

EST. 1752

EASTON
PENNSYLVANIA



EASTON WATERFRONT

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



JULY 2025



environmental
planning & design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Easton

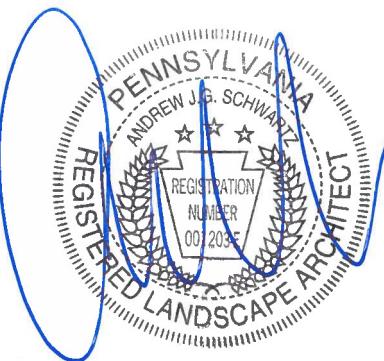
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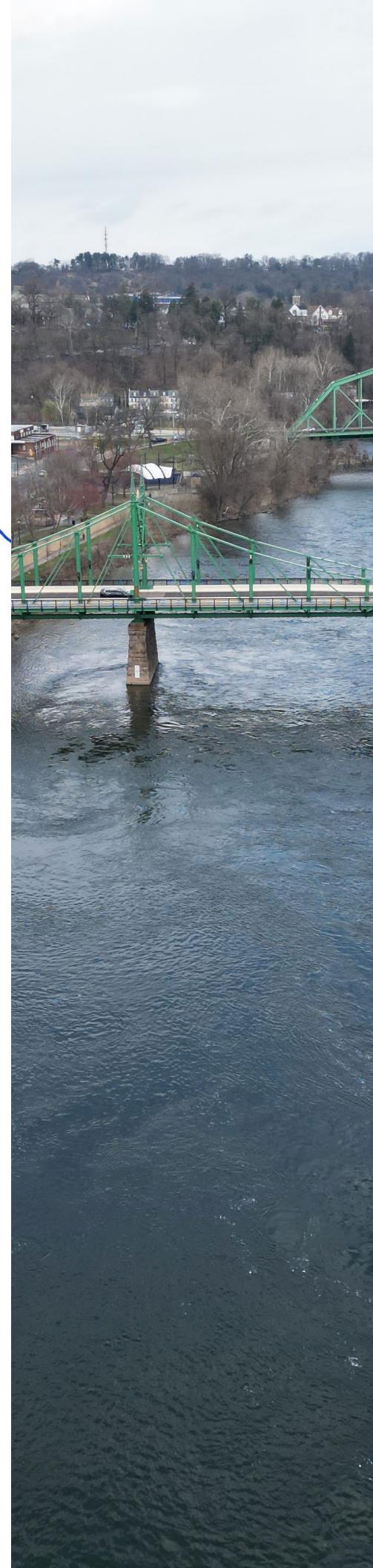




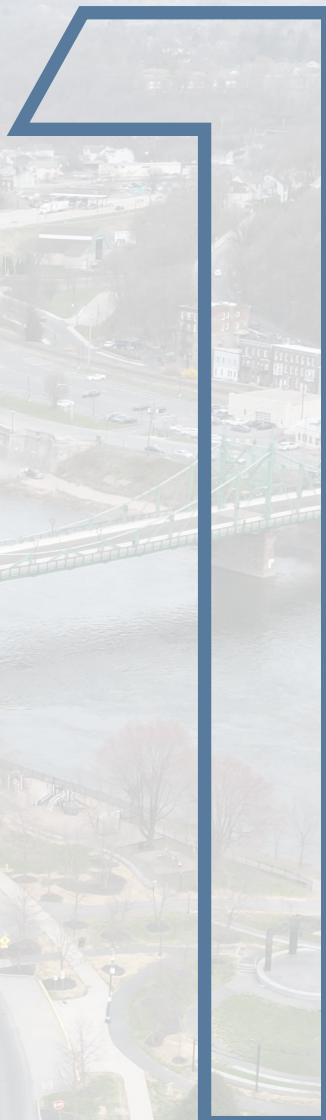
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Waterfront Planning and Conceptual Design

In this planning effort, the City of Easton is reimaging and better connecting its Delaware River and Lehigh River waterfronts. As one of Eastern Pennsylvania's rapidly growing areas, Easton's history, ecological setting, geographic location, and potential for extensive accessibility create a unique waterfront opportunity. In recent decades, Easton has worked to transform its waterfronts into a popular destination. This planning effort aims to continue that progress, improving the riverfronts to align with the city's aspiration for a vibrant, accessible, and active space. The purpose of the following study is to produce a long-term vision or master plan for development/redevelopment along the City's Delaware, Lehigh, and Canal Park waterfronts. Planning topics and considerations of particular emphasis that this plan delves into include:

- Visitor and user experience
- Park amenities
- Recreational value
- Pedestrian circulation to and through each focus area
- Recommendations for upgrades/improvements in the context of a growing downtown residential population
- Performance value

Planning aspirations and goals have been developed to guide the project and ultimately the specific development decisions along the City's two (2) waterfronts. The four planning aspirations are the overall objectives or broader intentions to function as guiding principles for the planning process. The planning goals are more detail oriented and hone in on specific issues or opportunities. The goals support the aspirations. Although some goals may lend themselves to a particular aspiration more than others, each goal promotes at least one aspiration.

Planning Aspirations



Achieve Connectivity with Local Trail Systems



Enhance Tourism and Visitor Experience



Celebrate History, Community, and Culture



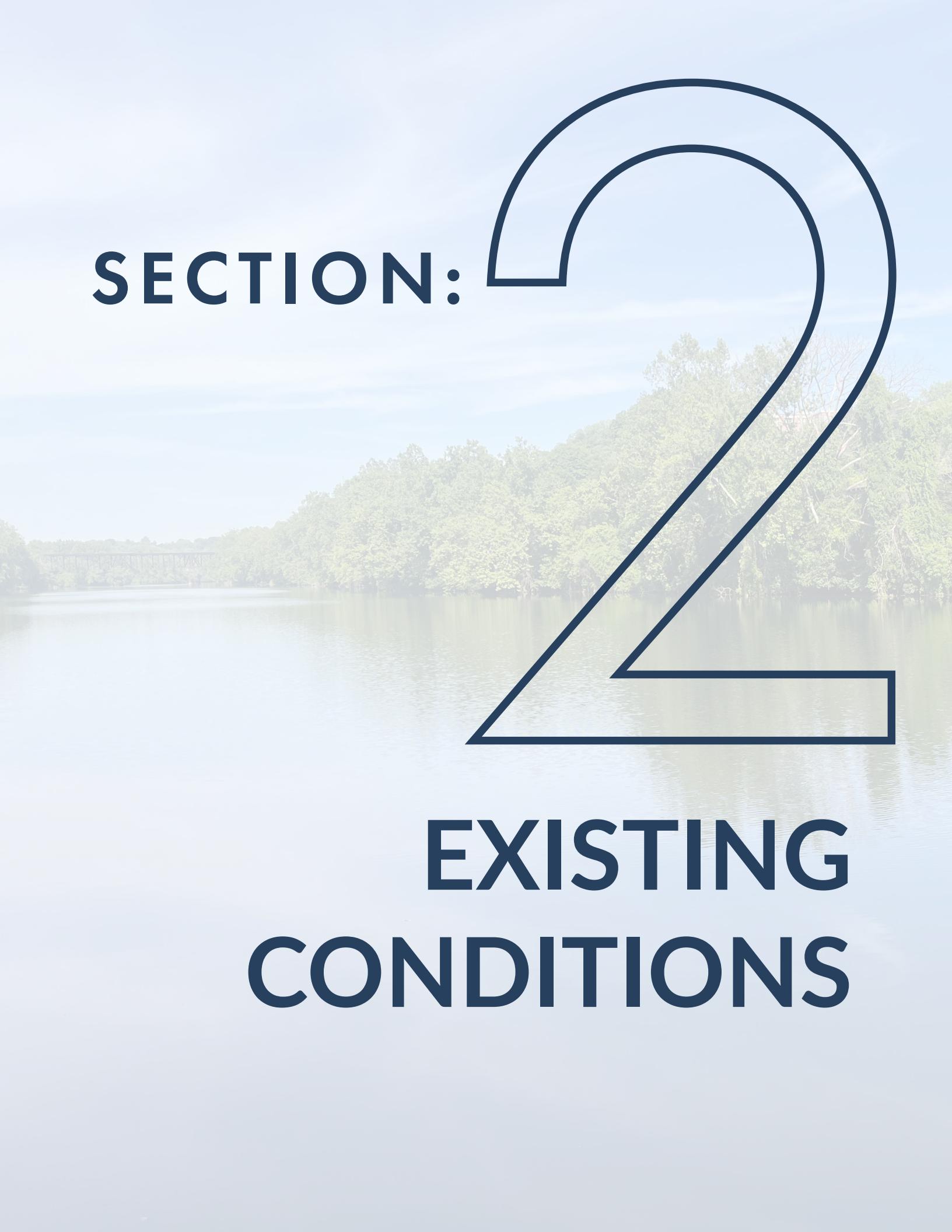
Provide Public Amenities for Growing Community

Planning Goals

- Fill in missing connections or gaps in connectivity along the riverfront parks, trail systems, and neighborhoods to create a continuous, accessible, and cohesive public realm.
- Leverage the natural amenities along the waterfront to highlight the sites' ecological value.
- Encourage the redevelopment or repurpose of invaluable waterfront areas to maximize their potential for public use.
- Build-on or repurpose past infrastructure and transportation investments; honoring historical structures while supporting new programming.
- Design the riverfront greenspaces with flood resilience in mind, integrating infrastructure and landscape that can withstand and recover from flooding.
- Prioritize the protection and appreciation of natural assets by preserving ecosystems and creating opportunities for public engagement with the natural environment.
- Integrate and reinforce the improvements recommended in the City's Active Transportation Plan and Safe Street for All initiative



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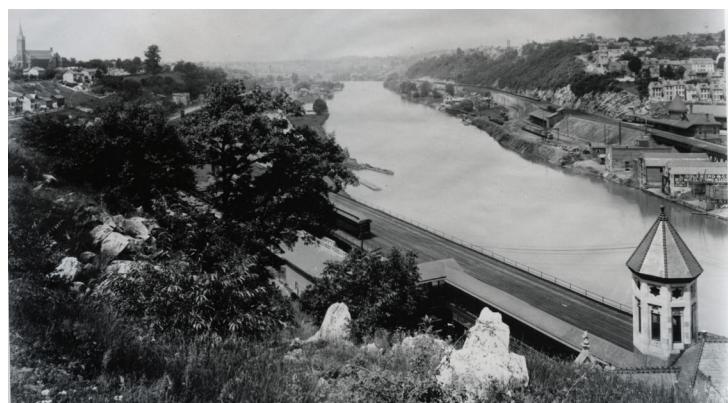
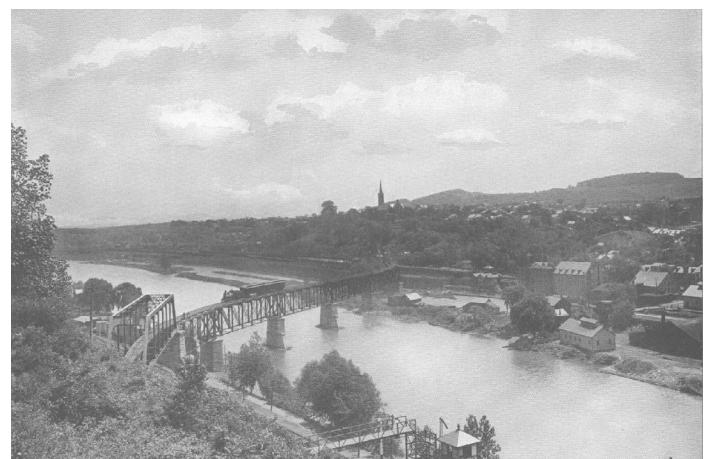
**EXISTING
CONDITIONS**

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

The City of Easton, Pennsylvania is located in the Lehigh Valley Region and functions as the seat for Northampton County. Situated at the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, Easton is about 4.7 square miles in size. The city includes the north and south sides of the Lehigh River. The Delaware River is the eastern border of Easton and the geographic boundary of the state. Phillipsburg, New Jersey neighbors Easton on the east side of the Delaware river. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York City, New York are both approximately 75 miles, or about a 1.5 hour drive, away from Easton. The city's regional context in relation to the major metropolitan cities of the East Coast further highlights its connectivity.

Easton is one of the oldest cities in Pennsylvania and its historic significance is still an important part of the identity and culture today. In 1736, the land at the confluence was bought by William Penn's son and soon established as the settlement of Easton. Beginning in 1752, Easton is home to the oldest continuous outdoor market in the United States, the Easton Farmers' Market. The Centre Square has been a significant location in the City's urban fabric for many years. On July 8, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was read in the Centre Square, making Easton one of only three locations in the colonies that held a public reading. Easton prospered as a center for industry, manufacturing, commerce, and culture with its unique position at the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers. Major rail lines and the Lehigh canal promoted this success.



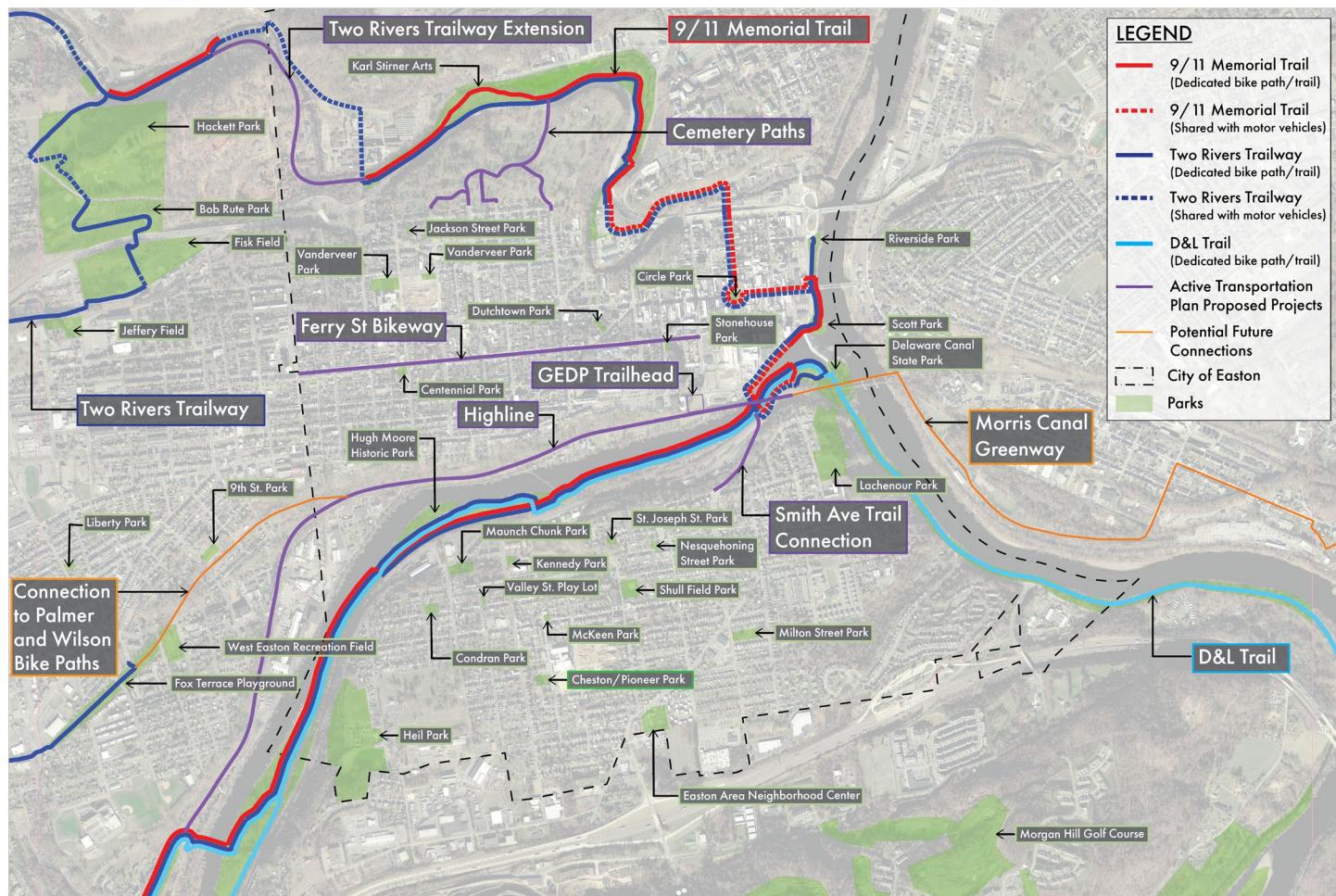
Historic photos provided by the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc.

Site Analysis

An inventory and analysis were prepared through an evaluation of the existing riverfront greenspace and infrastructure, as well as a broader look at the community, downtown, and future planning/development. The information gained during this study provided insight on the physical condition, constraints, and opportunities for design and planning. The following series of maps summarize the findings of the key analyzes.

Trails & Greenspace

The city of Easton is rich with trails and greenspace. The map below illustrates and identifies the parks and trail systems in Easton and the surrounding areas. Unlike the maps to follow, this analysis map is a broader scale to show the regional trail connections proposed in the Active Transportation Plan and begin to illuminate opportunities for increased connectivity. The Two River's Trailway, the D&L Trail, and the 9/11 Memorial Trail are three regional trailways that traverse the city. The recently completed Active Transportation Plan highlights potential connections between these trails, as well as new trails that promote non-motorized transportation. The city's greenspace is speckled around the city in community parks and concentrated along the rivers. Waterfront parks line the west riverbank of the Delaware River, including Riverside Park, Scott Park, and Delaware Canal State Park. Hugh Moore Park is located on the south bank of the Lehigh River, connecting to the D&L Trail. The north bank of the Lehigh River is one of the few riverfront areas without public greenspace. This area was identified in the City's comprehensive plan as an opportunity space for recreation development.



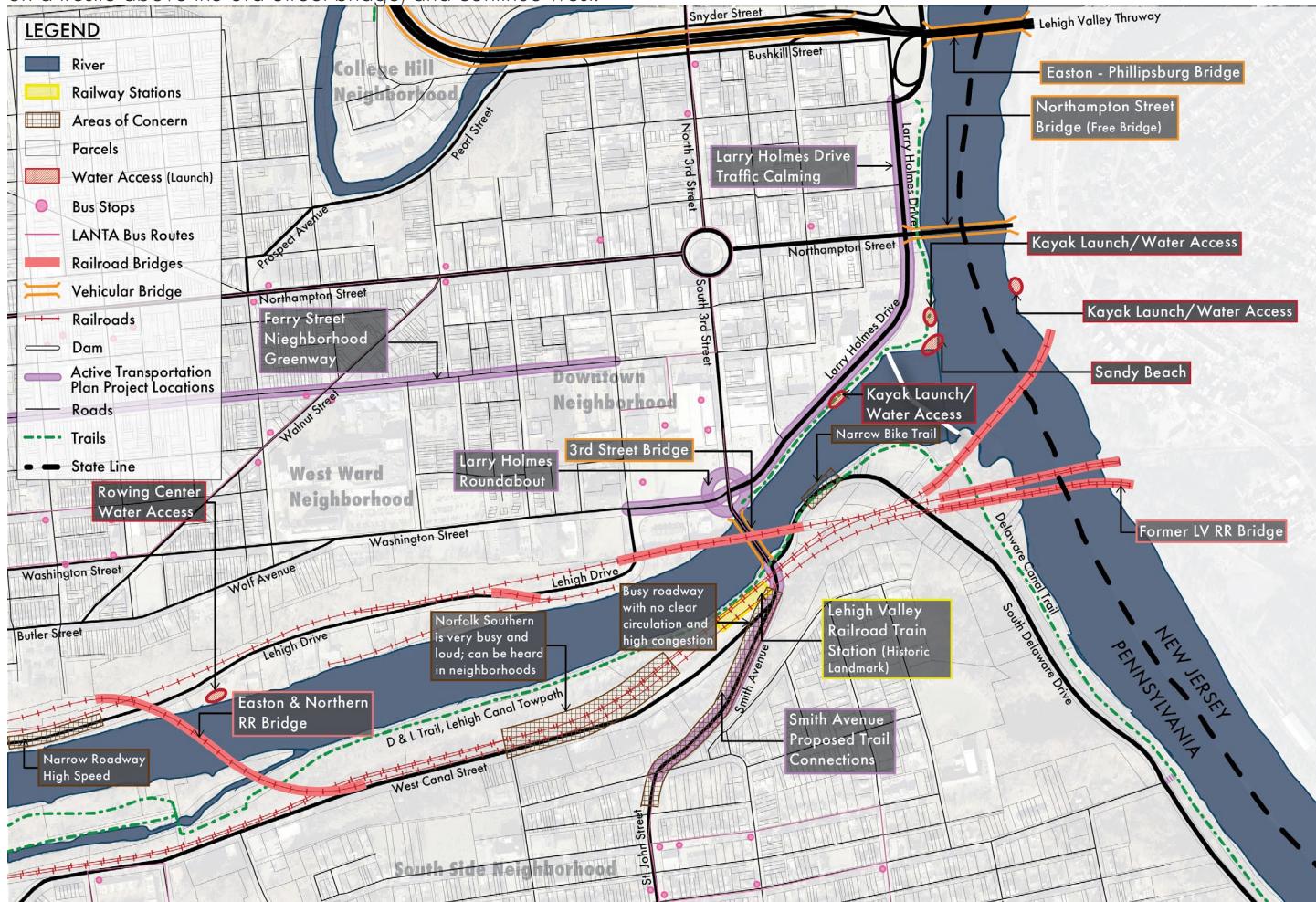
Demographics

The demographics of the city were studied to gain a better perspective of the community and culture. Historically, Easton's population peaked in 1950 at around 35,000 people. Between 1950 and 1980, the population declined significantly to about 26,000. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this decrease can be attributed to reduced family size, reduced housing due to urban renewal, and out-migration to suburban areas. 1990 was the first Census report showing positive growth and the population has steadily increased since, with more significant growth in the last decade. In 2020, the US Census reported a population of 28,128 people and a density of 6,598 people per square mile in the City of Easton. The current population is now over 30,000 people. The most densely populated areas are in the South Side Neighborhood, although there are several new apartment buildings being constructed downtown. These ongoing residential and multi-use developments are estimated to bring an additional 1,000 new residents. So, an increase in population density downtown is anticipated in the next few years. Other aspects of the city's demographics were analyzed, such as ethnic diversity, household income, and age. The Downtown and West Ward neighborhoods have more low-income households than the South Side. The Downtown neighborhood is the least ethnic diversity and has the highest senior population. The South Side and West Ward neighborhoods have more diversity, particularly in Hispanic and Black/African American ethnic groups. West Ward has the highest population of children.



Circulation

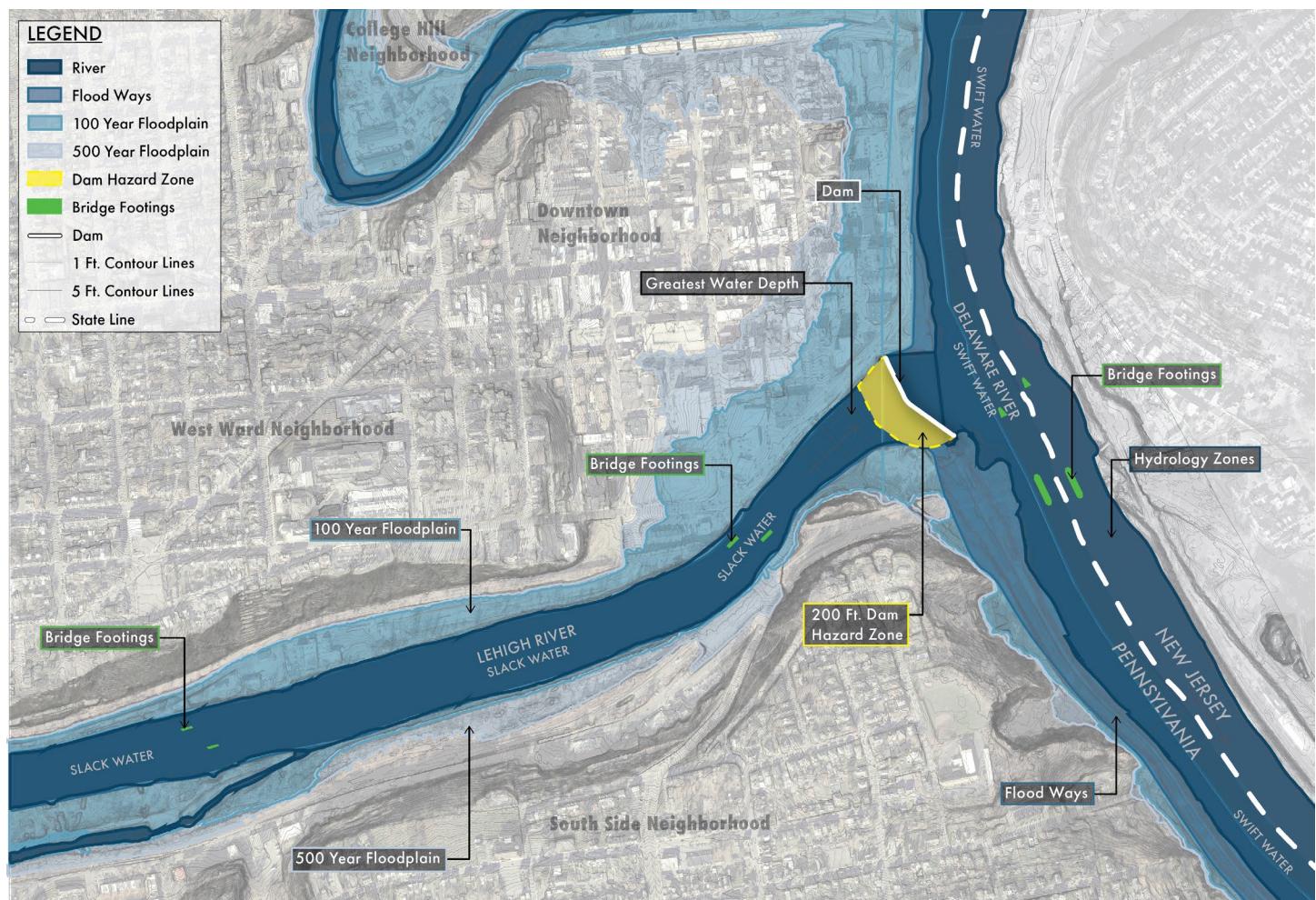
The circulation of several systems—vehicular, pedestrian, cyclist, and water access—was analyzed to better understand riverfront access. Three vehicular bridges cross the rivers: the Easton-Phillipsburg Bridge, the Northampton Street Bridge (Free Bridge), and the 3rd Street Bridge. Larry Holmes Drive and Lehigh Drive provide vehicular access to most of the northern riverfronts, while the southern riverfronts are less accessible. Delaware Canal State Park is accessible off South Delaware Drive. Of the key waterfront roadways, Lehigh Drive and Delaware Drive had no recorded bicycle- or pedestrian-involved crashes from 2019 to 2023 (according to the Active Transportation Plan). However, Larry Holmes Drive had 3 bicycle-involved crashes and 6 pedestrian-involved crashes recorded. Aligning with those statistics, Larry Holmes Drive has the highest average annual daily traffic (AADT), just above 11,000 vehicles per day (VPD), recorded by PENNDOT. South Delaware Drive has about 4,000 VPD and Lehigh Drive has around 2,500 VPD. The LANTA bus system provides public transportation throughout downtown, with several stops near the riverfronts. Five railroad trestles cross the rivers, with tracks on the north and south sides of the Lehigh River. Of the riverfront rail lines, the inactive Easton and Northern Branch is the southernmost line, traveling east-west from New Jersey (NJ), across Lehigh Valley Railroad Delaware River Bridge, and above the Lehigh Valley Rail Station. It crosses the Lehigh River on the Easton and Northern Railroad Bridge and continues west. Parallel to that, the Lehigh Line, an active Norfolk Southern (NS) railroad, travels east-west from NJ, across the Delaware River, above the rail station, and splits into two lines. The Portland Secondary, an active NS line, crosses the Delaware River via the Lehigh and Hudson River Railway Bridge, and merges with the Lehigh Line just west of the rail station. The Odenwelder Branch are two parallel inactive lines that terminate at Mt. Washington, cross the Lehigh River on a trestle above the 3rd Street bridge, and continue west.



Topography & Hydrology

The City of Easton is uniquely situated at the confluence of two major rivers—the Delaware River and the Lehigh River. At the end of the Lehigh River, a dam is located, and due to its presence, a 200-foot dam hazard zone has been established. As shown on the map, the 100-year floodplain extends deep into the downtown area and encompasses all of the existing riverfront greenspace. Easton has a long history of flooding, with one of the most severe events recorded in 1955, followed by other significant floods in 2004, 2005, and 2006.

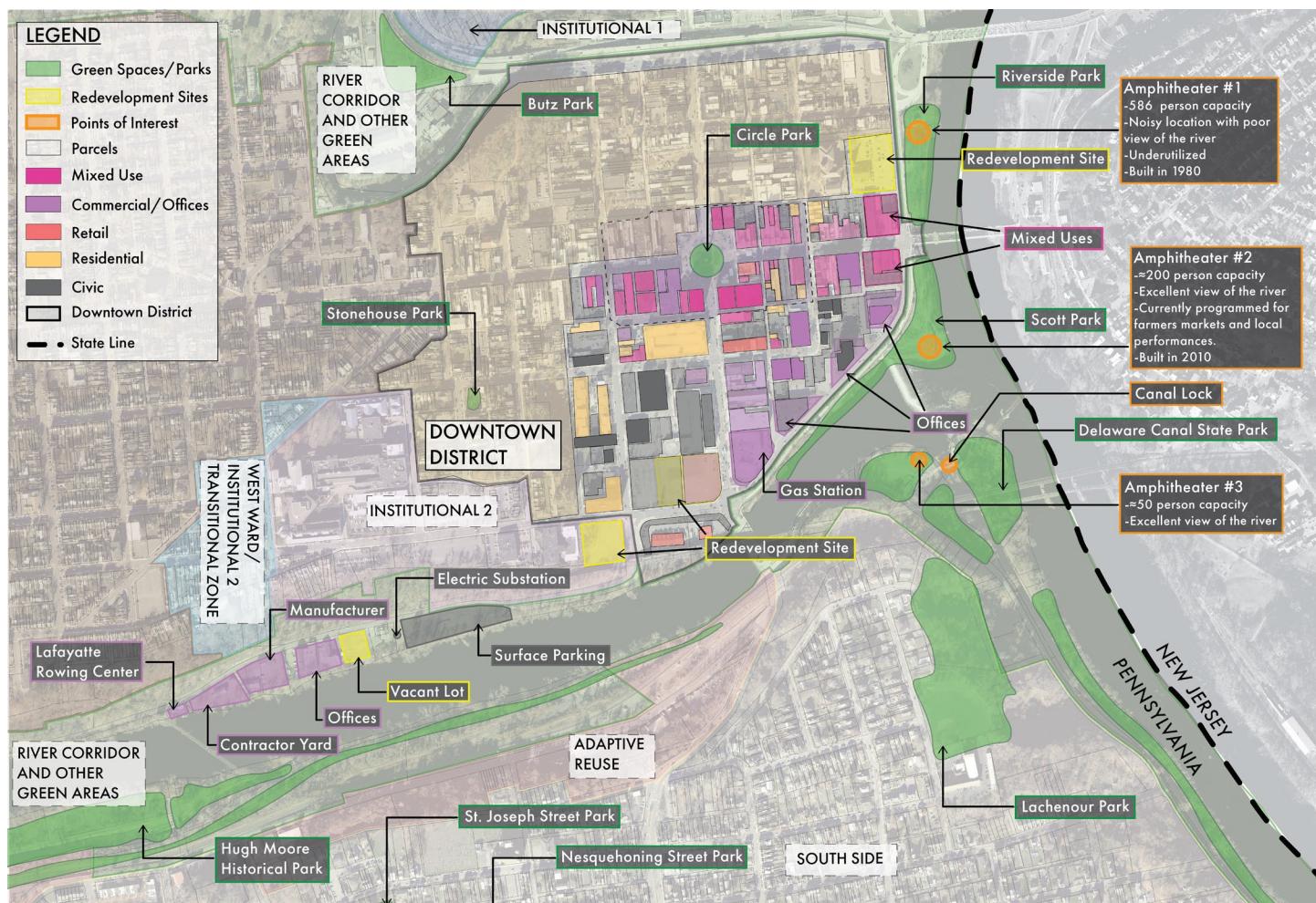
The most significant topographic features are along the Lehigh River. The Southside neighborhood sits much higher than the river, with steep slopes separating it from the riverfront. Likewise, the West Ward neighborhood is elevated above the riverfront space along Lehigh Drive, creating challenges for connectivity and access.



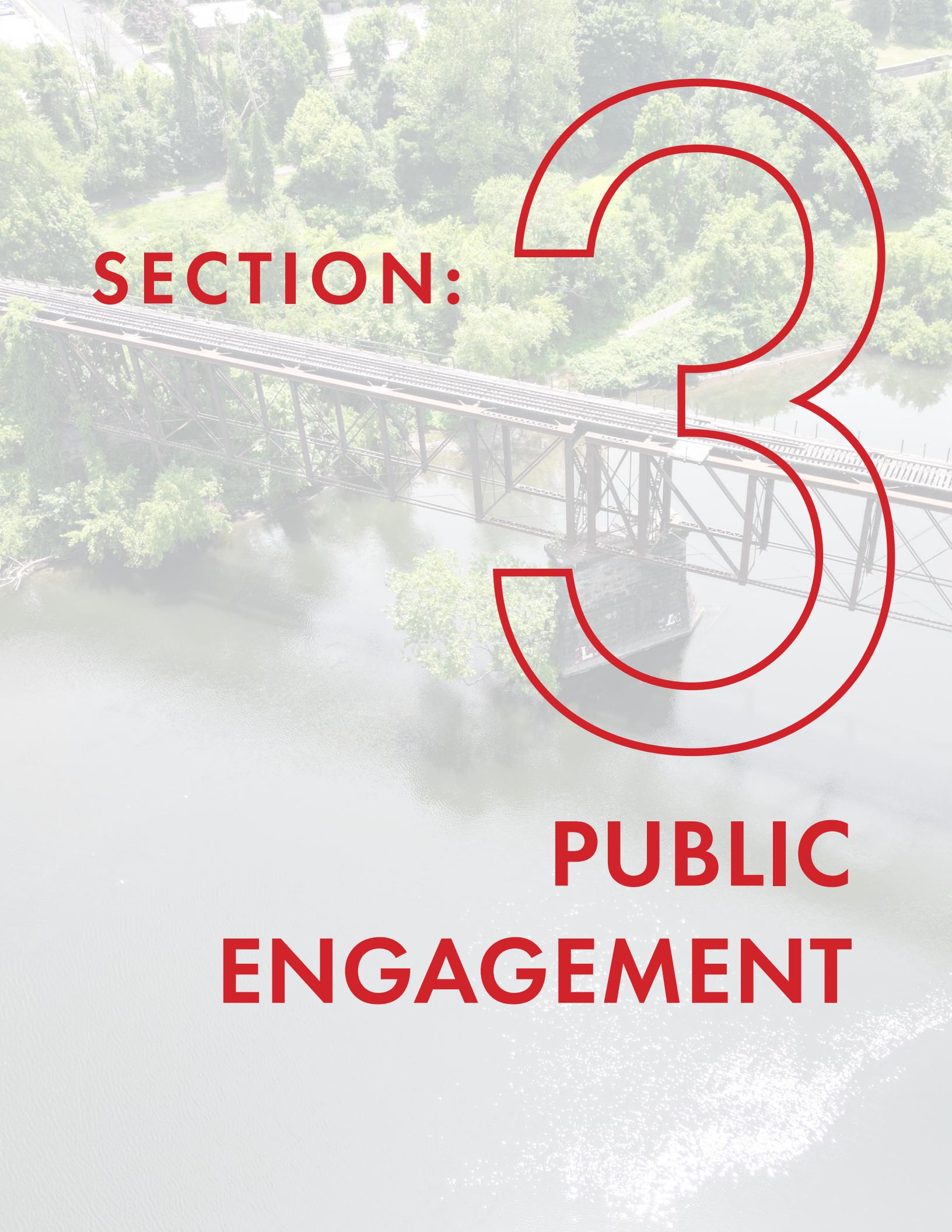
Infrastructure & Programming

An analysis of existing land uses and infrastructure was conducted to better understand Easton's urban fabric, particularly the areas adjacent to the riverfront greenspace and the infrastructure within the waterfront parks. Most of the downtown area is composed of mixed-use, commercial, and civic functions. Notably, there are currently three residential developments under construction on redevelopment sites within the downtown.

The greenspace illustrated on the accompanying map aligns with previous analyses of greenspace and trails, showing that much of the riverfront has already been designated as public greenspace. The Delaware Riverfront is entirely public greenspace, while the Lehigh Riverfront includes a mix of uses. Within the riverfront parks, there are three amphitheaters. Of these, Riverside Park Amphitheater is the largest, though the amphitheater at Scott Park is utilized the most.



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**PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT**

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Focus Group Interviews

There were a series of focus group interviews organized during the site analysis process to gain insight into the city of Easton's community, culture, history, and interests. Prior to the public meeting, key stakeholder groups participated in virtual interviews with the planning staff to share ideas, concerns, and knowledge. These interviews lasted about an hour and a half each. The key stakeholder groups play important roles in the community, have a keen understanding of the area, and/or have knowledge of the logistics of land ownership, management, and maintenance along Easton's waterfronts. Below is a list of the organizations, or stakeholders, included in the three focus group interviews and a brief summary of the discussions.

Focus Group 1

Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP)



As a group very involved in local programming, the Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP) shared details on how the community uses the waterfront parks, how these programs could be supported through park infrastructure, and some areas that are underutilized. The Riverside Park amphitheater is the largest outdoor venue on the waterfront and could generate revenue but is underutilized from programming challenges due to a lack in parking. Scott Park is home to the farmers market and concert series. Flexibility in this park is key to accommodate these programs. Some recommendations included additional parking, for visitors, buses, and food trucks, café tables, seating, and sun/rain cover. The Scott Park boat ramp could be better utilized and has the opportunity to be more welcoming. Larry Holmes Drive is a barrier that separates the parks from the downtown, so more pedestrian oriented crossing could help promote park use and successful programming. The GEDP owns two parcels along the Lehigh River. They shared the aspiration for these areas to provide outdoor recreation opportunities in future and support the City's projects included in Active Transportation Plan.

Focus Group 2

Nurture Nature Center

With their understanding of nature and science, the Nurture Nature Center provided insight and recommendations related to flood resilience, sustainability, wildlife habitat, etc. Along with other programming, the Nurture Nature Center organizes star parties for community stargazing in Scott Park. Limiting light pollution and maintaining open space are essential factors for the success of this program. The City's history of flooding was discussed and highlighted the importance of flood resilient infrastructure, green infrastructure, and more riparian buffers along the waterfronts. The potential dangers of the rivers and need for water safety education was also noted. This group recommended more areas for wildlife habitat and native planting to provide an opportunity for environmental education, passive recreation, and nature appreciation. There was an emphasis on the approach that supporting ecosystems can be an asset and amenity just as much as other development.



Focus Group 3

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
and Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor



**DELAWARE & LEHIGH
NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR**



DCNR and the D&L National Heritage Corridor were grouped together for an interview to discuss the south waterfronts, the D&L Trail, Delaware Canal State Park, and High Moore Park. These groups were able to clarify the intertwined nature of Delaware Canal Park, Delaware Canal State Park, and the D&L Trail, related to land ownership, maintenance responsibilities, and programming. DCNR explained that maintaining park access for visitors, operations, and emergency services is vital for Delaware Canal State Park. The D&L Trail connects this park to the Hugh Moore Park and extends throughout the region. Some of the programming includes the D&L Race Fest and Get Your Tail on the Trail. Although Hugh Moore Park is heavily used, improved connectivity and transportation would be beneficial. Improved bike safety, more riparian buffers, picnic groves, more passive recreation opportunities, and cross river access were recommended.

Public Meeting Presentation

In the fall of 2024, this planning project was introduced to the Easton community through a public webinar presentation. The goals of the project, site analysis findings, design possibilities, and planning timeline were discussed. A question and answer session was held at the end of the presentation to address any initial questions or comments. A recording of this meeting was posted on the City of Easton website for those that couldn't attend the webinar or wanted to refer back to the presentation details. For the next month, several thoughtful public comments were submitted to the City and relayed to the planning team. This feedback provided insight on the aspirations and needs of the community, as well as important context on past uses of these riverfront spaces.

Key Takeaways

The feedback for the focus groups and community covered many of the same topics and aligned in perspective. Below is a list of important highlights that were mentioned by multiple focus groups or community members, appearing to be common themes when summarizing the feedback. The order of this list does not relate to priority or level of importance.

Important Highlights

1. Dedicated pedestrian and cyclist oriented access across the Lehigh River is important to residents and visitors. Although the 3rd Street bridge crosses the river, a non-vehicular route, like a pedestrian bridge, would provide a safer and more enjoyable experience for users. This connection would foster unity in the waterfront park spaces and promote active transportation.
2. The community is supportive of more passive activities along the riverfronts and less heavily programmed

space. Community parks and existing waterfront parks already provide amenities like athletic fields, playgrounds, and amphitheaters. Opportunities to do activities like wildlife viewing, journaling, lounging, and picnicking could be increased.

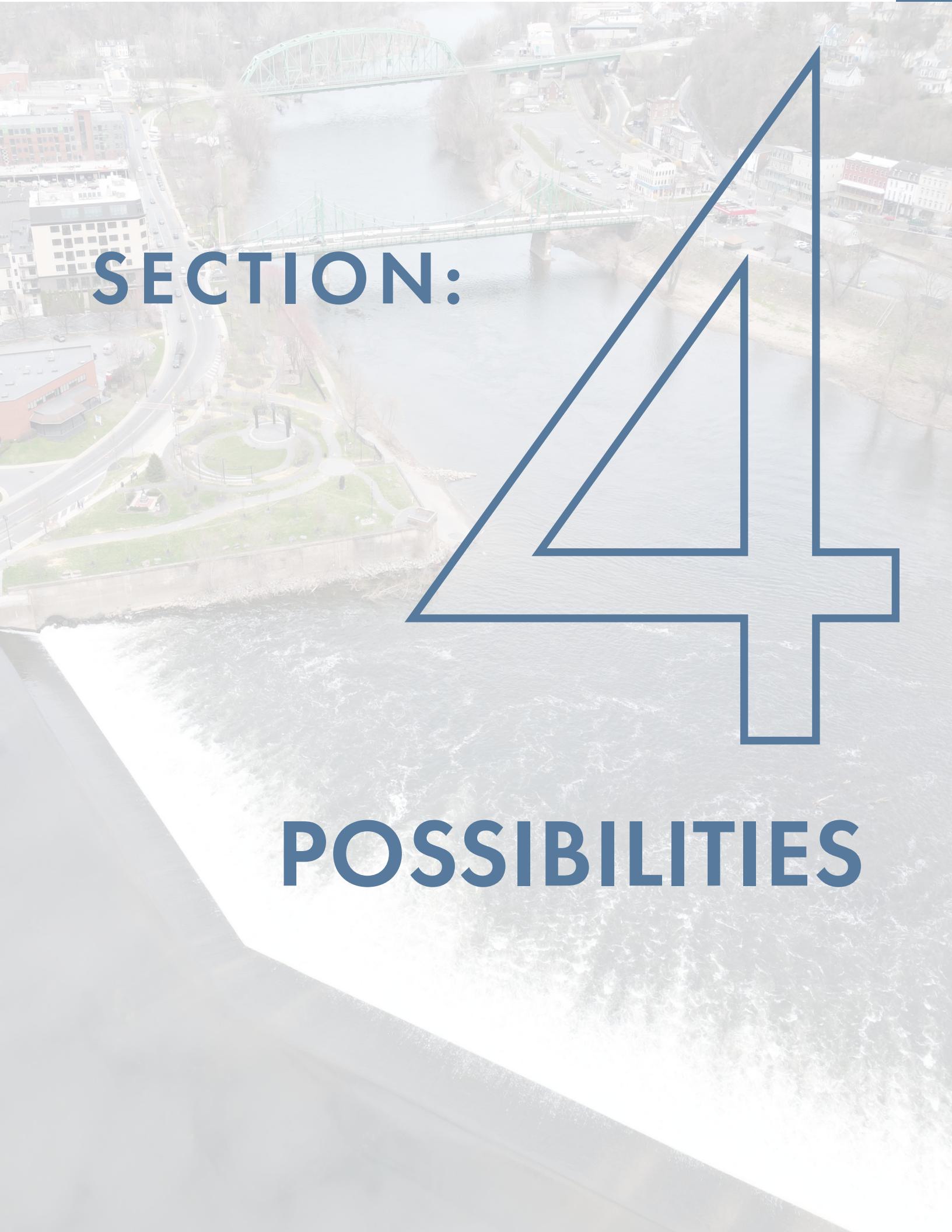
3. The high speeds of vehicular traffic on Lehigh Drive pose dangers to pedestrians. Proposed programming should be mindful of this and incorporate traffic calming measures.
4. Larry Holmes Drive is high volume, especially during events. A lack of legibility of where pedestrians can safely cross is problematic and could be improved. Increased amount of pedestrian crossing will promote community safety and low speed traffic.
5. Scott Park boat ramp has the opportunity for better utilization of public space. Scott Park boat ramp has the opportunity to be improved for better utilization of public space. Improvements should focus on creating a better functioning and accessible boat ramp, safer space for pedestrians, and potentially activating it as a lounge or passive recreation space.
6. Lack of public parking at the Riverside Park amphitheater limits the programming and activities. This asset could be better utilized if there were more parking or shuttles.
7. The GEDP bus lot located on Lehigh Drive could be better utilized as riverfront civic space. This area is a prime location for public greenspace because it has direct access to Lehigh River upstream from the dam, is more secluded than the other waterfront parks, and is relatively undeveloped.
8. The community would benefit from more dog-friendly parks. Areas that allow off-leash play are essential for the downtown apartment dwellers. With the increase in pet ownership among young generations and the new apartment buildings, the demand for this resource will likely increase.
9. Non-motorized boat amenities should be prioritized over motorized boat amenities. Non-motorized boats like kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards are increasingly popular, very accessible, and promote physical activity. The use of motorized boats at the existing boat ramps has seemingly decreased.
10. There is an opportunity to establish a trail connection between the Palmer Bikeway and the Southside of Easton using the Lehigh Rail Bridge. This decommissioned rail trestle could be repurposed as a pedestrian and cyclist bridge, creating a regional trail connection.

Philosophical Foundations

The public engagement process also illuminated the perceptions and values of the public. Below are two philosophical foundations that summarize the attitude and aspirations observed in the focus group interviews as well as the public comments.

There has been a shift in focus from increasing tourism as a regional destination to providing more local and community assets and amenities.

Environmental caution is important when planning for the future of the City's waterfronts. Designing with the approach of a "light touch" would highlight the natural assets and combat climate change. Prioritizing non-intrusive proposed infrastructure, environmental restoration, conservation, and flood resilience align with this.

A grayscale aerial photograph of a river scene. In the foreground, a concrete dam with a waterfall is visible. Behind it, a wide river flows through a city. Two bridges span the river: a green steel truss bridge on the left and a suspension bridge with red cables on the right. The city on the banks features various buildings, roads, and green spaces.

SECTION:

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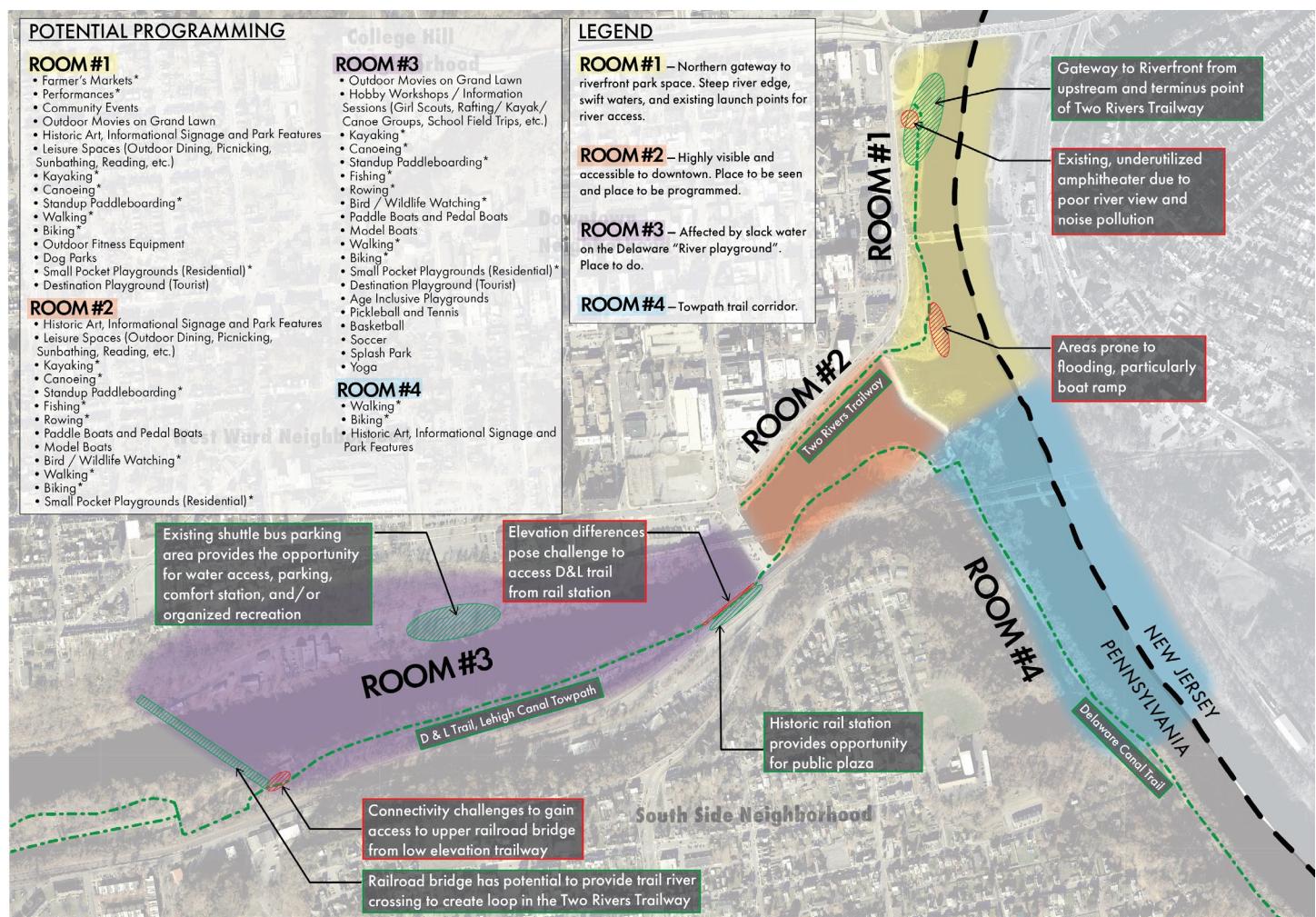
POSSIBILITIES

POSSIBILITIES

Opportunities & Constraints

The analysis of the Master Plan's opportunities and constraints revealed that the existing waterfronts were architecturally and spatially organized into four distinct spaces or geographic areas. These areas or "rooms" were created by terrain, man-made objects such as roads or bridges, or adjacent building developments. The rooms include the riverfront space on both shorelines, dividing the space into riverfront corridors. The characteristics that define these rooms affect how the public spaces are perceived or accessed. The rooms create obstacles, define scale, and begin to influence how each waterfront space could be used for recreation, social gatherings, etc. and what activities would be appropriate. The images on the next pages help depict the location and extent of these rooms.

Room #1, on the northern portion of Easton's Delaware River waterfront, functions as the northern gateway to the waterfront greenspace. It is bound by the Easton-Phillipsburg Bridge on the north and dam on the south. Room #2 consists of the Lehigh River waterfronts defined by the 3rd Street Bridge and dam, a highly accessible and visible area from downtown. Room #3 includes the expansive waterfront upstream of Room #2, defined by the 3rd Street Bridge and the Easton & Northern Railroad Bridge. Lastly, Room #4 includes the greenspace along the Delaware River, downstream of the dam.



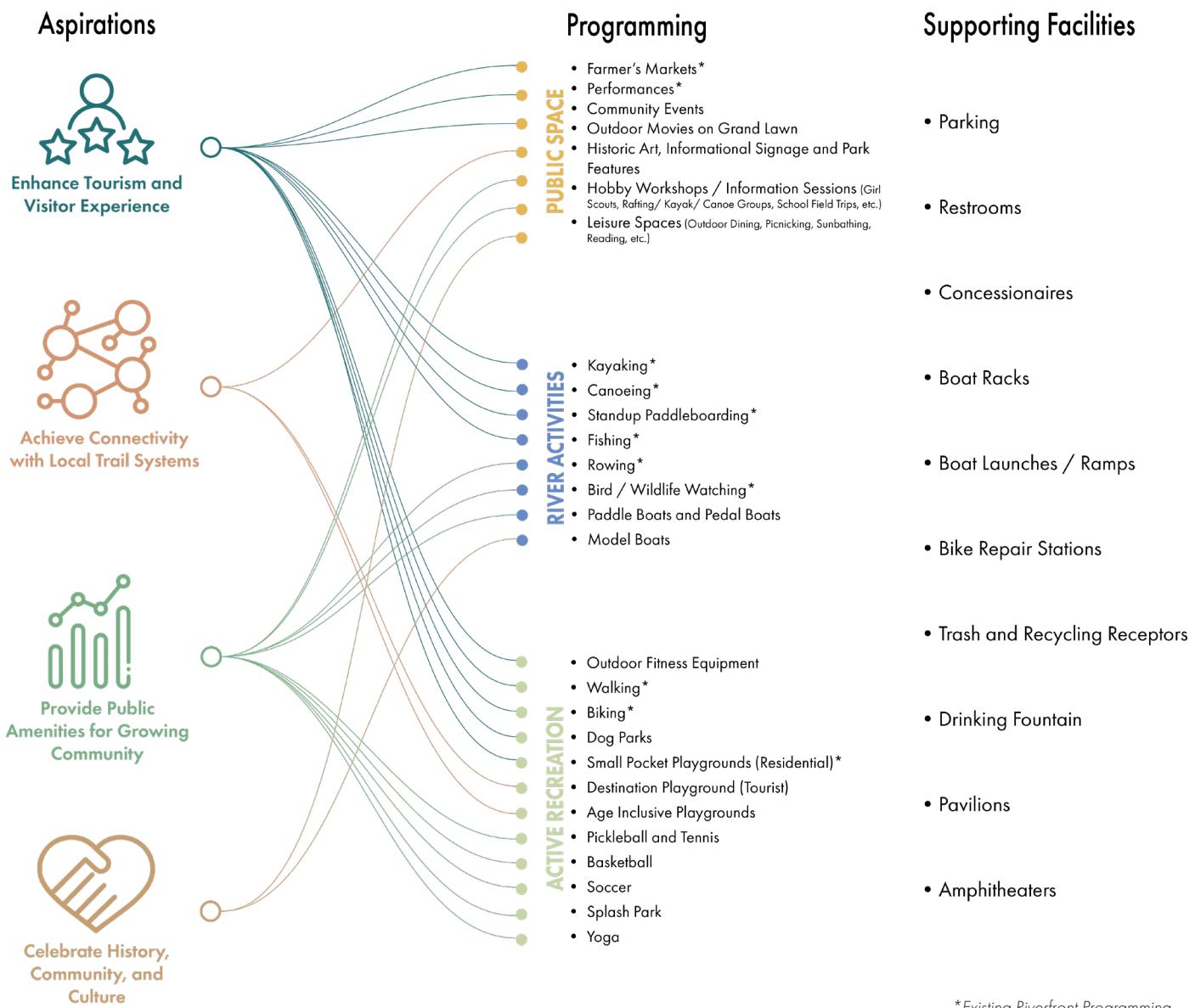
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POSSIBILITIES



Initial Development Programs, Activities, & Overall Waterfront Vision

The Master Plan's goals have been aligned with the four main aspirations, as described in Section 1: Introduction. These planning aspirations guided the list of potential programming for the waterfront park spaces. This list was intended to be fairly exhaustive to give a full scope of the possibilities for the sites. The development programs fell into three categories: public space, river activities, and active recreation. Supporting facilities, like parking, restrooms, and basic park amenities were also included. This list was used to incite discussion on particular programming types to receive direction from the City, stakeholders, and community. For example, although organized athletics like pickleball and soccer didn't seem like the most appropriate use of riverfront space in this specific context, those programs were included in this list so the planning staff could have their assumptions affirmed through public process and city review. The potential programming was critiqued and narrowed based on community need and interest, as perceived in the public feedback and focus group discussions, as well as the suitability in the context of the sites.



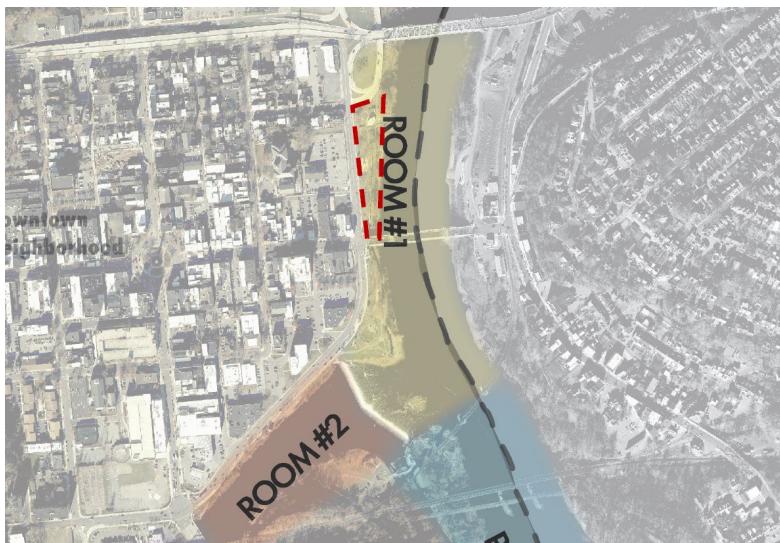
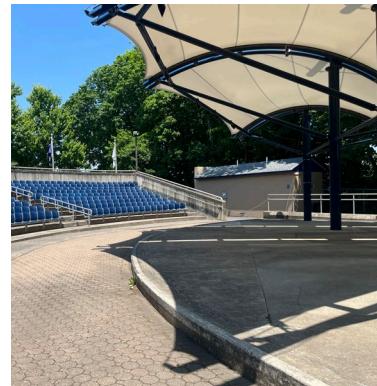
Important Focus Areas

Within the four spatial rooms, there are particular areas of interest that present an opportunity for enhanced riverfront recreation space. Factors like access, existing infrastructure, and existing programming distinguished these areas. The following pages summarize the observations, opportunities, and constraints of the focus areas.

Riverside Park

The northern focus area in Room 1 is Riverside Park, bounded by the PA-611 ramp to the north, the Northampton Street Bridge to the south, and Larry Holmes Drive to the west. There is an opportunity to activate this underutilized space with programming that revitalizes the riverside amphitheater and brings new energy to the park. Its close proximity to newly constructed apartment buildings presents a chance to create a “backyard” or “third place” for residents—a welcoming, everyday gathering space.

One key challenge is the traffic volume and speed along Larry Holmes Drive, which acts as a barrier between downtown and the riverfront park. However, recommendations in the Active Transportation Plan begin to address this by proposing safer pedestrian crossings to better connect the area. Additionally, limited parking presents challenges when programming events at the amphitheater. It's worth noting that improvements were made to Riverside and Scott Parks in 2010, including the reduction of Larry Holmes Drive from four lanes to two—an effort aimed at slowing traffic and improving pedestrian safety.



Scott Park

The second focus area in Room 1 is Scott Park, located south of the Northampton Street Bridge and extending to the confluence of the rivers. As one of the more developed and amenity-rich waterfront parks, any proposed improvements must be sensitive to the existing context—particularly ongoing programs like the GEDP concert series and farmers market. This parkspace, as well as the dam, are prominent features on the waterfront and are a spatial anchor when looking at the City's park system, particularly along the rivers.

The lower level of the park, which provides water access, is prone to flooding, so flood resilience should be a key design priority. The park's location offers some of the most striking views of the river confluence and dam—natural assets that should be highlighted and celebrated.

Public engagement has also raised safety concerns about the narrow, low-visibility staircase currently serving the area. This presents an opportunity to reimagine the access point and create a safer, more welcoming experience for park visitors.



Delaware Canal Park

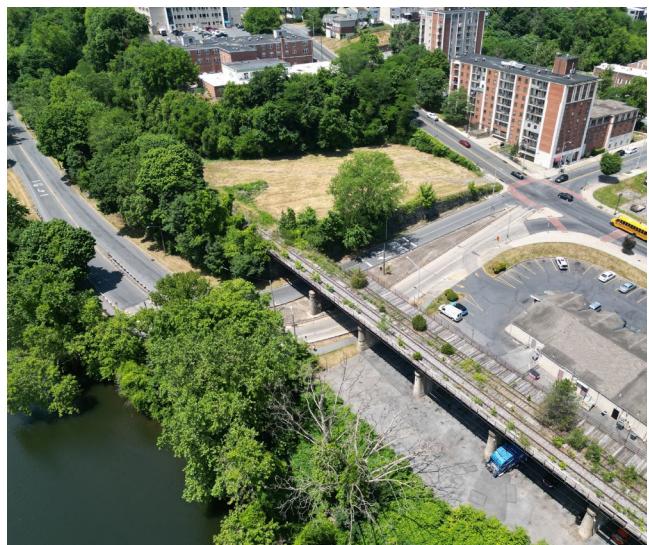
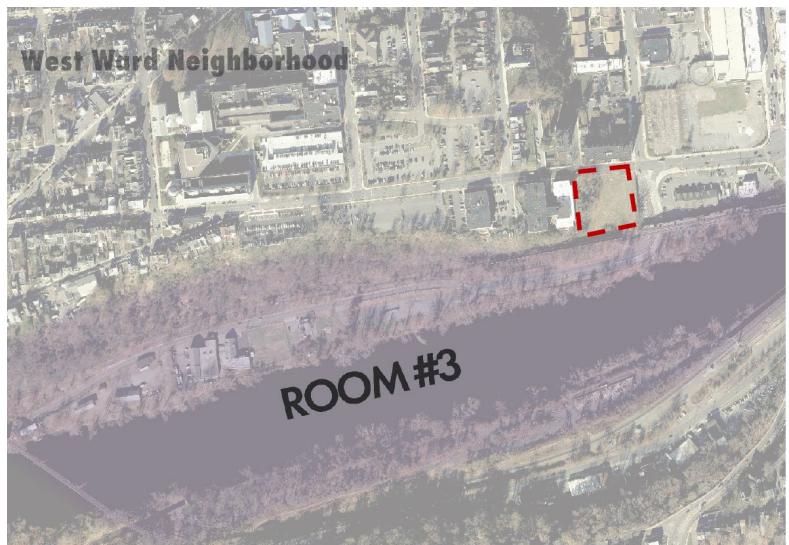
The next focus area identified is Delaware Canal State Park, which functions primarily as a trailhead or access point for the regional D&L Trail. There is an opportunity to enhance this area by adding more trailhead-oriented amenities to better serve trail users. However, access to the park poses some challenges. Located along South Delaware Drive pedestrian and cyclist access is limited and potentially unsafe. The narrow sidewalk on the north side of the road runs directly alongside a steep hillside, offering a poor experience for pedestrians. Additionally, the intersection of South Delaware Drive and 3rd Street is often congested and can be difficult to navigate for both pedestrians and cyclists.



GEDP Holdings

Continuing along the north shore of the rivers, the next focus area—located in Room 3—is the vacant lot at the corner of Washington Street and Lehigh Drive, currently owned by the Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP). This parcel presents an opportunity to serve as a key access point to the proposed trailway and linear park on the retired rail bridge above the 3rd Street Bridge.

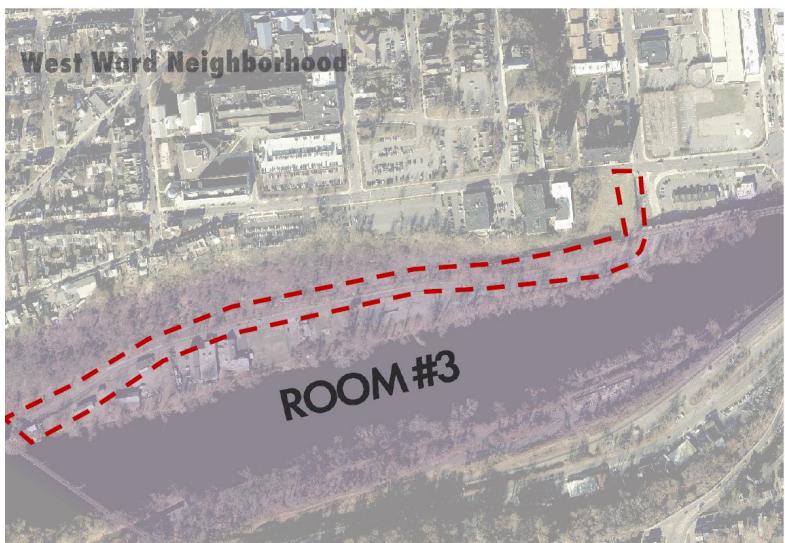
Due to its prominent visibility from both downtown and Lehigh Drive, and its immediate proximity to a new residential development, this site could become a welcoming gateway to Easton's expanding network of waterfront greenspaces and trails. It could function as an anchor node that connects the city's urban fabric to the riverfront, while also encouraging greater pedestrian and cyclist use of the future trail system.



Lehigh Drive

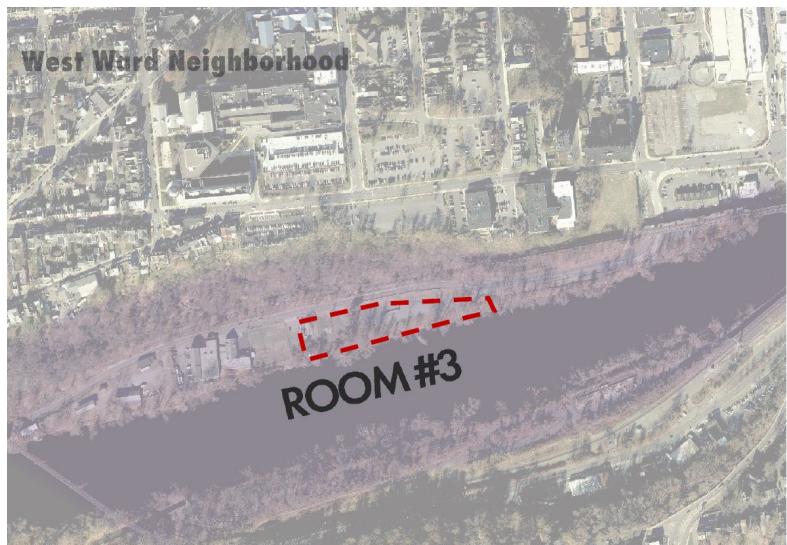
The next focus area in Room 3 is the stretch of land along Lehigh Drive. As identified in the Active Transportation Plan and echoed during public engagement, Lehigh Drive presents pedestrian safety concerns due to high traffic speeds. There has been pedestrian-vehicular conflict in recent years, further emphasizing the importance of prioritizing intervention or improvement in this area. There is an opportunity to address this in the concept planning with additional traffic calming measures and trail safety improvements.

This area offers prime waterfront space along the Lehigh River, making it a valuable opportunity for enhanced public access and recreational use. However, implementation is complicated by a patchwork of ownership. The Lafayette College Boathouse property is publicly owned and accessible, and the GEDP bus lot—while quasi-public—is also generally open to the public. In contrast, the remaining parcels are privately owned and not currently accessible for public use.



GEDP Bus Parking Lot

The next identified focus area is the GEDP-owned bus parking lot located along Lehigh Drive. Currently serving as a parking area for the Crayola Experience, this expansive, underutilized open space holds significant potential for transformation into a dynamic riverfront greenspace. Relocating the bus parking to another suitable location within the downtown area would free up this site, creating a relatively blank canvas for thoughtful redevelopment. Unlike the structured park spaces found in Rooms 1 and 2, this area offers a wide-open landscape with minimal existing infrastructure, a gentle slope, and sweeping views of the Lehigh River. Its open character makes it especially well-suited for active recreation, particularly water-based activities. Its location, set farther from the dam and largely unobstructed by man-made barriers like bridges and rail trestles, makes it ideal for improved water access. Furthermore, this site marks the current limit of the multi-use trail along Lehigh Drive. As such, it presents an opportunity to extend the trail system further along the riverfront, enhancing both connectivity and recreational use along the Lehigh River corridor.



Lehigh Valley Railroad Train Station

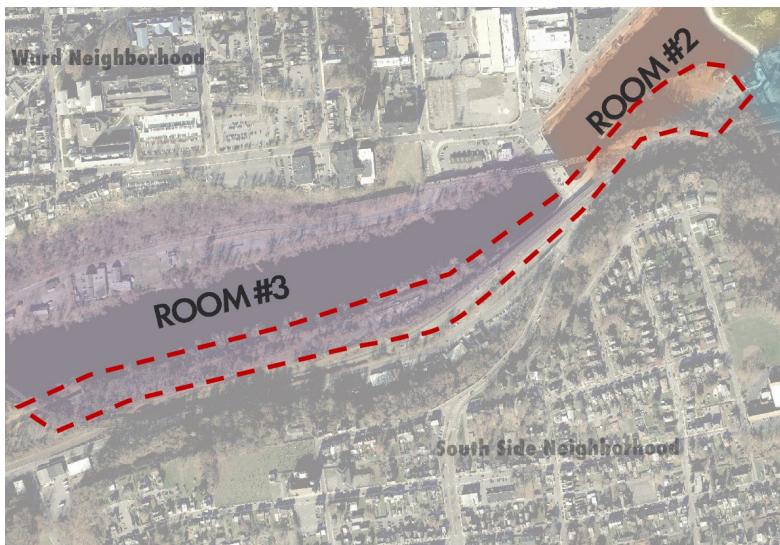
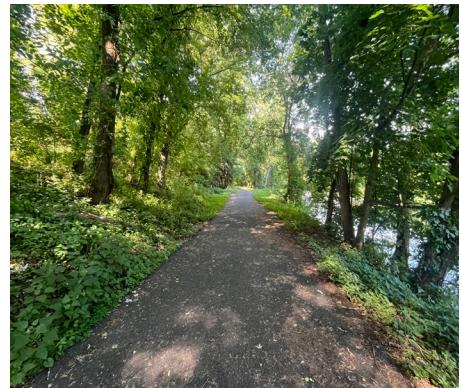
Located on the south shore of the Lehigh River, the historic Lehigh Valley Railroad Station presents a unique opportunity to be revitalized as a public space. With access from the 3rd Street Bridge and Southside neighborhood, the station could serve as both a valuable community asset and a gateway to the southern edge of the Lehigh riverfront. There is also potential to connect this site to the D&L Trail; however, a significant topographic challenge exists. The trail sits approximately 15 feet below the station, separated by a retaining wall.

The smaller geographic area, compared to the other larger public spaces, along with the slight narrowing in the river and low bridge infrastructure, creates a very human scaled space. Complemented by the downtown sight lines and urban context, this character provides an opportunity to design oriented to social interaction and gathering.



South Side Connectivity to Waterfront

Looking at the south shore of the Lehigh River as a whole, a key goal is to improve access to the waterfront from the Southside neighborhood. The D&L Trail, which runs along the river's edge, is a major asset in this area. However, access to both the trail and the waterfront is limited. The primary barriers are the railroad tracks and challenging topography, which hinder direct connections. The Active Transportation Plan includes recommendations for enhancing pedestrian circulation from the Southside to the 3rd Street Bridge and historic rail station. These recommendations provide a strong foundation to build upon and expand future access improvements.





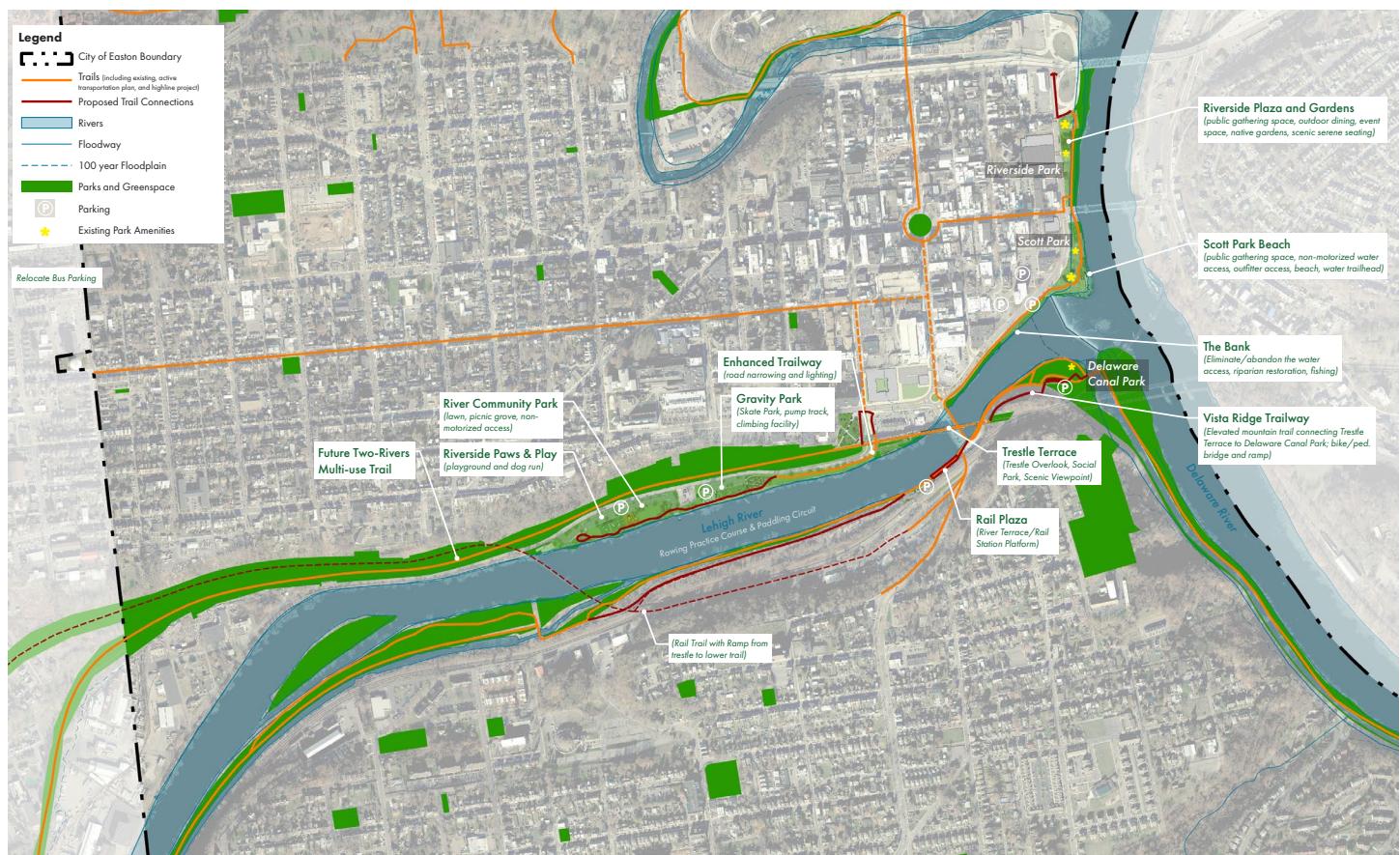
SECTION:

**CONCEPT PLANS &
RECOMMENDATIONS**

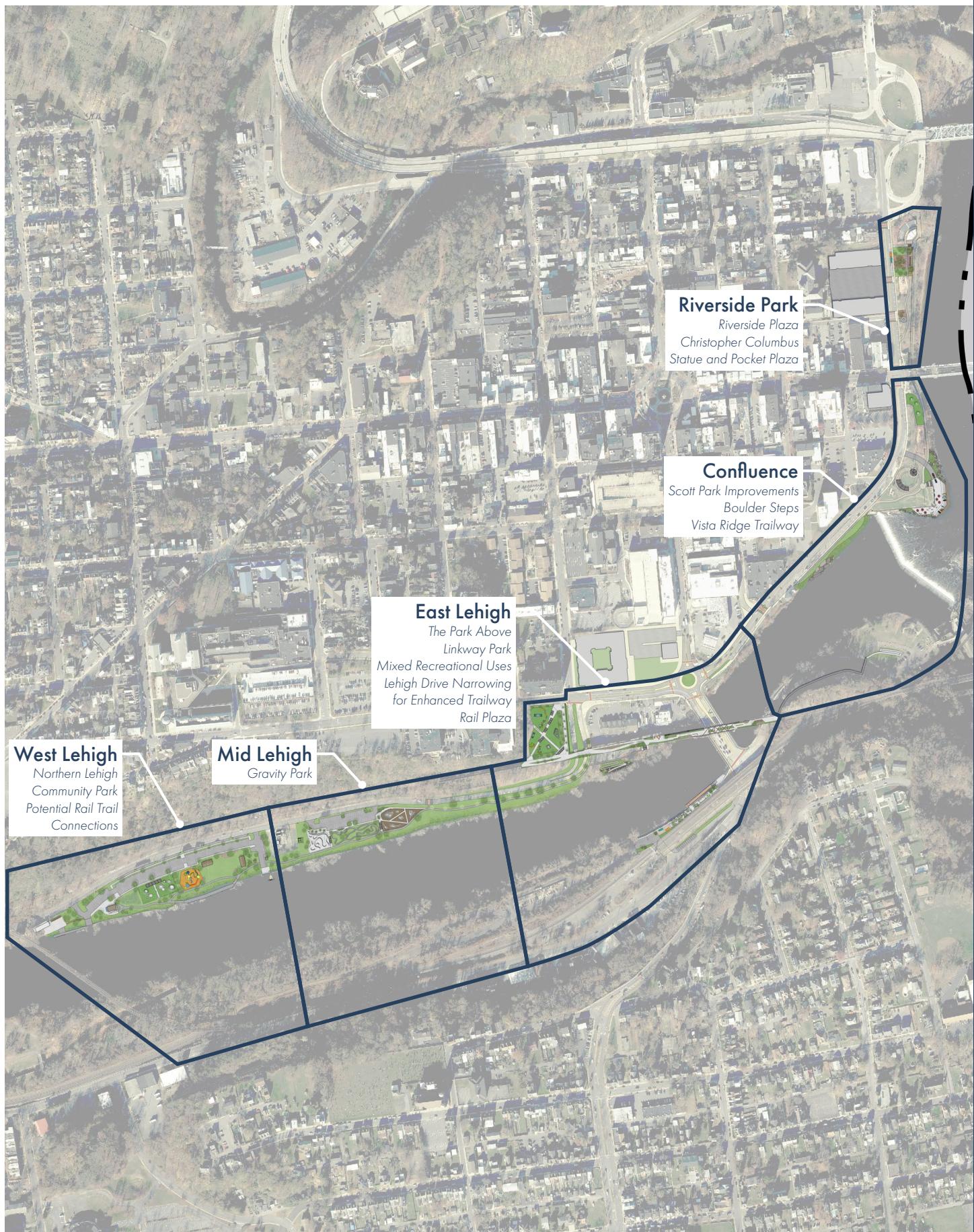
CONCEPT PLANS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Master Plan

A waterfront master plan was developed based on the opportunities and constraints observed during the site analysis and the direction received during the public engagement process. This masterplan is intended to visualize the long-term development goals of the Easton waterfronts. The new residential and mixed-use developments as well as the improvements outlined in the Active Transportation Plan are shown in the following concept designs to give a holistic view of the vision. To promote the goal of enhanced connectivity with local trail systems, additional trails were introduced in the masterplan to build off the existing trails and proposed trails of the Active Transportation Plan. The masterplan proposes a continuous green corridor of public greenspace along all of Easton's waterfronts to better leverage the natural amenities of the waterfronts. This includes additional greenspace along the north shore of the Lehigh River and activation of several smaller areas along the other riverfronts. This plan establishes several nodes of activity, each providing a unique riverfront experience. The aim was to create a dynamic park system that offers a variety of programming to appeal to a diverse set of users, while still maintaining individual character in each park.



SECTION: 5 CONCEPT PLANS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Riverside Park

Riverside Plaza

The master plan proposes enhancements to the northern most portion Riverside Park, including a plaza and outdoor dining space, community lawn, and native garden. The goal of these improvements is to activate the space, accommodate the new residents from the nearby apartment buildings, and create complementary event space for the riverside amphitheater. As discussed in the public engagement process, the Riverside Amphitheater is an asset but is difficult to program with such limited parking. To accompany the increased on-street parking, as proposed in the Active Transportation plan, this new plaza could support amphitheater events by creating a space for food trucks, vendors, merch and ticket sales, pre-show and after-show gathering space. Apart from event times, this area could provide a casual gathering space for residents downtown or lunchtime spot for downtown employees. To taking advantage of riverfront views, swings and more intimate seating areas are tucked into gardens of native planting. These passive areas with a focus on natural beauty align with the aspirations of the public.



Christopher Columbus Statue and Pocket Plaza

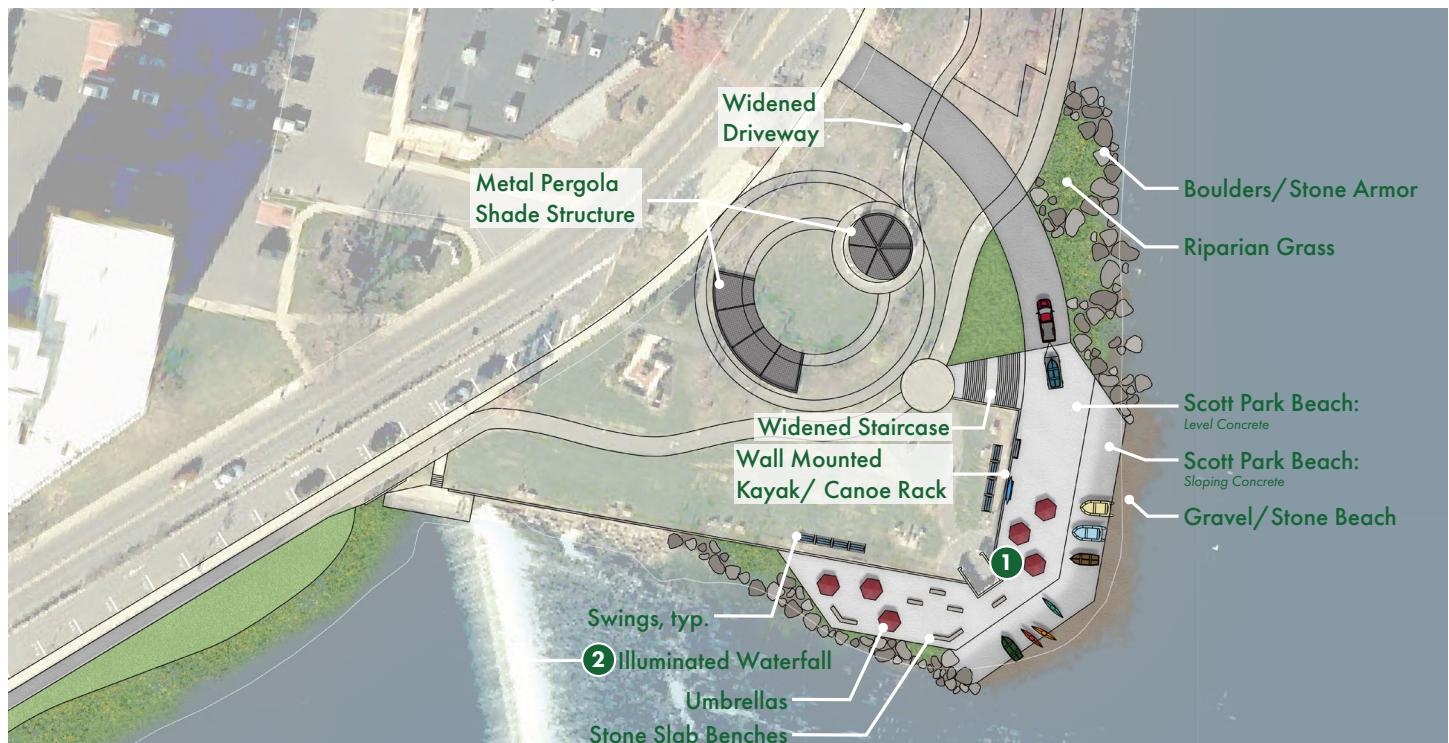
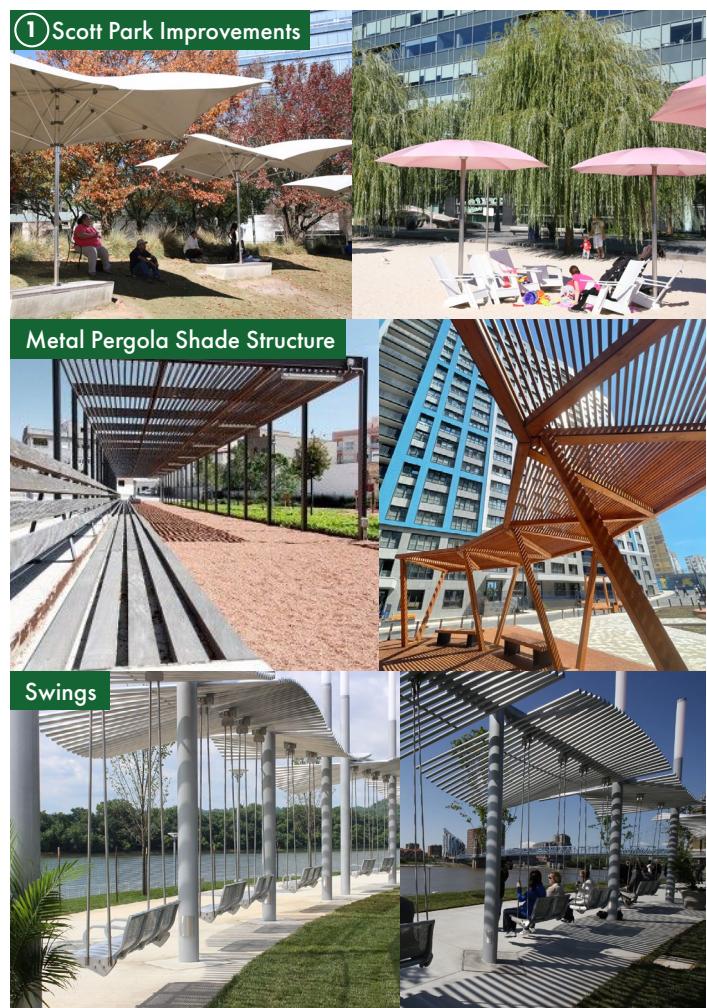
Further downstream a small pocket plaza is proposed at the Christopher Columbus Statue. This plaza would carry the character of the proposed Riverside Plaza through out Riverside Park and would showcase this historic monument. With the addition of a raised intersection and crosswalks at the intersection of Larry Holmes Drive and Church Street, this plaza provides a visual terminus to the street. This pedestrian focused design would connect the crosswalks and sidewalk directly to the trail within the park, promoting access and circulation within the park instead of along the adjacent sidewalk.



Confluence

Scott Park Beach

The existing boat launch at Scott Park has been reimagined as a sloping concrete beach with seating and improved water access, providing better accessibility and flood resilience while activating the space. To improve vehicular access, the existing access drive to the boat launch is widened. The water access would accommodate motorized and non-motorized boats and would include amenities like kayak racks and seating, as well as moorings or tie ups for light vessels such as kayaks, canoes, jet skis, and row boats. The master plan proposes widening the historic staircase to address the communities' safety concerns related to the narrowness and low visibility, as noted in the public engagement process. To preserve the historic nature of this structure, the south edge of the staircase would remain, and the extension would occur on the north edge. This compromise finds a balance between historic value, public safety, and usability. The addition of riparian grasses is proposed along the riverbank to promote ecologic diversity and flood resilience. The park lighting's preferred function or style, such as security, ambience, or wayfinding, should be determined through further discourse. Strategies to illuminate the dam could also be explored at this time. Dark Sky approved lighting is recommended for its environmental sensitivity.



SECTION: 5 CONCEPT PLANS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Boulder Steps

Through the master planning process, it was observed that the existing water access in this location isn't ideal because it's too close to the dam safety zone, the shoreline is silty/muddy, and the vehicular circulation is not optimal. With safer river access being proposed upstream on the Lehigh river, this space could be transformed to a naturalized riverbank and fishing spot. The design incorporates native riparian grasses and large boulder rocks to stabilize the riverbank and promote ecological diversity. The boulder steps would create a dry, raised platform for fishing, away from the mud prone shoreline.



Vista Ridge Trailway

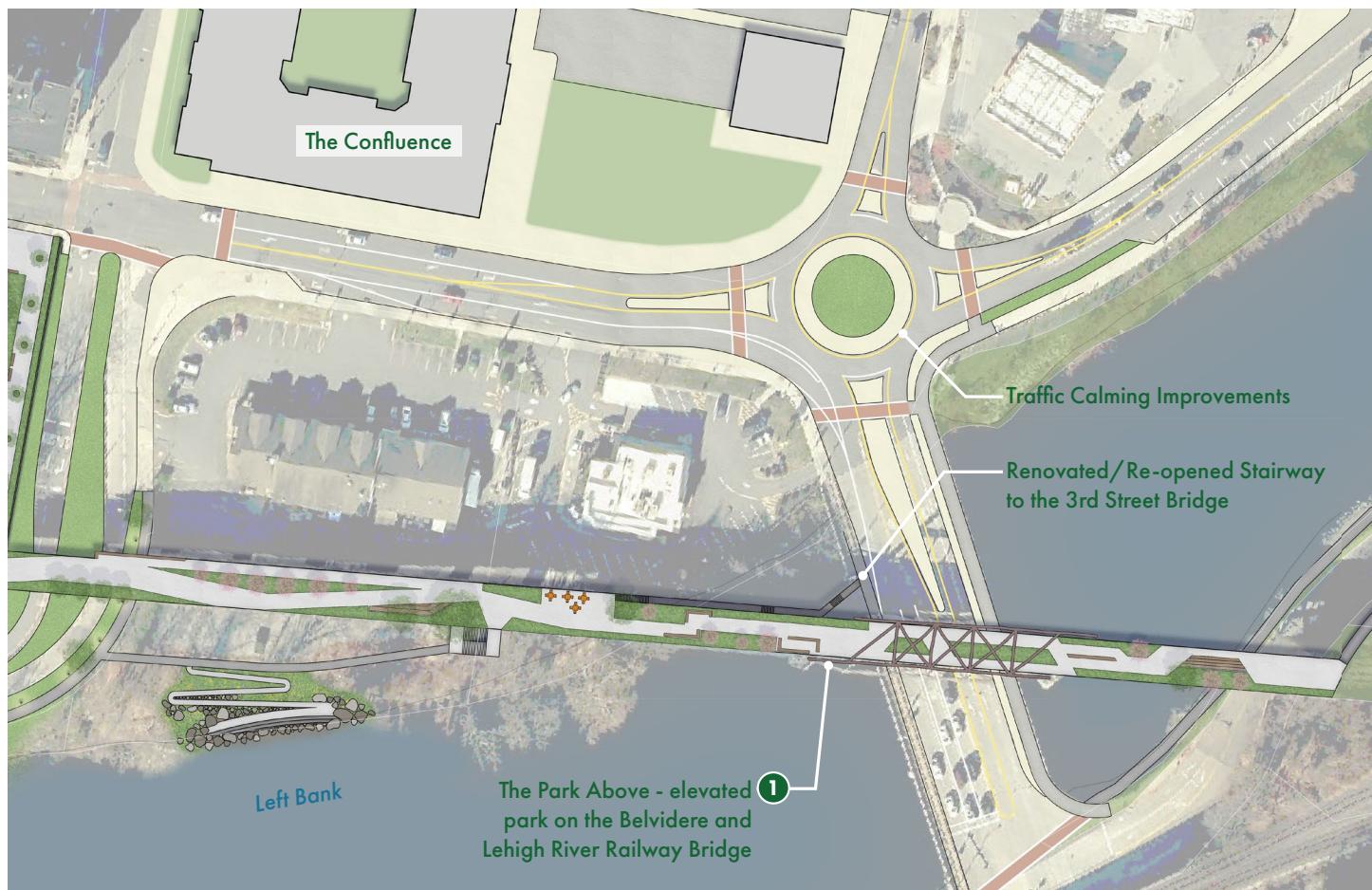
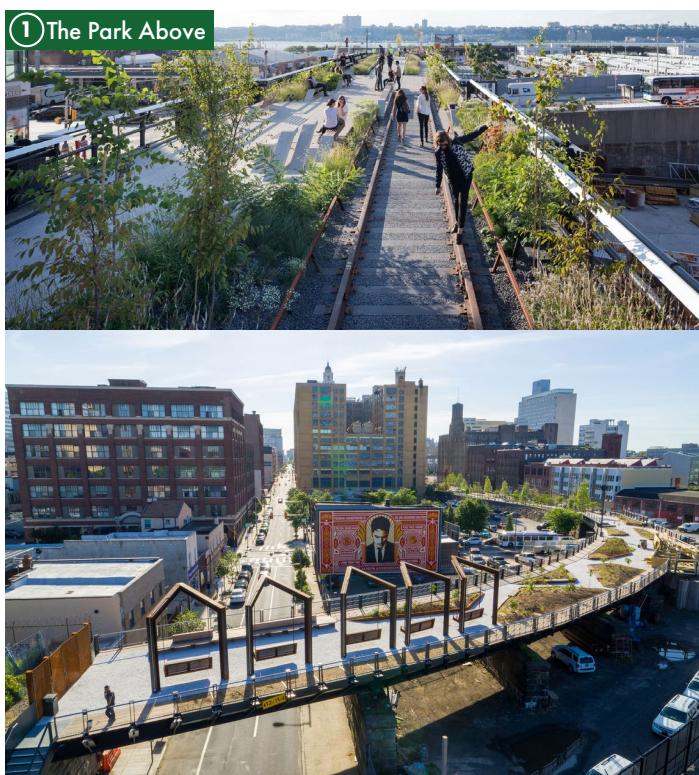
The Vista Ridge Trailway is a proposed trail to make the critical connection of the Delaware Canal State Park and D&L Trail across the Lehigh River, via the Park Above. This cross river connection would provide a safer and pedestrian oriented route from the southside neighbor to the downtown and the future Two-Rivers Multi-use Trail. Proposed as a steel boardwalk along the side of Mount Washington, trail users would transverse the mountain just slightly above ground level. The trailway would create a unique trail experience and provide beautiful views of the rivers and downtown that aren't possible anywhere else in the city. The trailway would cross over top South Delaware Drive as a pedestrian bridge leading to a switchback ramp system to Delaware Canal State Park. Trailhead improvements such as bike repair stations and seating would work well here to accommodate trail users of the D&L Trail and Vista Ridge Trailway that leads to other trail systems.



East Lehigh

The Park Above

The former Belvidere and Lehigh River Railway Bridge is conceptualized as an elevated linear park, the Park Above. This decommissioned rail bridge could be transformed into a destination parkway, connecting the Downtown and Southside communities. Cross river access has been a long-term aspiration of the City of Easton officials and residents because there is a clear need for safe, pedestrian oriented access across the Lehigh River. The Park Above facilitates access to riverfront parks, greenspace, local and regional trails. A connection from downtown to Delaware Canal State Park is established through the parkway and the Vista Ridge Trailway. The park could be accessed from the 3rd Street, through the renovation of a historic rail bridge staircase. A mid-parkway staircase connects the elevated park to the proposed Linkway Park. The east terminus of the parkway connects to the future Two-Rivers Multi-use trail and the downtown at the corner of Lehigh Drive and Washington Street.



Linkway Park

On the north shore of the Lehigh River, behind the strip mall at the corner of Lehigh Drive and Larry Holmes Drive, a small park is proposed to function as a corridor or link to the other waterfront parks. The Linkway park includes a trail from the mid-parkway staircase of the Park Above to the enhanced trailway along Lehigh Drive. This connection would provide access to the proposed Lehigh park areas (to be detailed in the following pages, the future Two-Rivers Multi-use Trail, and the D&L Trail. To leverage and appreciate the natural resources, this park includes a meandering pathway down to the water's edge, with a series of stone seat steps for passive recreation.

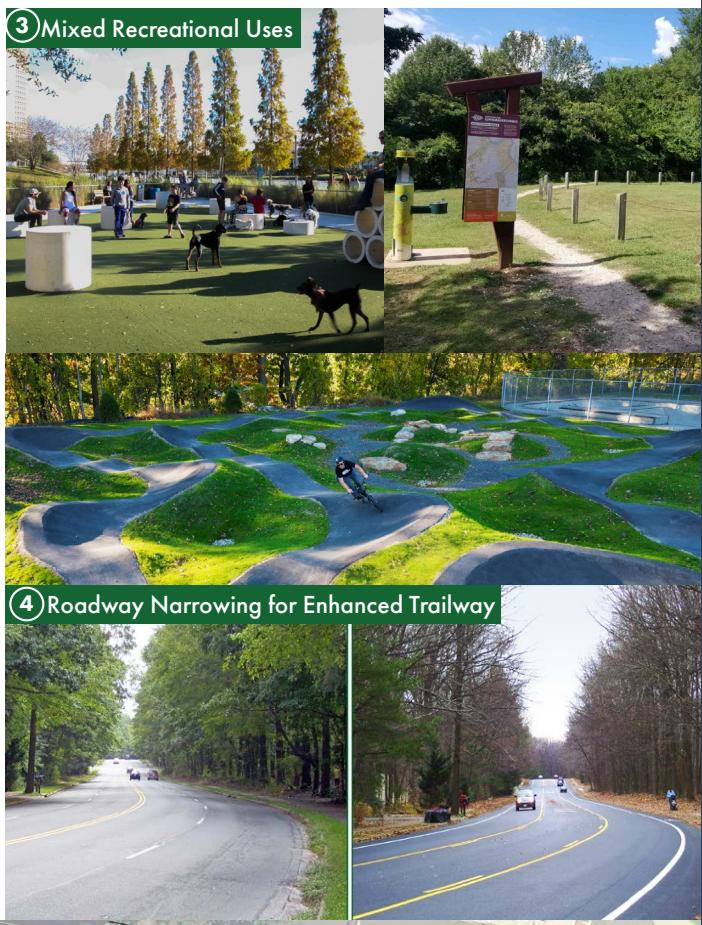


Mixed Recreational Uses

The clear lot at Washington Street and Lehigh Drive, owned by the Greater Easton Development Partnership, has strong potential for mixed recreation use. Its proximity to the Park Above, the future Two-Rivers Multi-use Trail, downtown, and new residential buildings makes it an ideal spot for a trailhead and outdoor amenities like a dog park or pump track.

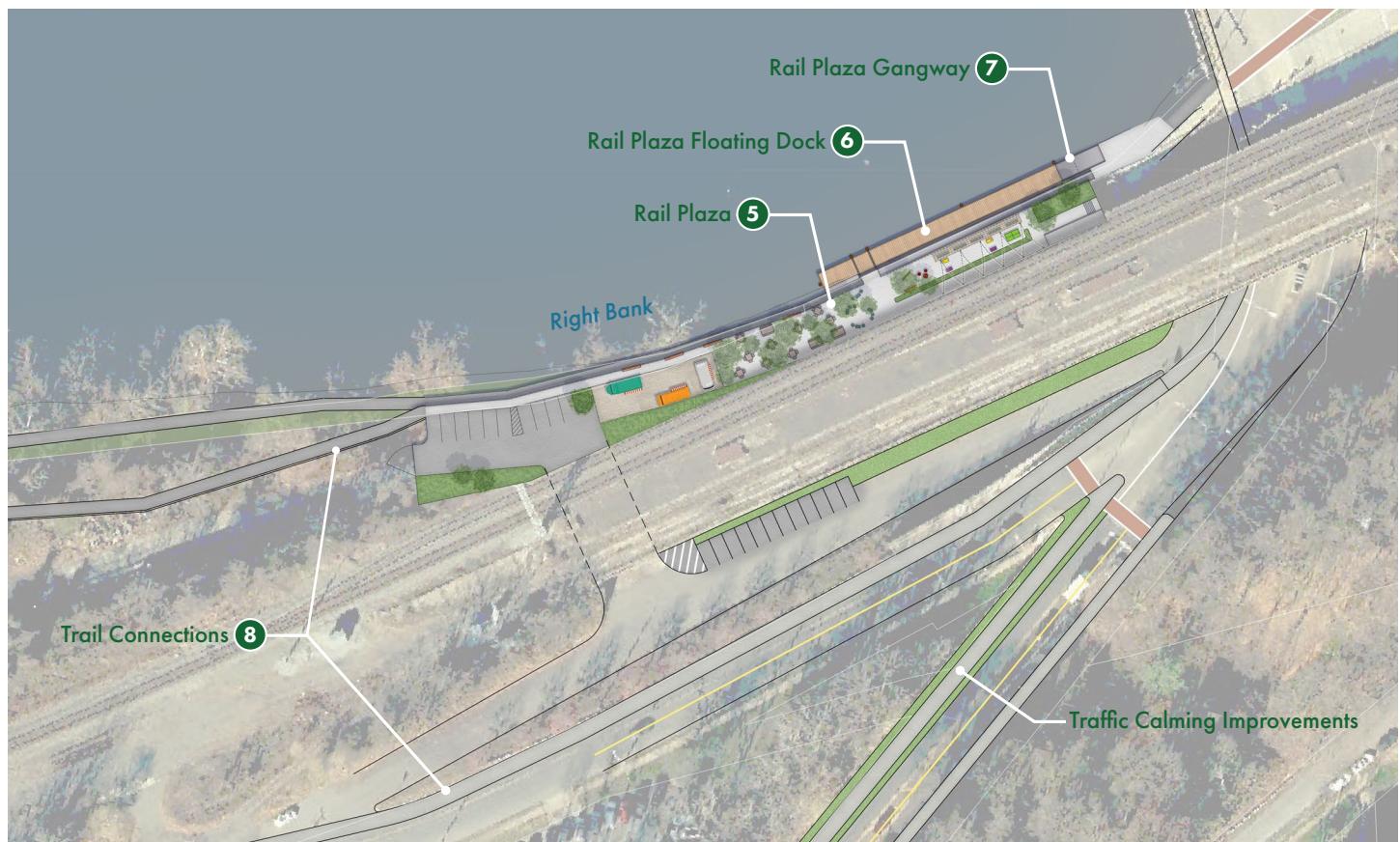
Lehigh Drive Roadway Narrowing for Enhanced Trailway

In response to the observed high-speed traffic of Lehigh Drive, the master plan shows roadway narrowing and trailway enhancements. Pedestrian and cyclist safety is a high priority, especially with the proposed park space along Lehigh Drive and additional trail connections creating higher volumes of non-motorized circulation. Narrowing the oversized lanes of Lehigh Drive to a standard width would encourage drivers to reduce speed and allow for a vegetated barrier between the trail and roadway. Lighting and street trees would further enhance the trail experience.



Rail Plaza

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Train Station is a historic landmark that could be enhanced with the addition of a rail plaza. The riverside of the station could be transformed into an inviting public space featuring amenities such as food trucks, yard games, fire pits, and outdoor dining—creating a lively, beer garden-style atmosphere. Accessible from the corner of 3rd Street and Smith Avenue, this plaza could also function as a link to the D&L Trail. The pedestrian route below the Norfolk Southern overpass on Smith Avenue should be improved for pedestrian safety, visibility, and aesthetics, such as introducing lighting, repainting, and debris cleanup. A boardwalk ramp would connect the street level plaza to the river level trail below, bridging a 15-foot grade change. To further enhance trail functionality, a floating dock is proposed to widen the existing trail, which is currently too narrow to comfortably support multiple activities at once. This expansion would allow for a variety of uses—such as fishing, dog walking, and running—to occur simultaneously without conflict. Taking the opportunity to highlight and honor the rail station by creating a vibrant public space aligns with the planning aspiration to honor the history and culture of Easton.



Mid Lehigh

Gravity Park

A gravity park is proposed within the existing GEDP lot, featuring a bouldering area, pump track, and bike/skate park. These active recreation elements complement each other well from a user experience perspective and would offer unique recreational opportunities not currently available elsewhere in the city. The Lehigh Drive trail would continue along the waterfront, connecting the gravity park with other nearby park spaces. Additionally, an existing hillside access route presents an opportunity to create a trail connection from the Lehigh Drive Trail to the planned Two Rivers Multi-use Trail. To enhance pedestrian safety and encourage low vehicle speeds, a raised crosswalk is proposed at this trail intersection.



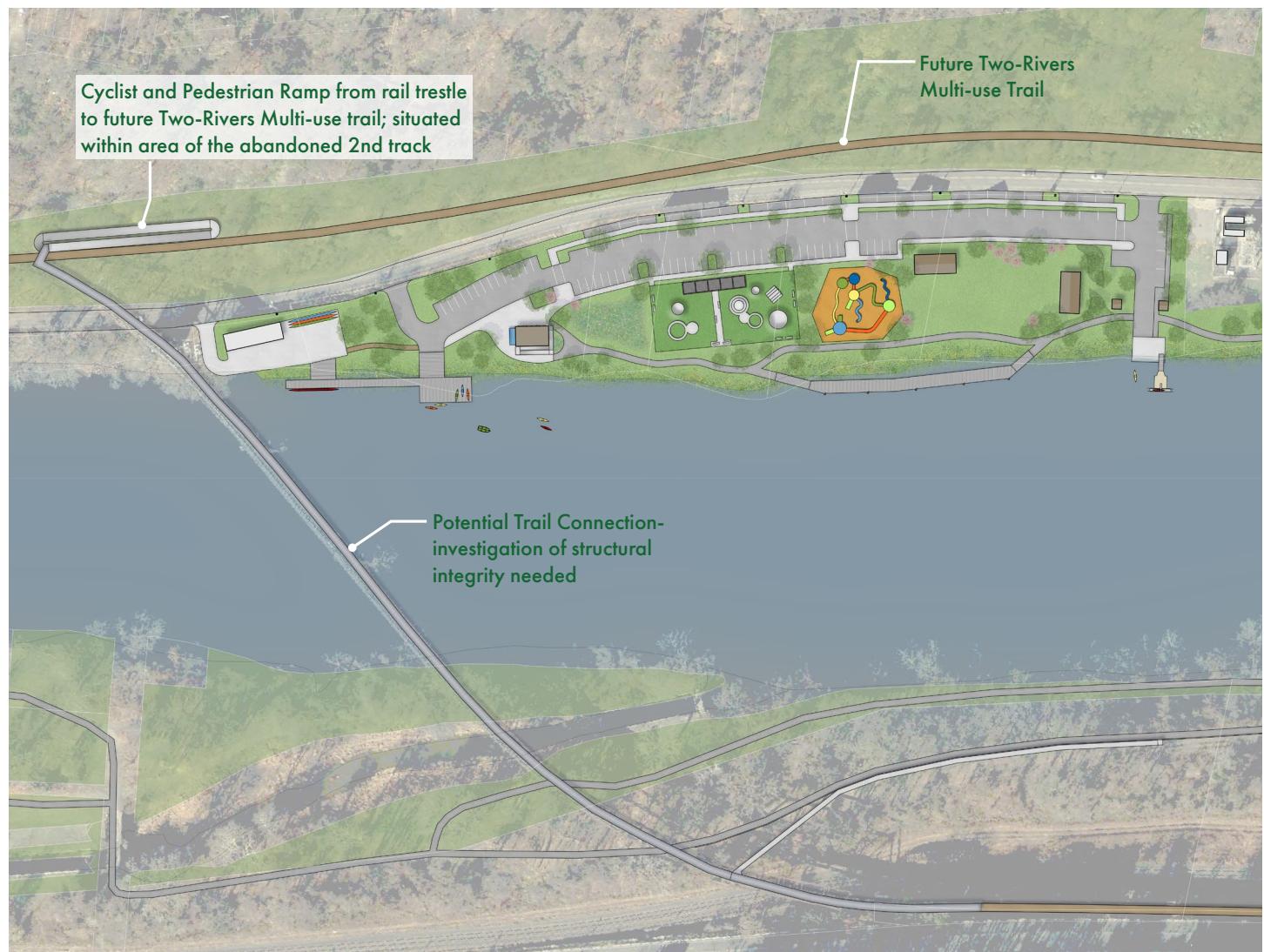
West Lehigh

Northern Lehigh Community Park

The Lehigh riverfront has been reimagined as the Northern Lehigh River Community Park. To serve the residents of Easton in a more meaningful way, the best use of these riverfront properties is for public enjoyment, recreation, and greenspace. City acquisition of these parcels is recommended. The following enlargements will explore the programming within this park space.

Potential Rail Trail Connection

Potential trail connections have been conceptualized in this plan. Renovating or repurposing the inactive tracks on the Easton & Northern Railroad Bridge would create a vital link between the D&L Trail on the south bank of the river and the future Two Rivers Multi-use Trail on the north side. A cyclist and pedestrian ramp would connect the elevated rail trestle to the proposed Two-Rivers Multi-use Trail. This connection would not only provide cross-river access and unify two regional trail systems, but also give Southside residents direct access to the planned greenspace along Lehigh Drive. Additionally, it would enable the creation of smaller, closed-loop trail systems—using the Park Above cross-river connection—to establish a pedestrian-friendly loop around the Lehigh River waterfront.



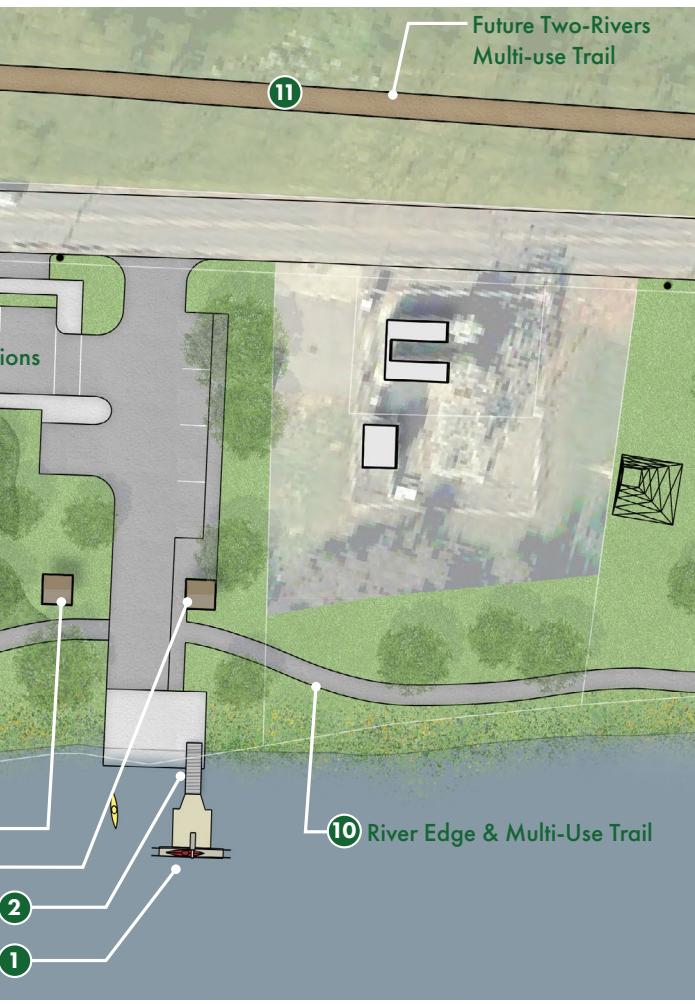
Water Access – ADA

The east end of the Northern Lehigh River Community Park design features a water access area for non-motorized boats, making use of the existing boat launch. The plan includes a fisherman's pavilion, a paddlers' pavilion, and expanded parking spaces to accommodate larger vehicles and boat trailers. Improvements to the access point would include a gently sloping concrete launch and a floating dock with an ADA-accessible kayak and canoe launch.



Picnic Area and Community Green

Moving west, the plan includes a community lawn and picnic pavilions. This area would offer flexible space for gatherings such as community events, parties, and casual get-togethers. The pavilions could serve as a revenue source for the city and would include amenities like grills, picnic tables, and warming kitchens. The lawn would support a variety of programming, including yoga, frisbee, yard games, and stargazing.



Floating Fishing Dock

To better utilize the riverfront, a 250-foot-long floating dock is proposed along the park's shoreline. Connected to the multi-use trail at both ends via gangways, the dock would provide visitors with direct access to the water. While primarily intended for fishing, it would also serve as a scenic spot for relaxation and enjoying the natural surroundings.

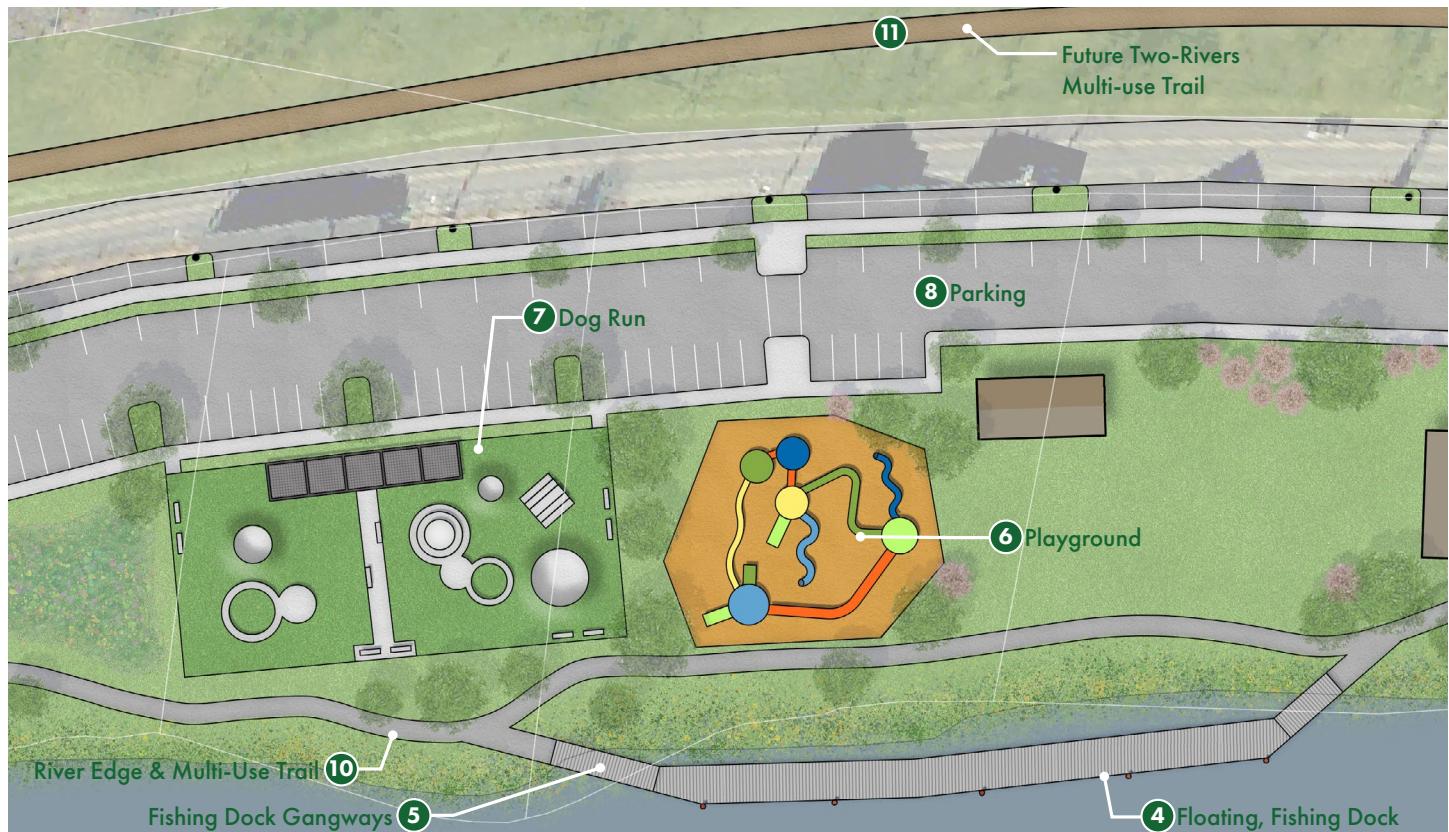


Playground

A destination playground is proposed at the center of the park, designed with a whimsical, river-themed concept that reflects the city's strong connection to the water. Serving as a vibrant centerpiece of the community park, the playground would offer a fun and engaging recreational space for children and families.

Dog Run

A proposed dog run, featuring shade structures, benches, and enrichment elements, would offer a dedicated space for off-leash play. With dog ownership on the rise, this amenity would be a valuable addition to the community park and a resource for downtown dog owners.

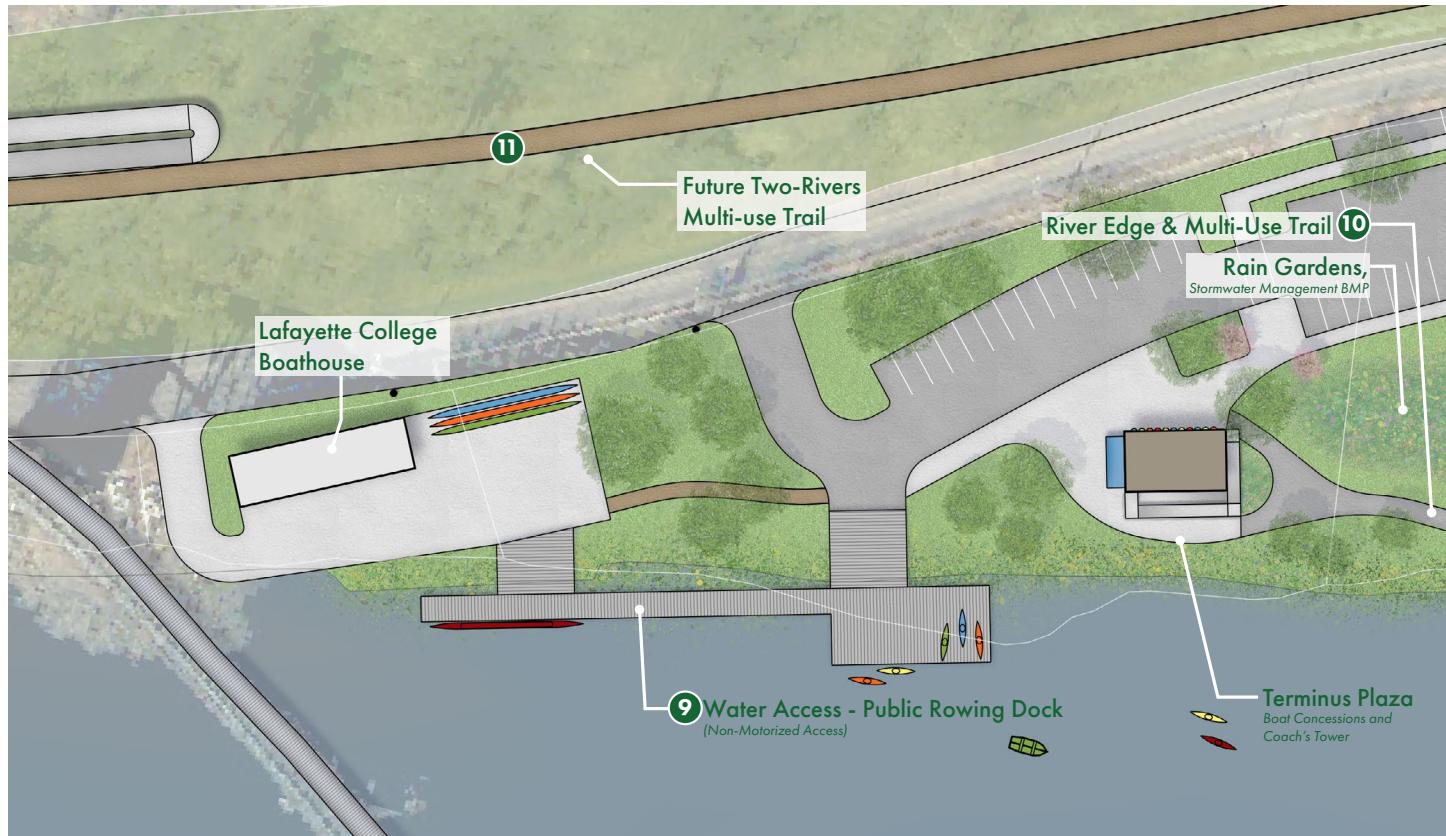


Terminus Plaza

Towards the west end of Northern Lehigh Community Park, the proposed multi-use trail ends in a loop at Terminus Plaza—a trailhead for both pedestrians, cyclists, and water access users. The concept plan include a boat concession and coach's tower housed in a retrofitted shipping container, creating a distinctive, eye-catching space visible from Lehigh Drive. With kayaks on display and amenities like refreshments, gear, and repair supplies, this plaza would complement the nearby floating dock and boathouse while helping define the park's identity..

Water Access - Public Rowing Dock

The west end of the park features a large public rowing dock that serves a dual purpose: providing water access for both the Lafayette College Boathouse and a new public launch. Similar to the ADA-accessible launch on the park's east end, this dock supports non-motorized water activities such as kayaking, canoeing, and rowing. The floating dock is easily accessible from the parking area, community park, and the boathouse. This type of water-focused infrastructure promotes active recreation, reflects Easton's river-oriented culture, and highlights the natural asset of the Lehigh River.



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SECTION:

**DEVELOPMENT/
IMPLEMENTATION**

OPINION OF PROBABLE DEVELOPMENT COSTS

These probable development cost calculations were derived from several sources, primarily referencing real world construction costs reflected in competitively bid construction projects. Most unit costs were acquired from recent competitive bids, received within the last year. Some costs, involving more specialized items not commonly used in projects, were obtained from competitive bids received prior to last year. In these instances, unit costs were adjusted to reflect inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) values relative to 2025 costs.

Costs related to land acquisition, the new residential developments, the potential trail connection on the Easton & Northern railroad bridge, and the proposed improvements per the Active Transportation Plan were not included in these OPDC calculations. The Active Transportation Plan recommendations will be integrated in the future as a component of better and safer recreation use. These improvements were incorporated in the concept plan graphics to visualize coupling of these two planning efforts.

The potential trail connection utilizing the Easton & Northern Railroad bridge, as detailed in the West Lehigh subsection of Section 5, was included in the conceptual plans to identify the opportunity to create a second point of cross river access and further improve trail connectivity. However, more detailed investigation is needed to determine if this use is suitable for the trestle. Information gained from detailed surveying, engineering, permitting requirements, etc. would greatly affect the cost associated with this trail connection.

The following two tables display the Opinion of Probable Development Cost of the Easton Waterfront Concept Plans. Table A shows the elements that are readily achievable, not related to the region/multi-municipal trail connectivity projects, such as community level assets like riverfront parks. Table B isolates the estimated costs of these region/multi-municipal trail connectivity projects from the other concept plan elements.

Table A: Development Costs for Non-Regional/Multi-Municipal Trail Connectivity Projects

| Riverside Park | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------|--------|-----------|--|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost | |
| 1 | Riverside Plaza | 11,696 | \$12 | \$140,352 | |
| 2 | Raised Crosswalks | 3,640 | \$35 | \$127,400 | |
| 3 | Pocket Plaza | 1,233 | \$12 | \$14,796 | |
| | Subtotal | | | \$282,548 | |

| The Confluence | | | | | |
|----------------|--|--------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| # | Item | SF | \$/SF | Cost | |
| 1 | Scott Park Improvements | 37,717 | \$48 | \$1,810,416 | |
| 2 | Illuminated Waterfall | N/A | N/A | \$100,000 | |
| 3 | Boulder Steps | 22,512 | \$8 | \$180,096 | |
| 4 | Raised Crosswalk | 1,100 | \$35 | \$38,500 | |
| 5 | Vista Ridge Trailway | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| 6 | Vista Ridge Flyover (Refabricated Ped. Bridge) | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| 7 | Vista Ridge Access Ramp | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| | Subtotal | | | \$2,129,012 | |

| East Lehigh | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost | |
| 1 | The Park Above | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| 2 | Linkway Park | 6,771 | \$44 | \$296,367 | |
| 3 | Mixed Recreational Use Area | 37,500 | \$11 | \$400,000 | |
| 4 | Enhanced Trail/Roadway Narrowing | 42,393 | \$22 | \$928,178 | |
| 5 | Rail Plaza | 18,200 | \$32 | \$582,400 | |
| 6 | Rail Plaza Floating Dock | 1,920 | \$45 | \$86,400 | |
| 7 | Rail Plaza Gangways | 1,290 | \$115 | \$148,350 | |
| 8 | Trail Connections | 19,354 | \$12 | \$232,248 | |
| | Subtotal | | | \$2,673,942 | |

| Mid Lehigh | | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost | |
| 1 | Gravity Park | 47,012 | \$47 | \$2,209,564 | |
| 2 | Raised Crosswalk | 757 | \$35 | \$26,495 | |
| 3 | River Edge & Multi-Use Trail | 72,106 | \$16 | \$1,153,696 | |
| 4 | New Trail Connections | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| | Subtotal | | | \$3,389,755 | |

| West Lehigh | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost | |
| 1 | Water Access - ADA Dock | 1,445 | \$24 | \$34,680 | |
| 2 | Water Access - ADA Gangway | 125 | \$115 | \$14,375 | |
| 3 | Picnic Area and Community Green | 43,172 | \$35 | \$1,511,020 | |
| 4 | Floating Fishing Dock | 3,627 | \$45 | \$163,215 | |
| 5 | Fishing Dock Gangways | 687 | \$115 | \$79,005 | |
| 6 | Playground | 8,000 | \$74 | \$594,000 | |
| 7 | Dog Run | 14,100 | \$18 | \$250,980 | |
| 8 | Parking | 72,841 | \$10 | \$728,410 | |
| 9 | Water Access - Public Rowing Dock | 5,325 | \$45 | \$239,625 | |
| 10 | River Edge & Multi-Use Trail | 33,518 | \$16 | \$536,288 | |
| 11 | New Trail Connections | | (Refer to Table B) | | |
| | Subtotal | | | \$4,151,598 | |

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Grand Total | \$12,626,855 |
| COSTS | |

Table B: Development Costs for Regional/Multi-Municipal Trail Connectivity Projects

| The Confluence | | | | |
|----------------|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| # | Item | SF | \$/SF | Cost |
| 5 | Vista Ridge Trailway | 3,755 | \$182 | \$683,410 |
| 6 | Vista Ridge Flyover (Refabricated Ped. Bridge) | 645 | \$315 | \$203,175 |
| 7 | Vista Ridge Access Ramp | 3,025 | \$242 | \$732,050 |
| | Subtotal | | | \$1,618,635 |

| East Lehigh | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost |
| 1 | The Park Above | 40,896 | \$225 | \$9,201,600 |
| | Subtotal | | | \$9,201,600 |

| Mid Lehigh | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost |
| 4 | New Trail Connections | 49,006 | \$12 | \$588,072 |
| | Subtotal | | | \$588,072 |

| West Lehigh | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
| # | Item | SF | \$/ SF | Cost |
| 11 | New Trail Connections | 28,477 | \$12 | \$341,724 |
| | Subtotal | | | \$341,724 |

Grand Total \$11,750,031

A grayscale aerial photograph of a bridge spanning a river. The bridge features a mix of steel truss and concrete arch sections. In the background, a city with numerous buildings is visible across the water. The foreground shows the riverbank with trees and some industrial structures.

APPENDIX

Legend

- City of Easton Boundary
- Trails (including existing, active transportation plan, and highline project)
- Proposed Trail Connections
- Rivers
- Floodway
- 100 year Floodplain
- Parks and Greenspace
- Parking
- Existing Park Amenities

Relocate Bus Parking

Riverside Plaza and Gardens
(public gathering space, outdoor dining, event space, native gardens, scenic serene seating)

Scott Park Improvements
(public gathering space, non-motorized water access, outfitter access, beach, water trailhead)

Boulder Steps
(Eliminate/abandon the water access, riparian restoration, fishing)

Vista Ridge Trailway
(Elevated mountain trail connecting Trestle Terrace to Delaware Canal Park; bike/ped. bridge and ramp)



1 Riverside Plaza



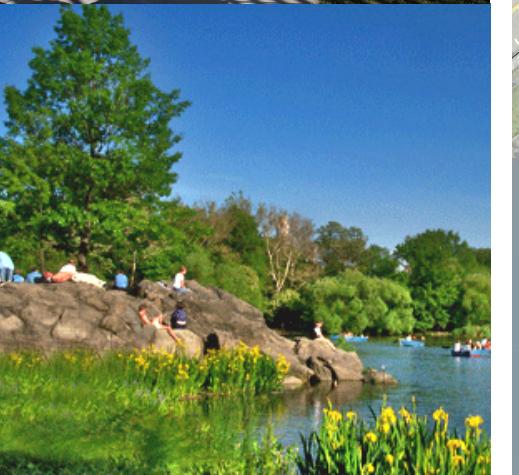
Swings



① Scott Park Improvements



③ Boulder Steps



⑤ Vista Ridge Trailway



1 The Park Above



2 Linkway Park



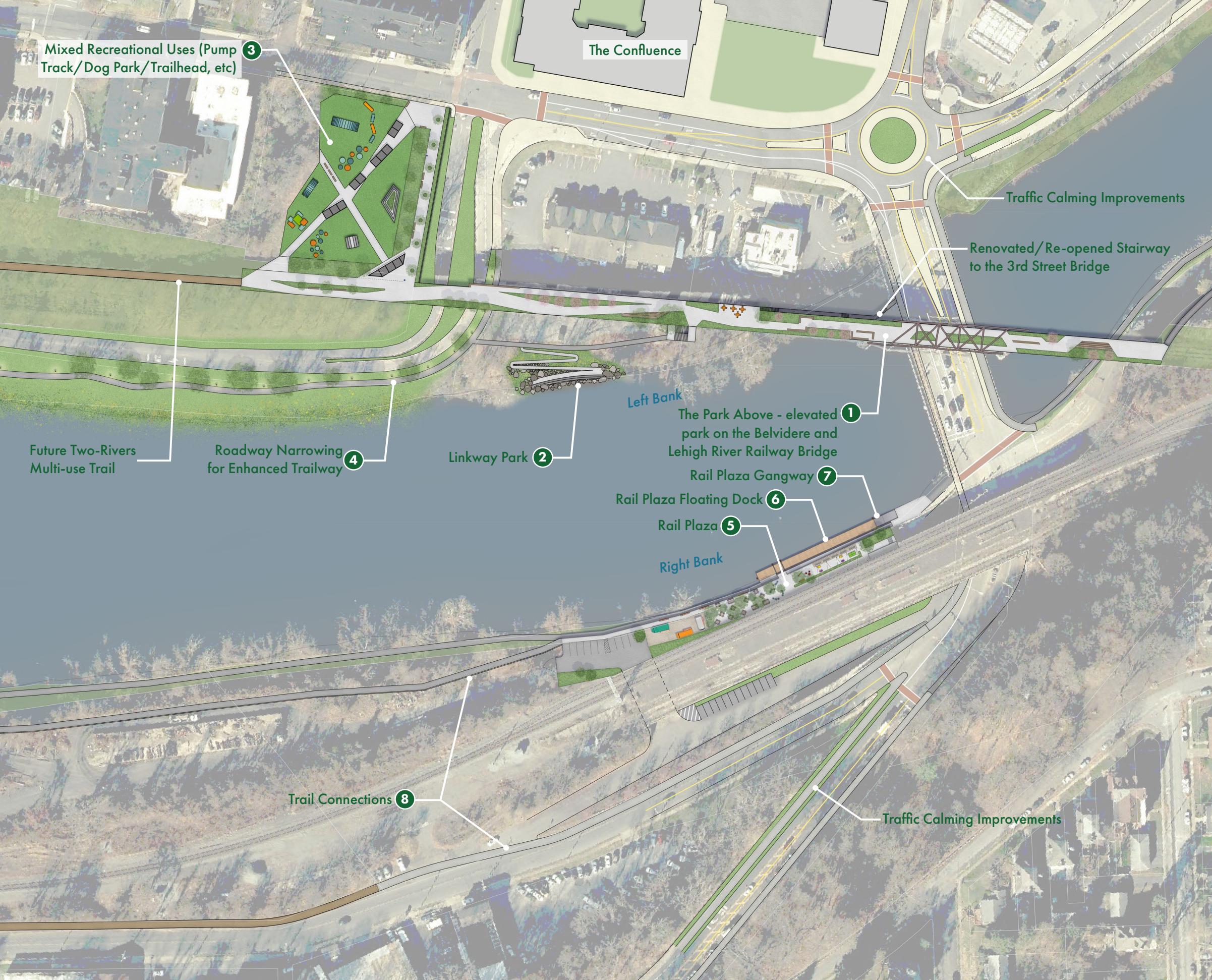
3 Mixed Recreational Uses



4 Roadway Narrowing for Enhanced Trailway



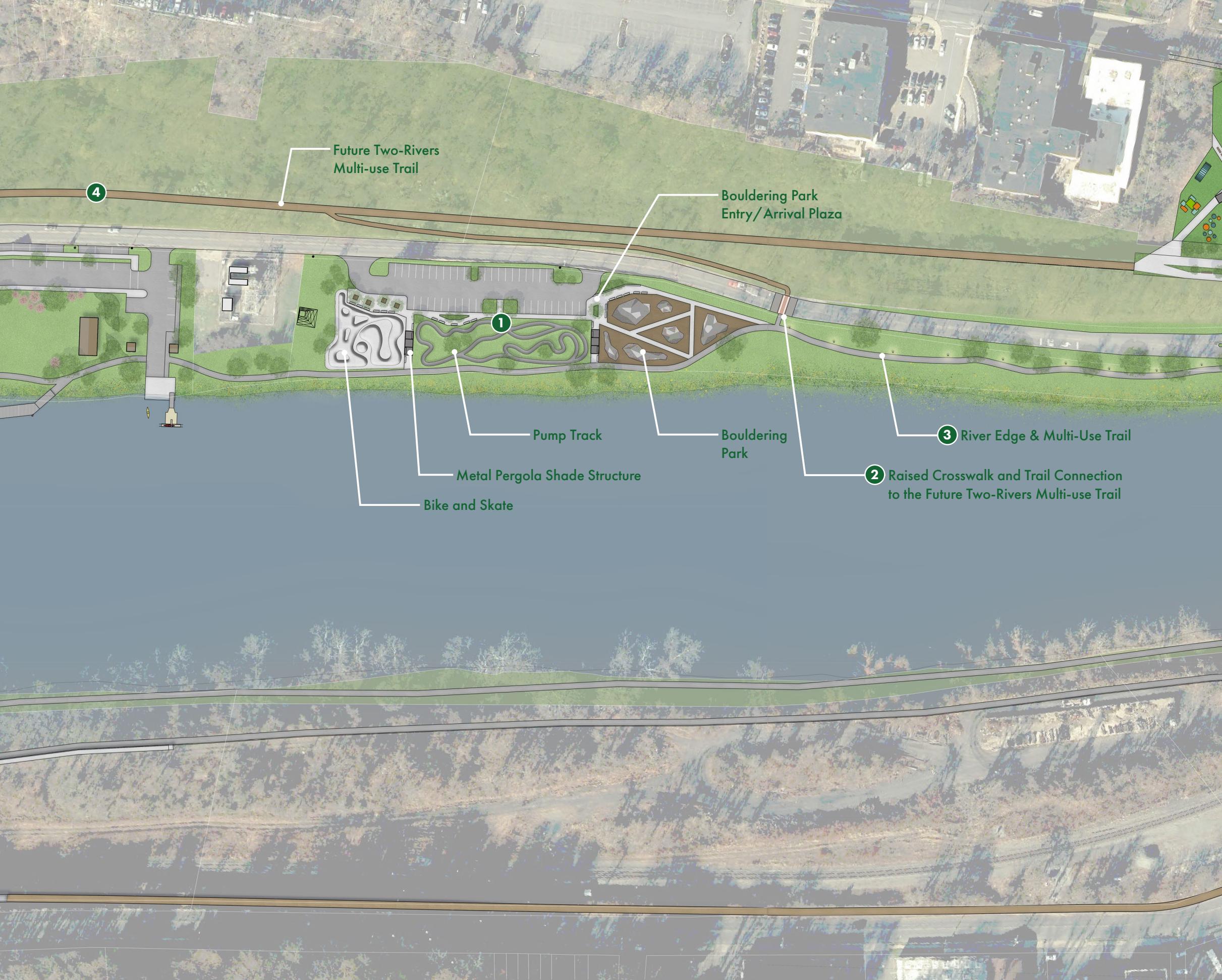
5 Rail Plaza



① Gravity Park



Metal Pergola Shade Structure



1 ADA Boat Dock



3 Picnic Area and Community Lawn



4 Floating, Fishing Dock



6 Playground



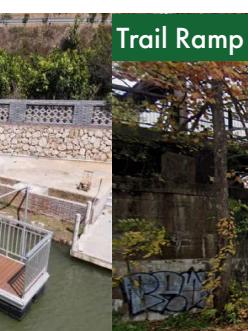
Cyclist and Pedestrian Ramp from rail trestle to future Two-Rivers Multi-use trail; situated within area of the abandoned 2nd track



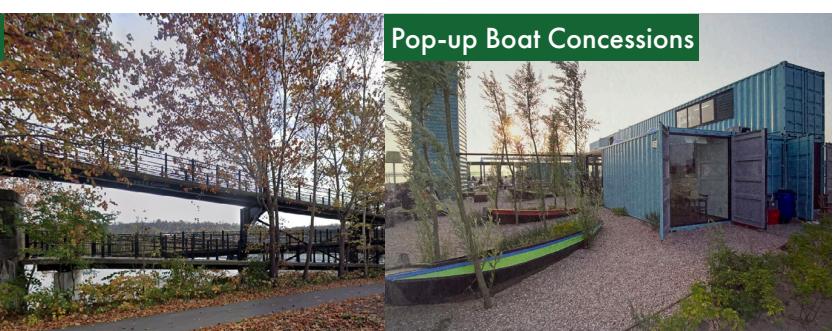
7 Dog Run



9 Public Rowing Dock



Trail Ramp



Pop-up Boat Concessions



CONCEPT PLAN - WEST LEHIGH

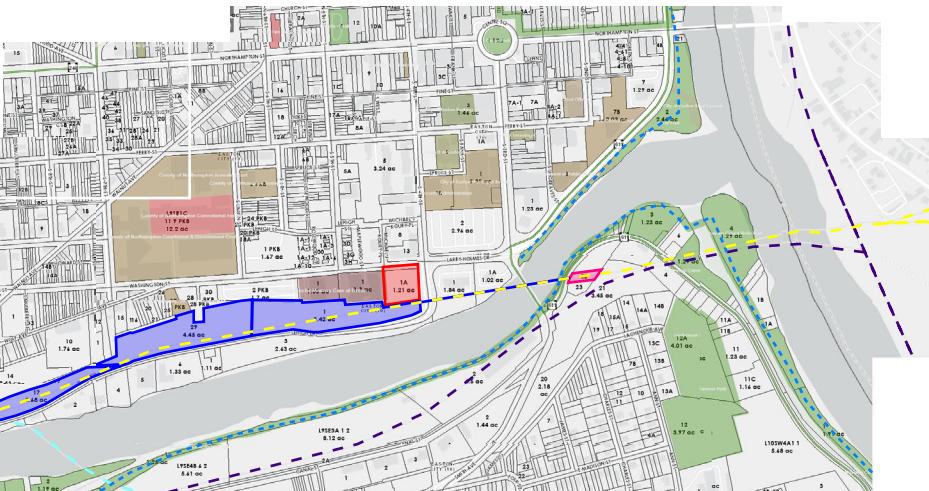
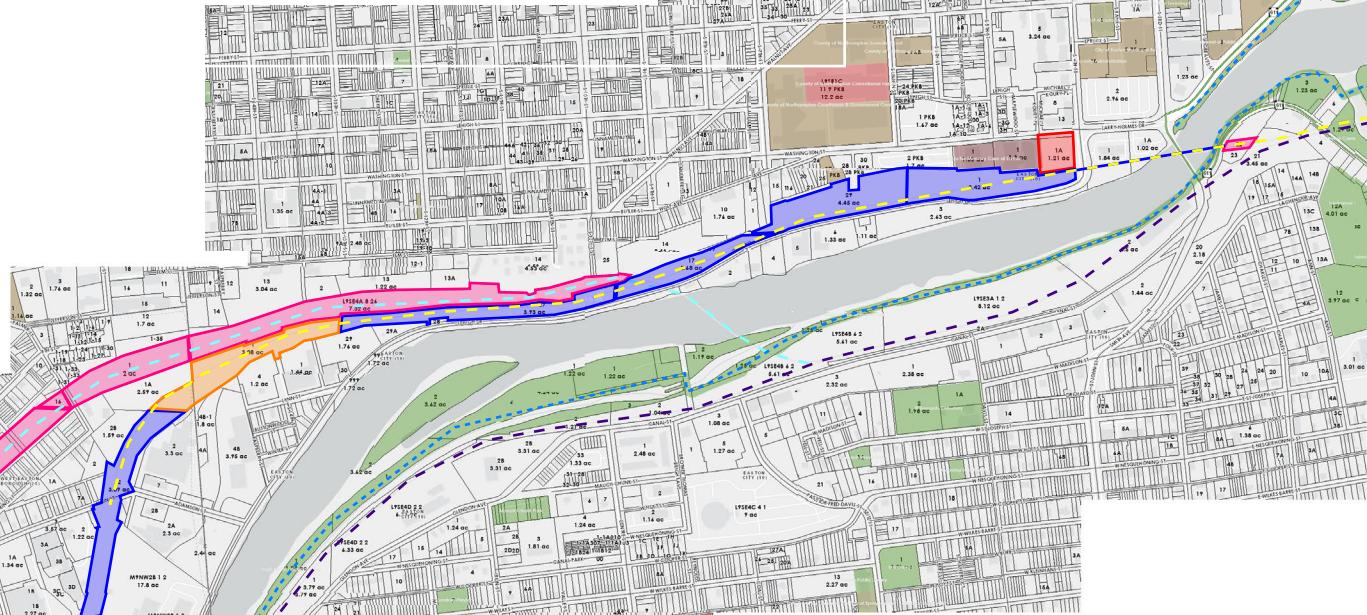
CITY OF EASTON
May 2025



Easton Highline Park

Map of Tax Parcels and Potential Connections
2025 DCNR C2P2

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Legend 2000 Feet

- Properties to Acquire
- Properties Owned by Municipalities
- GEDP-Owned Property
- Possible Future Project Phase
- Park
- Inactive Rail Line
- Other Inactive Rail Line
- Active Rail Line
- Current Trail



EASTON
PENNSYLVANIA®

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