

# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Executive Summary

**Adopted July 2022**

*Adopted by Resolution 2022-15 on July 12, 2022*



*Financial assistance for this Project comes in part from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, under the administration of the Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.*

## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to all the representatives of Union City Borough and members of the Project Steering Committee who participated in preparing this Trail Town Plan.

Steering Committee members were actively involved throughout this planning process. They participated in several Steering Committee meetings, answered questions, shared their knowledge of local conditions and provided quality input and guidance as the Plan was being prepared.

The Steering Committee is credited with identifying potential Trail Routes and Trail facilities and amenities, and for bringing together and evaluating different types of information and input to help create the French Creek Trail.

### **Project Steering Committee Members**

Cindy Wells – Union City Borough Manager & Union City Pride

Natalie Wilmoth – Union City Borough Mayor

Matthew Joyce – Union City Borough Council – Parks Liaison

Damon Piper – Union City Parks & Recreation Committee

Lynora Rumm – McLane Church and Union City Parks & Recreation Committee

Diane Bowes – Union City Community Foundation

Tami Green – Union City Pride & George Fox Insurance

Doug Still – Union City Borough Resident

Melinda Meyers – Erie County Planning and Preservation Erie

Abbe Biebel – Positive Youth Development, Union City Community Foundation and Citizen of Union City

Joy Fronzoli – Planning Program Administrator, Environment and Recreation, Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development

Vi Gilson – AHN Saint Vincent Outpatient Center Union City

Erin Wiley Moyers – Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC)

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Union City Borough wishes to thank the Planning Consultants for their efforts on this Project.



**Mark W. Lazzari, AICP, Planning Department Manager, The EADS Group, Inc.**

The EADS Group, Inc. is a multi-disciplined planning, engineering, architecture, and design firm. Mark has over 22 years' experience with preparing Master Site Development Plans, Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plans, Trail Studies, Complete Streets Policies and Active Transportation Plans, Corridor Plans as well as County and Municipal

Comprehensive Plans, Land Ordinances and Recreation Plans. Mark is also an experienced grant writer. He has recently supported several communities to obtain funding through the Multimodal Transportation Fund and Transportation Enhancement Programs, PA WalkWorks, DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Programs

(C2P2) and the DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP) for recreation area planning and development projects. He takes an active role in all of our public participation efforts and in preparing GIS mapping products. Learn more at <https://www.eadsgroup.com>



**Tracy Frampton, Senior Planner/Marketing Representative, The EADS Group, Inc.**

Tracy has worked on a number of community development and recreation related planning projects, including the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan in Union City Borough and Phase I and II of the

Cafilisch Park Improvement Projects. He has extensive experience in successfully applying for and administering a wide variety of recreation and trail related grant programs. Mr. Frampton currently

serves as the Chairman of the Slippery Rock Township Planning Commission. Learn more at <https://www.eadsgroup.com>



**Barbara J. Hauge, P.L.A., ASLA, GIP, UpStreet Architects**

Barb is a Pennsylvania Registered Landscape Architect with UpStreet Architects, Inc. Her designs include public and private landscapes, commercial designs as well as meadows, gathering spaces, educational gardens, and play spaces. She has over 20 years of experience and her expertise includes native plant designs, tree and plant selection, rain gardens and community planning. She serves on the boards of The Allegheny Arboretum, C&I Trail Council, and the League of Women Voters of Indiana County. Barb's love of connecting with people has evolved into community engagement for planning initiatives as municipalities plan for new projects and grant applications. In addition to degrees in Horticulture (Penn State) and Landscape Architecture (City College of New York), Barb is also an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist and a Green Infrastructure Professional (GIP) with the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program. Barb is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), PA-DE Chapter and serves on their Communications Committee. Learn more at <https://www.upstreetarchitects.com>

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## Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

The following describes the envisioned characteristics of the French Creek Trail. Information from various sources was gathered and reviewed including results of the Physical Inventory and Assessment, the Public Participation Process and input from the Project Steering Committee. The interpretation, application and use of this information was critical in developing a realistic Trail Concept Plan that incorporates wants and needs identified through the planning process.

### Trail Themes

The French Creek Trail will be developed as a single tread non-motorized nature trail primarily serving pedestrians, joggers, hikers, nature enthusiasts and off-road bicyclists. The following Trail characteristics emerged from the planning process. These characteristics will help to guide the development of the French Trail and will help to define what the Trail will be when created.

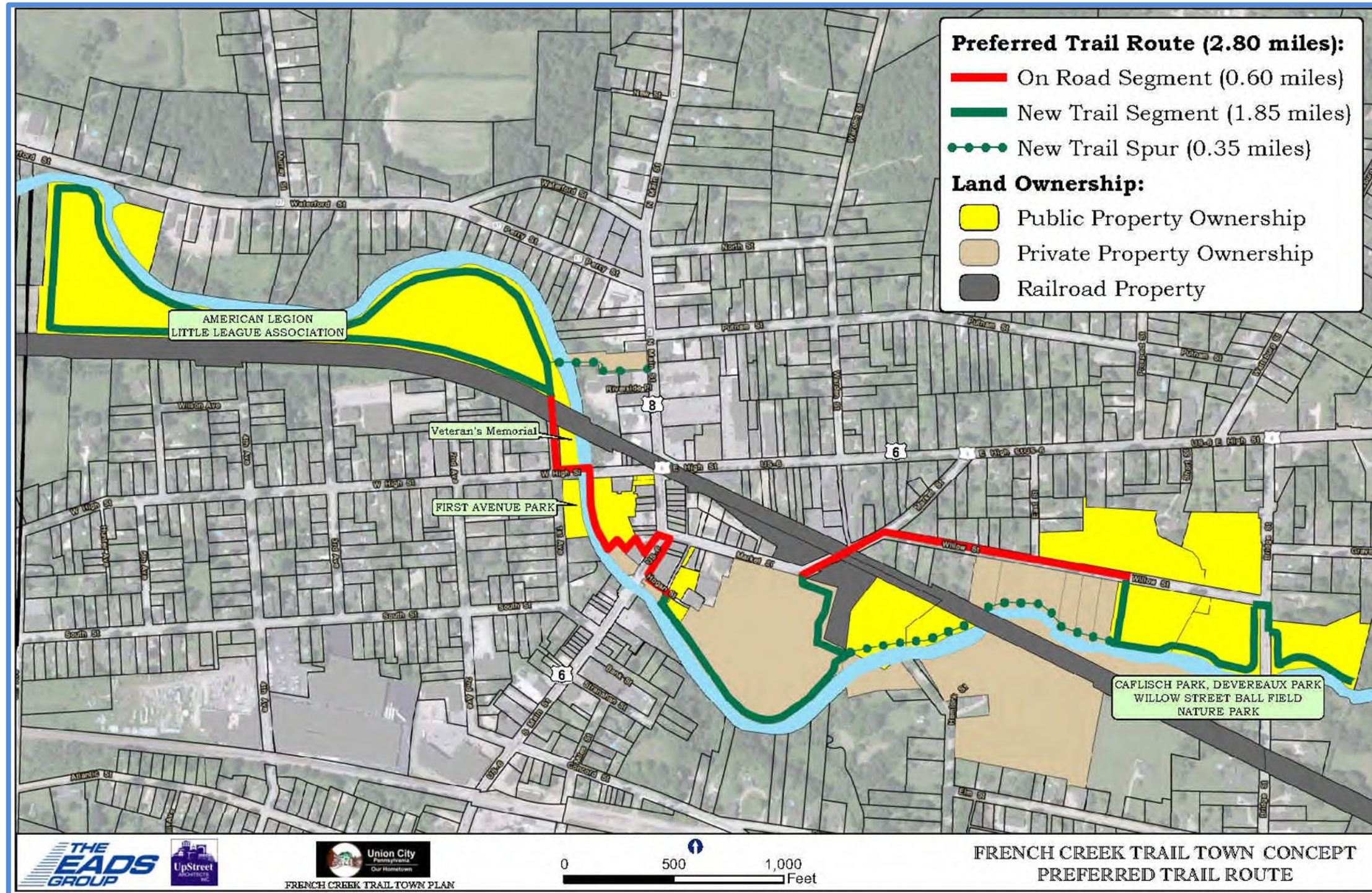
- A Nature Trail – South Branch French Creek and its surrounding Greenway creates a significant natural resource and riparian greenway zone in the Borough. The green and sustainable characteristic of French Creek and its surrounding greenway area establishes the overall theme of a French Creek Trail Town. The Borough desires to develop the Trail to enhance these characteristics in the Borough. Construction of the Trail will include invasive species removal, native vegetation plantings and riparian enhancements. The Trail will be naturally incorporated within the French Creek Greenway. Green practices and design approaches will be considered to enhance the natural resources surrounding the Trail so that users feel connected to French Creek and its Greenway. The development of the French Creek Trail will follow green and sustainable practices while providing passive recreation opportunities along the beautiful and environmentally important French Creek. The French Creek Trail can also be used as an outdoor environmental learning resource.
- A Trail for All Ages and Abilities – Results from the Community Engagement process indicate that the Trail should serve all residents. An emphasis of the French Creek Trail will be to connect different types of users and users of all ages and abilities to the French Creek resource. This will be accomplished by designing the Trail, fishing piers, direct points of Creek access, riparian and aquatic habitat improvements, seating areas and scenic overlooks along French Creek to be ADA compliant. The Borough intends to construct as much of the Trail as possible to be five (5) foot wide with a stabilized surface with grades not exceeding 1:20 and cross slope not steeper than 1:48. Pathways connecting to Trail facilities and amenities will also be designed to comply with ADA requirements.
- A Heritage Trail – Union City was founded because of French Creek. The French Creek Trail will bring back the major resource that built Union City. The French Creek Trail will reconnect Union City back to French Creek. Historic markers and interpretation panels will be installed along the Trail to reflect the importance of the French Creek to the early development of Union City.



# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Preferred Trail Route

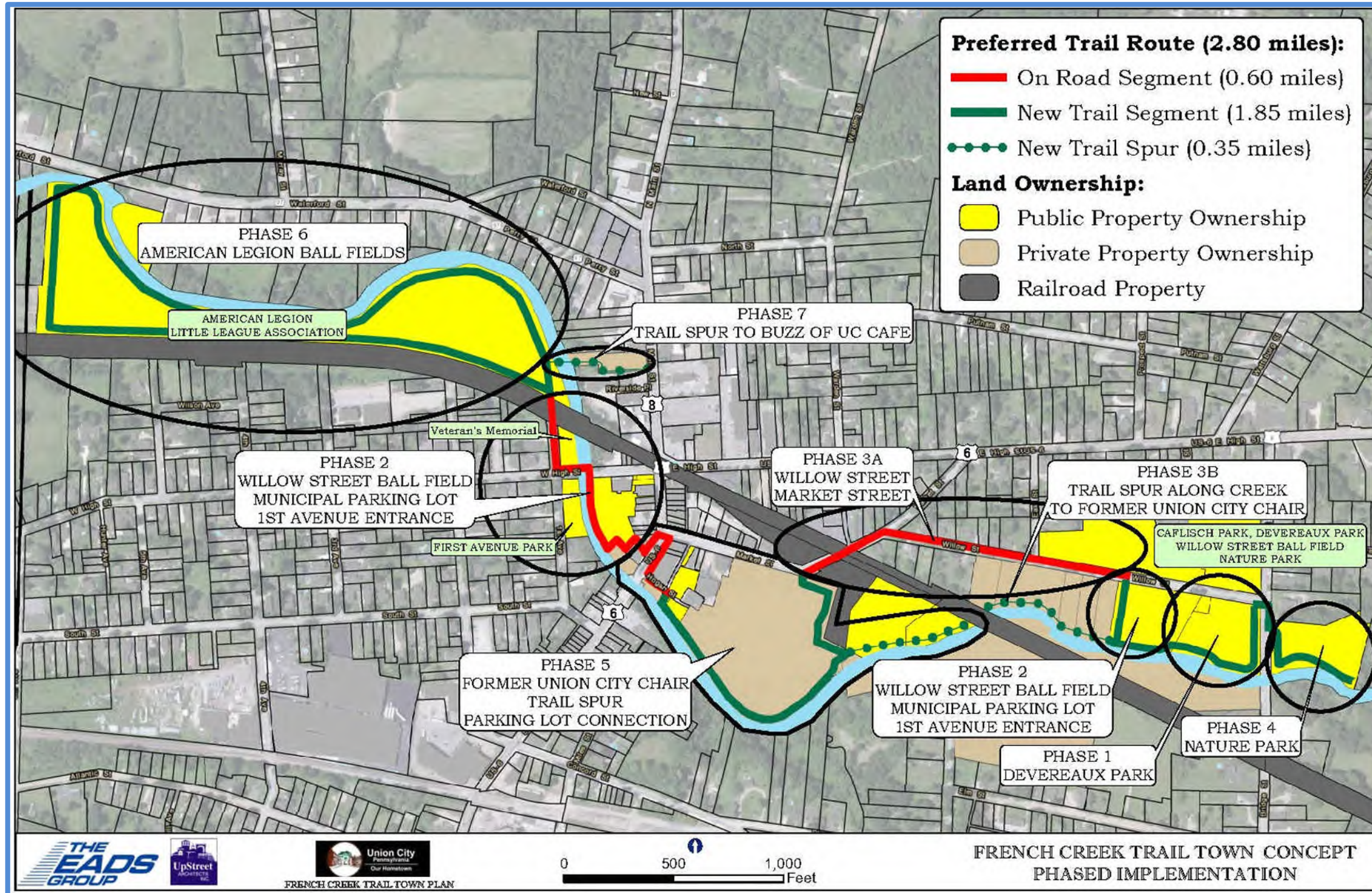
The map below shows the Preferred Route of the French Creek Trail. This route takes into the considering the Determination of Feasibility described in Section 7.0 and the desired Trail Characteristics described above. The Preferred Route also takes into consideration ease of construction factors including where portions of the Trail can be aligned through public property and on existing roadways. Two (2) Trail Spurs are also included in the Preferred Route to further connect the Trail to French Creek. As shown on the map, the total length of the French Creek Trail is approximately 2.65 miles. New Trail construction will total 1.85 miles. An additional 0.20 miles of New Trail will be needed to create the Trail Spurs. Approximately 0.60 miles of the Trail will be aligned on an existing road.



# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Phased Implementation Approach

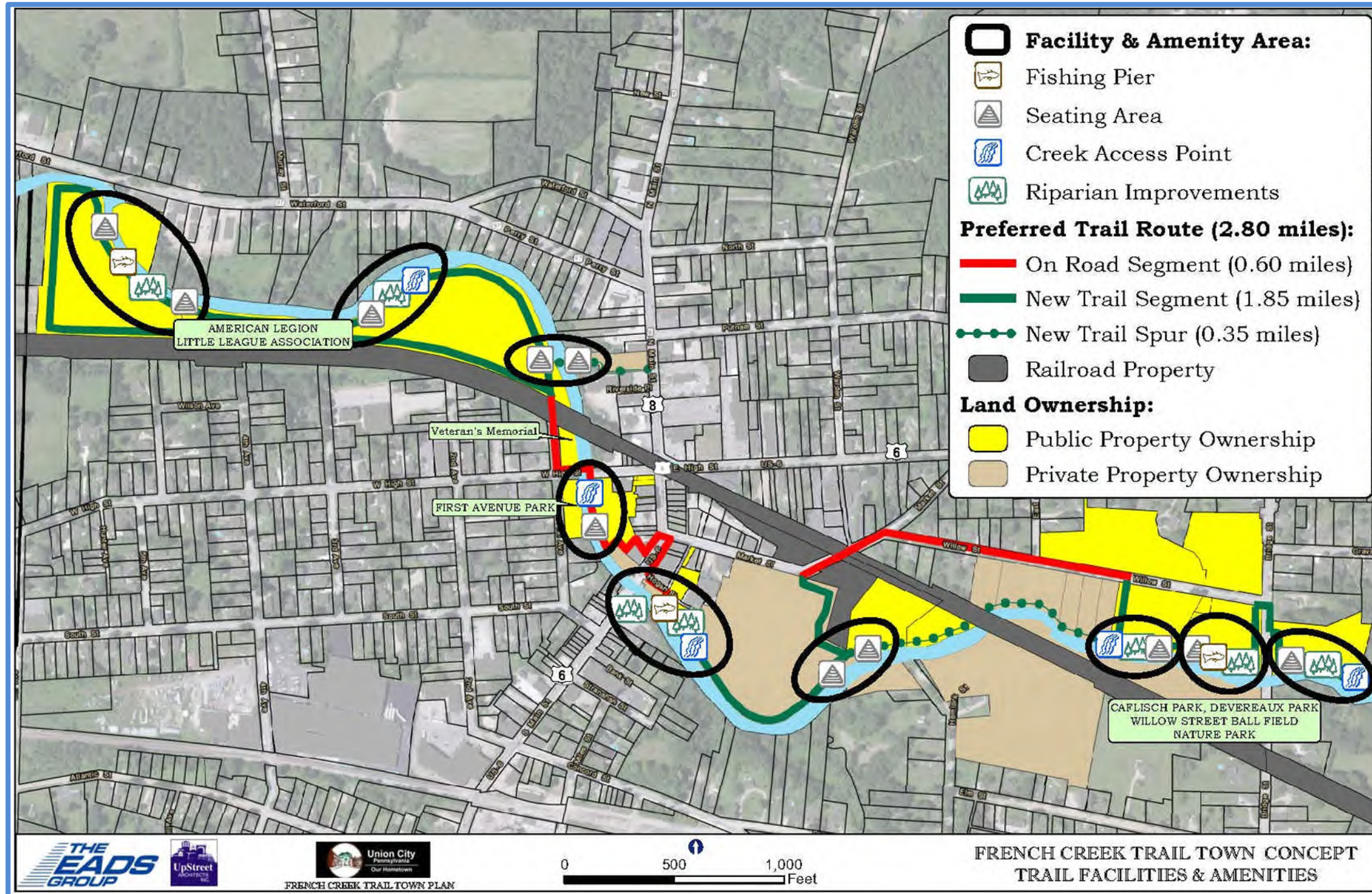
The French Creek Trail will be developed in seven (7) separate Phases. The map below shows the approximate location of each Trail Phase. Trail phases were identified based on construction cost and location. It is the intent of the Borough to keep the construction costs for each section in the \$200,000 - \$250,000 cost range to be better aligned with grant funding limits and local cash match opportunities. The Project Steering Committee emphasized the importance of constructing the Trail in sections to get sections open so that progress and enthusiasm for completing the Trail could be sustained. The Committee also emphasized the need to construct the first sections of the Trails in the Devereaux Park area and in the downtown area and then complete the remaining sections. The first four (4) phases are also consistent with recommendations included in the Borough Parks and Recreation Plan and Active Transportation Plan.



# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Phased Facilities and Amenities

Results of the Community Engagement process and the Interactive Comment map were used to identify wanted types of Trail related Facilities and Amenities and their wanted locations. Residents indicated they want Fishing Piers, Seating Areas, Creek Access Points and Riparian Improvements. The map below highlights the Facilities and Amenities and their preferred locations. As shown, the Facilities and Amenities are clustered in nine (9) locations. Final Trail designs will incorporate the wanted types of Facilities and Amenities. The exact location will be determined during field investigations conducted during the final design process.





# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Riparian and Habitat Improvements

Results of the Community Engagement process and the Interactive Comment map were used to identify areas where Riparian and Habitat Improvements should be completed along French Creek. The improvements include the removal of invasive plant species, the planting of native trees, shrubs and other vegetation and installation of aquatic habitat features. Final Trail designs will incorporate Riparian and Habitat improvements. However, Riparian and Habitat improvements can also be completed independent of developing the Trail. A set of graphic concepts are provided below to highlight proposed locations and types of Riparian and Habitat improvements. The graphics concepts also highlight how Riparian and Habitat improvements can be incorporated into development of the French Creek Trail.



## Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

### Trail Characteristics

<b>PHASE 1 - DEVEREAUX PARK</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$182,485</b>
Length	0.12 miles
Connections	Bridge Street, Willow Street, Devereaux Park
Slope	Less than 0.25%
Surface	5'- wide concrete
Ownership	Public – Union City Borough
Fishing Pier	One (1) ADA Fishing Dock
Seating Area	3-benches; 28' Gazebo
Riparian Improvements	Invasive vegetation to be removed and replaced with native vegetation
<b>PHASE 2 - WILLOW STREET BALL FIELD, MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT, 1<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE ENTRANCE</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$297,016</b>
Length	0.32 miles
Connections	Devereaux Park, Main Street, High Street, American Legion Little League Fields
Slope	Approximately 1%
Surface	5'- wide stabilized aggregate, 5'-wide concrete, existing asphalt in Parking Lot
Ownership	Public – Union City Borough
Seating Area	7-benches
Creek Access	Public access from Municipal Parking Lot to French Creek
<b>PHASE 3A - WILLOW STREET AND MARKET STREET – ON ROAD OPTION</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$304,448</b>
Length	0.30 miles
Connections	Willow Street Ball Field, Devereaux Park, Bridge Street, Market Street, Union City Chair property
Slope	Approximately 1%
Surface	4-ft wide sidewalks – in-replacement of existing
Ownership	NA – on road section
<b>PHASE 3B - WILLOW STREET BALL FIELD TO FORMER UNION CITY CHAIR – ALONG CREEK OPTION</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$157,285</b>
Length	0.15 miles
Connections	Willow Street Ball Field, Devereaux Park, Bridge Street, Market Street, Union City Chair property

<b>PHASE 4 - NATURE PARK</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$217,285</b>
Length	0.14 miles
Connections	Bridge Street, Devereaux Park
Slope	Approximately 1%
Surface	5'- wide concrete
Ownership	Public – Union City Borough
Creek Access	Access for public wading and boat launching
Seating Area	3-benches
Riparian Improvements	Invasive vegetation to be removed and replaced with native vegetation
<b>PHASE 5 – FORMER UNION CITY CHAIR, TRAIL SPUR AND PARKING LOT CONNECTION</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$207,790</b>
Length	0.53 miles
Connections	Market Street, Main Street
Slope	Approximately 1%
Surface	5'- wide compacted aggregate
Ownership	Private – Former Union City Chair; Public – Erie County, Union City Pride
Fishing Pier	One (1) ADA Fishing Doc with Aquatic habitat improvements
Seating Area	2-benches
Creek Access	Access for public wading and boat launching
Riparian Improvements	Invasive vegetation to be removed and replaced with native vegetation
<b>PHASE 6 – AMERICAN LEGION BALL FIELDS</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$383,185</b>
Length	1.14 miles
Connections	1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
Slope	Less than 1%
Surface	5'- wide concrete
Ownership	Public – American Legion, Union City Little League Association
Fishing Pier	One (1) ADA Fishing Dock
Seating Area	3-benches
Creek Access	Access for public wading and boat launching
Riparian Improvements	Invasive vegetation to be removed and replaced with native vegetation
<b>PHASE 7 – TRAIL SPUR TO BUZZ OF UNION CITY CAFÉ</b>	
Estimated Cost	<b>\$170,000</b>
Length	0.10 miles
Connections	American Legion Ball Fields
Slope	Less than 1%
Surface	Pedestrian Bridge
Ownership	Private – Buzz of Union City, Public – American Legion

# Union City Borough French Creek Trail Town Plan

## Determination of Feasibility

Union City Borough is committed to creating the French Creek Trail because it provides an extraordinary opportunity to develop the kinds of amenities, access options and facilities that will best allow the Borough to take full advantage of the important French Creek resource. Union City Borough will operate and maintain the Trail as they do their other existing Park areas. The Trail will be created using a multi-phase approach. Each phase will approximately cost between \$200,000 - \$300,000 to construct. Overall, development of the French Creek Trail is determined to be feasible.

- Legal Feasibility** – Union City Borough has indicated that land owned by public entities is available for the French Creek Trail. Two (2) options for connecting the Willow Street Ball Field and the former Union City Chair property will be developed. An on-road section using Willow St. and Market St. can be opened in the short-term while the Borough continues to work with property owners and develops the Trail Spur along the Creek. The Borough wants to open both routes to provide different types of experiences. The on-road section can be used by active users wanting to directly access the Park areas. The Creek route can be used by passive users wanting a more leisurely route with more intimate connections to the Creek. The property owner across the Creek from Devereaux Park indicated they were not able to enter into a Trail Agreement. Attempts to route the Trail through this property is considered Not Feasible. All other Trail Routes shown on the map to the right are considered Feasible.
- Demand for the Trail** - Demand and support for the French Creek Trail was overwhelmingly positive during this planning process. No significant opposition to a Trail was received.
- Physical and Natural Features** – No significant features were identified that would prevent development of the Trail.

