

Saucon Valley Rails to Trails

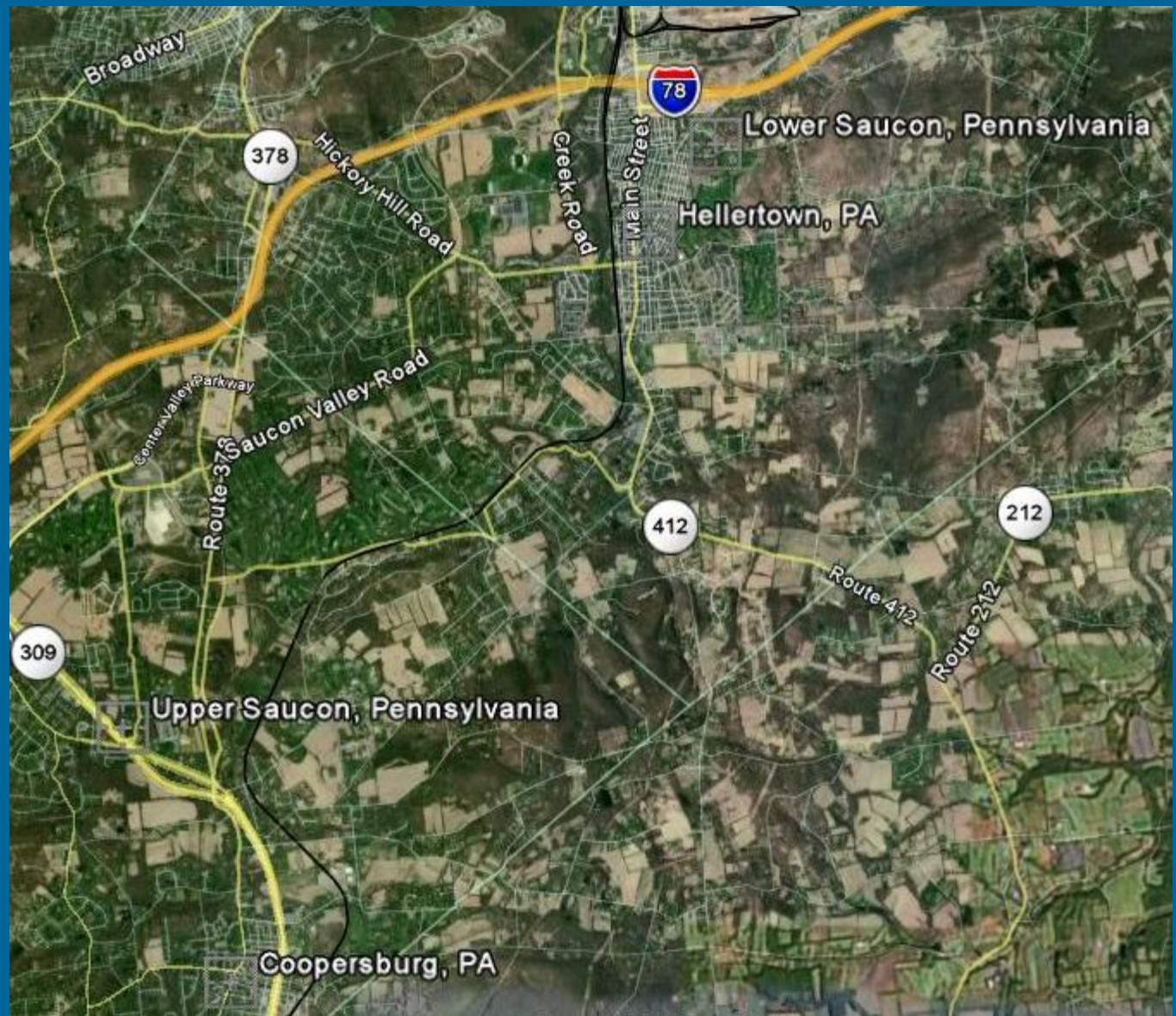
Prepared by
Boucher & James, Inc.
August 8, 2008

Proposed Project Background

- 8-mile trail
- Hellertown Borough, Lower Saucon Township, Upper Saucon Township, and Coopersburg Borough (Northampton and Lehigh Counties)
- Currently in talks with SEPTA



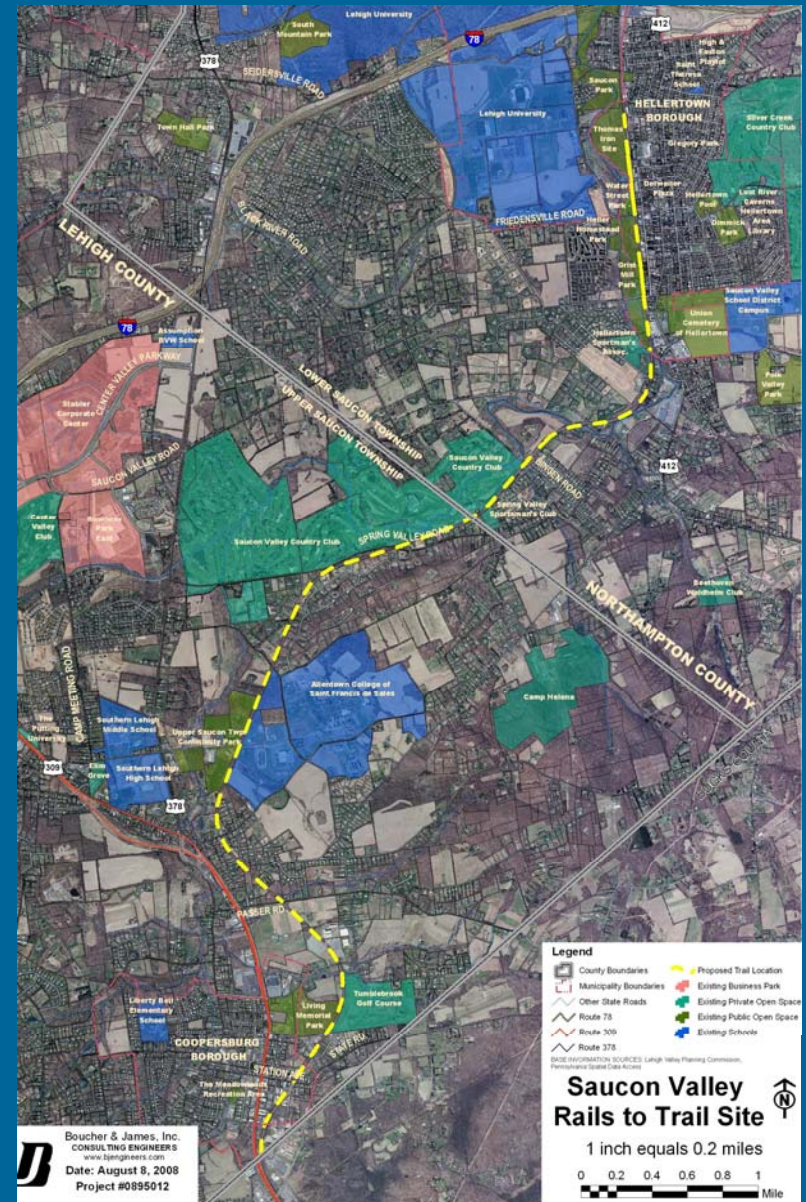
Regional Overview

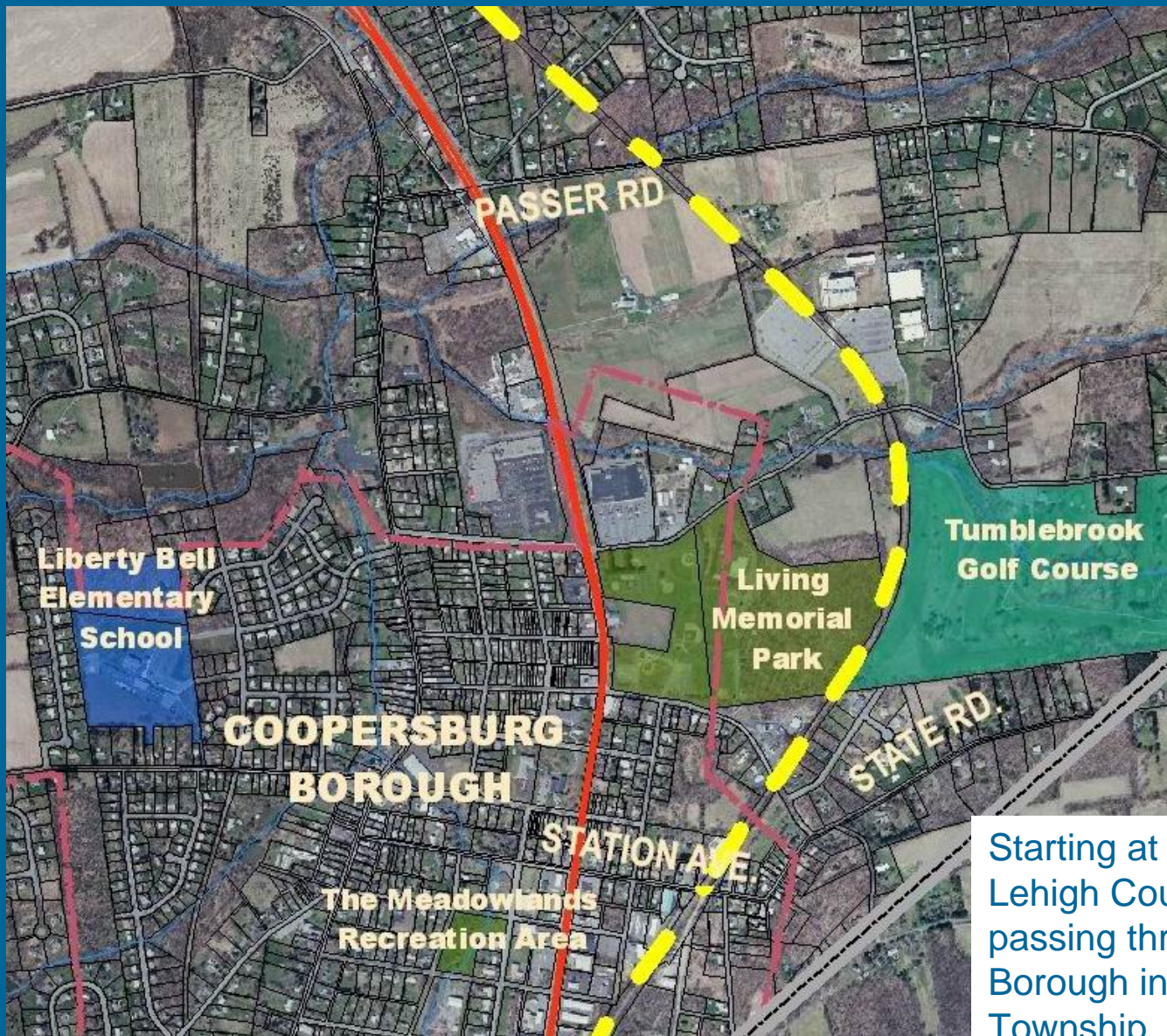


Conceptual Overview

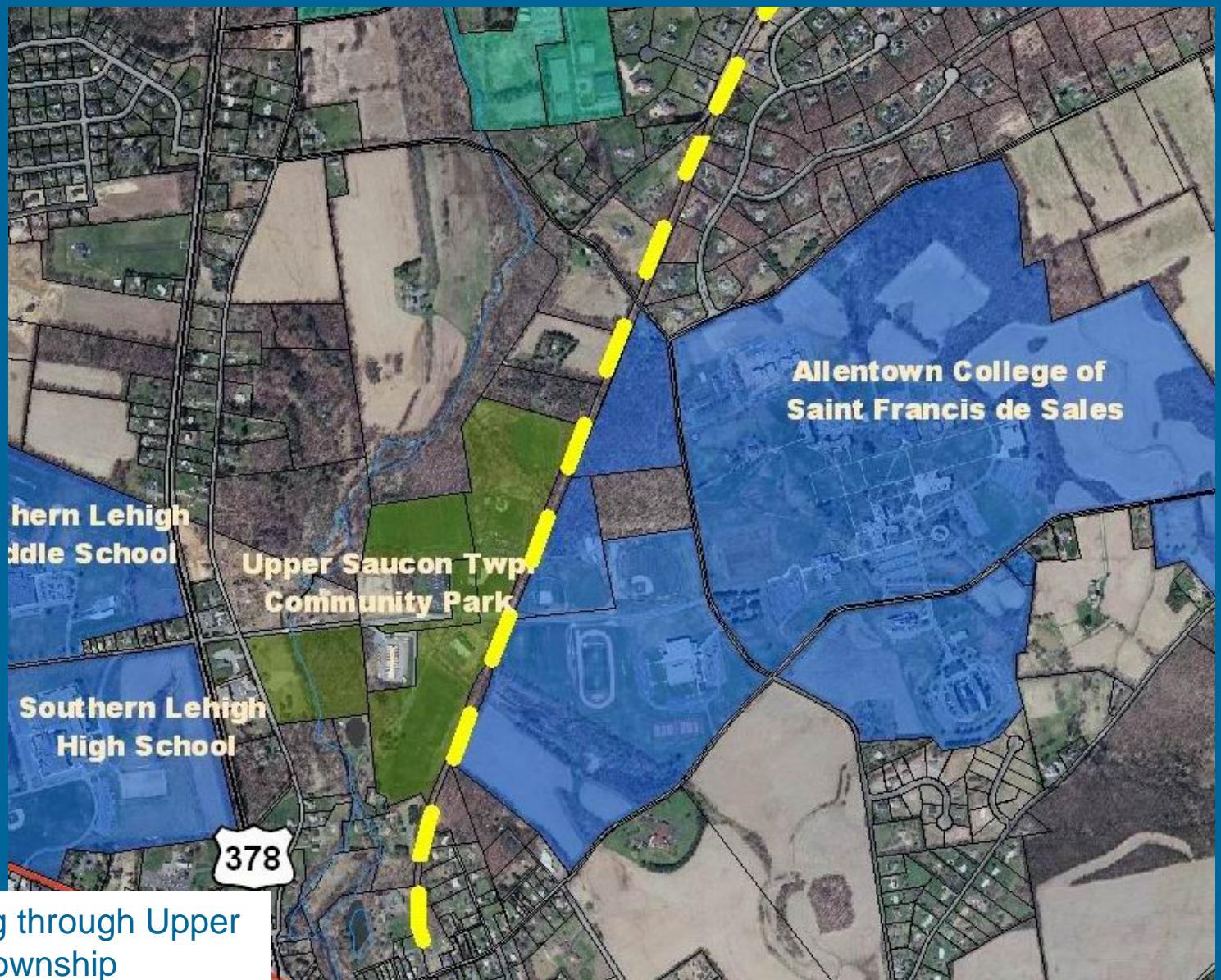
- Included with the proposed rail-trail on this map are:
 - Existing business parks
 - Existing private open space
 - Existing public open space
 - Existing schools and colleges

Demonstrates potential connections

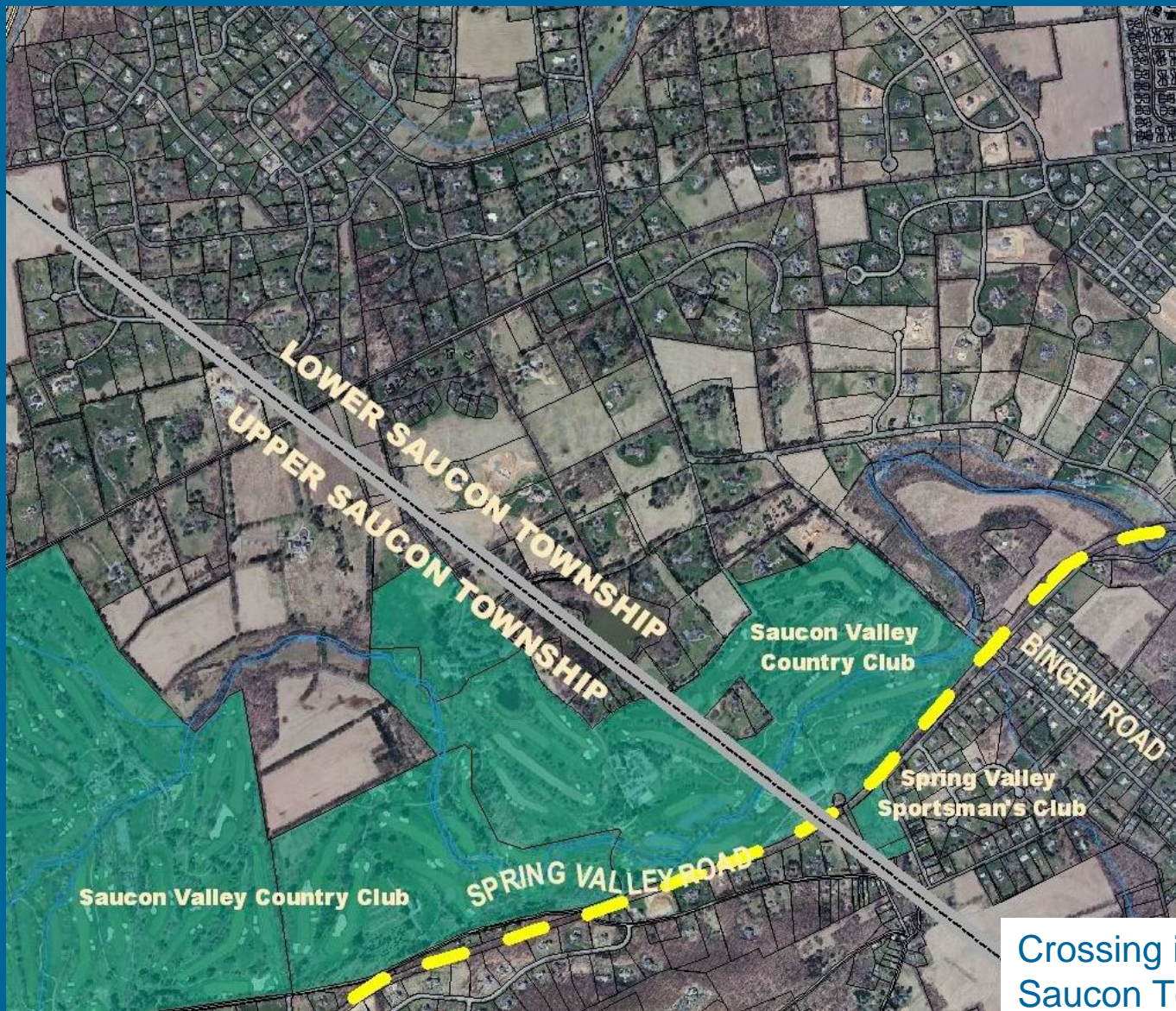




Starting at the Bucks County-Lehigh County Border and passing through Coopersburg Borough into Upper Saucon Township



Continuing through Upper
Saucon Township



Crossing into Lower
Saucon Township



Running parallel to parks in
both Lower Saucon Township
and Hellertown Borough



Existing Rails to Trails Projects

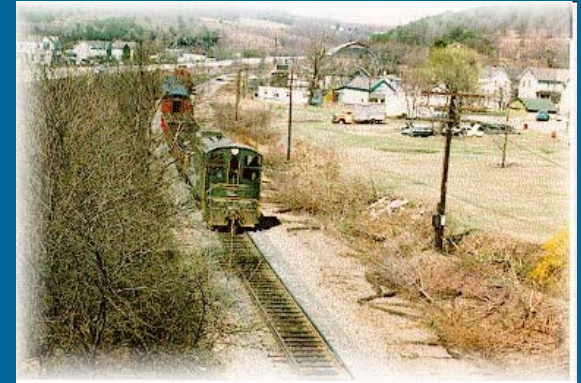
- Existing rails to trails projects in Lehigh County and Northampton County include:
 - Ironton Rail-Trail
 - Nor-bath
 - Towpath Bike Trail
 - Forks Township Recreational Trail
 - Plainfield Township Trail
- Existing major trails projects in Montgomery County include:
 - Perkiomen Trail
 - Schuylkill River Trail
 - Wissahickon Trail

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Online Rails-to-Trails Guide <http://www.gis.dcnr.state.pa.us/railtrails/>

Ironton Rail-Trail

- Developed by the municipalities of Whitehall, Coplay, and North Whitehall
- 9.2 mile trail stretching from Hokendauqua to Coplay in Lehigh County
- Railroad was abandoned in 1984 and purchased in 1996 from Conrail
- Ironton Rail Trail Oversight Commission is composed of representatives of the 3 municipalities responsible for the development and maintenance of the trail

Whitehall Recreation Bureau, Ironton Rail-Trail
<http://www.irontonrailtrail.org/index.html>



Nor-bath Trail

- 7.3 mile gravel trail stretching from Northampton to Bath
- Activities: walk, bicycle, mountain bicycle



Towpath Bike Trail

- 11.3 mile paved trail stretching from Palmer to Bethlehem
- Follows Eastern Northern Rail bed
- Activities: walk, bicycle, cross country ski, inline skates, fishing



Forks Township Recreational Trail

- 7 miles
- Surface is a combination of gravel and pavement
- Goes from Laplume to Factoryville
- Activities: walk, bicycle, cross country ski, inline skates, mountain bicycle



Plainfield Township Trail

- 6.7 miles
- Constructed of crushed stone
- Goes from Wind Gap to Stockerton
- Activities: walk, horseback, cross country ski, inline skates



Perkiomen Trail

- 19.5 miles
- Surface varies between asphalt and crushed stone
- Goes from Green Lane to Oaks
- Activities: walk, horseback, bicycle, cross country ski, mountain bicycle



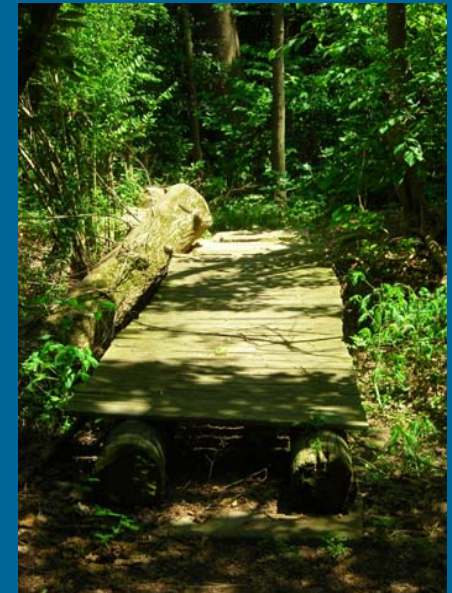
Schuylkill River Trail

- 25 miles
- Surface varies between asphalt, gravel and dirt
- Follows the entire Schuylkill waterway from its headwaters, south to Philadelphia
- Activities: walk, bicycle, cross country ski, inline skates



Wissahickon Trail

- 7 miles
- Predominantly constructed of gravel
- Follows the Wissahickon Creek from Lincoln Drive to the Philadelphia City Limit
- Activities: walk, horseback, bicycle, cross country ski, mountain bicycle



Trail Benefits

- Protect natural and historic resources
- Provide more recreation opportunities to increasingly active citizens
- Provide safe and convenient routes to walk or ride bicycles to work, to school, and to other local destinations
- Promote tourism and increase property values

Trail Misconceptions

- *Myth: Rail-trails generate crime*
 - Fact: Converting an abandoned rail corridor to a trail actually tends to reduce crime by cleaning up the landscape and attracting people who use the trail for recreation and transportation
 - Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) conducted a study in 1998 to document the levels of crime on trails. Overall results indicated that rail-trails are safe places for people to be.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, "Rail-Trails and Safe Communities: The Experience on 372 Trails" January 1998

Trail Misconceptions

- *Myth: Development of rail-trails will increase the liability of private and public landowners*
 - Fact: The Council of State Governments produced a model recreational use statute (RUS) in 1965 in an effort to encourage private landowners to open their land for public recreational use by limiting the landowner's liability for recreational injuries when access was provided without charge.

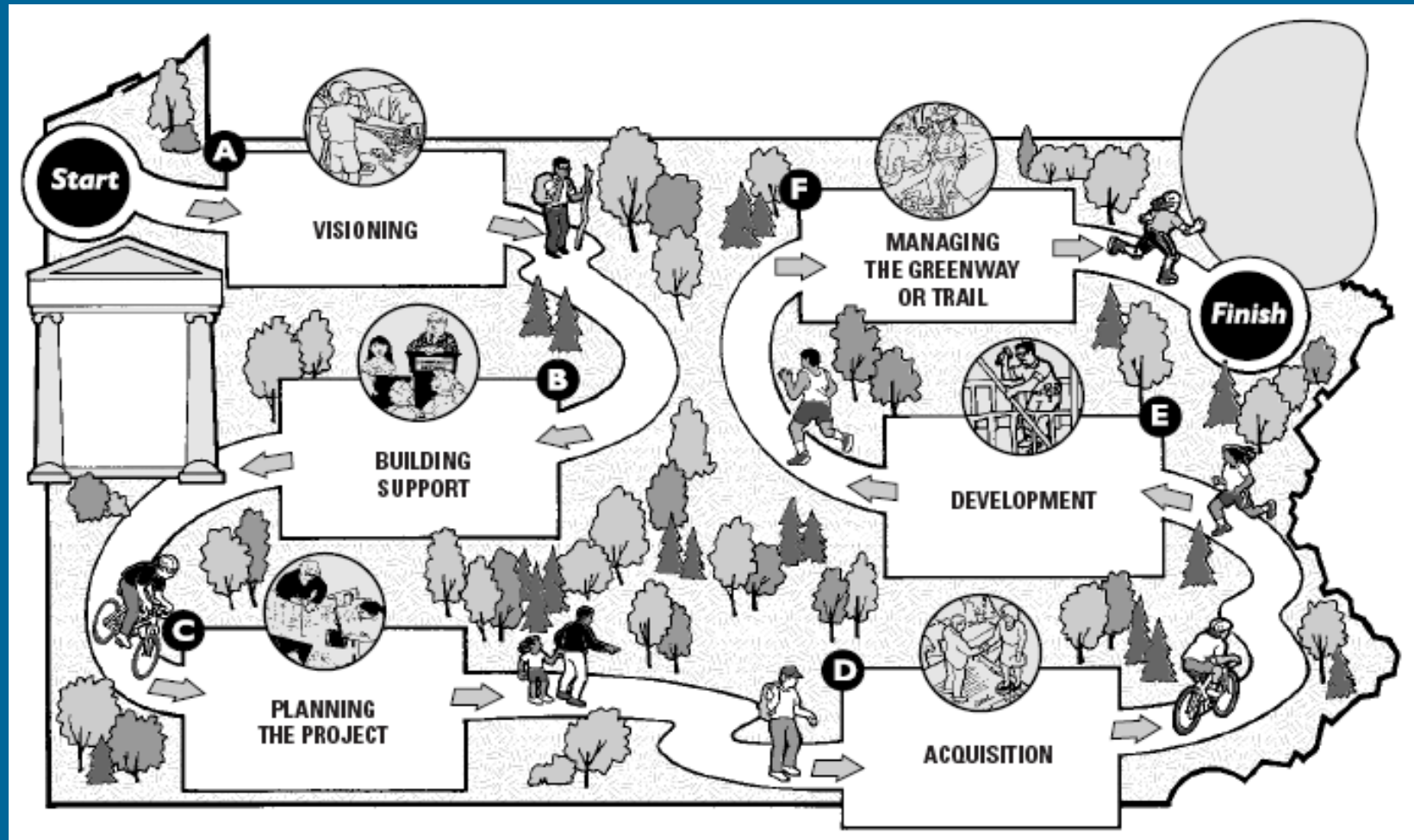
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, "Rail-Trails and Liability: A Primer on Trail-Related Liability Issues & Risk Management Techniques" September 2000

Trail Misconceptions

- *Myth: Trails have a negative impact on property values*
 - Fact: The effect of a trail on neighboring property is generally beneficial, rather than detrimental in terms of property values. Numerous studies both nationally and locally suggest that trails are prime attractions for potential home buyers and usually act to increase property values.

National Park Service. "The Impacts of Rail-Trails: A Study of Users and Nearby Property Owners From 3 Trails." Rivers, Trail, and Conservation Assistance Program 1992

Phases of Creating a Trail



Pennsylvania Environmental Council, "Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How-To Manual" 1998

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