

POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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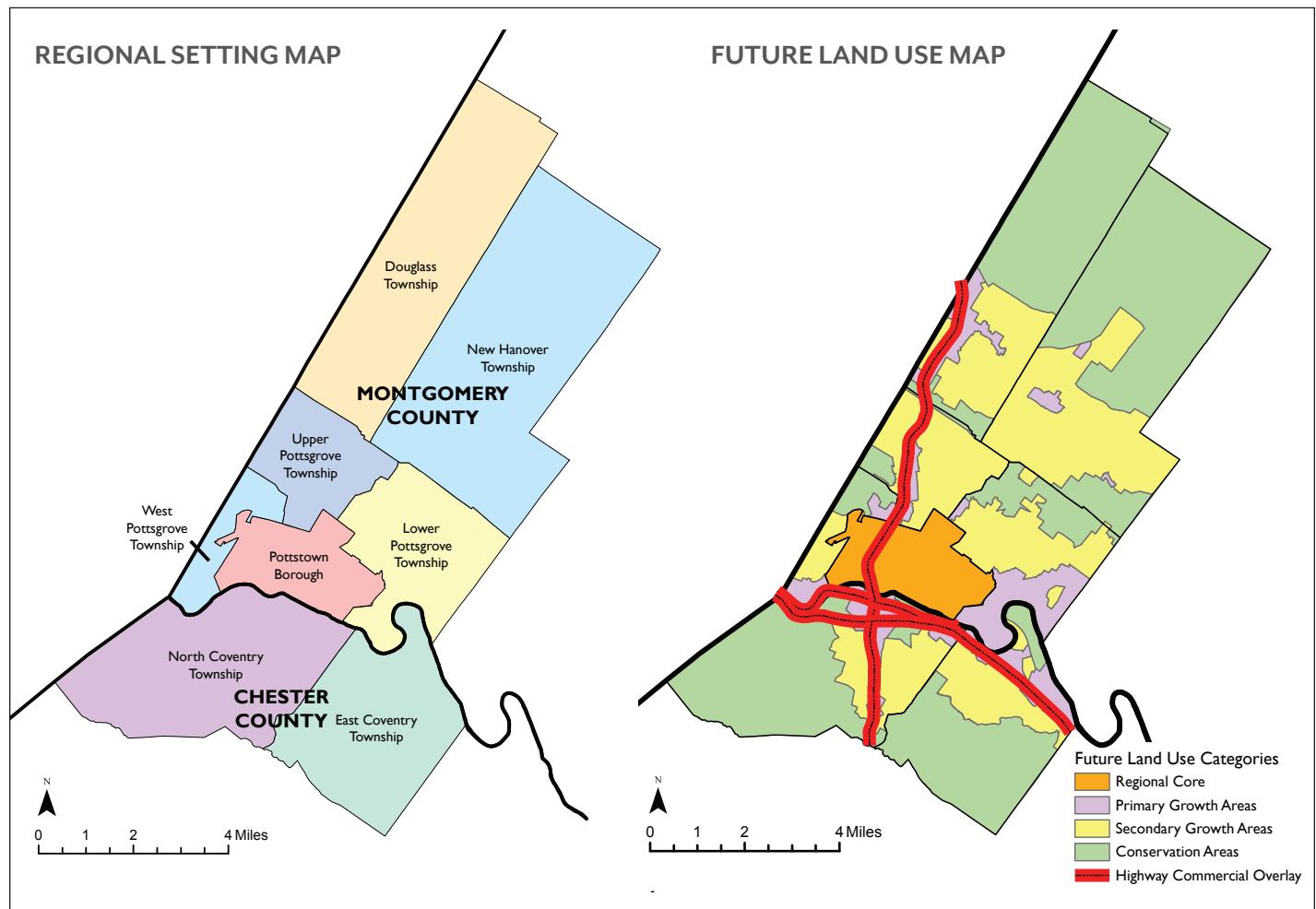
PMRPC PURPOSE

“The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is positioned directly in the path of growth as it continues to expand outward from Philadelphia and its suburbs. It is a well-balanced region with a richly diverse landscape of historic communities, attractive suburban neighborhoods, industry, commercial centers, rolling farmlands and abundant natural resources. The intersection of US Route 422 and PA Route 100 in the middle of the region provides a gateway for new growth. The region’s communities recognize that they are at a crossroads for directing growth and this is the catalyst for the region’s eight municipalities working together to plan their future. Especially important for the region is directing growth into the region’s older communities and designated growth areas, particularly the Borough of Pottstown, in order to revitalize these older places, maximize the costly public infrastructure of the region, and preserve the region’s rural areas.

Through regional cooperation and planning the Pottstown Metropolitan Region intends to:

- Protect the unique historical, cultural, and natural resources of the region.
- Promote the economic vitality and quality of life of the region’s existing communities.
- Implement growth management techniques to provide for orderly and well-planned new development.
- Preserve open space and agriculture in the region.
- Develop transportation choices for better mobility in and through the region.
- Encourage walkable communities with a mix of uses and a range of housing options where appropriate.
- Promote new economic opportunities and jobs.
- Maintain and improve recreation options.
- Address the specific needs and unique conditions of each municipality.”

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Region Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement for Regional Planning (April 12, 2010)



FEATURED PROJECT: PART BUS STOP ENHANCEMENT STUDY

PMRPC partnered with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to conduct a study to identify and prioritize bus stop and access improvements to increase ridership on the local transit service, Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART).

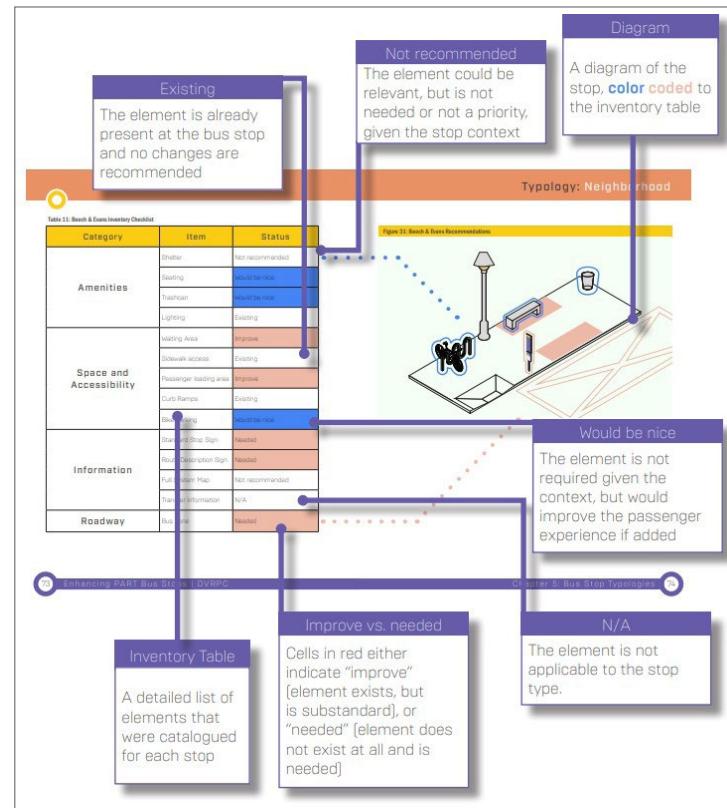
The final report includes both system-wide recommendations, such as user-friendly and consistent signage and coordination with other transit services, as well as stop-specific recommendations for the system's dozens of individual stops in a wide range of contexts.

This study will serve as a guide to help PART apply best practices in bus stop design and access across the system to increase efficiency and better connect riders to regional destinations.

In late 2023, \$850,000 was allocated to PART through the Carbon Reduction Program to begin implementing the recommendations identified in this study.



PART operates five bus routes with stops in six of the eight PMRPC municipalities.



The final report, which was released in 2023, includes detailed stop-specific recommendations for each stop based on a bus stop typology ranging from neighborhood to downtown.

2023 GUEST SPEAKERS

- **June** – Tricia McCloskey, AICP, Pottstown Area Regional Parks Planner (Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee Update)
- **August** – Mark Morley, Transportation Planner, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Committee (“Enhancing PART Bus Stops in the Pottstown Area”)
- **October** – Richard Tralies, PLA, ASLA, Senior Director of Landscape Planning, Natural Lands (East Coventry Township “Growing Greener” Ordinance)
- **October** – Scott France, AICP, MCPC Executive Director & SRPRA Board Member & Thomas Frawley, SRPRA Executive Director (Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA))

POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2015 as an update to the first regional comprehensive plan adopted in 2005. The 2015 Regional Comprehensive Plan lays out goals and objectives for the region related to economic development, housing, parks and recreation, open space, natural resource protection, agriculture, transportation, and community facilities.

No amendments to the regional comprehensive plan were reviewed or adopted by the Committee during 2023

ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP CONSISTENCY REVIEWS

Hookah Bar Zoning Text Amendment—Pottstown Borough – At the March meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed zoning text amendment to regulate hookah bars and tobacco stores/smoke shops in Pottstown Borough. The PMRPC determined the zoning text amendment to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

GMU Apartments Ordinance Zoning Text Amendment —Lower Pottsgrove Township – At the April meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed zoning text amendment to allow apartments as a principal use in the Gateway Mixed-Use district in Lower Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendment to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Active Adult Overlay Zoning Map & Text Amendment —Douglass Township – At the September meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed zoning map and text amendment to allow active adult community as a conditional use in the Convenience Commercial zoning district in Douglass Township. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan for the Pottstown Metropolitan Region as outlined in the 2015 Regional Comprehensive Plan includes policies and maps intended to guide future growth in the Region for the next 20 years (see the Future Land Use Map on the previous page).

SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Any subdivision or land development proposal within the Region which meets the definition of a “subdivision or land development of regional impact” is reviewed by the Committee. The Committee reviews and provides advisory comments to the individual municipality where the proposal is located as it relates to the stated goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted Regional Comprehensive Plan.

SteelSafe Pottstown, LLC – Upper Pottsgrove Township – At the June meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed development of a 61,280 square foot self-storage facility on Commerce Drive. It was determined that the application should be resubmitted with additional plan information.

Stack Storage – Pottstown Borough – At the June meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed development of a 106,800 square foot self-storage facility on Shoemaker Road. PMRPC provided comments on stormwater management and buffer landscaping.

Villages at Fricks Lock – East Coventry Township – At the September meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed subdivision and development of 155 single-family detached residential units near the intersection of Fricks Lock road and Schuylkill Road. No issues of regional significance were identified.

REGIONAL GRANT PROGRAMS

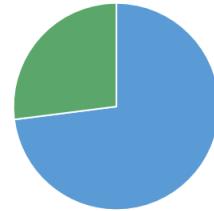
PREVIOUS MINI-GRANTS ROUNDS #1-4: 2013-2023



37
Projects



8
Municipalities



73% park development projects
27% park planning projects



\$725,521
Total grant
funds awarded

MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM

The Pottstown Parks and Recreation Improvement Mini-Grant Program is a local grant program jointly-administered by PMRPC and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) with grant funding from DCNR which is matched 50:50 locally by PAHWF. Mini-grants are available to all eight of the municipalities within the Region. The program is designed to fund park improvements to increase park usage and improve the health of area residents.

MINI-GRANTS ROUND #4: 2021-2024

Throughout 2023, PMRPC worked with its members, PAHWF, and PARRC to manage the fourth round of mini-grants. Pottstown Borough successfully completed and closed out their renovation of the Spruce Street Park basketball courts in 2022. The remaining five projects will be complete by May 1, 2024,

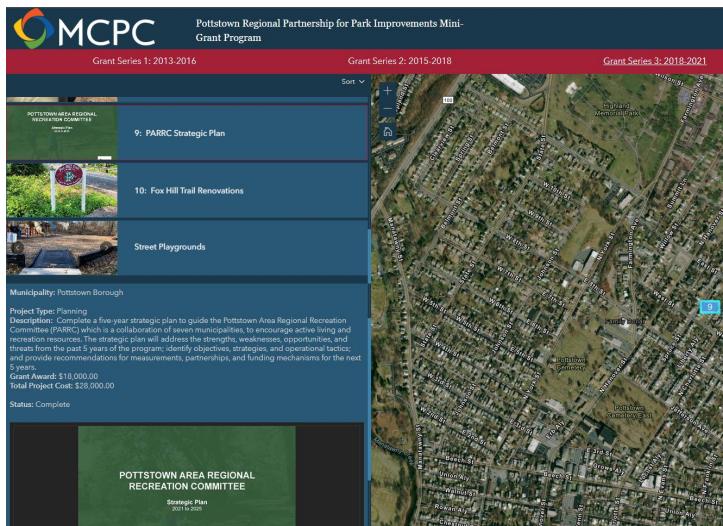


Pottstown Borough completed the Potts Drive Park Upgrades project in June of 2021 (Round #3). The project included installation of a playground and swing set, rehabilitation of an existing basketball court, and the construction of accessible pathways throughout the park.

unless an extension is granted. Open projects include: Ellis Woods Park Pedestrian Bridge (planning), East Coventry Township; Douglass Park Playground Improvements (development), Douglass Township; Schwenk Road Trailhead Phase 1 (development), Upper Pottsgrove Township; Old Timer's Field Improvements (development), West Pottsgrove Township; and the Sanatoga Park Pavilion and Parking project (development), Lower Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC will close out the DCNR grant before the end of the calendar year.

MINI-GRANTS ROUND #5: 2023-2026

Round #5 of the mini-grant program picked up momentum in the fall of last year. Seven applications were submitted during the application window that occurred in October of 2023. Throughout 2024, the grant management team will be working with applicants on administration of awarded projects.



PMRPC recently published a revamped online map of ongoing and completed mini-grant projects. The GIS-based website allows users to select the grant series and specific projects within that series. When a project is selected, the map zooms in on the project location and provides a brief description of the project. View the map here: <http://tiny.cc/n0gjxz>