
OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

BOROUGH OF NEWTOWN, BUCKS COUNTY, PA



Adopted
September 13, 2022

NEWTOWN BOROUGH OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Borough of Newtown, Pennsylvania is a 0.6 square mile municipality in south central Bucks County, PA. First surveyed in 1684 and incorporated as a borough in 1838, Newtown Borough has a proud, rich history dating back to before the American Revolutionary War.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Newtown Borough formally recognized the need to preserve its natural history by establishing its first Open Space Plan, which served as a valuable tool in the decision making, implementation, and management of natural resources in the Borough.

Although Newtown Borough is relatively built out, a number of areas and specific parcels are candidates for additional public open space. The 2022 edition of the Newtown Borough Open Space and Connectivity Plan identifies these candidates and is organized in three parts, with accompanying appendices.

- **Part One** describes the background and existing conditions of open space in the Borough, including an overview of its demographic characteristics, a survey of existing open space assets, and a recreational needs analysis;
- **Part Two** identifies candidate areas and specific properties that could be considered for additional public open space including opportunities for enhanced connectivity of the Borough's open spaces with the surrounding areas. The properties are grouped by geographic sections, from north (*Newtown Creek North*) to south (*Newtown Creek South*) to the eastern portion (*Newtown Rail Trail, Borough Park Improvements, Connectivity Enhancements*); and
- **Part Three** outlines approaches and options for expanding and enhancing the Borough's open space including an overview of different acquisition strategies, a summary of the prioritized open space recommendations, and a list of potential funding sources. The recommended candidate properties are identified as being of the highest priority for the short-term and; thus, should be actively pursued for funding and/or partnership opportunities, are as follows:
 - *Newtown Creek North*- Riparian Buffer Plantings along Newtown Creek; Pedestrian Connection from Newtown Common to Steeple View.
 - *Newtown Creek South*- Recommendations for Steeple View; Acquire parcels and develop a detailed plan for a Nature Preserve on Delta School parcels.
 - *Newtown Rail Trail (NRT)*- CVS parcel and its connection to NRT; Recommendations for design and completion of NRT.
 - *Borough Park Improvements*- Newtown Rail Station Site; Pickering Field Playground needs assessment; Patriots Park wayfinding.
 - *Connectivity Enhancements*- North Lincoln Ave/North Elm Ave Connector; Frost Lane Sidewalk; Newtown Cemetery Sidewalk.

The intention behind this document is to build upon the proud history of our community and enhance the uniquely rich historical and aesthetic context of our community for future generations to come.

BACKGROUND

In 2001, Newtown Borough released its first Open Space Plan which served as a valuable tool in the decision making, implementation, and management of natural resources in the Borough. Using the information contained in the 2001 plan, and its subsequent update in 2011, the Borough was able to:

- Purchase the unused property adjacent to the Chancellor Street School from the Council Rock School District. This one acre parcel is now the Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park and contains a children's playground and open field areas.
- Purchase an open space at the corner of Mercer Street and Court Street as a small historical interpretive garden park. This 0.15 acre parcel is now Patriots Park and has a large Oak tree, a garage/shed and 2 paved parking spaces.

In the 20 years that have passed since the adoption of the initial Newtown Borough Open Space Plan, the need for protecting urban green space and identifying opportunities to acquire open space has only been heightened by ongoing development in areas that were previously thought to be unavailable for further development. With this document, we want to ensure open space is a priority for our Borough and establish a commitment that all future development is balanced with open space consideration.

PURPOSE

In recognition of the development that Newtown Borough has experienced in recent history, the purpose of the 2022 edition of the Newtown Borough Open Space and Connectivity Plan is to identify and preserve the important, but scarce, open spaces and multi-modal connections that advance public health and recreation, protect natural resources, and enhance the uniquely rich historical and aesthetic context of the community.

This document is organized in three parts, with accompanying Appendices. Part One describes the background and existing conditions of open space in the Borough; Part Two identifies candidate areas and specific properties that could be considered; and Part Three outlines approaches and options for expanding and enhancing the Borough's open space.

PART ONE – ANALYSIS OF BASE CONDITIONS AND POLICY

LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Newtown Borough is a 0.6 square mile municipality in south central Bucks County, PA, approximately 30 miles northeast of Center City Philadelphia. It is an almost entirely built out community.

Newtown’s history goes back to before the American Revolutionary War, was first surveyed in 1684, and incorporated as a borough in 1838. The town has served as a military outpost for the Continental Army, as the Bucks County Seat, and as an important regional agricultural center. Due to its long history, Newtown is home to many fine examples of historical architectural styles, including eighteenth century early Colonial, early nineteenth century Classic Revival, late nineteenth century Queen Anne, and early twentieth century Colonial Revival. The Borough became nationally recognized with the listing of the Newtown Historic District in 1979.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The U.S. Census reports that the Borough’s 2020 population was 2,268 persons. The Borough *Comprehensive Plan Update* cites¹ population forecast data from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) predicting robust population growth in the Borough between 2020 and 2040, including an estimate of 2,543 persons residing in Newtown by 2045. The Comprehensive Plan also cites Borough household characteristics that indicate an aging Borough population with smaller families. Although Newtown’s residents are getting older, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that children aged 19 or younger still comprised nearly 20% of the population in 2018. The Borough should ensure that its recreational facilities and programs adequately serve all of its residents in order to maintain public health and a high quality of life. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for tables with supporting demographic data.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ASSETS WITHIN NEWTOWN BOROUGH

Currently, Newtown Borough has five public parks/open spaces:

- **Pickering Field** at Lincoln Avenue and Jefferson Street is 3.14 acres and includes a baseball field and un-programmed lawn area.
- **Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park** on Congress Street just south of Jefferson Street is 0.69 acres and includes a children’s playground and open field areas.
- **Linton Memorial Park** is a 0.5 acre park with play equipment and is located on the northwestern corner of Lincoln Avenue and Penn Street.
- **Newtown Common** is a 0.18 acre passive park with native plantings, benches, interpretive signage, and a stone marker, located along Newtown Creek, at the west end of Greene Street.
- **Patriots Park** is a 0.15 acre lawn open space with a large Oak tree, a garage/shed and 2 paved parking spaces. The Borough is developing the space into a historical interpretive garden/park.

In addition to publicly owned open space, there are community association and institutional lands that are protected from future development. These include:

- **Brynwood HOA** – Common open space of 0.61 acres, located on the north side of Brynwood Lane (southeast of Pickering Field).

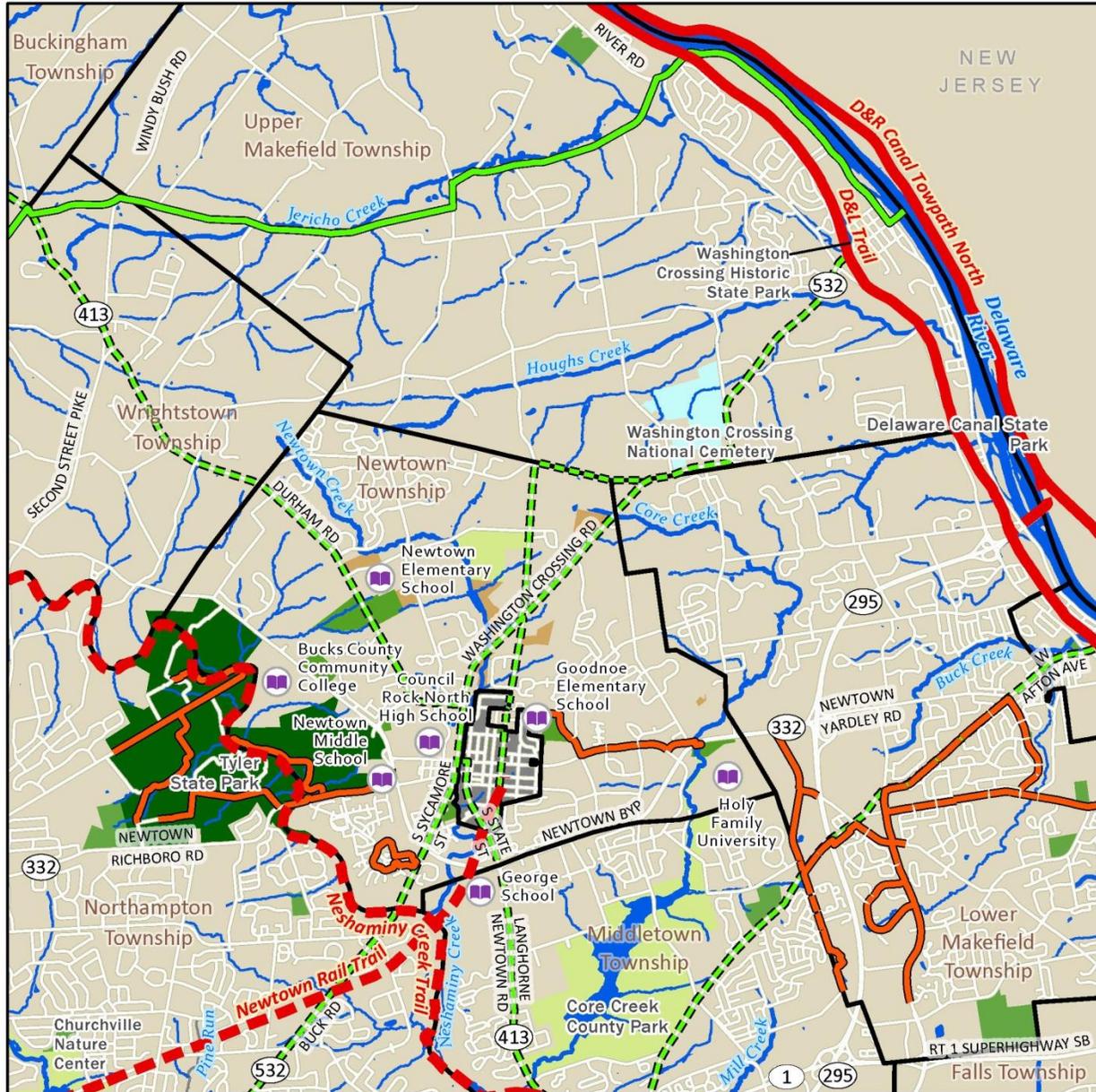
¹ Bucks County Planning Commission, *Newtown Borough Comprehensive Plan Update 2022*, “Population and Demographic Characteristics”.

- **Barclay Court Townhome Association** – Common open space of 0.883 acres located along the properties on the north side of Barclay Street.
- **Newtown Park Condo Association** – Common open space of 3.03 acres located near the Borough’s southern border with Newtown Township, on the south side of Barclay Street.
- **Newtown Station** – Includes 6 open space areas throughout the development totaling 1.25 acres, east of Lincoln Avenue between Washington Avenue and Penn Street.
- **Steeple View** is a partially constructed mixed use development off of State Street south of Centre Avenue. Upon completion, the development will include an open space/greenway corridor of 2.5-3 acres along Newtown Creek, including a publicly accessible piazza and multi-use trail.
- **Episcopal Church and Cemetery** at Washington Avenue and Liberty Street is 0.49 acres.
- **Newtown Cemetery** on South Elm Avenue between Washington Avenue and Penn Street is 22.5 acres, approximately 3.5 acres of which are in the Borough.
- **Newtown Friends Meeting and Cemetery** occupies 2.9 acres at the southernmost end of Court Street.
- **Boone Garden** occupies 0.05 acres at the corner of East Centre Ave and Court Street, owned by Newtown Historic Association.

Tables showing the acreage for the existing open spaces and community/institutional lands are listed in [Appendix B](#).

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ASSETS

Newtown is in close proximity to a number of regional open space assets and lies at the confluence of several proposed regional multi-use trails. The map on the following page provides an overview of regional open space assets relative to Newtown Borough. A complete listing of regional open space assets is located in [Appendix B](#).



Regional Context

Open Space Plan 2022

Newtown Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania



0 7,500
Feet

Prepared by
Tackett Planning, Inc. and
Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC

Data credits: Borough of Newtown, Bucks County Planning Commission, DVRPC, FEMA, PAMAP, SEPTA, USFS National Wetlands Inventory.

Legend

| | |
|---|--|
|  Municipal Boundary |  Federal Open Space |
|  Newtown Borough |  State Park |
| County Trails | |
|  Existing Bike Route |  County Park |
|  Existing Shared-Use Trail |  Municipal Park |
|  Proposed Bike Route |  Municipal Open Space |
| Circuit Trails | |
|  Existing |  Institution |
|  Proposed | |

RECREATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Adequate recreational facilities are necessary to maintain public health and quality of life for a community's residents. The Borough should provide sufficient land area devoted to parks and other open space. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) maintains the following population density-based open space standards for municipalities:

TABLE 1: DVRPC RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE STANDARDS FOR LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES (SOURCE: DVRPC RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE DELAWARE VALLEY, MAY 2002)

| Recreational Open Space Standards for Local Municipalities | |
|--|--|
| Population Density (Persons per square mile) | Recommended Acres of recreational open space per 1,000 persons |
| 0 - 499 persons | 6.0 |
| 500 - 4,999 persons | 8.0 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 persons | 6.17 |
| > 10,000 persons | 3.08 |

With a population of 2,268 persons and an area of 0.6 square miles, Newtown Borough's population density is 3,780 persons per square mile. Thus, per the DVRPC's density-based acreage standards, the Borough should provide 8.0 acres of recreational open space per thousand residents. This ratio is applied to the Borough's 2020 Census population and to population projections through 2045 to calculate Newtown's current and future open space acreage needs:

TABLE 2: NEWTOWN BOROUGH RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS, 2020-2045

| Population-based Assessment of Open Space Needs 2020-2045 - Newtown Borough | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|--|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Year | Borough Area (Square Miles) | Population | Population Density (Persons per square mile) | Recommended Parkland Standard (Acres per 1,000 persons)** | Acreage of parkland needed | Acreage of Existing Parkland | Surplus or Deficit |
| 2020 Census | 0.6 | 2,268 | 3,780.0 | 8.0 | 18.1 | 4.7 | -13.4 |
| 2025 Forecast* | 0.6 | 2,345 | 3,908.3 | 8.0 | 18.8 | 4.7 | -14.1 |
| 2030 Forecast* | 0.6 | 2,407 | 4,011.7 | 8.0 | 19.3 | 4.7 | -14.6 |
| 2035 Forecast* | 0.6 | 2,461 | 4,101.7 | 8.0 | 19.7 | 4.7 | -15.0 |
| 2040 Forecast* | 0.6 | 2,505 | 4,175.0 | 8.0 | 20.0 | 4.7 | -15.3 |
| 2045 Forecast* | 0.6 | 2,543 | 4,238.3 | 8.0 | 20.3 | 4.7 | -15.6 |

*DVRPC population projections from Newtown Borough Comprehensive Plan Update (2022)
 **DVRPC Recreational Open Space Needs Analysis for the Delaware Valley, May 2002

Based on DVRPC standards, current Borough park acreage is insufficient to address community needs. Although Newtown is almost completely built out, there are opportunities within the Borough to provide new recreational facilities. Further, nearby parks outside of the Borough could address part of Newtown's recreational need. Additional pedestrian and bicycle connections should be provided to improve access to these nearby facilities. In addition to the overall open space area requirement, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)² further

² NRPA, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, by James D. Mertes, PhD, CLP and James R. Hall, CLP, 1996

establishes the need for different types of parks, which are classified by size and service area. The following classifications apply to existing park facilities in and around the Borough:

- **Mini Parks** are between 2,500 square feet and one acre in size. They address the recreational needs of residents within a 1/4-mile service radius. Newtown Common, Linton Memorial Park, Brian Gregg Memorial Park, and Patriots Park are examples of Mini Parks within the Borough.
- **Neighborhood Parks** provide informal active and passive recreation opportunities for residents within 1/2-mile of the facility. The NRPA considers 5 to 10 acres to be the optimal size range for Neighborhood Parks. Carl Sedia Park and Roberts Ridge Park in Newtown Township could be considered Neighborhood Parks.
- **Special Use Parks** do not have defined size or service area criteria. This classification covers a broad range of facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use. Pickering Field in Newtown Borough and Chandler Field in Newtown Township are examples of Special Use Parks.

The Public Accessibility to Parks map on the following page shows areas of Newtown that are served by parks, and indicates that residents in the northern and southern Borough corners do not have convenient access to open space. Although Carl Sedia Park is adjacent to the Borough, Newtown Creek and a lack of sidewalks on Barclay Street restrict convenient and safe pedestrian access to the park.

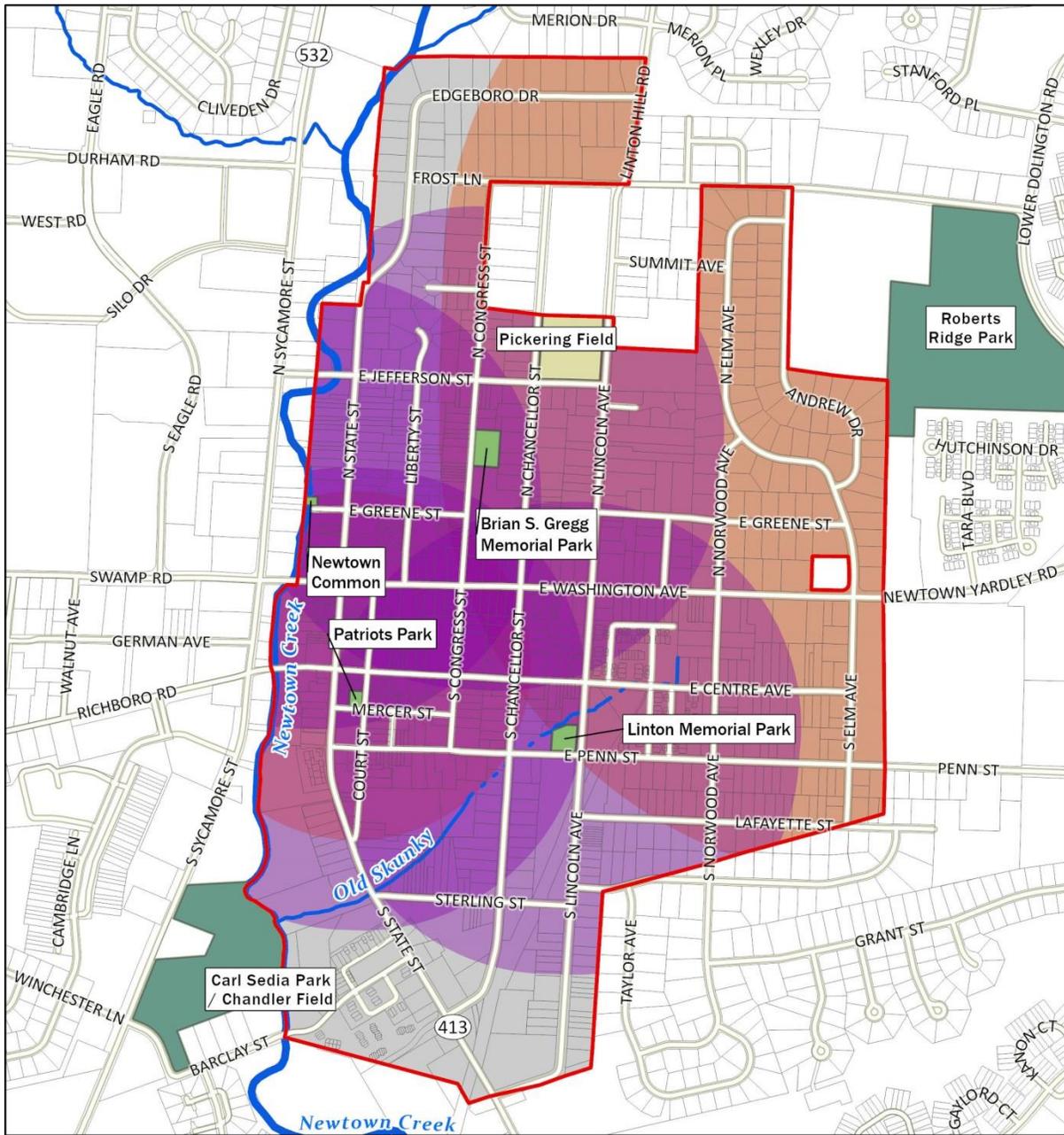
PLANNING/POLICY CONTEXT

The Borough of Newtown Open Space and Connectivity Plan is supported by previous local and regional planning initiatives from the last decade which provide a useful reference point to help define priorities. The following is a list of the historical plans that were consulted when developing this document:

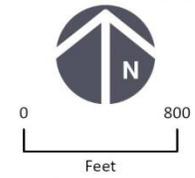
- 2011 **Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Update**
- 2011 **Newtown Creek Watershed Conservation Plan**
- 2012 **Bucks County Bicycle Plan**
- 2016 **Newtown Township Trail Plan**
- 2019 **Circuit Trails Map**



THE MULTI-USE NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL IS PROPOSED ALONG THIS FORMER SEPTA RAIL LINE FROM NEWTOWN BOROUGH TO THE PENNYPACK TRAIL IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY.



Public Accessibility to Parks
Open Space Plan 2022
 Newtown Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania



Prepared by
 Tackett Planning, Inc. and
 Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC

Data credits: Borough of Newtown, Bucks County Planning Commission

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundary
- NRPA Municipal Park Classification**
- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Special Use
- Park Service Area**
- Mini Park (1/4 mile walk)
- Neighborhood Park (1/2 mile walk)
- Areas of the Borough not served by parks

PART TWO – PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY

Although Newtown Borough is relatively built out, a number of areas and specific parcels are candidates for additional public open space. They are described in this part of the plan grouped by geographic sections, roughly from north to south and then the eastern portion of the Borough.

It is important to note that several of the areas identified in this section of the Open Space and Connectivity Plan will require coordination with Newtown Township. Inter-municipal cooperation is a critical element when ensuring the connectivity of the Borough’s open spaces with the surrounding areas.

NEWTOWN CREEK NORTH

Areas of the Borough along the Newtown Creek to the north of the center of town can promote three primary functional objectives:

- Nature Preserve, Riparian Buffer, and Habitat Enhancement areas
- Multi-use walking trail connecting the Frost Lane Bridge to downtown
- Sidewalk connections that link the walking trail, downtown, and Sycamore Street in Newtown Township

Depending on technical/engineering difficulty, funding, and ability to negotiate public purchase or access, there are multiple means of advancing these objectives. For simplicity, we have examined this area in sections, from north to south.

A. FROST LANE TO NEWTOWN COMMON (GREENE STREET)

Frost Lane Multi-Use Trail

The northernmost project is the establishment of an 8-foot minimum width multi-use trail and bridge connection between the intersection of North State Street/Frost Lane and North Sycamore Street/Durham Road in Newtown Township. Pedestrian access will be facilitated by sidewalk extensions along Frost Lane and North State Street, connecting residents in the north side of the Borough with destinations in Newtown Township.

Newtown Borough has acquired an easement within a former paper street extension of Frost Lane to the west Borough boundary for a multi-use trail.

West of the Borough boundary, coordination with Newtown Township will be required.

The bridge over Newtown Creek could be constructed on stone piers remaining from a former trolley rail line. Engineers will be required to evaluate the fitness of the piers and prescribe any necessary structural augmentation.



STONE PIERS FROM A FORMER TROLLEY BRIDGE ARE PROPOSED TO BE REPURPOSED FOR THE FROST LANE MULTI-USE TRAIL BRIDGE.

West of the bridge, the multi-use trail would extend to the intersection of North Sycamore Street/Durham Road along the same paper street extension of Frost Lane. Easements from the following three adjacent commercial property owners would be required:

- 29-012-027 (DLCP, LLC)
- 29-012-026 (Sycamore Street Assoc.)
- 29-010-012 (Cliveden HOA)

Pedestrian Bridge and Path - Edgeboro Drive/North State Street to North Sycamore Street/ Silo Drive

An existing wooden pedestrian bridge is no longer publicly accessible. Reopening of this bridge would provide access between the Borough and Newtown Township, expanding access to commercial facilities for residents of both municipalities. All of the involved area is in Newtown Township, so the effort would need to be coordinated jointly.

In addition to re-opening the pedestrian bridge, easements should be established and a durable all-weather surface for a walking path should be provided, at a minimum width of five (5) feet. Access easements from the following properties, all in Newtown Township, would need to be acquired to re-establish this historically used connection:

- 29-012-032 (Cassidy, Neely)
- 29-012-029 (Calle Enterprises, LLC)
- 29-012-026 (Sycamore Street Assoc.)

Sidewalk Extension – North State Street/Edgeboro Drive to Frost Lane

Currently, there is no safe pedestrian access along North State Street northward of Macedonia Baptist Church. Walking in this area is dangerous due to a narrow road, poor sight distance, and relatively high traffic volume. The hazard would be exacerbated by pedestrians accessing the proposed multi-use trail and bridge at Frost Lane.

Because there is no sidewalk on the east side of State Street north of Jefferson Street, it would be most desirable to extend the sidewalk northward on the west side of State/Edgeboro to Frost Lane and the proposed multi-use path to Newtown Township. The biggest hindrance to this is topographic and private driveway conflicts at the bend in the road. These conflicts are most pronounced on the east side of State Street in front of a historic residence on the inside of the bend, but the west side also presents similar challenges. Despite the challenge, an engineered solution is feasible.

One possible accommodation would be a “road diet” along North State Street and Edgeboro Drive, to allow the sidewalk to be extended essentially within the existing paved area. In this scenario, the vehicular cartway would be narrowed from 20 to 14 feet, with one-way travel north of Jefferson Street to Frost Lane.



EXTENDING THE STATE STREET SIDEWALK NORTH TO FROST LANE WOULD PROVIDE A SAFE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE FROM THE CENTER OF THE BOROUGH TO THE FROST LANE TRAIL.

Since the area on the west side of the bend of North State Street is within Newtown Township, inter-municipal coordination would be necessary. In addition, construction of the sidewalk around the bend would involve disturbance of land and driveway improvements on the following properties:

- 28-002-035 (Welch)
- 29-012-032 (Cassidy) – Newtown Twp.
- 29-092-094 (Dutton)

If it proves too difficult to continue the sidewalk around the bend in North State Street, the Borough could extend the sidewalk/pedestrian path to the existing pedestrian bridge to the Calle Enterprises property. In this case, the pedestrian route would continue north from there along North Sycamore Street and through the Sycamore Street Assoc. property to the bridge/path extension from Frost Lane.

Riparian Buffer Plantings along Newtown Creek

From the wooden pedestrian bridge south to Greene Street, Newtown Creek is bordered by private properties. Between the bridge and Jefferson Street, properties are relatively large residential and institutional uses with generous back yards that could facilitate broad and effective natural buffers. These could be promoted as aesthetic enhancements to streamside properties that also help to control flood impacts and streambank erosion.

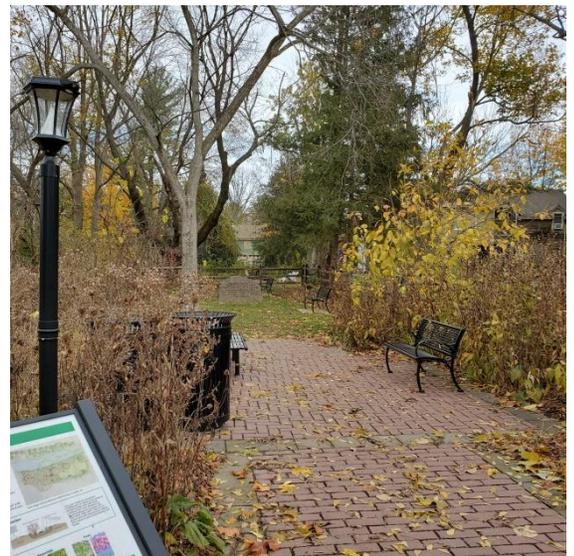
Between Jefferson and Greene Streets, lots are smaller and more intensively developed, and thus room for riparian buffer plantings is generally more limited. In these areas, landowners should be encouraged to eradicate invasive plant species and replace them with native, flood-tolerant species that will provide habitat, filter pollutants from runoff, and provide shading and bank stabilization benefits along the stream.

B. WALKING ACCESS FROM NEWTOWN COMMON (GREENE STREET) TO WEST CENTRE AVENUE (STEEPLE VIEW)

A pedestrian route is proposed for this section, marked by signage and decorative paving/crosswalks, that connects Newtown Common with the historic downtown and the proposed multi-use trail beginning at Steeple View and heading south. This pathway would be approximately ¼ mile long, beginning and ending at Newtown Creek, with a tour through one or two blocks of Newtown’s commercial core, depending on the final route chosen.

Newtown Common

Newtown Common is the northern terminus of this section, and the northernmost point where the public can walk along Newtown Creek. The site is currently a natural area with native plantings and interpretive signage, a commemorative marker, seating, and decorative brick paving. Large stepping stones leading to the creek allow visitors to sit close to the water and are popular with residents. In order for it to function as a more prominent destination and community focal point, the following improvement is proposed:



NEWTOWN COMMON

- Extend Greene Street across Newtown Creek with a pedestrian bridge and path connecting to North Sycamore Street in Newtown Township. The bridge could be supported by existing stone piers, which would need to be evaluated for soundness by an engineer. Beyond the bridge, the path enters Newtown Township on a paper street. Access would need to be coordinated with the Township via a pedestrian easement across the following property:
 - 29-002-006 (Burns)

Sidewalk Connections into Downtown

Existing sidewalks along Greene Street, South State Street, and Washington Avenue constitute the downtown pedestrian section. The path could be routed through the municipal parking lot, or would proceed along South State Street to Centre Avenue.

South State Street sidewalks are appointed with a decorative brick border along the curb and decorative street lamps between Washington Avenue and Centre Avenue. This design vocabulary should be continued along State Street to Greene Street, along the south side of Greene, and along the south side of Washington or Centre Avenue to delineate the route. In the case of Centre Avenue, the cartway could be narrowed from 27 to 24 feet width to allow for a more generous walkway on the south side. Since Centre Avenue in this location is a state road, any change to the cartway would require PennDOT approval. In addition, crosswalks should consist of colored/textured decorative pavement (e.g. unit pavers, patterned concrete, or colored/textured asphalt). Unique signage could also be considered.

Multi-use Trail through Municipal Parking Lot

Instead of routing this pathway onto two blocks of South State Street to Centre Avenue, it could be directed west on Washington Avenue and through the municipal parking lot to Centre Avenue. This would extend the length of the multi-use trail between the center of town and the proposed Newtown Rail Trail at the south end of town.

Due to the proximity of the steep streambank, it is not feasible to extend the pavement closer to the creek to accommodate a trail. Thus, various strategies of redesigning the parking lot have been evaluated to fit a multi-use trail between parking and Newtown Creek. Options of narrowing the parking lot drive aisle with angled parking spaces and one-way vehicular flow were viewed as undesirable, because too many parking spaces would be lost and one way vehicle access was thought to be problematic.



THE PATHWAY WOULD EXTEND BRICK SIDEWALK TRIM AND DECORATIVE STREET FURNISHINGS ALONG STATE STREET

An option with shared vehicle/bicycle/pedestrian use of the drive aisle with sharrow markings would keep the current parking count but could present concerns with safety and user conflicts. Sharrow markings are road markings used to indicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and automobiles.

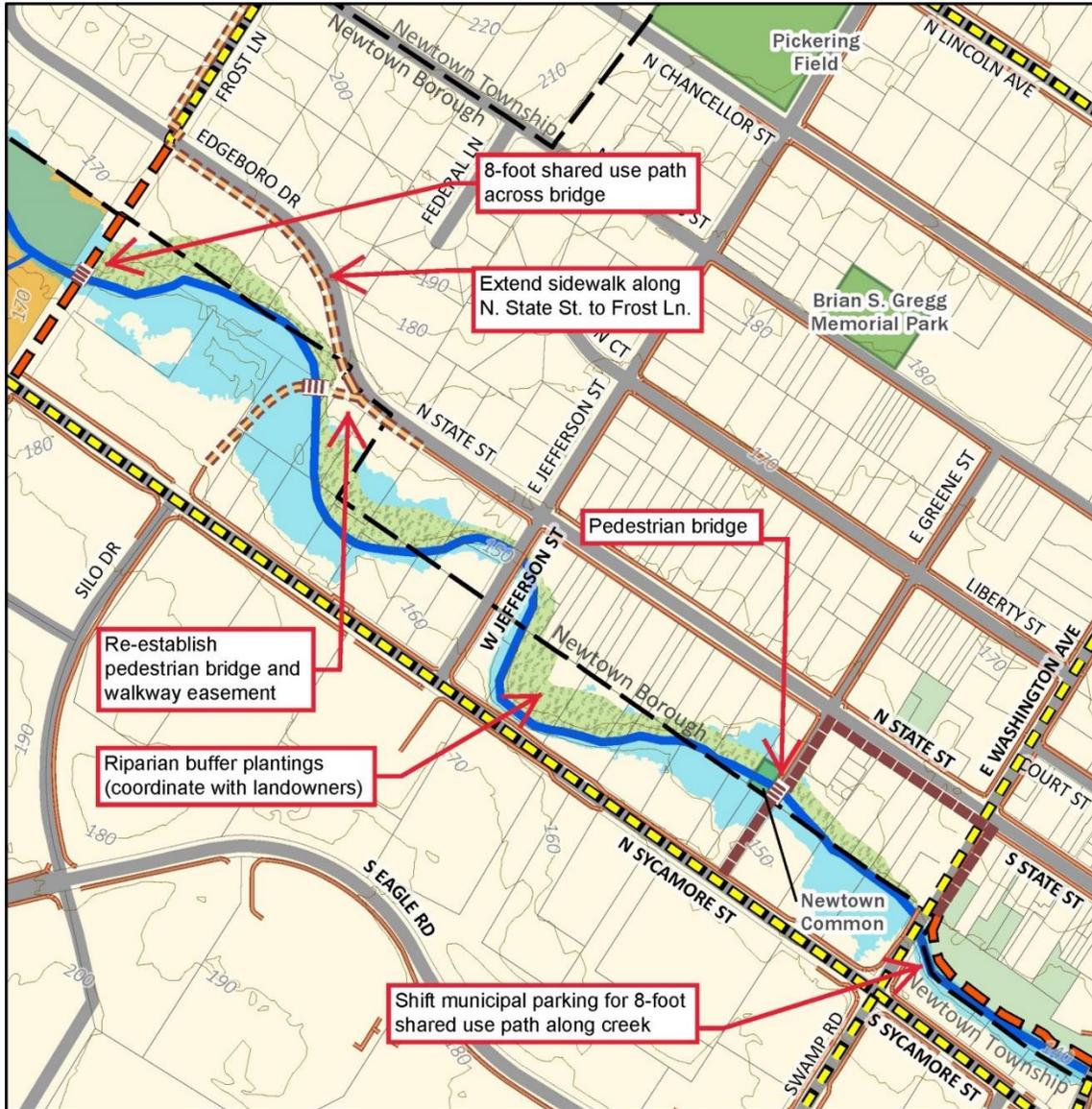
Another option involves shifting the drive aisle and parking eastward and providing an 8-foot wide multi-use trail on the west side, between the parking curb and the creek. However, this option would eliminate

12 or more of the 124 parking spaces from the municipal lot. Because of the shift in paved area near Centre Avenue, the project would need to be coordinated with the following property owner:

- 28-002-001 (First National Bank)

An alternative concept for the municipal parking lot presents an opportunity for a new Borough park. Relocating parking farther east from Newtown Creek would provide an area for a new formal linear park along the creek bank with an 8-foot wide multi-use trail between Washington and Centre Avenues, benches and creek overlooks, and native plantings. A parking study, as strongly recommended in the Borough's Comprehensive Plan Update, would help determine how much public parking actually is needed in this location and whether it could be best accommodated in an open lot, a parking structure, or a combination of both. Discussion and decisions about the feasibility of this approach would need to be addressed separately from this open space plan.

Another desirable feature would be stream/bridge seating areas and overlooks along the multi-use trail. One near Washington Avenue would mark the end of the trail and the intersection with the enhanced pedestrian sidewalk to State Street. Another location at Centre Avenue would provide a picturesque view of the double stone arch bridge (built in 1796 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and the historic McMaster House across the creek. Either location could also be outdoor eating areas.



Newtown Creek North - Option 1
Open Space Plan 2022
 Newtown Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

Prepared by
 Tackett Planning, Inc. and
 Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC

0 320
 Feet

Data credits: Borough of Newtown, Bucks County Planning Commission, DVRPC, FEMA, PAMAP, SEPTA.

Legend

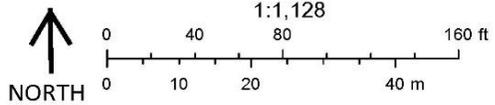
| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Municipal Boundary | HOA Open Space |
| Parcel Boundary | Riparian Buffer |
| 10-foot Contour | Proposed Trail Facilities |
| 100-Year Floodplain | Trail Bridge |
| Existing Sidewalks | Pedestrian Path |
| Existing Open Space | 8-foot Shared Use Path |
| Public Park | Sidewalk |
| Borough Property | On-road Bike Route |

Newtown Creek North (Option 1): Shared Use Trail



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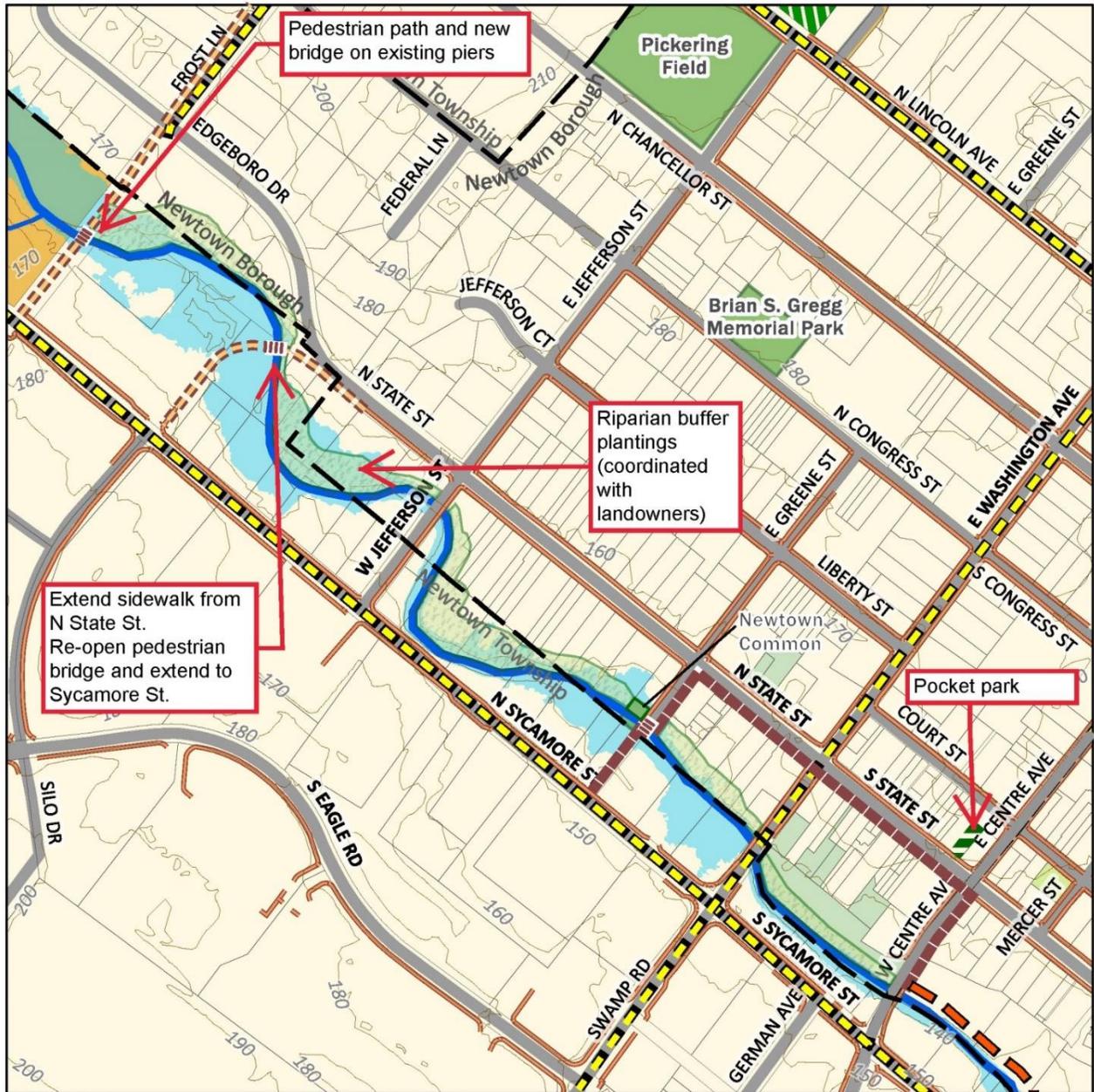
- Municipal Boundary
- Parcels



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Bucks County

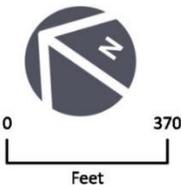
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Newtown Creek North - Option 2

Open Space Plan 2022

Newtown Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania



Prepared by
Tackett Planning, Inc. and
Theurkauf Design & Planning, LLC

Data credits: Borough of Newtown, Bucks County Planning Commission, DVRPC, FEMA, PAMAP, SEPTA.

Legend

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Municipal Boundary | | HOA Open Space |
| | Parcel Boundary | | Riparian Buffer |
| | 10-foot Contour | Proposed Trail Facilities | |
| | 100-Year Floodplain | | Trail Bridge |
| | Existing Sidewalks | | Pedestrian Path |
| Existing Open Space | | | 8-foot Shared Use Path |
| | Public Park | | Sidewalk |
| | Borough Property | | On-road Bike Route |

Walking Access from Newtown Common (Greene Street) to West Centre Avenue (Steeple View)



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█ Municipal Boundary

█ Parcels

1:1,128
 0 40 80 160 ft
 0 10 20 40 m
 NORTH

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NEWTOWN CREEK SOUTH

Properties along Newtown Creek south of Centre Avenue present a different set of possibilities, including land already planned for development, the largest open space parcel in the Borough, and connections to other non-vehicle trails and paths.

1. STEEPLE VIEW

The proposed Steeple View Development will occupy properties along Newtown Creek from Centre Avenue south to the Delta School (aka Buttonwood Farms) property near the intersection of South State Street and Sterling Street. This development is partially built with retail and residential condominiums, and will include additional mixed use space, parking, and a greenway corridor along Newtown Creek with a public plaza (piazza), riparian buffer plantings, and a mixed use path along the stream. At the south end of the trail, the developer proposes a pedestrian bridge across Newtown Creek to Carl Sedia Park.

The Borough should assure that the developer designs the greenway and path as follows:

- Path should be 8-10 feet width, finished with an appropriate trail surface.
- A decorative crosswalk at the end of the path at Centre Avenue should be provided.
- Path should extend to the property boundary with Buttonwood Farms.
- If special signage is used for the pathway through town, it should continue through Steeple View.
- Native riparian buffer plantings should be provided.
- Incorporate strategic points for views of/access to Newtown Creek.

2. NATURE PRESERVE

A nature preserve is proposed immediately south of Steeple View that would continue the continuous walking path into the southwestern corner of the Borough, with trails and ecological enhancements to provide residents with passive recreation opportunities in a naturalistic setting. The preserve would be approximately 5.98 acres, and is proposed on the following three contiguous parcels:

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 28-004-002 | 3.098 | Buttonwood Farms, Inc. (Delta School) |
| 28-004-005-001 | 1.88 | Buttonwood Farms, Inc. (Delta School) |
| 28-004-005 | 1.6 ³ | Adamusko Pugh |

Except for approximately 0.6 acres of the Adamusko Pugh lot, which has a multiple-tenant building with parking along the Barclay Street right-of-way, the parcels are largely undeveloped and covered in successional woodland/ meadow. A power line easement parallels Newtown Creek through the tract from Steeple View to cross Barclay Street. The larger Delta School parcel has frontage on State Street and borders Newtown Creek. Old Skunky, an intermittent storm water channel, flows through from Washington Avenue to its confluence with Newtown Creek. The Adamusko Pugh lot and the smaller Delta School parcel each has frontage on Barclay Street. On the smaller Delta School parcel, driveway access from Barclay Street to a residence on an adjacent property under the same ownership goes through a maintained lawn area. Portions of parcels 28-004-002 and 28-004-005 are within the 100-year floodplain and cannot be developed; further, additional lands are within the 500-year floodplain and would be subject to extreme weather events.

³ Approximately 0.6 acres of the Adamusko Pugh property is developed and not proposed for open space.

The tract's adjacency to the Steeple View development's proposed trail, its access to State Street and Barclay Street, and location at the confluence of the Borough's two waterways make it ideally suited for public open space. By extending the multi-use trail at Steeple View through the site, walking access could be continued through to the Borough's southernmost boundary. Additional trails can connect to State Street and Barclay Street, while also providing access to Newtown Creek and Old Skunky for fishing or viewing nature. Further, the two Delta School parcels and the undeveloped portion of the Adamusko Pugh parcel represent the largest natural habitat area remaining in the Borough, and thus have the highest potential as an ecological preserve.



THE DELTA SCHOOL PROPERTY FROM SOUTH STATE STREET

The patchwork of meadow and forest vegetation on site creates ecotones that promote species diversity and habitat value, and the site serves as an important riparian buffer to promote water quality and aquatic life in Old Skunky and Newtown Creek. By establishing the tract as public open space, the property's natural abundance can be made directly accessible to Borough residents for walking, biking, environmental study/interpretation, and passive enjoyment.

In order to implement the nature preserve, the Borough should acquire the Delta School parcels through fee-simple purchase, and pursue acquisition of and/or trail access through the Adamusko Pugh property to Barclay Street. Since the Borough has no interest in the developed portion of the property, aside from a possible trail easement, the best option is subdivision of the property, or establishing an easement or lease on part of the property. Including the Delta School parcels in an Official Map would help the Borough prioritize acquisition.

The route of the multi-use trail from Steeple View through the nature preserve will depend on the Borough's acquisition of parcels for the preserve and on trail connections to the proposed Newtown Rail Trail. If the Borough can only acquire Delta School parcel 28-002-004, then the trail would exit the preserve at the intersection of South State and Sterling Streets. If the Borough can acquire all three properties for the preserve, then the trail can follow Newtown Creek to exit the preserve at Barclay Street. See Option 3, below.

The following nature preserve improvements are proposed in addition to the multi-use trail:

- Nature trails that connect to the multi-use trail and facilitate exploration of the preserve.
- Ecological restoration including invasive plant removal and plantings of native species to enhance woodland and meadow habitats.
- Native riparian buffer plantings along Newtown Creek and Old Skunky; shrubs and/or meadow vegetation should be utilized within the power line right-of-way.
- Seating areas along trails, Newtown Creek, and Old Skunky with interpretive signage.
- Stream access and/or viewing areas along trails.
- Wayfinding.

3. CONNECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

The multi-use trail would end at the proposed Newtown Rail Trail (NRT). The Borough could pursue the trail connection by one of three options:

- **Option 1:** Extend an 8-foot multi-use trail south across Barclay Street from the nature preserve through the Newtown Professional Park. Approximately 550 feet of the trail would cross into Newtown Township through the Gloria Dei senior living facility and the VanArtsdalen property adjacent to the office park. From there, the trail could be routed along the southern boundaries of the VanArtsdalen property to connect to the NRT. The trail would have to be routed to avoid conflicting with an existing garden associated with the senior living facility. Additionally, Newtown Creek runs through the southwest corner of the VanArtsdalen property, immediately adjacent to existing bus parking on the property. A trail easement on the property would require shifting bus parking in order to accommodate the trail. The trail should be extended along the east edge of the bus parking lot to the point where an at-grade connection can be established. This option minimizes crossings of South State Street. Access for a trail easement should be coordinated with Newtown Township and the following landowners:
 - Parcel 28-004-011-004 (Newtown Park Condo Association)
 - Parcel 29-010-120 (Gloria Dei Plaza)
 - Parcel 29-010-083 (VanArtsdalen)
 - Parcel 29-010-016 (SEPTA)

- **Option 2:** After crossing Barclay Street through Newtown Professional Park and the Gloria Dei senior living facility, the trail would follow the office park's private road to its intersection with State Street across from Chancellor Street. The trail would cross State Street at the Chancellor Street intersection and parallel Chancellor Street before joining the NRT adjacent to the Clubhouse restaurant parking lot. This option would require trail crossings of Barclay Street, the senior living facility entrance drive at the office park road, and State Street at the Chancellor Street intersection. Access for a trail easement should be coordinated with Newtown Township and the following landowners:
 - Parcels 28-004-011-004 and 28-004-011-002 (Newtown Park Condo Association)
 - Parcel 29-010-120 (Gloria Dei Plaza)
 - Parcels 29-010-083 and 28-004-089 (VanArtsdalen)
 - Parcel 28-004-054 (SEPTA)

The Chancellor Street trail segment would be implemented within the road right-of-way, and would require shifting the south curb line by two feet to provide an 8-foot trail along a 24-foot roadway with striped travel lanes.

- **Option 3:** The multi-use trail exits the nature preserve at the intersection of State Street and Sterling Street. From there, the trail would extend southward along South State Street to its intersection with the Newtown Rail Trail. Pedestrians would use existing sidewalks, but gaps in pedestrian access on both sides of the street south of South Chancellor Street would need to be addressed. For bicycle access, a complete streets design would narrow the existing vehicle travel

lane widths from 34 feet to 24 feet, allowing for a 5 foot wide bike lane on each side. Coordination with PennDOT would be required.

At the historic Fabian mill property, the Borough should extend a 5-foot pedestrian sidewalk from South Lincoln Avenue across to the NRT. Alternatively, the Borough could require the property owner to extend such a connection during land development, either in lieu of a sidewalk along Lincoln Avenue or in conjunction with it. In addition, up to 8 trailhead parking spaces could be provided at the Fabian property, which would require re-configuration of the existing access drive onto the adjacent PECO-owned property. The Borough should coordinate with the following landowners for easement access and to construct improvements:

- Parcel 28-004-063 (507 South State Street LP) – a.k.a. Fabian property
- Parcel 28-004-064 (PECO)
- Parcel 28-004-054 (SEPTA)



FABIAN MILL, WITH THE NEWTOWN RAIL LINE IN THE FOREGROUND

4. RIPARIAN BUFFER ENHANCEMENTS FOR OLD SKUNKY

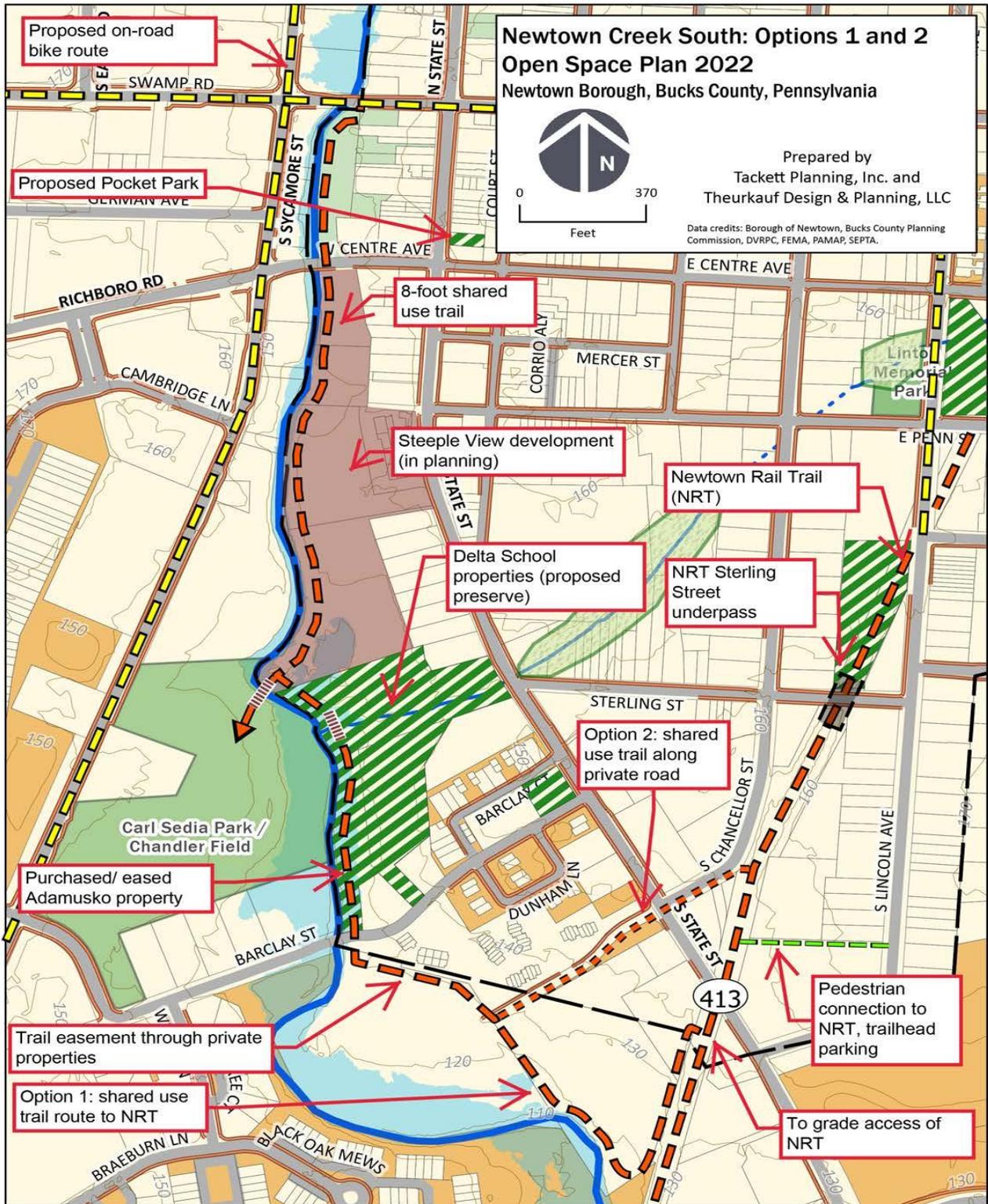
Old Skunky joins Newtown Creek at the Delta School property (parcel 28-004-002). Riparian buffer plantings along the stream would enhance the aesthetic and wildlife habitat benefits of the corridor while filtering runoff and preventing erosion, thus helping to protect adjacent properties and the water quality of Old Skunky and Newtown Creek. The Borough should implement an array of enhancement strategies within the Old Skunky riparian corridor that address the stream’s unique conditions:

- The Borough should undertake invasive plant eradication and implement buffer plantings consisting of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous meadow species on Borough properties such as Linton Memorial Park and the proposed Newtown Preserve. 100-foot vegetated buffers should be provided to the extent feasible. Native, flood-tolerant species will provide habitat, filter pollutants from runoff, and provide bank stabilization benefits along the stream.
- The majority of the stream corridor, from South State Street to the Newtown Station stormwater basin, is on developed private properties. The Borough should encourage property owners to eradicate invasive plant species and replace them with native, flood-tolerant species. In particular, the Borough should work with Newtown Station to naturalize the stormwater basin at the corner of Centre Avenue and Watson Mill Lane with native meadow vegetation.
- As with the enhancements proposed along Newtown Creek, landowners should be encouraged to implement stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in addition to riparian buffer plantings. A municipal clearinghouse that informs residents and connects them with sources of funding and technical assistance is recommended.
- Approximately 1,000 feet of Old Skunky is channeled into pipes below roads and private properties. Where daylighting buried stream segments and implementing riparian buffer enhancements is not feasible, the Borough and/or conservation entities should educate

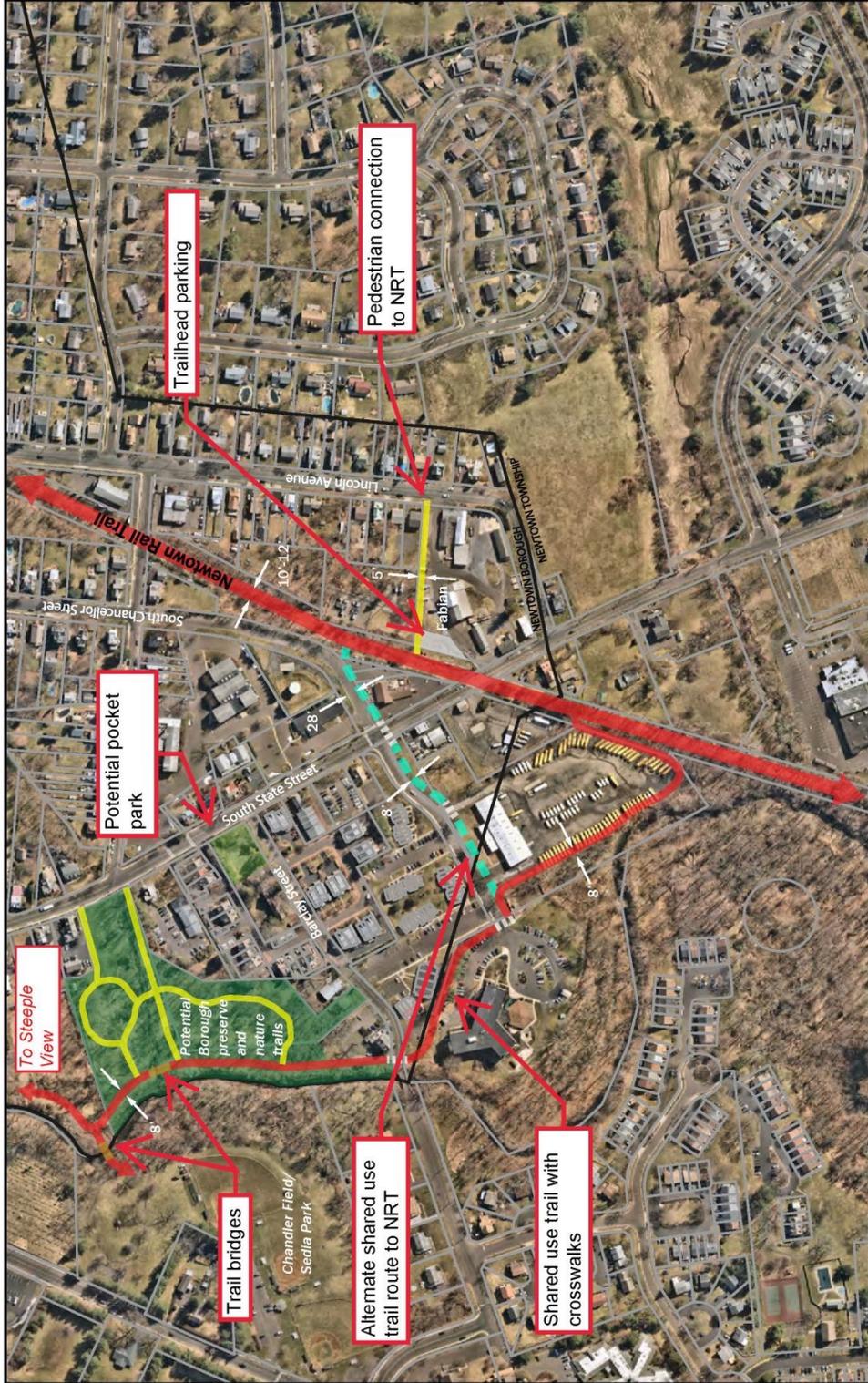
landowners on best practices to protect water quality. Signage and/or storm drain marking should be implemented to prevent dumping and spills from above-ground uses into the underground stream.

The following is a legend to the Newtown Creek South maps included in this section:

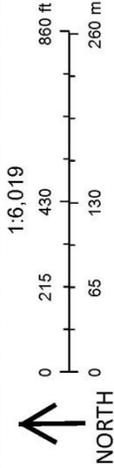
| <u>Legend</u> | |
|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Municipal Boundary |
|  | Parcel Boundary |
|  | 10-foot Contour |
|  | 100-Year Floodplain |
|  | Existing Sidewalks |
| Existing Open Space | |
|  | Public Park |
|  | Borough Property |
|  | HOA Open Space |
|  | Riparian Buffer |
|  | Proposed Public Park |
| Proposed Trail Facilities | |
|  | Trail Bridge |
|  | 8-foot Shared Use Path |
|  | Other Trail Facility (see map) |
|  | On-road Bike Route |



Newtown Creek South (Options 1 and 2)

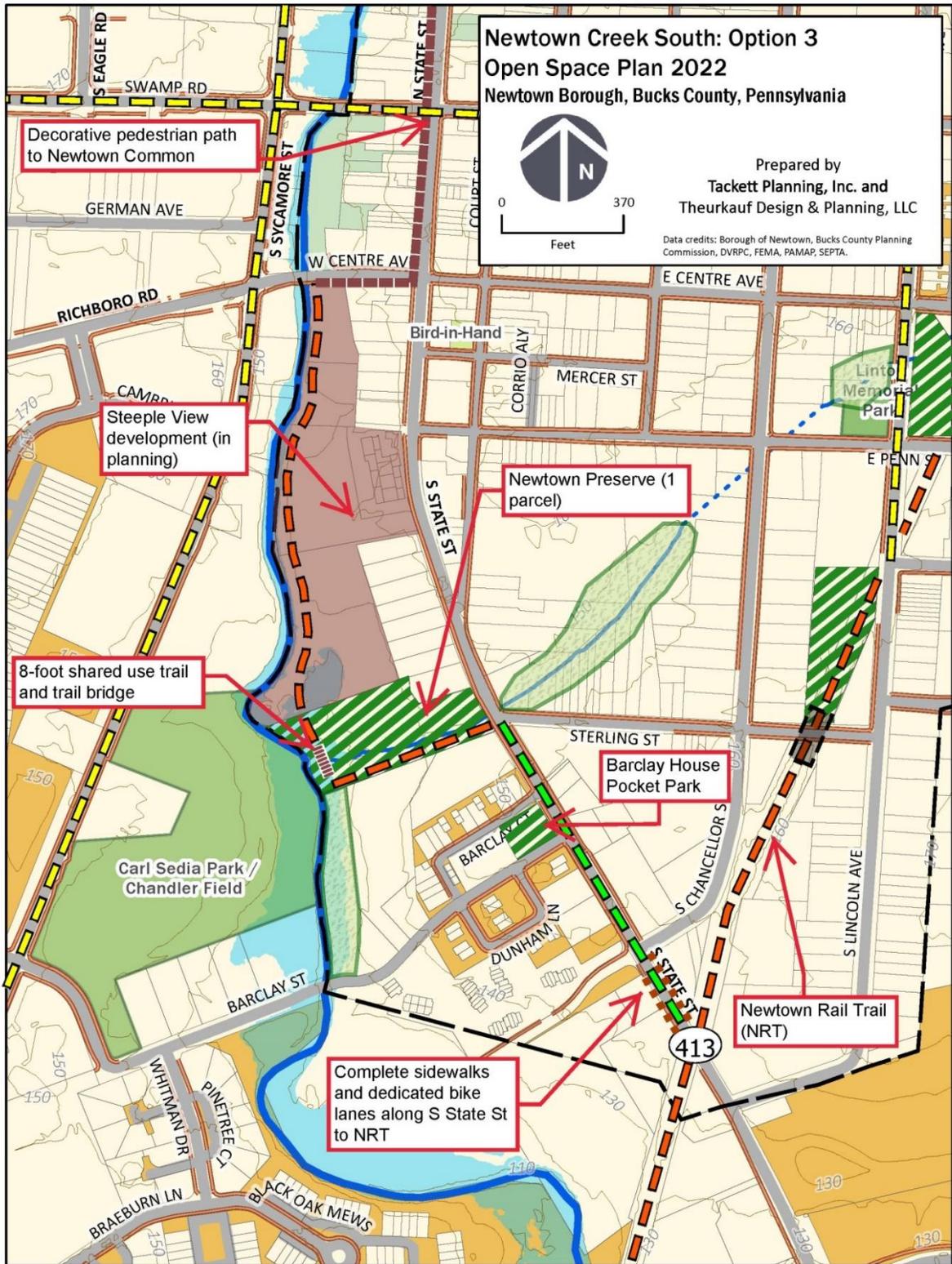


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- Municipal Boundary
- Parcels

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Newtown Rail Trail

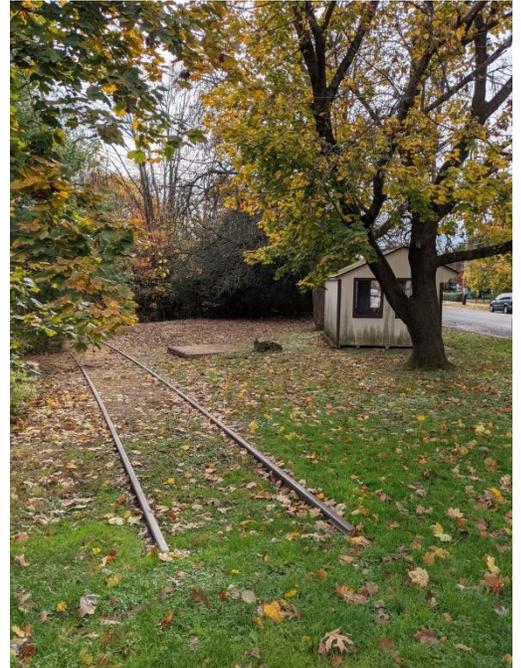
Newtown Borough will be the northern terminus of the Newtown Rail Trail (NRT), a multi-use, 8.4 mile trail along the former Newtown Rail Line to the Pennypack Trail in Montgomery County. As part of the Circuit multi-use trail network, the NRT will connect bicyclists and pedestrians in the Borough with the greater Philadelphia region.

Bucks County has a 30-year lease on the rail ROW for the trail. SEPTA retains ownership of the ROW and thus the right to restore rail use in the future. The NRT will be 10 feet to 12 feet wide, with an appropriate trail surface. Phase 1 of the NRT was completed in December 2021 and consists of the southernmost trail section from Pennypack Trail to Bristol Road in Southampton Township. Vegetative buffering and fencing between the trail and adjacent residences was provided by the County. Phase 2 is in the design phase and will extend the trail northward from Bristol Road to Churchville Nature Center in Northampton Township. The County has not yet scheduled design and completion of the section of trail up to its terminus in Newtown.

Currently, Bucks County proposes to extend the NRT to Sterling Street, and to implement ramps to provide an at-grade trail access point at the intersection of Sterling Street and Lincoln Avenue. From there the County is considering bike lanes along Lincoln Avenue to Linton Memorial Park, or continuing the NRT within the rail ROW as a raised boardwalk. Both options would require fill to construct ADA-accessible ramps that would bring the NRT approximately 15 feet higher to Sterling Street. In addition to the expense of constructing ramps, the County's second proposed option would require constructing a raised boardwalk in the remaining sunken rail ROW between Sterling Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Instead, the County and the Borough should consider establishing a trail underpass under Sterling Street. The Newtown Rail Line historically crossed under the road, but the Sterling Street bridge was removed after service on the line was suspended in 1983 and filled in under the street. Boring through the fill and installing a steel or precast concrete underpass would enable the NRT to follow the existing ROW grade to street level at Lincoln Avenue. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy underpasses:

- Minimum 8- to 10-foot vertical clearance.
- Grading and/or raised trail sections to ensure proper drainage of water.
- Signage indicating clearance height and the above cross street.
- Reflective markings and/or lighting for underpasses with poor visibility.



NEWTOWN RAIL LINE ALONG LINCOLN AVENUE



EXAMPLE OF A CORRUGATED METAL TRAIL UNDERPASS

The Borough should also coordinate with the County on the following additional considerations for the Newtown section of the NRT:

- Appropriate trail surface for bicyclists and users with wheelchairs as well as for maintenance considerations.
- Coordination with the County, SEPTA, and PennDOT is required to provide a road crossing of State Street / S.R. 413, with all applicable pedestrian and bicycle signalization and pavement markings.
- Road crossings of Lincoln Avenue and Penn Street with signalization and pavement markings.
- Wayfinding between the NRT and Borough open space.
- Vegetative buffering / fencing as needed between the trail and adjacent residences.

BOROUGH PARK IMPROVEMENTS

A. NEWTOWN RAIL STATION SITE

This one-acre property was the site of the Newtown commuter rail station, the terminal stop on SEPTA’s R-8/Fox Chase line from the Reading Terminal in Philadelphia. SEPTA stopped train service to Newtown in 1983, and then operated a shuttle bus service from Fox Chase Station to Newtown until 1999. The train station shelter was removed in 2004.

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28-005-202 | 1.00 | SEPTA |

The site contains remnants of the rail station parking lot, platform, and rail beds, and part of the site is used for access, parking, and equipment/material storage by an adjacent contracting company (Shanahan). Vegetative cover consists of lawn, trees, and naturalizing shrubs in non-maintained areas.

The site presents two primary opportunities as an open space asset:

- Its adjacency to Linton Memorial Park provides potential for expansion of park facilities, including parking, playgrounds, playfields, amphitheater, and historic/interpretive features. With its location in the center of the Borough, the SEPTA site and Linton Memorial Park could be the nexus of civic events and celebrations, and it could be the premier children’s park serving residents of the central and southern parts of the community.
- As the terminus of the proposed Newtown Rail Trail, the site will be a critical trailhead, access, and parking location. Its proximity to the downtown part of Newtown and its unparalleled concentration of historic buildings and sites make the Newtown Railroad Station site an ideal terminal point for a linear trail. In addition to this site, there could be others near the trail that should be considered to meet anticipated demand. Desirable trailhead features include improved parking, water fountain, shelter, restroom, and bike repair station. Additional considerations and details are discussed under the Connectivity Enhancements section of this plan.

Agreements with SEPTA regarding the Newtown Rail Trail would maintain SEPTA’s ownership, while Bucks County would operate the trail under a 30 year lease. If fee simple acquisition of the site were not possible for the park and trailhead improvements, a similar agreement between SEPTA and Newtown Borough could be pursued.

B. PICKERING FIELD PLAYGROUND

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28-002-268 | 3.14 | Newtown Borough |

The property is bounded on three sides by North Lincoln Avenue, Jefferson Street, and North Chancellor Street. The Pickering Manor assisted living facility in Newtown Township forms the parcel’s north boundary. The property is mostly lawn surrounding the baseball field. Bleachers, a concession stand, and



VIEW OF PICKERING FIELD FROM NORTH LINCOLN AVENUE

a commemorative monument are shaded by mature tree plantings in the southwest property corner. A flagpole surrounded by a small paver circle and seating wall is in the northeast property corner.

Pickering Field’s facilities could be expanded to serve a broader range of community needs. Additional seating could be provided around the baseball field, and the addition of a playground/ tot lot and seating area would convert the property from a single-use facility to a neighborhood park, with necessary consideration given to protection from potential ball strikes. Additionally, the flagpole area to the northeast could be expanded into a commemorative garden with decorative paving, landscaping, and seating, thus creating a more compelling destination for Borough residents to enjoy. The Borough should also implement a walkway around the park perimeter that connects to the Lincoln Avenue sidewalk and provides residents with a loop trail.

If the Borough can acquire the undeveloped portion of the Newtown Artesian Water Company property directly across Lincoln Avenue from the field, additional amenities can be provided that further expand local recreational opportunities.

C. NEWTOWN ARTESIAN WATER COMPANY PROPERTY

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 28-002-269 | 2.88 | Newtown Artesian Water Company |

Directly across North Lincoln Avenue from Pickering Field, the Newtown Artesian Water Company (NAWC) parcel contains an office building, garage and utility structures, and parking with a driveway entrance from Lincoln Avenue opposite Jefferson Street. Approximately 1 acre of the property directly facing Pickering Field is undeveloped lawn area. There is potential to expand Pickering Field onto this undeveloped land to provide complementary park amenities, such as sport courts, seating areas, and interpretive elements such as sculpture or a fountain commemorating the water company’s 134-year history. Another option would be to create a purely passive park on the site. Park improvements should be designed to visually and practically link the two properties, including pedestrian connections and compatible design elements. Together with proposed improvements to Pickering Field, the Borough could create a significant recreation destination serving northern and central Newtown.



VIEW OF THE NEWTOWN ARTESIAN WATER COMPANY PROPERTY FROM NORTH LINCOLN AVENUE

Acquiring this park space would require coordination with NAWC. The intersection of North Lincoln Avenue and Jefferson Street would require a three-way stop for safe pedestrian access between the two properties.

Additionally, the Borough should pursue an easement through the NAWC property for a walkway from Jefferson Street to North Elm Avenue for access between the center of Newtown and Goodnoe Elementary School. This easement will be discussed in the Connectivity Enhancements section of this plan.

D. PATRIOTS PARK

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28-002-039-001 | 0.148 | Newtown Borough |

The property is adjacent to the historic circa-1686 Bird-in-Hand Tavern, and Newtown Borough purchased it in 2019 to create a public park at the corner of Mercer and Court Streets. The park’s design features a passive-use area, with seating and gardens surrounding a central lawn. Landscaping includes plants historically used for medicine, cooking, and textiles to reflect the site’s Colonial-era setting.

Patriots Park is set back from the Borough’s main thoroughfare and tucked away behind a building. It is recommended that the Borough implement wayfinding signage to direct visitors to the park from State Street.

E. STATE STREET POCKET PARK

There is an opportunity to provide additional public open space in the undeveloped portion of a mixed use commercial/residential property at 35 South State Street:

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28-002-044 | 0.17 | Nosenchuck |

The proposed pocket park is approximately 0.07 acres and consists of a lawn and a mature Oak tree. It is elevated above street level and separated from State Street by a stone wall and hedge. The site formerly housed the County Seat, and a historical marker describing the site’s heritage is located along the sidewalk in front of the property. A private residence is located behind the site along Court Street.

Park development would require coordination with the landowner for subdivision and purchase of the property. The Oak tree provides shade, habitat, and natural beauty and should be preserved. Site furnishings such as seating, decorative paving, landscaping, and artistic installations that reference the site’s history could be added to create an attractive destination for passers-by. Access requires ADA-compliant ramps, which would entail redesign of the walls and steps from State Street.

F. BARCLAY HOUSE POCKET PARK

The Historic Barclay House at 330 South State Street provides additional possibility for public use. Currently occupied by office tenants, undeveloped portions in the front of the site could provide a setting for a small public garden, historical commemorative exhibit, seating space, and/or a playground. Such opportunities could also be explored within the context of any future redevelopment of the property.

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 28-004-001 | 1.13 | Connolly Family Newtown LP |

G. CVS (GATOR NEWTOWN LLC)

The former Kotanchik property, located in south-central Newtown Borough across from Linton Memorial Park and along the SEPTA rail right-of-way, holds potential as open space to support the proposed Newtown Rail Trail:

| <u>Parcel Number</u> | <u>Area (Acres)</u> | <u>Current Owner</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28-005-027 | 2.78 | Gator Newtown, LLC |

A CVS pharmacy and parking lot occupy approximately 1.3 acres of the site at the corner of Penn Street and South Lincoln Avenue. Successional woodland covers the remaining portion of the property. This portion of the lot is deed-restricted from development. Its natural cover and proximity to a proposed multi-use trail presents the opportunity to develop a small natural area park with trail connections and supporting facilities. Invasive plant eradication and native plantings are recommended to improve site ecology. Seating areas with pollinator gardens are recommended to create attractive places that adjacent residents and trail users alike can visit for relaxation, nature watching, and quiet reflection.

The Borough should work with the landowner to consider subdivision or easement of the parcel. Coordination with the County and SEPTA will be required to implement trail connections to the Newtown Rail Trail.

CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENTS

Among the Borough's most fundamental open space needs is the improvement of pedestrian and multi-modal accessibility to connect residents and businesses to destinations within municipal borders and beyond. The following improvements are in addition to those proposed along Newtown Creek and the Newtown Rail Trail:

PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY

Newtown Borough's existing pedestrian infrastructure is good overall, but additional sidewalks are necessary to improve residents' access to open space and other destinations. The following routes would address critical gaps in Newtown's pedestrian network. The Borough should also implement development standards that require sidewalk infill on streets with sidewalk gaps, as well as consider incentive programs that encourage landowners to install sidewalks.

A. N LINCOLN AVENUE-N ELM AVENUE CONNECTOR

A 680-foot walkway is proposed between North Lincoln Avenue and North Elm Avenue, opposite Jefferson Street to connect central areas of Newtown to Goodnoe Elementary School. This would require an easement through the Newtown Artesian Water Company (NAWC) property and the paper street extension of Jefferson Street. An easement could also be considered through the adjacent Brynwood HOA open space to link the connector to Brynwood Lane. The Borough should coordinate with the following landowners:

- Parcel 28-002-269 (NAWC)
- Parcel 28-005-248 (Kichula)
- Parcel 28-005-249 (Epstein)
- Parcel 28-002-270-003 (Brynwood HOA)

A minimum 5-foot-wide walkway is recommended along the southern NAWC property line. Fencing should be provided between the walkway and NAWC driveway to prevent conflicts between pedestrians and water company vehicles. An existing wooden fence along the NAWC property line would protect the privacy of adjacent residences. Fencing and/or vegetation could be provided to buffer residences north and south of the walkway's endpoint at North Elm Avenue.

B. FROST LANE SIDEWALK

A 1,250-foot sidewalk is proposed along the north side of Frost Lane between North Lincoln Avenue and Edgeboro Drive, connecting the existing Lincoln Avenue sidewalk and proposed Frost Lane trail. This will provide Newtown's northern residents with pedestrian access to destinations throughout the Borough. The Frost Lane ROW varies from 45 to 60 feet wide and would accommodate a 5-foot-wide sidewalk.



VIEW OF THE PROPOSED LINCOLN-ELM AVENUE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTOR FROM THE INTERSECTION OF LINCOLN AVENUE AND JEFFERSON STREET

Sidewalk construction would require disturbance of landscaping and other improvements within the ROW and would require coordination with the following residential properties:

- Parcel 28-002-185 (McCoy)
- Parcel 28-002-199 (McDade)
- Parcel 28-002-198 (Kerns)
- Parcel 28-002-197 (Henk)
- Parcel 28-002-196 (Smolen)
- Parcel 28-003-001 (Harrison, Murphy)
- Parcel 28-003-002 (Horn)
- Parcel 28-003-003 (Kelleher)
- Parcel 28-003-004 (Koza)
- Parcel 28-003-004-001 (Darchuk, Finnegan)
- Parcel 28-003-005 (Maples, Tringa)

C. NEWTOWN CEMETERY SIDEWALK

A 1,130-foot sidewalk is proposed along Newtown Cemetery's (parcel 29-010-036) frontages on South Elm Avenue and Penn Street in Newtown Borough. This sidewalk would extend Newtown Township's proposed Penn Street sidewalk into the Borough, create additional pedestrian connections to the Township's Newtown Trail along Washington Avenue/Newtown-Yardley Road, and provide pedestrian access to the cemetery's institutional green space. It would also create a continuous walking path adjacent to a Borough neighborhood with intermittent sidewalks.

The sidewalk should be minimum 5 feet wide and located within the South Elm Avenue and Penn Street rights-of-way. Coordination with the landowner will be required to design a pedestrian crossing of the cemetery's South Elm Avenue entrance drive. To provide access for residents along Centre Avenue, the Borough could convert the intersection of Centre and Elm Avenues into a three-way stop and provide crosswalks.

BICYCLE ACCESSIBILITY

In order to facilitate the **Bucks County Bicycle Plan** and to promote Borough multi-modal accessibility, dedicated bicycle routes are needed for access to parks and the proposed multi-use Newtown Creek North/South Projects and Newtown Rail Trail. The Borough should coordinate with Newtown Township and the County to connect to regional destinations including Council Rock North High School, Tyler State Park, Bucks County Community College, Washington Crossing State Park and the Delaware & Lehigh Trail, by way of the following proposed major bicycle routes:

- **Lincoln Avenue:** Connects points north of the Borough on Linton Hill Road to Pickering Field, Linton Memorial Park, and the proposed Newtown Rail Trail. The Borough can coordinate with Newtown Township to continue the bike route north along Linton Hill Road toward the proposed County bicycle route along Washington Crossing Road.
- **Washington Avenue:** Connects points east and west of the Borough to the Newtown Trail and the proposed Newtown Creek North/South projects. Coordination with Newtown Township would extend the bike route along Swamp Road to Council Rock North High School, Tyler State Park, and Bucks County Community College. The bike route can also connect to the proposed County bike route on Sycamore Street/Washington Crossing Road/Buck Road.

- **Frost Lane:** Connects County Bike Routes on Linton Hill Road with those on Washington Crossing Road, North Sycamore Street, and Durham Road via the proposed multi-use trail and bridge. Newtown Township can extend the route east of Lincoln Avenue for access to Goodnoe Elementary School and Roberts Ridge Park.

A. IMPLEMENTING BIKE ROUTES

Proposed Newtown Borough bike routes have shallow building setbacks, on-street parking, and narrow roadways that would not accommodate dedicated bicycle lanes. Where possible, road striping could separate vehicle travel lanes from the road shoulder, where bicyclists would travel outside of the flow of traffic. PennDOT recommends providing minimum 4-foot-wide shoulders, though Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) notes⁴ that 6-foot shoulders provide cyclists adequate maneuvering space without conflicting with passing vehicles. Where separate shoulders are not feasible, sharrow pavement markings and “share the road” signage should be implemented to alert drivers to bicycle traffic.

Because Washington Avenue is a state-owned road, the Borough will need to coordinate with PennDOT to implement bicycle improvements. Through the Bike-Friendly Resurfacing Program (www.dvrpc.org/transportation/bicycle/bikefriendlyresurfacing), PennDOT would install bicycle signage and pavement markings as part of scheduled re-surfacing projects, provided the Borough agrees to maintain the bicycle improvements.

B. CONNECTIONS TO OPEN SPACE

Providing safe, convenient, and attractive connections between bike routes and open space will promote Newtown as a bicyclist-friendly destination and encourage increased visitation to the Borough. Of these, the connection between the Lincoln Avenue bike route and the Newtown Rail Trail would be the most significant. The Borough should work with the County and SEPTA to design bicycle access to the trail, including trail and roadway crossings, wayfinding, and site furnishings that establish a compelling trailhead destination that is well-integrated with the rest of the Borough. Amenities such as bike racks, repair stations, and fountains for refilling water bottles should also be provided at parks along the proposed bike routes.

C. WAYFINDING

Additional signage is recommended to highlight bicycle routes and promote their use. The Borough should coordinate with Newtown Township and the County to design “Bucks County Bike Route” or “Greater Newtown Bike Route” markers that enable wayfinding and alert road and trail users to bicycle traffic.

⁴ *Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, Lesson 14: Shared Roadways*, FHWA-HRT-05-111, 2006, retrieved from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05085/chapt14.cfm>

PART THREE – PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Given the background described in Part One, and candidate properties identified in Part Two, this section discusses various approaches to adding public open space in Newtown Borough. A number of different acquisition strategies are described, followed by the plan’s prioritized recommendations. Many of the possibilities require coordination with the surrounding Newtown Township. The plan then describes potential funding sources.

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE

In order to protect open space and lands on which the Borough has a resource conservation, recreation, or public accessibility interest, there are a number of legal and regulatory options:

A. FEE SIMPLE PURCHASE

The most straightforward method of securing open space protection is outright purchase of the property by the Borough. This method gives Newtown Borough absolute control over the use and conservation of the property. Fee simple purchase requires a willing and motivated seller, and adequate financial resources on the part of the municipality to complete the agreement of sale.

In rare cases, when the need for public accommodation, resource protection, or other public purpose is acute, properties can be acquired by municipalities under Eminent Domain, which does not require the consent of the owner. An appraisal is required so that the current owner is compensated for the property’s fair market value.

B. CONSERVATION AND ACCESS EASEMENTS

Conservation easements place restrictions on a property against development and other activities in the interest of promoting environmental resource stewardship and protection. These typically involve monitoring and maintenance agreements to assure that the conservation requirements and objectives are met. Conservation easements are usually held by conservation organizations, but could also be held by municipalities, institutions, or even individuals.

Access easements grant rights of access to the general public or to specific parties for specified activities. In the case of Newtown, this would most likely entail public access by trail for multi-modal accessibility and/or passive recreational pursuits, and the easement would most likely run in favor of the Borough.

Easements require a landowner to willingly relinquish certain rights to outside parties. Often the landowner is entitled to tax benefits that partially compensate for the value of rights relinquished.

C. LEASE AGREEMENT

A lease agreement gives an outside party specific use and access rights to an owner’s property for a specific period of time and an agreed upon fee. An example is the Newtown Rail Trail, for which Bucks County is entering a 30 year lease with SEPTA for public trail access on their right-of-way.

D. LAND USE LICENSE AGREEMENT

A land use license agreement is similar to a lease, but may or may not involve a fee for the right of use or access. Unlike lease agreements, land use licenses are revocable by the landowner. Because absolute authority lies with the landowner, this is the least secure method of preserving land or public accessibility.

E. ZONING ORDINANCE RESOURCE PROTECTION

Where the interest of resource protection is paramount, the Borough could undertake revisions to its environmental protection zoning and, in particular, riparian buffers. The zoning ordinance currently requires a 20 foot area of no building, grading, or disturbance along Newtown Creek, with an exception for trails and path connections to adjacent properties.

In order to maintain natural riparian buffer areas of adequate width to promote healthy streams, the Borough should revise its riparian buffer regulations to require 100 feet of width along Newtown Creek. This would effectively protect any undeveloped lands along stream corridors in the future. If desired, Newtown could create phased buffers with higher level use and land cover restrictions closer to the stream. In recognition that many of the riparian buffers are extensively developed, any redevelopment of those areas should be required to introduce Best Management Practices for water quality, infiltration, and habitat to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of prior development.

The Old Skunky stream corridor is highly developed and divided into small, private lots. Two sections of the stream – north and south of Chancellor Street, and between the Newtown railroad lot and the Newtown Station townhouse development – have been channeled into underground pipes. In recognition of these constraints, the Borough could require narrower riparian buffers along the portions of Old Skunky that are not buried. 25-foot riparian buffers are recommended to provide sediment trapping, erosion mitigation, and flood reduction benefits.

F. OFFICIAL MAP

The PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) authorizes local governments to adopt an Official Map to facilitate acquisition of private properties for public purposes. When a property is designated on an Official Map, prior to any change of ownership or development, the municipality has one year to exercise its option to purchase the property for appraised fair market value. In accordance with Section 406 of the MPC,

The governing body may fix the time for which streets, watercourses and public grounds on the official map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. However, the reservation for public grounds shall lapse and become void one year after an owner of such property has submitted a written notice to the governing body announcing his intentions to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation, or has made formal application for an official permit to build a structure for private use, unless the governing body shall have acquired the property or begun condemnation proceedings to acquire such property before the end of the year.

Because public acquisition of private land is a potentially controversial matter, Official Map designation should only be used where there is a serious and specific public interest in the property.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages represent a summary of the recommendations identified throughout this document. To best implement the recommendations to achieve recreational facilities and/or ecological and environmental improvement, each recommendation is followed by a 1, 2, 3, or 4 to indicate its relative priority as follows:

- 1- Highest Priority- The Borough should actively pursue funding and/or partnership opportunities in the short-term to accomplish this recommendation.
- 2- Medium Priority- An important item, but may require other actions before it can be realized.
- 3- Lower Priority- An item that should be pursued when opportunities arise.
- 4- Ongoing- This is an item that requires ongoing attention over time.

NEWTOWN CREEK NORTH

1. **Frost Lane Multi-Use Trail**- Construct an 8-foot minimum width multi-use trail and bridge connection between the intersection of North State Street/Frost Lane and North Sycamore Street/Durham Road in Newtown Township. **(2)**
2. **Frost Lane Bicycle Route**- Extend a proposed bicycle route along Frost Lane to its continuation along Durham Road. **(2)**
3. **Pedestrian Bridge Restoration**- Repair and reopen the bridge from Edgeboro Drive/North State Street to North Sycamore Street/ Silo Drive along with obtaining easements for a walking path connection to provide access between the Borough and Newtown Township. **(2)**
4. **Sidewalk Extension**- Plan and construct this missing pedestrian connection along North State Street/Edgeboro Drive to Frost Lane. **(2)**
5. **Riparian Buffer Plantings along Newtown Creek**- encourage property owners to undertake restoration and revegetation along individual portions of Newtown Creek. This could include educational information to property owners and pursuing grants for native plants in partnership with property owners. **(1)(4)**
6. **Pedestrian Connection from Newtown Common to Steeple View**- develop detailed designs for this by-pass connection through downtown. **(1)**
7. **Greene Street Bridge Connection**- pursue funding and partnerships to reestablish this historic connection for pedestrians. **(2)**
8. **Multi-use Trail through Municipal Parking Lot**- further evaluate the potential for extending the multi-use trail through the municipal parking lot and pursue grant funding. **(2)**

NEWTOWN CREEK SOUTH

1. **Steeple View**- work with the developer to integrate the following greenway and path recommendations **(1)**:
 - Path should be 8-10 feet width, finished with an appropriate trail surface.
 - A decorative crosswalk at the end of the path at Centre Avenue should be provided.
 - Path should extend to the property boundary with Buttonwood Farms.
 - Facilities such as bike repair stations, seating, and bike racks should be incorporated in the development and along the trail.
 - If special signage is used for the pathway through town, it should continue through Steeple View.
 - Native riparian buffer plantings should be provided.
 - Incorporate strategic points for views of or access to Newtown Creek.

2. Nature Preserve (1)

- Pursue discussions with the owners of the vacant Delta School parcels regarding potential acquisition of parcels or easements on the portions of the property not suitable for development.
- Adopt an Official Map identifying the Delta School parcels as high-priority acquisition properties.
- Pursue funding opportunities for acquisition of Delta School parcels.
- Pursue discussions with the owners of the Adamusko Pugh property regarding potential trail easements on the portion of the property not suitable for development.
- Once key parcels are acquired for the nature preserve, develop a detailed plan for improvements to include the following:
 - Nature trails that connect to the multi-use trail and facilitate exploration of the preserve.
 - Ecological restoration including invasive plant removal and plantings of native species to enhance woodland and meadow habitats.
 - Native riparian buffer plantings along Newtown Creek and Old Skunky; shrubs and/or meadow vegetation should be utilized within the power line right-of-way.
 - Seating areas along trails, Newtown Creek, and Old Skunky with interpretive signage.
 - Stream access and/or viewing areas along trails.
 - Wayfinding.

3. Connections to Proposed Newtown Rail Trail (3)

- Conduct an outreach process to the property owners potentially affected by the trail connection alternatives to gauge interest and willingness to work with the Borough on potential trail alignments and potential easements.
- Coordinate with Newtown Township regarding potential connection alternatives.
- Based upon feedback from affected property owners, consider the feasibility of the alignment options and consider a preferred alternative.

NEWTOWN RAIL TRAIL

- **CVS (GATOR NEWTOWN LLC) (1)**
 - The Borough should work with the landowner to consider subdivision or easement of the parcel. Coordination with the County and SEPTA will be required to implement trail connections to the Newtown Rail Trail.
- Advocate that the County prioritize design and completion of the NRT to the terminus point identified by Newtown Borough. **(1)(4)**
- Advocate for a tunnel structure under Sterling Street designed in accordance with the guidelines of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. **(4)**
- The Borough should also coordinate with the County on the following additional considerations for the Newtown section of the NRT **(1)(4)**:
 - Appropriate trail surface for bicyclists and users with wheelchairs as well as for maintenance considerations.
 - Coordination with the County, SEPTA, and PennDOT is required to provide a road crossing of State Street / S.R. 413, with all applicable pedestrian and bicycle signalization and pavement markings.
 - Road crossings of Lincoln Avenue and Penn Street with signalization and pavement markings.
 - Wayfinding between the NRT and Borough open space.

- Vegetative buffering / fencing as needed between the trail and adjacent residences.

BOROUGH PARK IMPROVEMENTS

1. NEWTOWN RAIL STATION SITE (1)

- Identify the SEPTA site on the official map as a priority property for acquisition for public use in the future.
- Conduct an in-depth study of the SEPTA property for priority uses at that location.

2. Pickering Field Playground (1)

- Conduct an assessment of Pickering Field’s facilities to prioritize additional amenities that could be integrated into the park to meet a broader range of community needs.
- Pursue grant funding to assist in the development of additional amenities.

3. Patriots Park (1)

- Implement wayfinding signage to direct visitors to the park from State Street.

CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENTS

1. Implement development standards that require sidewalk infill on streets with sidewalk gaps, as well as consider incentive programs that encourage landowners to install sidewalks. **(3)(4)**

2. N LINCOLN AVENUE-N ELM AVENUE CONNECTOR (1)

- Coordinate with Newtown Artesian Water Company and adjacent property owners to obtain easements for a walkway between North Lincoln Avenue and North Elm Avenue.
- Upon acquisition of the easement, construct a minimum 5-foot-wide walkway between North Lincoln Avenue and North Elm Avenue with associated fencing and/or vegetation.

3. FROST LANE SIDEWALK (1)

- Construct a 1,250-foot sidewalk along the north side of Frost Lane between North Lincoln Avenue and Edgeboro Drive.

4. NEWTOWN CEMETERY SIDEWALK (1)

- Construct a 1,130-foot sidewalk along Newtown Cemetery’s (parcel 29-010-036) frontages on South Elm Avenue and Penn Street in Newtown Borough to create additional pedestrian connections.
- To provide access for residents along Centre Avenue, the Borough could convert the intersection of Centre and Elm Avenues into a three-way stop and provide crosswalks.

5. BICYCLE ACCESSIBILITY & IMPLEMENTATION OF BIKE ROUTES (4)

- The Borough should coordinate with Newtown Township and the County to connect to regional destinations.
- Where possible, road striping could separate vehicle travel lanes from the road shoulder, where bicyclists would travel outside of the flow of traffic. Where separate shoulders are not feasible, sharrow pavement markings and “share the road” signage should be implemented to alert drivers to bicycle traffic.

6. CONNECTIONS TO OPEN SPACE (3)(4)

- To promote Newtown as a bicyclist-friendly destination and encourage increased visitation to the Borough, connections between bike routes and open space should be developed. In particular, the connection between the Lincoln Avenue bike route and the Newtown Rail Trail.
- The Borough should work with the County and SEPTA to design bicycle access to the trail, including trail and roadway crossings, wayfinding, and site furnishings that establish a compelling trailhead destination that is well-integrated with the rest of the Borough.

7. **WAYFINDING (3)(4)**

- Additional signage is recommended to highlight bicycle routes and promote their use. The Borough should coordinate with Newtown Township and the County to design “Bucks County Bike Route” or “Greater Newtown Bike Route” markers that enable wayfinding and alert road and trail users to bicycle traffic.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Official Map (1)**
 - Adopt an official map of key properties that the Borough identifies as priorities for acquisition to be able to fully implement the recommendations of this plan.
- **NRT to Lincoln Avenue Connection (Fabian Mill Property) (3)**
 - Extend a 5-foot pedestrian walkway from South Lincoln Avenue across to the NRT.
- **Newtown Artesian Water Company Property (2)**
 - Identify the front portion of the Newtown Artesian Water Company property on an official map as potential open space.
 - Contact representatives of the Newtown Artesian Water Company regarding the possibility of preserving the front portion of the site for public open space and regarding a pedestrian connection along the southern boundary of the property.
 - If deemed feasible, develop a plan for the space.
- **State Street Pocket Park (3)**
 - Consider adding the green space of 35 S. State Street to an official map for potential acquisition as a pocket park along State Street.
 - Contact the owner about possible acquisition for a pocket park.
 - If feasible, pursue grant funding to acquire the property and develop a plan for the park.
- **Barclay House Pocket Park (3)**
 - Consider adding 330 South State Street to an official map for potential acquisition as a pocket park along South State Street.
 - Contact the owner about possible acquisition for a pocket park.
 - If feasible, pursue grant funding to acquire the property and develop a plan for the park.
- **Riparian Buffer Enhancements- (1)(4)**
 - The Borough should undertake invasive plant eradication and implement buffer plantings consisting of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous meadow species on Borough properties along Newtown Creek.
 - The Borough should encourage property owners to eradicate invasive plants and reduce the amount of lawn adjacent to the stream, and instead provide native plantings.
 - The Borough should work with Newtown Station to naturalize the stormwater basin at the corner of Centre Avenue and Watson Mill Lane with native meadow vegetation.
 - Encourage land owners to implement stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in addition to riparian buffer plantings. A municipal clearinghouse that informs residents and connects them with sources of funding and technical assistance is recommended.
 - Where feasible, daylight buried stream segments and implement riparian buffer enhancements.
 - The Borough and/or conservation entities should educate landowners on best practices to protect water quality.
 - Signage and/or storm drain marking should be implemented to prevent dumping and spills from above-ground uses into the underground stream.

FUNDING

Funding and Assistance Resources

| Funding Program | Purpose/Description | Eligibility | Link |
|---|--|--|---|
| Facilities | | | |
| Non-motorized Trails | For the acquisition, planning, development, rehabilitation, or maintenance of designated routes on land or water for non-motorized recreation activities. This includes the purchase of equipment for trail construction or maintenance. | | https://www.bcrerants.dcmr.nj.gov/ |
| Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program | For the development, rehabilitation and improvements to public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails and river conservation. | For-Profit: Businesses; Municipalities; Councils of Government; Authorized Organizations; Institutions of Higher Education; Watershed Organizations | https://dec.state.nj.gov/bcr/programs/trails-and-recreation-program.aspx |
| Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program | The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation, recreational trail program projects, and safe routes to school projects. | Local governments; Regional transportation authorities; Transit agencies; Natural resource or public land agencies; School districts, local education agencies, or schools; Tribal governments | https://spartan.nj.gov/Planning/SPASRSet-Aside/Pages/default.aspx |
| Regional Trails Program | Provides planning assistance and financial support to trail developers, counties, municipalities and nonprofit organizations to complete the Circuit, Greater Philadelphia's 800-plus-mile network of multi-use trails. | Trail developers; Counties; Municipalities; Nonprofit organizations | https://www.dvrc.nj.gov/Trails/RegionalTrailsProgram/ |
| People for Bikes Community Grant | Supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. | Nonprofits with a focus on bicycling, active transportation or community development | https://www.peopleforbikes.org/guidelines |
| Land & Open Space | | | |
| Service Community Assistance in Conservation and Outdoor Recreation | To improve parks, establish trails, access rivers, and protect special places. | State and local agencies; Tribes; Nonprofits; Citizen Groups | https://www.nj.gov/our-services/ |
| Service Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants | The State Side of the LWCF provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. | State and local agencies | https://www.nj.gov/su/dec/awcf/state-side.html |
| Community Recreation and Conservation Planning | For future land acquisition, development and management of parks, recreational facilities, critical habitat, open space, natural areas, greenways, and river/watershed corridors. Look into small community grants, which are oriented to municipalities with populations less than 5,000. | | https://www.bcrerants.dcmr.nj.gov/ |
| State and Regional Partnerships | Help build local, county, regional and statewide capacity to better develop and manage recreation and park facilities and to promote the conservation of natural and heritage resources through plan implementation, education and training. | | https://www.bcrerants.dcmr.nj.gov/ |
| Peer and Circuit Rider Grants | To help municipalities improve their park, recreation and conservation services through a collaborative process. Projects are accomplished through contracts with experienced park, recreation and conservation professionals from nearby communities who will work closely with local leaders. | Municipalities; Counties; Multi-municipal partnerships; Councils of governments | https://www.bcrerants.dcmr.nj.gov/ |
| Land Acquisition and Conservation | These projects involve the purchase and/or donation of land for park and recreation areas, greenways, critical habitat areas and/or open space. | | https://www.bcrerants.dcmr.nj.gov/ |
| Multimodal Transportation Fund | The Multimodal Transportation Fund provides grants to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of the commonwealth. | Municipalities; Councils of government; Businesses; Economic development organizations; Public transportation agencies; Ports-air/freight | https://dec.state.nj.gov/programs/transportation-fund/ |
| Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) | Act 88 also established a dedicated Multimodal Transportation Fund that stabilizes funding for ports and rail freight, increases aviation investments, establishes dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and allows targeted funding for priority investments in any mode. | | https://www.oemmd.nj.gov/PortAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/Pages/def |

| Funding Program | Purpose/Description | Eligibility | Link |
|---|--|--|---|
| Riparian Forest Buffer | Provides financial assistance to identify locations in need of riparian forest buffers and to design, establish, monitor, and provide short-term maintenance for these buffers. | Municipalities; Municipal agencies; Nonprofits | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/riparian-forest-buffers |
| Tree Planting Grants | Aimed at providing assistance for tree plantings in community and urban areas along streets, parks, and other publicly accessible areas. | Municipalities or nonprofits working within the Commonwealth of PA | https://treeplanting.org/grants-programs |
| Urban Riparian Buffer | Aimed at providing assistance for urban riparian buffer tree plantings adjacent to community and urban waterways. | Municipalities or nonprofits working within the Commonwealth of PA | https://treeplanting.org/grants-programs |
| Community Forestry Management Grant | Aimed at providing assistance for tree care management plans, tree inventories, pruning, short term employment (including internships), municipal nursery design, tree risk abatement, educational workshops, webinars, urban wood utilizations, ordinance development, and other aspects of urban forestry. | Municipalities or nonprofits working within the Commonwealth of PA | https://treeplanting.org/grants-programs |
| Watershed Restoration and Protection Program (WRPP) | To restore, and maintain restored stream reaches impaired by the uncontrolled discharge of nonpoint source polluted runoff, and ultimately to remove these streams from the Department of Environmental Protection's Impaired Waters List. | Municipalities; Councils of Governments; Authorized Organization; Institution of Higher Education; Watershed Organization | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/watershed-restoration-program |
| Watershed Grants | Grants for local watershed-based conservation projects. These projects can include: watershed assessments and development of watershed restoration or protection plans; implementation of watershed restoration or protection projects (stormwater management wetlands, riparian buffer fencing and planting, streambank restoration (especially FGM), agricultural BMPs); construction of mine drainage remediation systems; reclamation of previously mined lands; and demonstration/education projects and outreach activities. | Counties; Authorities and other municipalities; County conservation districts; Watershed organizations; Organizations involved in the restoration and protection of Pennsylvania's environment | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/watershed-grants |
| Growing Greener Plus | The three programs covered under the Growing Greener Plus Grants Program are: Growing Greener Watershed Restoration and Protection; Surface Mining, Conservation and Reclamation Act (SM/CRA) Bond Forfeiture; and Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Set-Aside grants. | Incorporated watershed association; County or municipality; County conservation district; Council of governments | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/growing-greener-plus |
| Environmental Education Grants Program | The Environmental Education Grants Program (EE Grant Program) was developed to support and strengthen environmental education in Pennsylvania. The EE Grants were established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993 and mandate that five percent of all pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually be set aside for environmental education. | Public and private schools; Colleges and universities; County conservation districts; Nonprofits; Conservation and education organizations; Municipalities; Municipal authorities; Businesses. | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/environmental-education-grants-program |
| Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund | To conserve and restore natural areas, corridors and waterways on public and private lands that support native fish, wildlife and plants, and to contribute to the vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed. | Community-based nonprofits; Government agencies | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/delaware-watershed-conservation-fund |
| Delaware River Restoration Fund | To help community-based nonprofits and government agencies work together to clean up and restore polluted waters and improve habitat for target species, including eastern brook trout and river herring. | Community-based nonprofits; Government agencies | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/delaware-river-restoration-fund |
| Planning Grant | To help develop a conservation plan that identifies the threats to the health of local coldwater ecosystems that have naturally reproducing trout as well as the opportunities for habitat restoration and conservation within those watersheds. | Watershed associations; Conservancies; Conservation districts; Municipalities; Local chapters of Trout Unlimited | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/planning-grant |
| Implementation Grant | To provide funding for projects recommended in a completed conservation plan or other approved plan such as a Rivers Conservation Plan. | Watershed associations; Conservancies; Conservation districts; Municipalities; Local chapters of Trout Unlimited | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/implementation-grant |
| PECO Green Regions | Recognizing that open space in our communities is crucial to the quality of our lives, PECO has committed to supporting municipalities, recreational authorities and nonprofits in Southeastern Pennsylvania with their ongoing efforts to preserve, protect and improve public spaces. | Any township, borough, city, or regional recreational authority within PECO's service territory in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or York counties (eligible applicants must receive gas and/or electric service from PECO) | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/green-regions |
| George & William Martin Foundation | The focus of the George and William Martin Foundation is river and watershed conservation. | Organizations interested in preserving streams and wetlands. | https://www.gmfoundation.org |
| Local Municipalities | The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) ARPA provides Pennsylvania's local governments with resources to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding can be used for a variety of municipal priorities as long as they are consistent with the intent of the funding. | Local municipalities | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/local-municipalities |
| PA Public Utility Service Fund | The PA Public Utility Service Fund (PUSF) provides Pennsylvania's local governments with resources to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding can be used for a variety of municipal priorities as long as they are consistent with the intent of the funding. | Municipalities. Eligible projects must be owned and operated by a public utility. | https://www.peco.com/energy/conservation/pa-public-utility-service-fund |

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC TABLES

TABLE 1: POPULATION PROJECTIONS (2015-2045) FROM NEWTOWN BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

| Year | Population Projections |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 2010 | 2,248 |
| 2015 | 2,222 |
| 2020 | 2,284 |
| 2025 | 2,345 |
| 2030 | 2,407 |
| 2035 | 2,461 |
| 2040 | 2,505 |
| 2045 | 2,543 |

Sources: U.S. Census 2010, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (2010-2018) FROM NEWTOWN BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

| Characteristics | 2010 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Population | 2,248 | 1,953 |
| Median Age (years) | 45.4 | 51.9 |
| Households ¹ | 965 | 918 |
| Family Households ² | 599 | 551 |
| Married-Couple Households | 505 | 507 |
| Nonfamily Households ³ | 366 | 367 |
| Households Living Alone | 313 | 343 |
| Average Household Size | 2.33 | 2.13 |
| Average Family Size | 3.0 | 2.8 |

Source: U.S. Census 2010, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2014-2018

¹ A household is an occupied housing unit.

² A family household is a household with two or more individuals related by marriage, birth, or adoption.

³ A nonfamily household is a household with a group of unrelated individuals or a person living alone.

TABLE 3: CHANGE IN AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010-2018) FOR NEWTOWN BOROUGH, NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP, AND BUCKS COUNTY. FROM NEWTOWN BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

| Age Cohorts | 2010 | | | | | | 2018 | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Newtown Borough | | Newtown Township | | Bucks County | | Newtown Borough | | Newtown Township | | Bucks County | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Under 5 | 93 | 4.1% | 1,096 | 5.7% | 34,150 | 5.5% | 44 | 2.3% | 968 | 4.9% | 30,389 | 4.9% |
| 5 to 9 | 125 | 5.6% | 1,281 | 6.6% | 38,919 | 6.2% | 80 | 4.1% | 1,074 | 5.5% | 35,228 | 5.6% |
| 10 to 14 | 177 | 7.9% | 1,483 | 7.7% | 43,070 | 6.9% | 103 | 5.3% | 1,278 | 6.5% | 39,343 | 6.3% |
| 15 to 19 | 117 | 5.2% | 1,310 | 6.8% | 41,724 | 6.7% | 150 | 7.7% | 1,289 | 6.6% | 39,793 | 6.4% |
| 20 to 24 | 108 | 4.8% | 777 | 4.0% | 32,984 | 5.3% | 54 | 2.8% | 837 | 4.3% | 36,291 | 5.8% |
| 25 to 34 | 222 | 9.9% | 1,852 | 9.6% | 66,297 | 10.6% | 151 | 7.7% | 1,575 | 8.0% | 68,936 | 11.0% |
| 35 to 44 | 266 | 11.8% | 2,748 | 14.2% | 83,959 | 13.4% | 208 | 10.7% | 2,529 | 12.9% | 73,286 | 11.7% |
| 45 to 54 | 412 | 18.3% | 3,756 | 19.5% | 109,090 | 17.4% | 343 | 17.6% | 3,317 | 16.9% | 95,669 | 15.3% |
| 55 to 59 | 218 | 9.7% | 1,672 | 8.7% | 46,067 | 7.4% | 178 | 9.1% | 1,885 | 9.6% | 52,165 | 8.3% |
| 60 to 64 | 199 | 8.9% | 1,148 | 5.9% | 37,770 | 6.0% | 208 | 10.7% | 1,651 | 8.4% | 44,949 | 7.2% |
| 65 to 74 | 168 | 7.5% | 1,108 | 5.7% | 47,259 | 7.6% | 289 | 14.8% | 1,926 | 9.8% | 62,289 | 9.9% |
| 75 to 84 | 91 | 4.0% | 671 | 3.5% | 30,573 | 4.9% | 81 | 4.1% | 777 | 4.0% | 33,076 | 5.3% |
| 85 and up | 52 | 2.3% | 397 | 2.1% | 13,387 | 2.1% | 64 | 3.2% | 500 | 2.6% | 14,956 | 2.4% |
| Total | 2,248 | 100.0% | 19,299 | 100.0% | 625,249 | 100.0% | 1,953 | 100.0% | 19,606 | 100.0% | 626,370 | 100.0% |

Source: U.S. Census 2010, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2014-2018

TABLE 4: EXISTING NEWTOWN BOROUGH PARKS AND TOTAL ACREAGE

| Newtown Borough Parks | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Park Name | Acreage |
| Patriots Park | 0.15 |
| Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park | 0.69 |
| Linton Memorial Park | 0.5 |
| Newtown Common | 0.18 |
| Pickering Field | 3.14 |
| Total | 4.66 |

TABLE 5: NEWTOWN BOROUGH OPEN SPACE ASSETS

†ACREAGE PRESENTED AS A RANGE DUE TO IN-PROGRESS STEEPLE VIEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

| Borough Open Space Assets | Area in Acres |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Borough Parks | 4.7 |
| Community Association Open Space | 8.3-8.8† |
| Institutional Open Space | 6.9 |
| Total | 19.9-20.4 |

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ASSETS

PARKS

- **Core Creek County Park** is a 1,200-acre park centered on the 175-acre Lake Luxembourg reservoir in Middletown Township. The park features sports fields and courts, paved and natural trails, boat rentals and boating programs, fishing docks, a dog park, playgrounds, picnic facilities, and natural areas. The park is 4 miles from Newtown Borough.
- **Tyler State Park** encompasses 1,711 acres along the Neshaminy Creek, with a boat rental facility and areas for fishing. The park also includes 25 miles of trails for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding; picnic areas; a 36-hole disc golf course; educational programming; a historic mill building that has been converted into a community theater; and an arts center within a converted barn. Tyler State Park is 1.5 miles from Newtown Borough. The park can also be accessed on foot via the Newtown Trail.
- **Churchville Nature Center** is a County facility located within a 65-acre nature preserve on the Churchville Reservoir in Northampton Township. It features gardens, history and nature exhibits, trails, a natural playground, and a picnic grove. The Nature Center is 5.4 miles from the Borough.
- **Chandler Field** is a 7.1-acre Newtown Township park with three baseball fields, concessions, restrooms, and trailhead parking for Newtown Trail. The park is home to Council Rock Newtown Athletic Association, a youth baseball organization serving Newtown Borough, Newtown Township, and a portion of Upper Makefield Township. Chandler Field is contiguous with Carl Sedia Park. It is less than 1 mile from Newtown Borough, and can be accessed on foot via sidewalks along Sycamore Street.
- **Carl Sedia Park** is a 4.3-acre Newtown Township park with a gazebo, picnic area, and a walking trail. The park is contiguous with Chandler Field, and is less than a 1-mile walk from Newtown Borough.
- **Roberts Ridge Park** is a 22.8-acre park owned by Newtown Township that is adjacent to Goodnoe Elementary School. It features a playground for ages 2-12, picnic areas, and a paved walking trail. Pedestrian access to the park is via the Newtown Trail along Dolington Road as well as a sidewalk along Frost Lane. The park shares a vehicle entrance with Goodnoe Elementary School along Frost Lane.
- **Goodnoe Elementary School** encompasses 17.3 acres in Newtown Township adjacent to the Borough. It includes two playgrounds, a baseball field, soccer field, three half basketball courts, and trail connection to the adjacent Roberts Ridge Park. Pedestrian access from the Borough is via sidewalks along Andrew and Elm Avenues, or via the Newtown Trail in Newtown Township.
- **Silver Lake Park** is an 18-acre park owned by Newtown Township. Facilities consist of a paved loop trail with benches overlooking Silver Lake at the park's west end. The park is accessible from Upper Silver Lake Road via the Newtown Trail, and from a gravel parking lot off of Campus Drive. The park is 2.2 miles from Newtown Borough.
- **Washington Crossing National Cemetery** is a 205-acre military cemetery in Upper Makefield Township. It includes commemorative gardens and memorials. The cemetery is 3.1 miles from Newtown Borough.
- **The Garden of Reflection 9-11 Memorial** is a 2.5 acre park situated within the 62-acre Memorial Park in Lower Makefield Township. The park includes a spiral walking path, twin fountains within a reflection pool, a wall of remembrance, gardens, flagpole, and fragments from the ruins of the World Trade Center. The memorial is 4.1 miles from Newtown Borough.
- **Washington Crossing Historic Park** is a state park and National Historic Landmark along the Delaware River. It is divided into two sections totaling 499 acres: a 100-acre Lower Park in Upper Makefield Township, and a 399-acre Upper Park in Solebury Township. The park includes the multi-use D&L Trail and other trails, picnic pavilions, soccer fields, and multiple historic buildings that feature educational

exhibits. The Lower Park is 5.7 miles from Newtown Borough, and the Upper Park is 9 miles from the Borough.

TRAILS

- **Newtown Trail** is a 3.7-mile trail owned by Newtown Township that connects Tyler State Park with Silver Lake Park and Roberts Ridge Park. The trail follows Green Lane in the state park to Council Rock North High School, where it follows sidewalks along Swamp Road and through Newtown Borough via Washington Avenue/ Newtown-Yardley Road. From there the trail diverges into two routes: an east-west route that follows Upper Silver Lake Road to Silver Lake Park, and a north-south route that follows Dolington Road to Roberts Ridge Park.
- **Delaware Canal State Park** is a 59-mile-long linear park that follows the historic Delaware Canal towpath between Easton and Bristol, PA. The towpath is part of the 165-mile, multi-use Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) corridor, a National Heritage Corridor and designated National Recreation Trail. Trail crossings of the Delaware River connect the D&L Trail with the 70-mile-long Delaware & Raritan (D&R) Canal State Park and Trail in New Jersey. Delaware Canal State Park and the D&L Trail can be accessed from Washington Crossing Historic Park.

CIRCUIT TRAILS AND THE EAST COAST GREENWAY

The Circuit is the Greater Philadelphia Region’s premier trail network, comprising nearly 1,000 miles of multi-use trails throughout southeastern PA and southern NJ. Both the D&L and D&R Trails are part of the Circuit. The D&L Trail also forms part of the East Coast Greenway, a walking and biking route that stretches 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida. The Circuit and the East Coast Greenway provide trail-side communities with recreational opportunities well beyond the Philadelphia region, creating a continuous trail corridor across 15 states.

Two additional Circuit trails are proposed that would connect Newtown with this regional recreation network:

- The **Newtown Rail Trail** (NRT) will follow the former SEPTA Regional Rail line into the heart of the Borough. When complete, the NRT will be 8.4 miles long, connecting Newtown Borough with the Pennypack Trail in Montgomery County, and providing access to Churchville Nature Center. The southernmost section from Bristol Road to County Line Road in Southampton Township was completed in December 2021. The Bristol Road trailhead for this section is 6.5 miles from Newtown. Bucks County proposes to extend the NRT to Sterling Street within the Borough, and to implement ramps to provide an at-grade trail access point at the intersection of Sterling Street and Lincoln Avenue. From there the County is investigating the following options to connect the trail to Linton Memorial Park:
 - Providing bike lanes along Lincoln Avenue to Penn Street; or
 - Continuing the NRT within the SEPTA rail ROW as a raised boardwalk to the park.
- The **Neshaminy Creek Greenway** will follow the Neshaminy Creek for 33 miles from Peace Valley County Park in New Britain Township to Neshaminy State Park in Bensalem, and will be part of the Circuit Trails network. The Greenway is proposed to incorporate existing trails in Tyler State Park. It is proposed to cross the Newtown Rail Trail east of Buck Road in Northampton Township. Two trail segments currently exist in Bensalem (7.4 miles from Newtown) and Doylestown (13.7 miles).