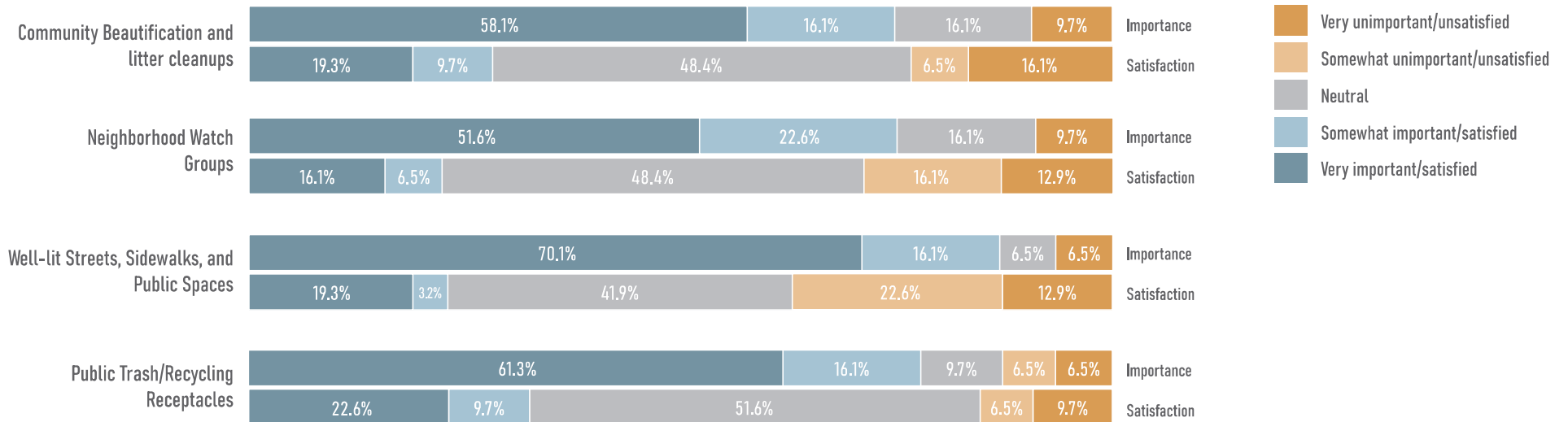
COMMUNITY SERVICES

The survey also sought to find out how important and currently satisfied the respondents were with certain community actions and amenities. Respondents reported that all these community actions and amenities are very important while the respondents' levels of satisfaction ranged from very unsatisfied to neutral. These low levels of satisfaction imply either more of these actions are desired or the manner of their delivery ought to improve. Suggestions to organize more neighborhood clean-ups and neighborhood watches were often mentioned. Improvements in lighting of streets and sidewalks were also popular comments.

COMMENTS FROM VISIONING WORKSHOP

The 1st & 6th Wards need more resources...
 ... for the prevention of substance abuse.
 ... to address domestic violence”
 ... to improve mental health services”
 ... to increase police presence

IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION



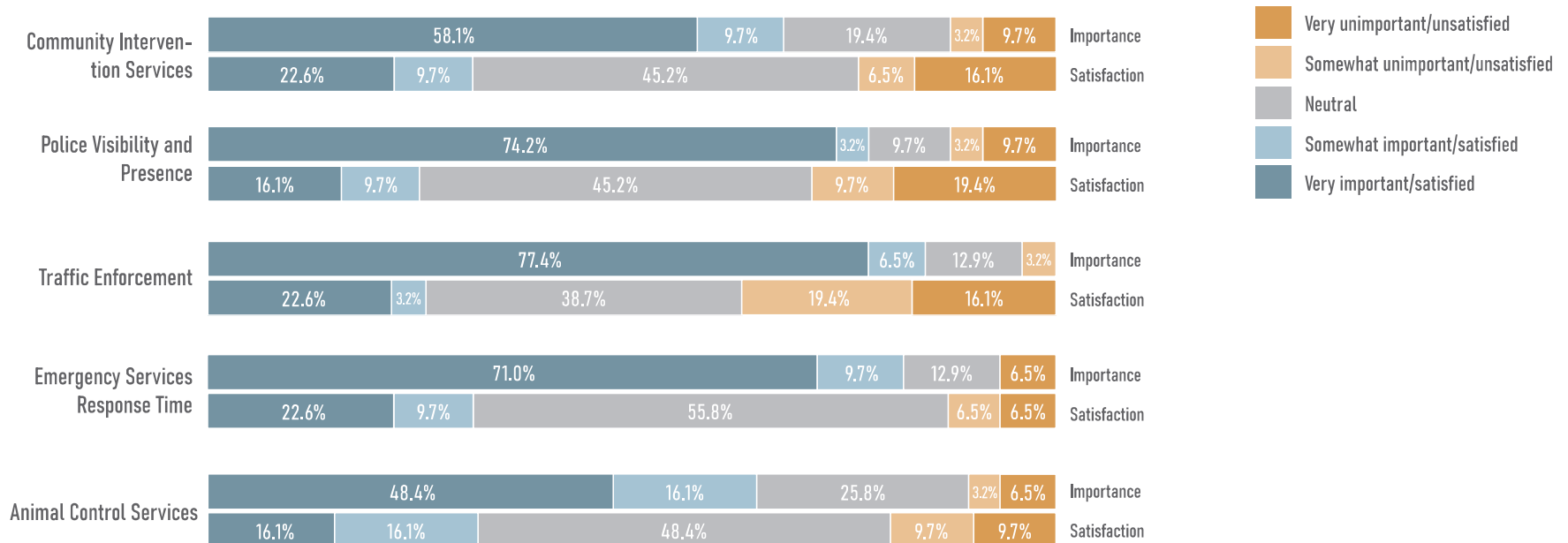
PUBLIC HEALTH + AMENITIES

In the needs assessment survey, respondents were asked “how important and how currently satisfied are you with the following services on public health & safety?” Respondents felt all these services were very important. Their satisfaction levels however, while varied, are low for the most part.

Such low levels of satisfaction were especially noted in Community Intervention Services (which include those on mental health, substance abuse prevention, addressing domestic violence, housing assistance), police visibility, and traffic enforcement – specifically, speeding and driving through stop signs. Comments such as putting in more resources towards improving programs and services on mental health and prevention of substance abuse and addressing domestic violence and increasing police visibility were also important factors for residents. On the other hand, respondents were mostly satisfied with response times rendered by public safety services (police, fire, EMS).



IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION



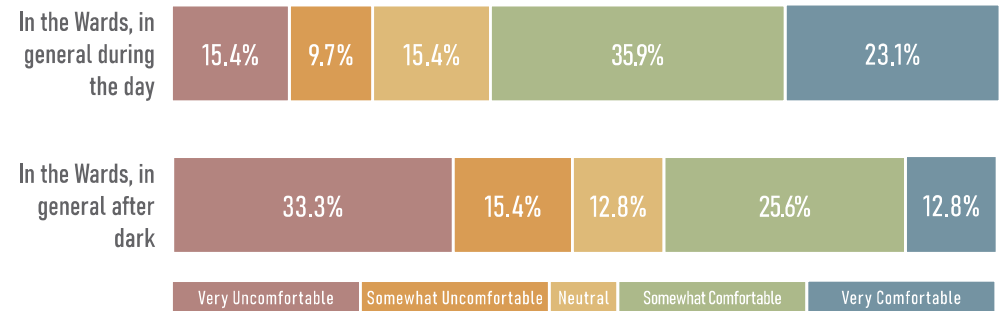
PUBLIC SAFETY + COMFORT

Similar to the Community Visioning Workshop, survey respondents were also asked about their relative levels of comfort within the Wards both during the day and after dark. Survey respondents to the survey also reported much higher feelings of discomfort after dark with in the Wards with 33.3% indicating they were “Very Uncomfortable” and an additional 15.4% responding that they were “Somewhat Uncomfortable” during such conditions. These remarks reinforce previous indications that there may be a lack of pedestrian scale lighting as well as welcoming public spaces for people to gather safely and comfortably within the Wards.

The City has made great strides in the recent years to upgrade city owned street lights to high output LED replacement bulbs throughout the city. The Wards were included in Phase II of these efforts and have benefited greatly from increased illumination within roadways where new lighting upgrades have been installed.

While these lights are great for improving visibility on roadways, they are not as successful at illuminating at the pedestrian scale in areas such as sidewalks, intersections, crossings, and public spaces. Beyond strictly making areas brighter (which alone can actually make places more comfortable and welcoming) Pedestrian scale lighting can be used in a variety of ways from incorporating into landscaping, streetscape design, transit stops, signage, building entrances, public art, etc. Conducting a pedestrian scale lighting audit would be a good first step to determining where additional lighting might be appropriate and what strategies would best fit the context of the Wards.

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES



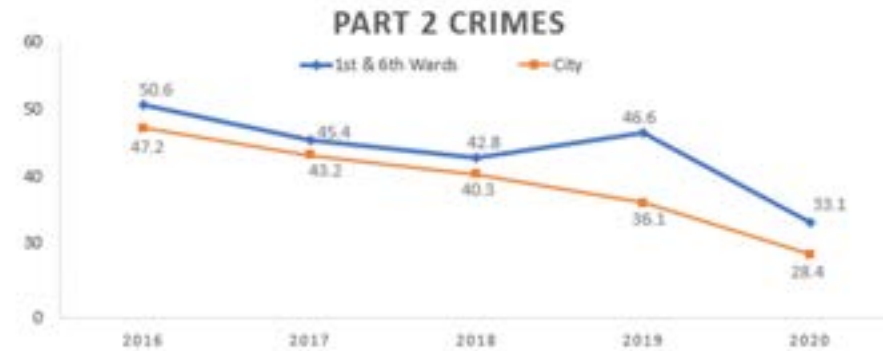
Examples of pedestrian scale lighting streetscape enhancements (Photo - NACTO)

REAL AND PERCEIVED THREAT OF CRIME

Throughout the public feedback gathering process the issues of real and perceived threat of crime was an issue that continued to be brought up as one of the major challenges facing the Wards. With the help of the Allentown Police Department, recent crime statistics (2016-2020) were obtained and analyzed to determine crime related trends within the Wards and how they compare to the city as a whole. Crimes were broken down into two categories:

- 1) **Part 1 Crimes** including: homicide, rape robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, theft, simple assault, arson.
- 2) **Part 2 Crimes** including: forgery fraud, receiving stolen property, vandalism, weapons, prostitution, sex offenses, drug abuse violations, offenses against family, DUI, liquor law violation drunkenness, disorderly conduct, vagrancy.

The figures to the right show the annual crime instances (Part 1 & Part 2 Crimes) per 1,000 residents for the Wards and the city as a whole. After seeing an uptick in 2019, both types of crime have decreased in the Wards and within the city overall in the past year. Despite this decrease, crime rates (for both Part 1 & Part 2 Crimes) have consistently been higher within the Wards than at the city wide level.



Allentown Police on the Road YouTube series aims to bring law enforcement and the community together

COMMUNITY POLICING

Beyond additional police presence, these findings could warrant more creative approach such as community policing and early intervention strategies to match residents with the resources they need. Such strategies should be included in an integrated approach with coordination among many levels of city government, local nonprofits, and community stakeholders. Education campaigns like the “Allentown Police on the Road” YouTube series is a good first step to build upon to bridge the gap and instill trust between local police and the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: SERVICES + AMENITIES

GOAL #1: IMPROVE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO AFTER-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
1A	Continue to support initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education and parent participation in education.	Work with schools to identify opportunities for expanded programming and support from city to increase positive educational outcomes and connect with existing programs and community groups
1B	Coordinate and align after-school programs to ensure quality and relevance with school curriculum.	Careful selection of after-school and out of school time (OST) programs to ensure relevance and complementation with current school curriculum.
1C	Create opportunities for youth to participate in identifying and designing OST programs.	Create an ad-hoc youth working group or youth council to identify, design after-school and OST program.

GOAL #3: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH AND AMONG NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

3A	Improve internal neighborhood structure among community partners to build and maintain relationships and effective communications with all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and participate in relevant meetings and special events sponsored by neighborhood groups. • Support initiatives by neighborhood groups and non-profits (like neighborhood clean ups, beautification projects, block parties, neighborhood watch, community gardens, etc.).
3B	Improve communications among residents and community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and city staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key city unit and staff to serve as liaisons for different engagement needs. • Require developers to convene with area stakeholders to inform of new /proposed projects and gain resident insights in turn. • Explore designating a development coordinator in each organized neighborhood group who will serve as that group's resource person for all development matters arising from city hall

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved educational outcomes 	ASD /Parents, guardians /Casa Guadalupe / providers of after-school programs	○	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsive after-school and OST programs that are also well-timed and of high quality. 	ASD /providers of after-school and OST programs.	○	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A collection of programs deemed relevant and well-supported by Youth. 	ASD /providers of after-school and OST programs.		P I	●

CITY AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better functional relationship between city hall and organized neighborhood groups and non-profits. Clear internal structure of partners 	City (APD, AFD, P&Z, CED).	○	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful resident input and participation on development matters concerning their neighborhoods. 	City (P&Z, PW)	○	----->	

GOAL #4: ADDRESS NEGATIVE SAFETY PERCEPTIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
4A	Through state grants, install pedestrian-scale streetlighting along major streets.	Develop and adopt (with the city) a street lighting plan prioritizing the Front Street and Gordon Street.
4B	Through local grants, implement a resident-assisted porch /façade lighting program for narrow-than-standard streets.	Develop and adopt a street lighting program by installing or repairing porch lights and lighting attached to the façade of homes along narrow streets.
4D	Strengthen relationships between residents and public safety professionals.	Re-establish community-oriented policing in the Wards.

GOAL #5: INCREASE ACCESS TO CULTURAL AND ARTS PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

5A	Increase activities and programming in active and passive leisure.	Create relevant (and cool) sports and leisure activities - like exercising -- that are accessible to all.
5B	Enhance programs and activities in music, arts mindful of the diverse cultural heritage in the area and the city.	Activate more spaces (from idle or underused spaces like churches, social halls) for art exhibits and festival events.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

PROMOTE ACTIVITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
• Well-lit streets that improve pedestrian experience.	PA, City (P&Z, PW)/corporate citizens/foundations.	P	I----->	
• Well-lit streets that improve pedestrian experience.	City (P&Z, PW)/corporate citizens/foundations / residents.		P I----->	
• Police are proactive in crime prevention with the help of residents.	APD	○	----->	----->

ACTIVITIES THAT BENEFIT ALL AGE GROUPS

• Healthy, physically active residents	City (AHB, APD) /non-profits /health care providers/corporate citizens		P I----->	
• More visitations from other areas.	City (Arts Commission) /non-profits /health care providers/corporate citizens		P I----->	

LIVING SYSTEMS

OVERVIEW

Vision 2030 envisions Allentown as a “place where the health of the community and the environment is paramount” promising that the city will “plan for a sustainable, vibrant, and resilient future for the city and the region”. This two-prong focus on human and environmental health recognizes the vital symbiotic nature between the two as well as the many co-benefits that can be realized outcomes are coordinated. Acknowledging and planning for the complex relationships among these living systems is essential to the overall health and vitality of the city and its residents.

The link between community and environmental health is particularly important within the Wards where a combination of geographic, environmental, and socioeconomic factors create a unique set of challenges. With these challenges, also come opportunities for innovative approaches and techniques to protect and expand upon the many vital resources the Wards have to offer. Achieving a balance that both projects natural systems and provides stable growth within the community will be essential for sustainable future within the Ward moving forward.



VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Plan for a Sustainable and Resilient Allentown
- 2) Improve Community Health Outcomes
- 3) Increase Environmental Stewardship
- 4) Create Productive and Connected Urban Landscapes

COMMUNITY HEALTH

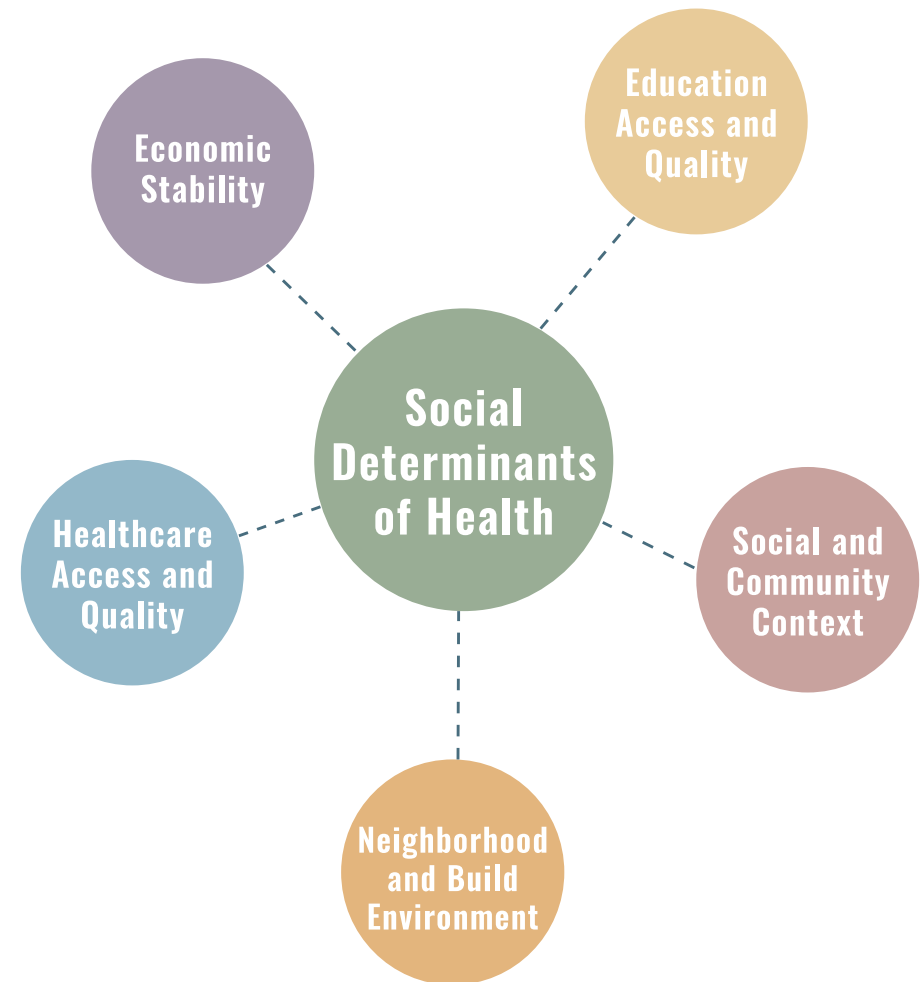
Similar to Vision 2030, this report uses the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) "Social Determinants of Health" as a framework to understand community health within the Wards. The framework is broken down into five key factors:

- Economic stability
- Education Access and Quality
- Social and Community context
- Health Access and Quality
- Neighborhood and Built Environment

With the wide array of data available from seemingly limitless sources, it can be overwhelming to attempt to narrow down the most beneficial datasets. For the purposes of this report, staff wanted to ensure that data was available at a local level (US Census Tract or finer). In addition, staff looked to utilize data sets that combine multiple social determinants of health to paint the picture of community health with the Wards.

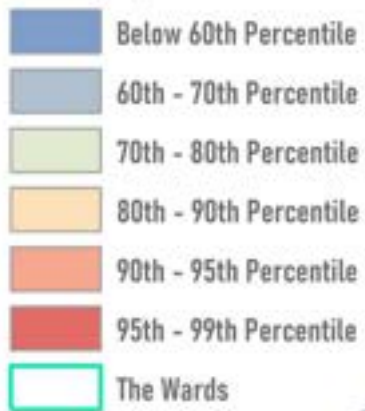
With this in mind, planning staff looked at three primary datasets to determine the current state of community health within the Wards. While there is some overlap among datasets, this speaks to the interconnected nature of community health and adds depth to the analysis.

- 1) US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - EJSCREEN (2021)
- 2) Center for Disease Control (CDC)- Social Vulnerability Index (2018)
- 3) Center for Disease Control (CDC) - PLACES dataset (2021)

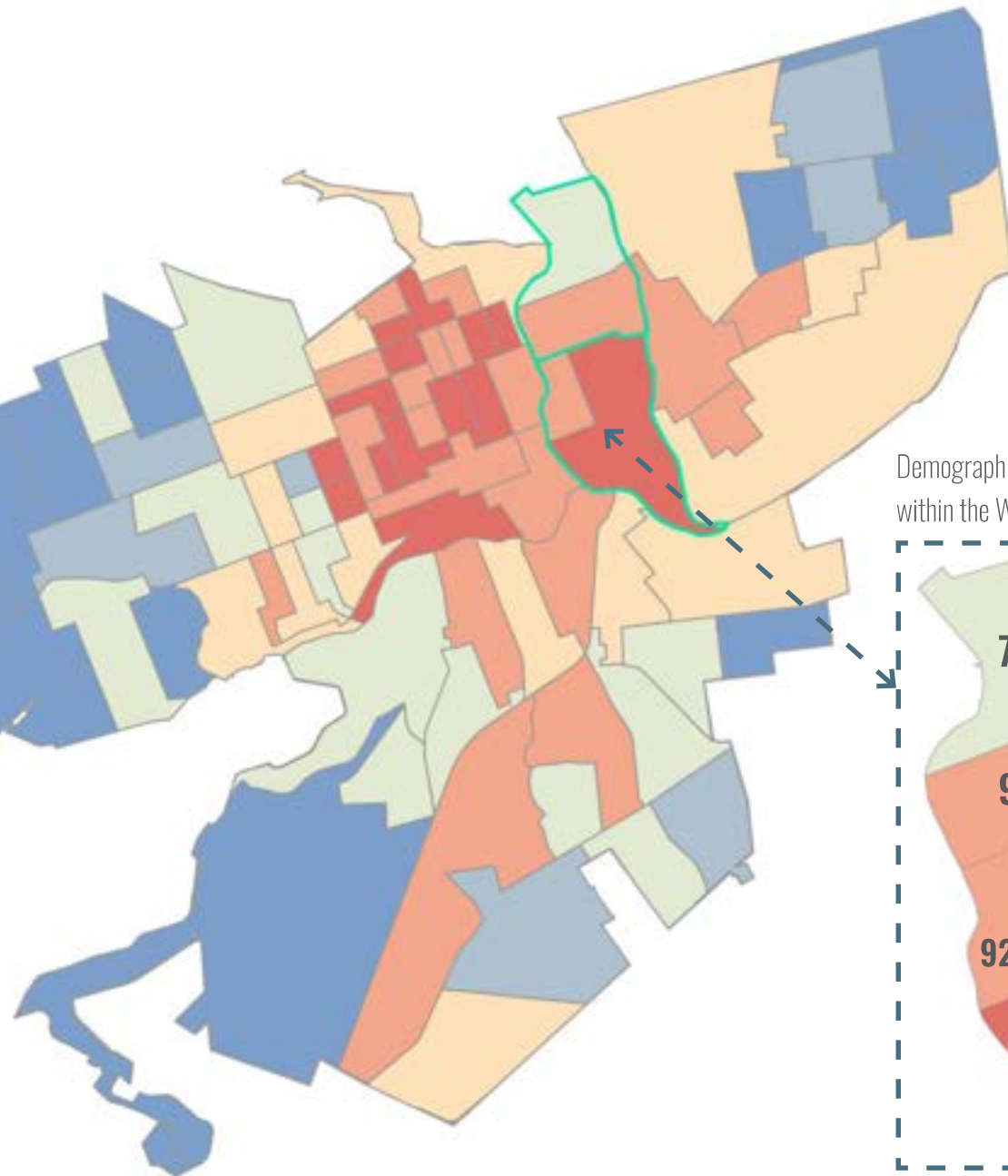


EJSCREEN DEMOGRAPHIC INDEX RANKING - CITY OF ALLENTOWN

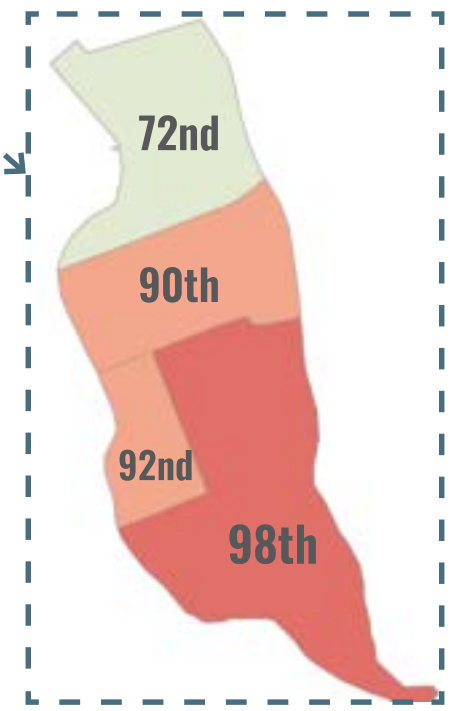
Demographic Index



This map displays the Demographic Index rankings for Allentown. The Wards rank very high indicating high concentrations of both minority and low income residents making the area particularly vulnerable to environmental justice issues such as pollution and adverse health outcomes.



Demographic Index Percentile Rankings within the Wards



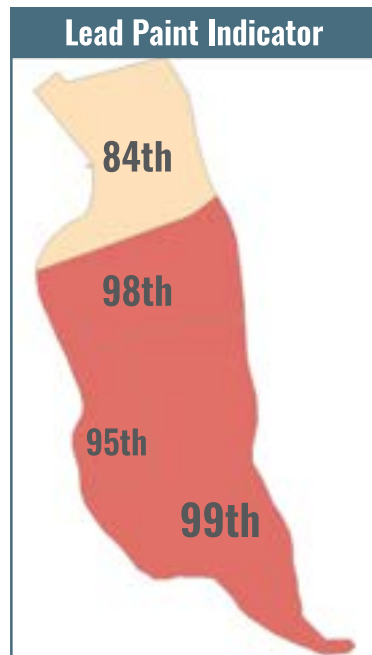
EJSCREEN MAPPING/SCREENING TOOL (2021)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines “environmental justice” as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Planning with and environmental justice approach helps ensure that historically marginalized populations are protected.

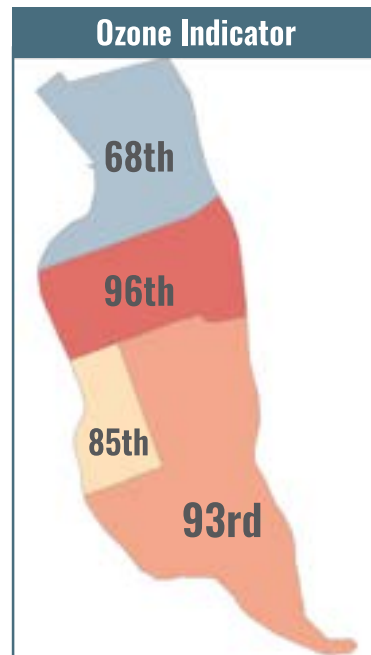
EJScreen is an environmental justice mapping/screening tool developed by the EPA that provides a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators into Environmental Justice (EJ) indexes. EJSCREEN is available at a finer scale than many other data sets (Census Block Group) which allows for more localized analysis.

EJSCREEN offers a “Demographic Index” based on the combination of low-income and people of color demographic data from US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates. The percentiles are compared to all other Census Blocks groups in the country so the higher the percentile, the higher the vulnerability of the population.

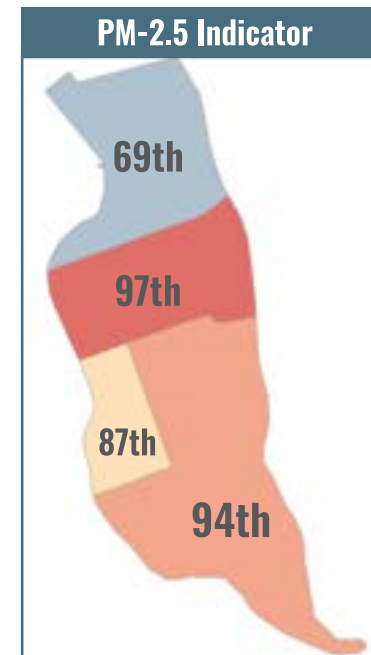
EJSCREEN combines the Demographic Index with various environmental indicators (ranging from cancer risk, to lead paint exposure, to air toxics) to show how susceptible areas are to environmental hazards. Some noteworthy findings for the Wards are displayed below. Percentile ranks show how each block group ranks nationwide with a higher percentile indicating higher risk.



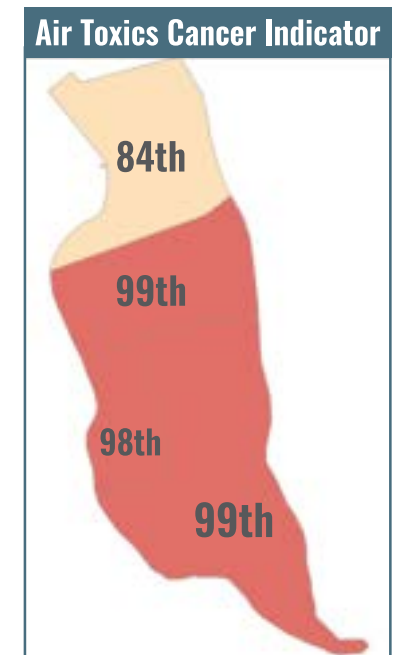
Percentage of pre-1960 housing as indicator of possible exposure to lead paint. High rankings indicate need for enhanced lead abatement strategies.



High levels of ozone (from vehicle traffic, manufacturing, construction, etc.) can lead to severe respiratory issues including long term illness.



High levels fine particulate matter (PM-2.5) from exhaust and other chemicals result in haze/smog and can severely impact respiratory health.

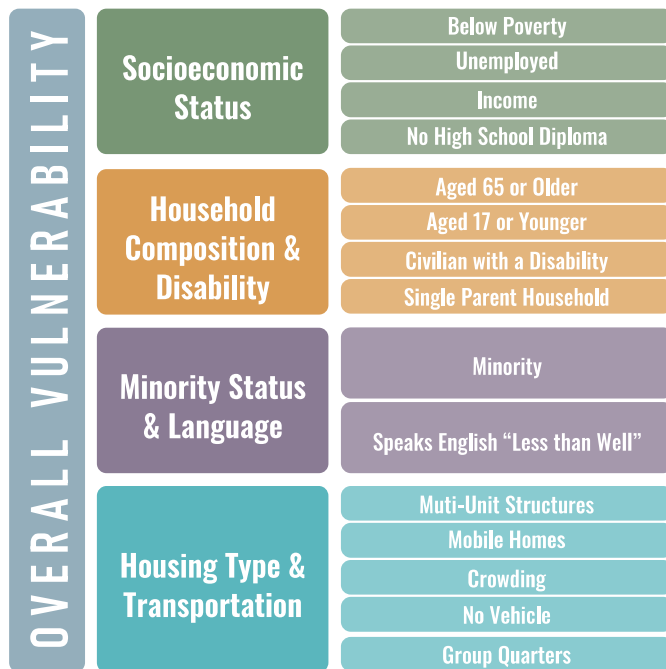


Lifetime cancer risk from inhalation of air toxics. High rankings indicate substantial elevated risks of cancer. Enhanced screenings and preventative care considerations.

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (2018)

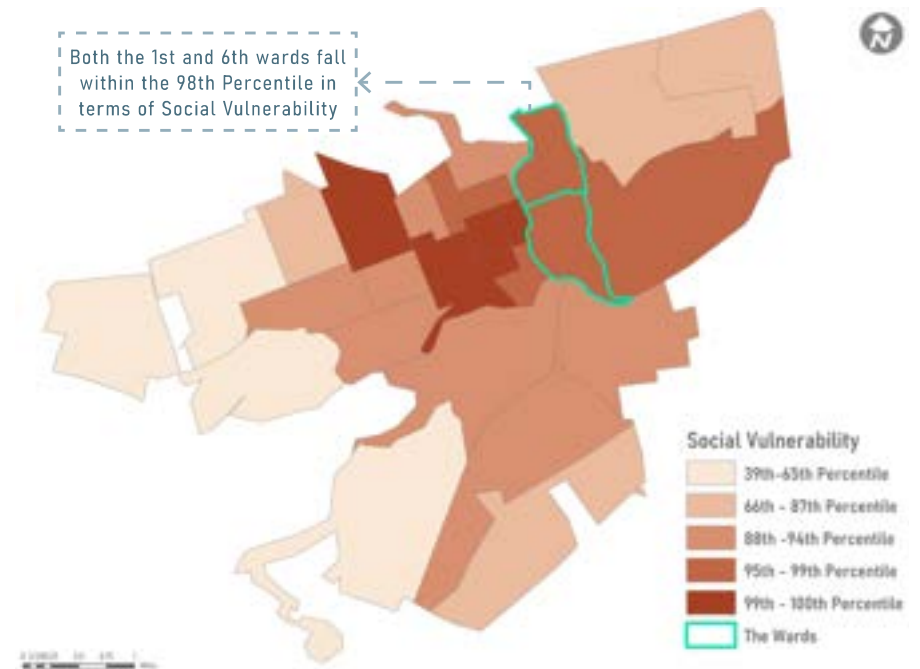
Every community must prepare for and respond to hazardous events, whether a natural disaster like a tornado or a disease outbreak, or an anthropogenic event such as a harmful chemical spill. The degree to which a community exhibits certain social conditions, including high poverty, low percentage of vehicle access, or crowded households, may affect that community's ability to prevent human suffering and financial loss in the event of disaster. These factors describe a community's social vulnerability.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to help public health officials and emergency response planners identify and map the communities that will most likely need support before, during, and after a hazardous event.



SVI indicates the relative vulnerability of every U.S. Census tract. Census tracts are subdivisions of counties for which the Census collects statistical data. SVI ranks the tracts on 15 social factors, including unemployment, minority status, and disability, and further groups them into four related themes. Thus, each tract receives a ranking for each Census variable and for each of the four themes, as well as an overall ranking.

Social Vulnerability is typically used as a tool for disaster preparedness and mitigation but also serves as a vital tool to highlight at risk populations that warrant increased attention and investment. Based on the index, the Wards fall into this category as they rank within the 98th percentile in terms of overall vulnerability at a national scale.



CDC PLACES DATASET (2021)

After identifying the presence of vulnerable populations through the Social Vulnerability Index and investigating the potential environmental justice based threats through EJ Screen it is important to also consider how equipped the Wards are to handle and adapt to such situations. The CDC's Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates (PLACES) dataset provides vital health related information at a local level (Census Tract) help identify health threats and inform policy decisions to mitigate risk. Per CDC guidance this information can help:

- Inform the development and implementation of effective and targeted prevention activities, programs, and policies.
- Identify emerging health problems and priority health risk behaviors for action.
- Understand the burden and geographic distribution of health-related issues and prioritize investment to areas with the biggest gaps or inequities.
- Establish key health objectives that the community can focus on to improve health.

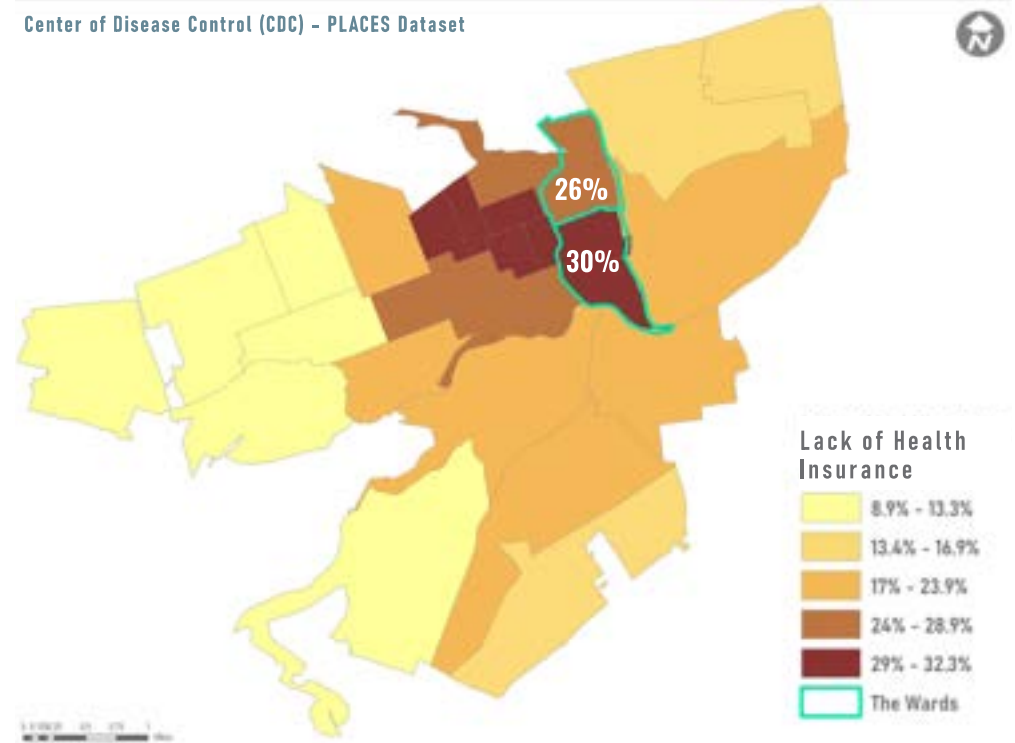
Based on PLACES data, compared to the rest of the city, the Ward has particularly high rates of obesity, asthma, high blood pressure, and diabetes. In addition, the Wards had higher rates of smoking and lack of leisure-time physical activity which both contribute to and exacerbate poor health outcomes.

CDC PLACES HEALTH DATASET (2019)

HEALTH FACTOR (ADULTS > 18)	Wards	Allentown	Dif.
Obesity	46.4%	41.3%	+ 5.1
Asthma	11.9%	11.0%	+0.9
High blood pressure	35.0%	33.1%	+1.9
Diagnosed diabetes	15.4%	12.7%	+2.7
Current smoking	27.8%	23.7%	+4.1
No leisure-time physical activity	42.9%	35.7%	+7.2

LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Center of Disease Control (CDC) - PLACES Dataset



Based on SVI and EJSCREEN data, the Wards are home to highly vulnerable populations with elevated health risks. Furthermore, based on PLACES data, the Wards rank as one of the highest areas of the city in terms of current lack of health insurance among adults 18-64 with a combined percentage of 28.1% of residents lacking coverage.

This is 6% higher than the percentage for the city as a whole (21.7%) and indicates increased susceptibility to the negative health outcomes due to a lack health care access including preventative care.



FOOD ACCESS

Access to fresh, local, and healthy food is one of the most important factors to maintaining a healthy and vibrant lifestyle and avoiding negative health outcomes such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

LACK OF OPTIONS

In the 1st and 6th Wards, there are no large grocery stores (like Giant or Weis) or big box retailers. In a briefing paper done as an academic exercise by a Kamilah Aviles – then a graduate student from Muhlenberg College who was interning with the Allentown Health Bureau in 2020 -- it was found that the major food access points without fresh produce in the Wards were convenience stores. She surmised that while there are food access opportunities for residents in the Wards, these are very limited. Almost all of the stores where food is sold do not offer fresh produce.

There used to be two long-standing stores in the area that sell fresh produce: Elias and Sam's. But Sam's closed shop in 2021, although it had very limited variety and choices compared to Elias. But the point being driven here is that residents must travel outside of the Wards to access more grocery stores and farmers markets with healthy food options.

The paper mentioned that there are at least five food pantries that offer services at least once a month; now they are down to four. Moreover, there are two community gardens (one behind the Harrison-Morton Middle School and the other at Casa Guadalupe) which are still operating. As mentioned earlier, Casa – being a WIC agency -- provides supplemental foods and nutrition education to low-income pregnant, women, and to infants and children.

The paper made the observations that people tend to consume what is directly available to them, especially if they do not have to travel far to get it. And if what is available to them is prepackaged, processed foods high in carbohydrates, sodium, sugar, and nothing naturally grown, that this will impact their lifestyle habits for the rest of their lives.

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite a current lack of affordable options for fresh, local, healthy food, there are potential strategies that could improve food access in the Wards:

- 1) Community gardens (re-establish existing plots and explore new locations)
- 2) Establish local cooperative buying clubs
- 3) Farmers markets/mobile food trucks (with incentives for EBT and low/moderate income customers)
- 4) Partner with local farmers to supply fresh food to schools and area nonprofits



Mobile food truck delivering fresh produce to local schools



Existing community garden at Chestnut Street (need to reestablish and work with residents to maintain)



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental health is the other, equally important, component that makes up the living systems equation. Environmental health views Allentown through the lens of a larger ecosystem made up of interrelated natural systems that each play a vital role in the function and vitality of the city. These systems range from parks and greenspaces, to rivers and waterways, to biodiversity. Ensuring that these systems are healthy and resilient and is essential in ensuring a sustainable future.

Environmental health is particularly important to consider in the context of the Wards where geographic constraints, a dense urban landscape, and evolving development pressures present unique challenges not found in other parts of the city. Identifying these challenges, as well as understanding their interrelated nature, is an essential first step in a living systems approach to community planning. Once this is established, the next step is to integrate this approach into planning strategies to ensure a healthy balance between nature and the built environment that integrates and works with natural systems instead of fighting against them.

GEOGRAPHY + LAND USE

The Wards represents one of the most densely developed areas in the city. This is due to both a unique geographic configuration as well as historic development patterns that centered around major industrial employment centers that once called the area home. At present, the Wards are nearly 100% built out with the majority of green space in the form of formal parks.

Due to the built out nature of the wards and limits on expansion due to geographic constraints, the need to plan wisely with limited space available becomes even more crucial. Strategies that such as infill development through adaptive reuse of existing structures is one approach that has seen success in similarly dense locations throughout the nation. The Ward's industrial history has afforded it with a number of distinct legacy structures with historic and architectural significance. While many of these structures have fallen into various states of disrepair over the years, the opportunity for rehabilitation that capitalizes and extenuates the rich history of the community.

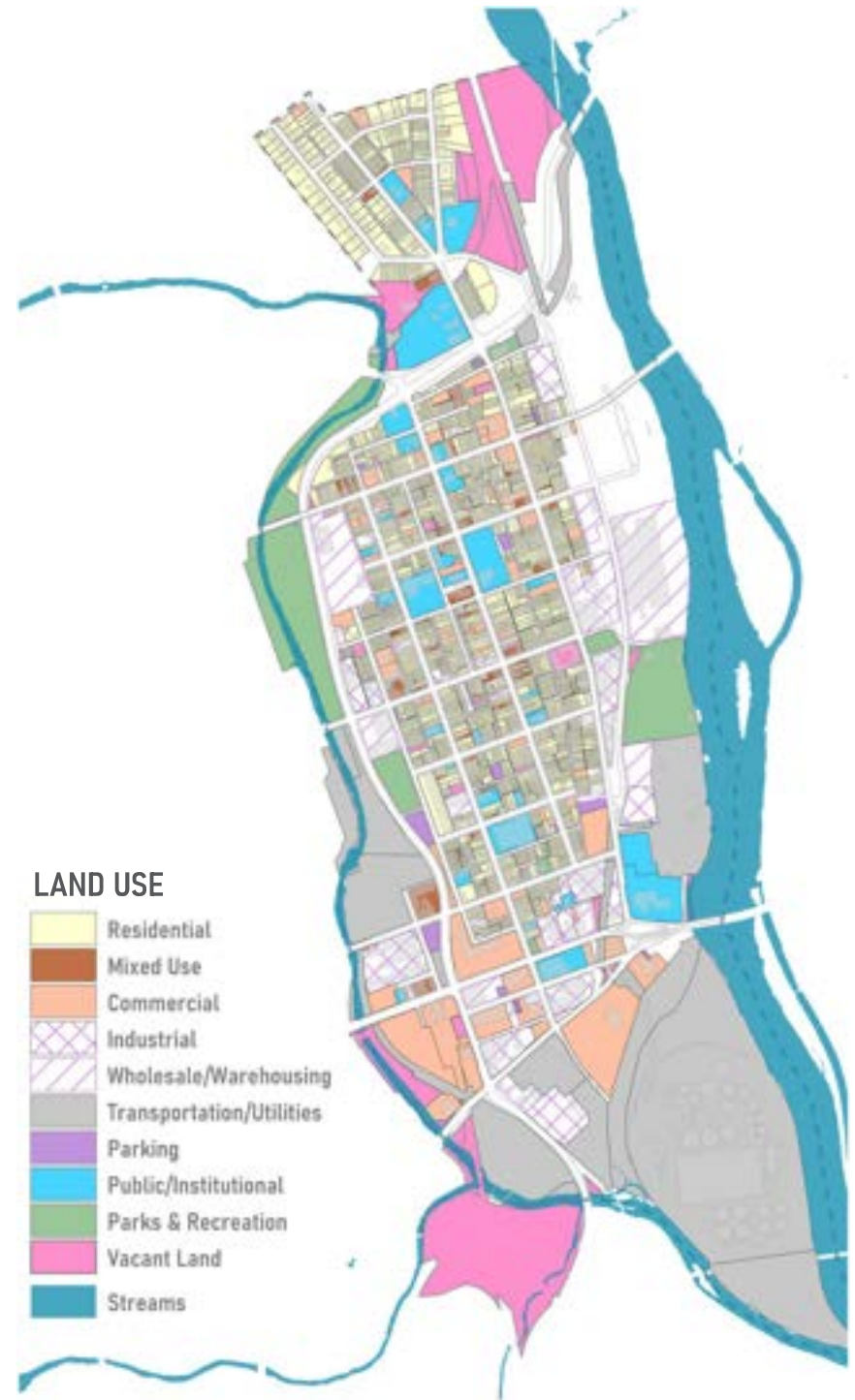
In addition to adaptive reuse, identifying and existing vacant and underutilized spaces within the Wards (Pink parcels on map) and redesigning them into welcoming public spaces such as pocket parks or public plaza is one to activate the spaces and increase livability.

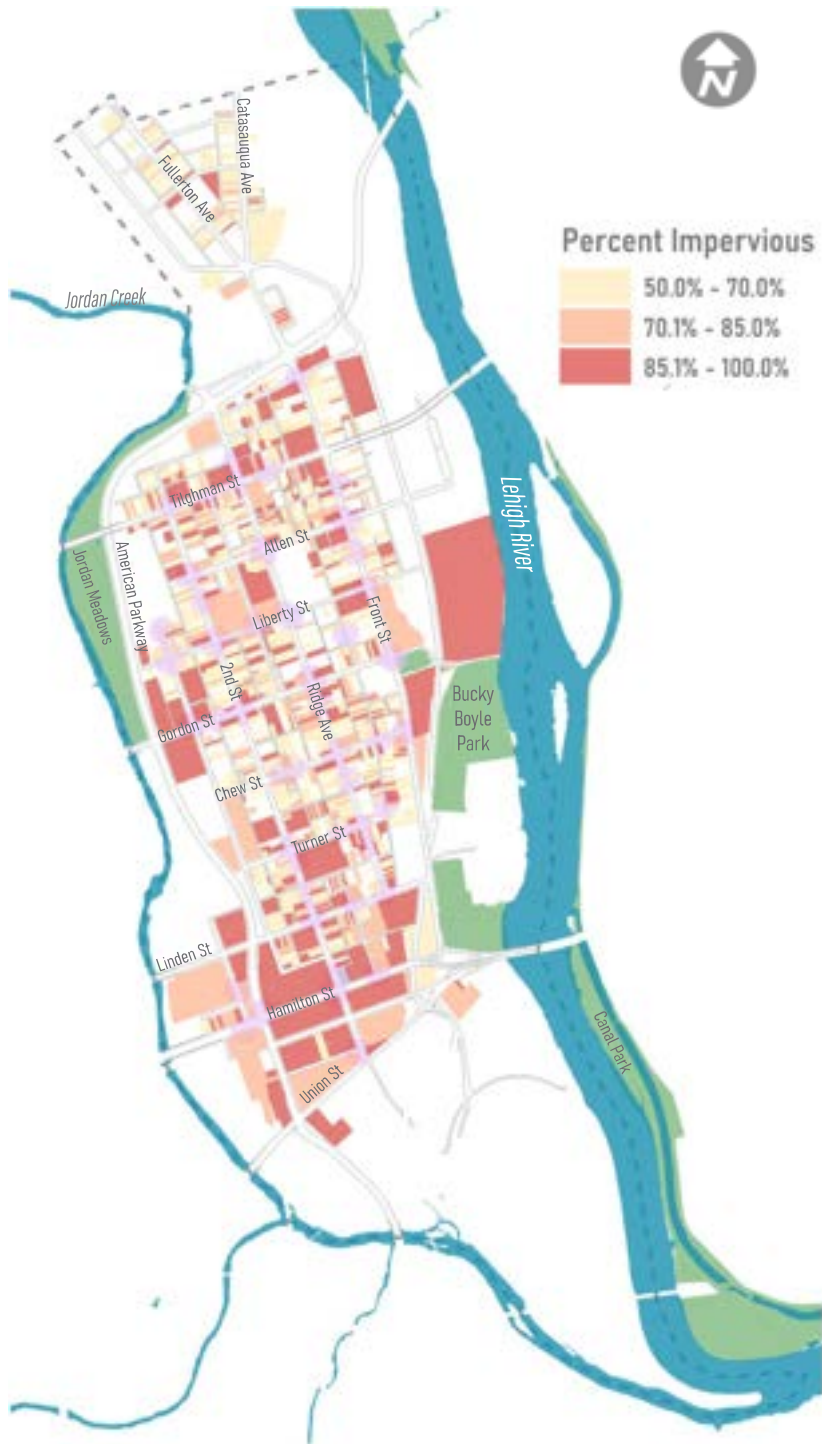


Example of potential adaptive reuse (former Neuweiler Brewery site)



Example of underutilized vacant lot (411 Ridge Ave.)





IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

The dense, urbanized landscape of the Wards results in a large amount of impervious surfaces (i.e. areas covered by water resistant materials with low absorption rates) throughout the community.

Impervious cover can have many negative effects including increased risk of flooding and water pooling during rain events. This is particularly problematic during heavy storms as water cannot be absorbed quickly enough (or some times at all) is pushed off properties and into lower-lying areas such as roadways. Along the way, water can pick up sediments (leading to erosion), as well as harmful chemicals and debris, which eventually overwhelm storm water sewers and cause localized flooding and pollution of waterways. Impervious surfaces also warm quickly and retain heat from the sun. This contributes to increased urban heat island effect and can lead to increases in poor health outcomes such as heat exhaustion and stroke for residents.

Based on city tax parcel data, over 40% of the surfaces within the Wards is considered impervious. In addition, as seen in the map to the left, many parcels feature impervious coverage of greater than 70%. This has a compounding effect that increases the negative impacts resulting from impervious cover.

When impervious surfaces are combined with green infrastructure measures such as green spaces, rain gardens, bioswales, etc. can help capture stormwater runoff and slow absorption to mitigate the risks associated with high rates of impervious cover.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STORMWATER



GREEN ROOFS



URBAN TREE CANOPY



RAINWATER CATCHMENT

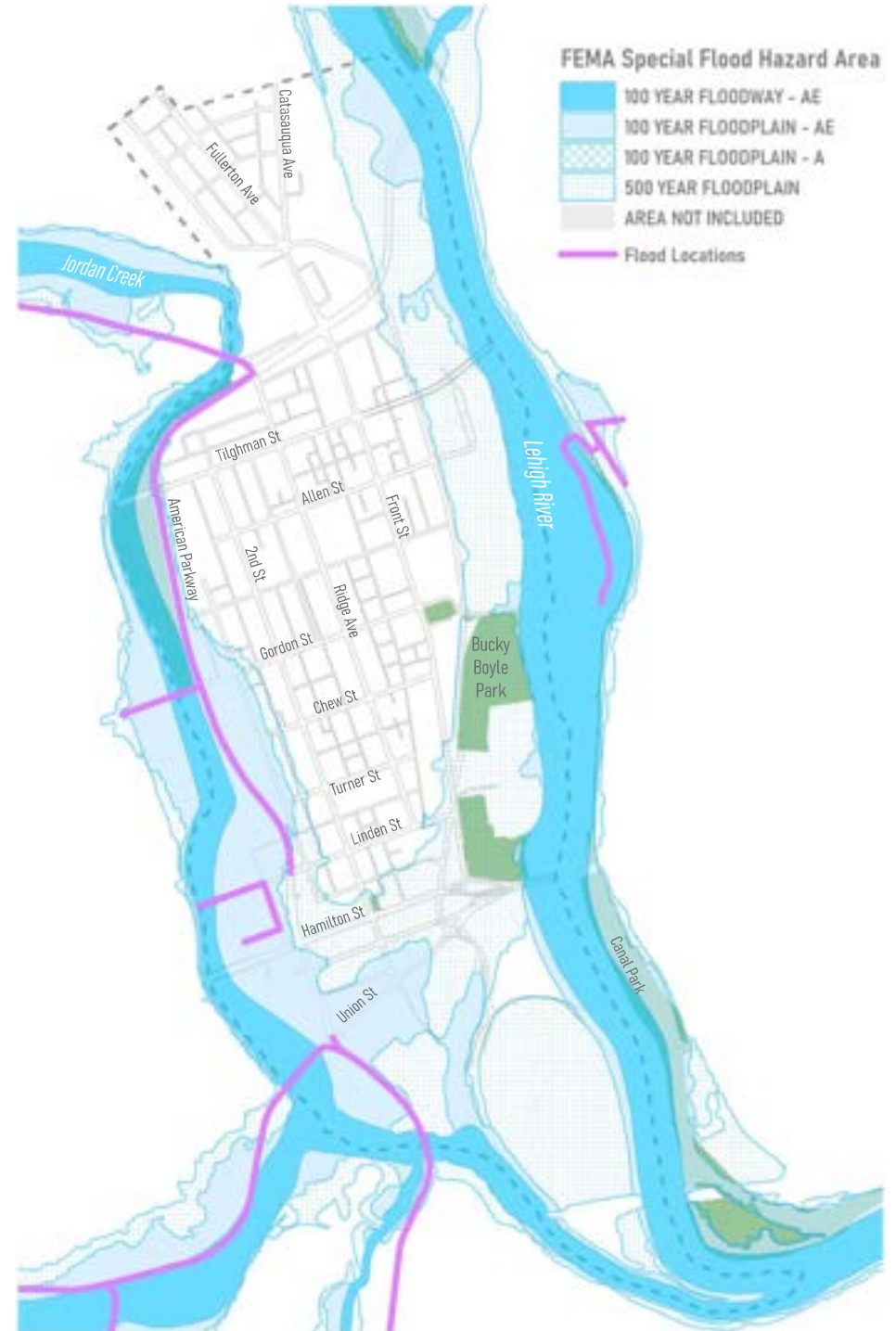


PERMEABLE PAVEMENT

FLOOD HAZARDS

High rates of impervious cover, combined with major waterways to both the east (Jordan Creek) and west (Lehigh River) borders make the Wards particularly susceptible to flooding hazards. When looking at FEMA designated flood hazard zones (map to the right) significant portions of the Wards fall within the 100 year floodplain. While this may seem like a low likelihood of flooding, historic flooding areas documented by the city (purple lines) indicate flooding is much more commonplace.

As the effect of climate change continue to intensify in coming years, extreme weather events (including flooding) are predicted to become more frequent and severe. Due to this, it becomes all the more crucial to make smart planning decisions that take this into account and work with natural systems to mitigate these negative effects. Tactics such as utilizing green infrastructure best management practices can prove to be an effective strategy and should be integrated in planning decisions moving forward.



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



BIOSWALES



RAIN GARDENS



COMMUNITY GARDENS

ILLEGAL DUMPING

Littering and illegal dumping is not only an eyesore but can also have significant negative impacts on human and environmental health. Litter, especially food waste, results in noxious odors and attracts rodents and insects that can spread disease. Debris, including harmful chemicals, can be washed away by stormwater during rain events into local waterways where contamination damages delicate ecosystems and threatens drinking water supplies. Litter and illegal dumping also lowers home values and can lead to negative perceptions of both residents and visitors.

Concerns about litter and illegal dumping within the Wards were raised throughout the public engagement process. Residents expressed concerns about human and environmental safety related to excess litter and the negative impression it poised for the neighborhood. Planning staff gathered records from the city's Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP) to identify problem area "hot spots" with high concentrations of illegal dumping reports. Analysis of the data found three particular areas with high report concentrations:

- 1) Tilghman St Corridor (specifically intersections with N Bryan St and N 2nd St)
- 2) Intersection of Liberty St and N Bryan St
- 3) Intersection of Oak St and N Grant St

While these locations are approximations based on report data, they do provide useful starting points when for potential priority areas to focus on education and monitoring/enforcement efforts. In addition, organizing litter cleanups (with focus on these areas) could be a useful strategy to engage local residents and community organizations to increase community beatification and enhance neighborhood pride within the wards.

EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL DUMPING IN THE WARDS



TILGHMAN STREET



N BRYAN STREET



N BRYAN STREET



OAK STREET/N GRANT STREET



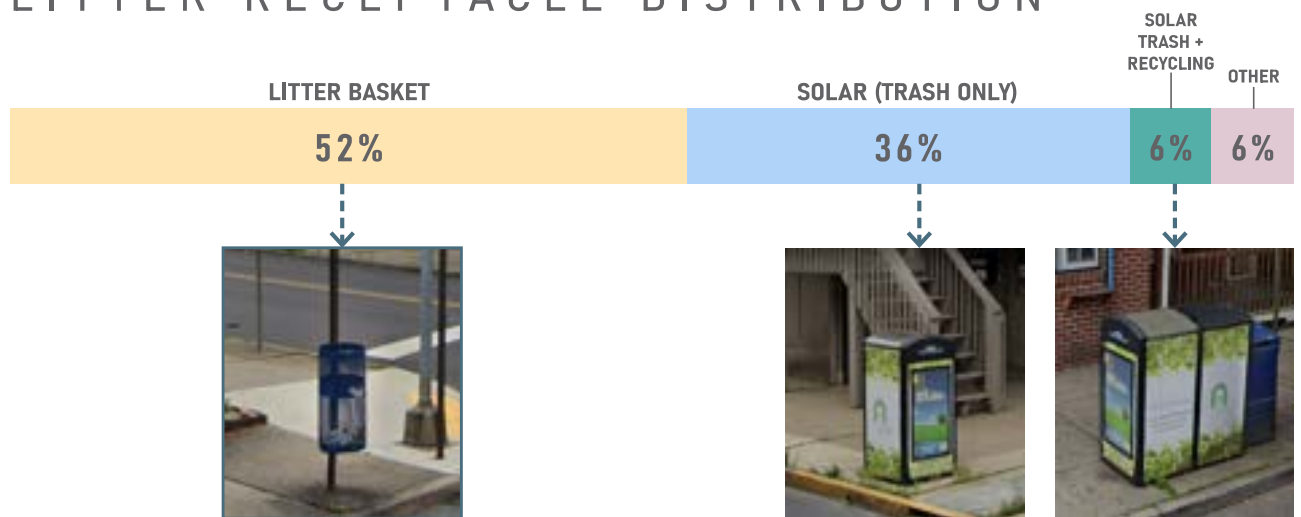


LITTER RECEPTACLES

The City of Allentown Bureau of Recycling & Solid Waste collects trash and recycling using a variety of public receptacles throughout the city. Planning Staff reviewed the distribution of different types of receptacles within the Wards and found that over half were the smaller, pole mounted, metal litter baskets variety (yellow on map). While these receptacles are better than nothing, they are limited in volume and can overflow if not emptied frequently and could contribute to increased litter. The second most frequent receptacle type are solar belly trash only cans (blue on map) accounting for 36% while Only 6% of receptacles have dual trash and recycling (green on map). The lack of recycling locations make it difficult for residents and visitors to recycle in the Wards and could lead increased litter as well.

The proximity of litter receptacles also plays a role in likelihood people throwing away their trash versus littering. Although people may litter regardless, the likelihood of littering increases as the distance from the receptacle increases. The map to the left shows the location of trash receptacles (by type) with a 100 ft buffer around each location. The red dashed boxes show areas that are over 100 ft from the closest receptacle. These areas might warrant consideration for additional trash receptacles as a means to decrease litter within the

LITTER RECEPTACLE DISTRIBUTION



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and recreational resources represent one of the most important assets for residents of the Wards and serve as a point of pride within the community. Access to parks and open space is particularly important for areas like the Wards where density and a near fully built out urban landscape can make opportunities for outdoor recreation difficult to come by.

Bucky Boyle Park, along the Lehigh River at the eastern border of the Wards, represents one of the most important assets in terms of amenities, youth programming, and access. Jordan Meadows, located along the western border of the Wards on the banks of Jordan Creek, is also an important recreational resource for residents but one where access is limited do to the need to cross high volume and high vehicle speed roadway American Parkway.

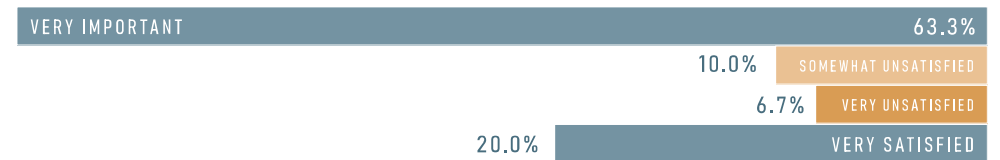
In addition, close proximity to the D & L Trail (a 165-mile shared use path converted from a former towpath along the Lehigh River) provides residents with excellent opportunities for recreation and transportation. Despite its close proximity, access to this resource is limited due to high speed/volume roadway crossing and a general lack of knowledge about the trail. Improving both of these aspects will greatly improve access to this vital resource and increase access to parks and open space within the Wards.

Feedback from both the Community Visioning Workshop and the Community Needs Assessment Survey indicated that parks were an extremely important to residents of the Wards. Survey respondents were generally satisfied with existing active recreation facilities (ball fields, gyms, playgrounds, ect.) with over 63% rating such amenities as “Very Important” and around 20% saying they were “Very Satisfied”. Still, around 17% were either somewhat or very unsatisfied indicated room for improvement.



Spray park at Bucky Boyle Park (Photo - Allentown Parks and Recreation)

ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES (BALL FIELDS, GYMS, PLAYGROUND, POOLS, ETC.)



PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES (OPEN SPACE, PICNIC AREAS, WALKING TRAILS)



While over 70% of survey respondents indicated that Passive Recreation Facilities were “Very Important” more than 33% indicated that they were either somewhat or very unsatisfied with the current state of such amenities. This points to potential further investigation into how these types of facilities can be improved to better serve the needs of the community.

EXISTING PARKS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

While existing parks within the Wards represent one of the most important assets within the community, there is also opportunity to enhance and expand these resources to better fit the needs of all residents. Whether improving existing access or reenvisioning spaces to better align with changing community needs, the table below explores some potential strategies for improving park and open space amenities within the Wards.

PARK TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Public Parks	
1 Bucky Boyle Park	Playing fields (baseball, football, basketball), spray park, community center /training room, playground, pavilion
2 Jordan Meadows	Active sports areas (basketball, football, roller hockey, handball)
3 Fellowship East Playlot	Passive recreation. Currently underutilized and could benefit from reimagining for public use
4 Lehigh Landing	Riparian activities (rowing, fishing)
Proposed Parks	
1 D & L Trail Extension	10 foot shared use path to connect existing portions of D & L Trail and integrate public portions of The Waterfront project.
2 Auburn Cross	Trails (bicycle, hiking), playgrounds, picnic areas, wildlife appreciation, passive leisure.
Opportunities	
1 ASD Fields	Practice fields/open space. Opportunities for shared use with community in off hours
2 Pump Place	Benches, statue, shade trees. Currently underutilized and could benefit from reimagining for public use
3 Vacant Lots	Currently vacant lots like the one at Gordon St/Ridge Ave could be converted to pocket parks and/or community gardens
4 Waterfront Connector	Opportunity for riverfront trail to connect Bucky Boyle Park and Waterfront Development project along Lehigh River



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

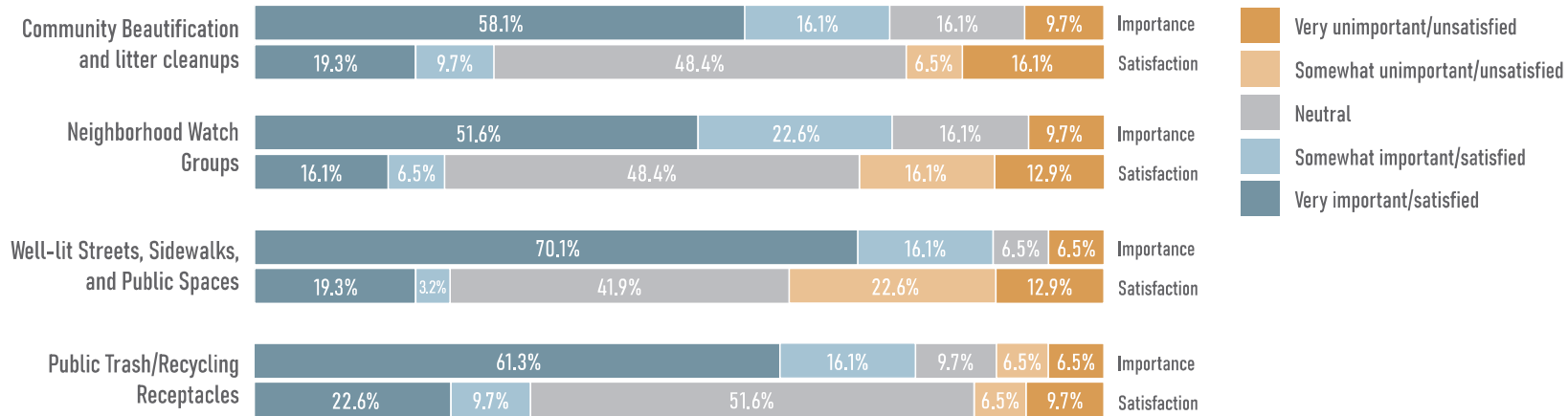
During the June 12th Community Visioning Workshop, questions related to Living Systems were included in the Public Health + Safety section of the workshop. Attendees given a set of topics related to public health and safety and asked to rate each on both their relative importance as well as how currently satisfied they are with the state of each within the Wards.

Attendees had relatively high importance ratings for the majority of items but, in terms of satisfaction, “Community beautification and litter cleanups” stood out at the topic that most people were not currently satisfied with. This, combined with the identified issues of litter and excessive illegal dumping, point towards a need to increase community cleanups within the Wards and explore avenues for increasing community beautification efforts. This could be through local non-profit groups, churches, neighborhood associations, or working with developers to insure that welcoming public spaces are included in future land developments.



Public Health + Safety Topic	IMPORTANCE					SATISFACTION				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Community beautification and litter cleanups				2	15	4	5	2		
Neighborhood watch groups			1	4	18	2	3	3		1
Community intervention services				2	16		10	1	1	1
Police visibility and presence				2	16	2	2	4	3	1
Traffic enforcement				4	13	7	2	4	1	
Emergency services response time				3	13			8	3	1
Well-lit streets, sidewalks, and public spaces				6	13	5		5	1	1
Public trash/recycling receptacles				4	12	1	3	5	1	
Animal control services		1	4	4	5	2		9		1

IMPORTANCE VS SATISFACTION



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Responses to the community needs assessment survey followed a similar trend in indicating the importance and current dissatisfaction of beautification and community litter cleanups efforts. Respondents also felt strongly about the importance of well-lit streets, sidewalks, and public spaces (more than 86% either “Very” or “Somewhat” important) with low levels of satisfaction (over 35% “Very” or “Somewhat” unsatisfied). These results reinforce a need to provide more safe, welcoming public spaces that can be enjoyed by all.

The survey also provided a list of 10 environmental concerns and asked to rank (1-10) what they viewed as the most important within the Wards. Based on results, Noise pollution was the most pressing issue (over 45% ranked either #1 or #2), followed by “Litter and illegal dumping” (also with over 45% but less #1 rankings). Flooding (both related to stormwater/poor drainage as well as general flooding of creeks/ivers) were also viewed as important receiving nearly 30% of combined #1 and #2 rankings.

MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS (1= MOST IMPORTANT; 10 = LEAST IMPORTANT)	Importance Rank		
	#1	#2	Total
Flooding of creeks/ivers	14.0%	15.8%	29.8%
Flooding/poor drainage during heavy rains	19.3%	10.5%	29.8%
Sinkholes	5.3%	7.0%	12.3%
Water pollution	1.8%	10.5%	12.3%
Air pollution	3.5%	3.5%	7.0%
Noise pollution	31.6%	14.0%	45.6%
Preserving trees/woodlands	1.8%	7.0%	8.8%
Preserving open space	1.8%	1.8%	3.5%
Soil contamination	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%
Litter and illegal dumping	21.1%	24.6%	45.6%

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: LIVING SYSTEMS

GOAL #1: IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH DATA DRIVEN APPROACHES

#	RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY
1A	Utilize existing data sources and tools to identify vulnerable populations and prioritize resources to help those most in need	Combine national datasets (EPA, CDC, Census, etc.) with local data to identify priority health issues and populations to direct resources and funding.
2B	Increase awareness of existing health programs and expand coverage for residents especially among vulnerable populations	Create educational campaign about existing programs and how people can access care.
2C	Connect vulnerable populations with tools and resources they need to improve physical and mental health	Create database of existing service providers and explore ways (online, combining with existing services, etc.) of connecting people to health resources

GOAL #2: IMPROVE ACCESS TO FRESH AND HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

2A	Promote more and regular outlets for farmer's markets and mobile produce trucks.	Identify more locations where farmer's market events may be held on a regular, predictable basis.
2B	Set up a buying club or food cooperative that acquires and sells affordable fresh produce.	Form a food access working group to facilitate creation of a buying club or food cooperative in the Wards to purchase and sell to members fresh produce at affordable prices.
2C	Improve the ability of low-moderate income persons to purchase fresh, organic produce.	Encourage vendors in farmers' market and corner stores to honor EBT (electronic benefit transfer) payments and food vouchers.

P = Project Planning ○ = Ongoing
 I = Implementation ● = Completed

COACH

OUTCOMES	PARTNERS	TIME FRAME (YEARS)		
		0-2	3-5	5-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localized datasets to highlight priority areas Tools to connect people to health resources 	COA (Planning, Health) area hospitals, Local non-profits	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of programs More participation from residents especially those most at risk Increased preventative care and health screening 	COA (Planning, Health) area hospitals, Local non-profits	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online database portal to connect people to existing services Innovative strategies to meet people where they are and improve health related service access including preventative care 	COA (Planning, Health) area hospitals/clinics, Local nonprofits	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More locations for open markets in the Wards and immediate vicinity where fresh farm produce is sold 	City (AHB, P&R)/churches/other non-profits.	P	----->	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buying clubs formed. 	Neighborhood groups, Allentown fairgrounds/AHB/farmers and vendors/Rodale		P	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vouchered low-mod income persons have access to non-traditional outlets of fresh produce (like farmers markets). 	Vendors/AHB	P	----->	

2D	Explore partnerships with local/regional farmers to help fill gap in access to fresh, healthy produce.	Explore innovative strategies like Community Supported Agricultural (CSA), mobile food trucks sourcing fresh produce for school/nonprofit meal programs
2E	Encourage setting up more community gardens and home-based vegetable gardens	Identify /consolidate vacant parcels where community gardens may be set up and maintained.
2F	Continue to market the Wards as potential location for a neighborhood-scale grocery store.	Coordinate this activity with development projects in the riverfront NIZ.

GOAL #3: ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND PROJECT NATURAL ASSETS

3A	Determine and monitor problem area for littering and illegal dumping and implement program to cut down on behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install cameras to catch and deter would-be offenders. • Educational campaign on harmful effects of litter • Invest in additional trash/recycling bins
3B	Identify opportunities to decrease impermeable cover through green stormwater best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and connect residents to resources for small scale green stormwater management • Incentive programs for developers to implement smart sustainable practices in their projects.
3C	Identify and inventory vacant/underutilized areas to expand access to parks and open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory existing vacant lots and underutilized spaces • Activate existing underutilized areas as small scale pocket parks and public spaces • Explore shared use agreements with schools

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More local access points to fresh, affordable produce • Partnership that benefit farmers and local residents 	Local/regional farmers, ASD, Soup kitchens and community pantries		P	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community gardens and home based vegetable gardens 	RACA/City (PW, P&C, AHB)		P	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular grocery store established. 	COA (BEAR)/LVEDC/NIZ develop	○		----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly maintained properties that improve pedestrian experience and help improve property values and neighborhood character. 	COA (P&Z, PW, APD)/residents		P	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in impermeable cover and localized flooding • Increase in green stormwater BMP among residents and new projects 	COA (Planning, Public Works), residents, developers		P	----->
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded access to parks and open spaces 	COA (Planning, Public Works), ASD, residents, developers		P	----->

NEXT STEPS

The Neighborhood Plan for the 1st and 6th Wards incorporates an extensive set of goals and strategies intended to address current needs and desires, as expressed by residents and stakeholders in the three public engagement opportunities that were held during the plan formulation process. The foregoing Implementation Matrix consolidates all the action items listed in the five Urban Systems discussed, and suggests a general time frame – to plan, implement and complete (or continue) an action item – the responsible parties and potential partners for each strategy.

To achieve the desired outcomes significant efforts will be required in terms of cooperation and coordination between and among identified partners, in further studies, in policy development, financing and construction. The matrix clearly illustrates that there is no one entity, project or funding source that can do it alone – coordination will be critical to achieve the long-term goals described in this plan.

To help make this plan a reality, it is important to all concerned to recognize the constraints including limited resources – both in terms of money and time. The relevant unit in City of Allentown will explore all implementation options such as volunteering, in-kind contributions, staff time, general funds, grants from foundations, State and federal sources, and matching monies from corporate entities.





HOW TO USE THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Area Residents

Residents are encouraged to explore the information and priorities they deem applicable to their neighborhoods. Learning about what is currently happening and what the future vision might be will help residents become more informed and participate meaningfully in plan implementation. Likewise, residents are encouraged to find recommendations they care about, and engage in community initiatives that will help drive this initiative toward implementation.

This could take the form of becoming a more active member of an organized neighborhood group, applying to serve on a city board or commission or attending their meetings, or simply reaching out to lend a helping hand to a neighbor. While the process for preparing this plan is complete, monitoring the conditions of our neighborhoods is an ongoing, evolving process of continuous improvement.

2) Neighborhood Organizations

Many of the recommendations in this plan deal with programs and initiatives that can be led by an organized neighborhood group. In some instances, neighborhood groups and their respective leadership are in a better position to reach out to residents, organize events or observe issues because they are actively involved in the day-to-day activities in the neighborhoods.

Engaging the area neighborhood groups in plan implementation will help ensure that the actions are done in a way that is meaningful to residents and can help improve the working relationship among stakeholders (residents, businesses, non-profits, public entities). Additionally, neighborhood associations are encouraged to share upcoming events, successes and other activities with the community in order to celebrate positive things that are being achieved in our neighborhoods.

3) City Officials

City officials and staff will also use this plan when setting goals, implementing policies or funding community improvements. This plan will help city officials focus on the priorities for the Wards and incorporate them into strategic planning, work programs, capital and operational budgeting, and outreach activities.

PARTNERSHIPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PLAN

Potential partner organizations have been identified throughout the plan and for each implementation recommendation/strategy. Establishing and fostering these partnerships will be an essential component to the future success of the Neighborhood Plan.

CITY OF ALLENTOWN	
AFD	Allentown Fire Department
AHB	Allentown Health Bureau
APD	Allentown Police Department
BEAR	Business Expansion, Attraction & Rentention
CED	Community & Economic Development Department
COA	City of Allentown
P&R	Parks & Recreation
P&Z	Planning & Zoning
PW	Public Works Department
RACA	Redevelopment Authority
LOCAL	
AEDC	Allentown Economic Development Corporation
AHA	Allentown Housing Authority
APA	Allentown Parking Authority
ASD	Allentown School District
CADCA	Community Action Development Corporation of Allentown
CACLV	Community Action Lehigh Valley
NIZ	Neighborhood Improvement Zone

REGIONAL	
GLVR	Greater Lehigh Valley Realtors
LANTA	Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority
LCCC	Lehigh Carbon Community College
LCTI	Lehigh Career Technical Institute
LVCAT	Lehigh Valley Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
LVCC	Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
LVEDC	Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
LVPC	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
NHS	Neighborhood Housing Services of the Lehigh Valley
SBDC	Small Business Development Center, Lehigh University
TLC	The Literacy Center, Lehigh Valley
WBLV	Workforce Board Lehigh Valley
SBDC	Small Business Development Center, Lehigh University
STATE/NATIONAL	
D&L	Delaware & Lehigh Trail National Heritage Corridor
HUD	Housing & Urban Development (U.S. Department of)
PennDOT	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation