

# Philadelphia Trail & Sidepath Maintenance Plan

*Advocacy Group Meeting  
City of Philadelphia*

*Virtual Meeting*  
*5/2/2022, 11:00 – 12:30 PM*



# Agenda

- Study Overview and Progress-to-Date
- Stakeholder Input
- Brainstorming Session
- Wrap Up





The background of the slide is a photograph of a paved path in a park. On the left, there are large trees with green and yellowing leaves. On the right, there are modern city buildings and a bridge structure. The text is centered over this image.

# **Study Overview + Progress-to-Date**



# Study Overview

OTIS is leading this **policy-oriented** study to:

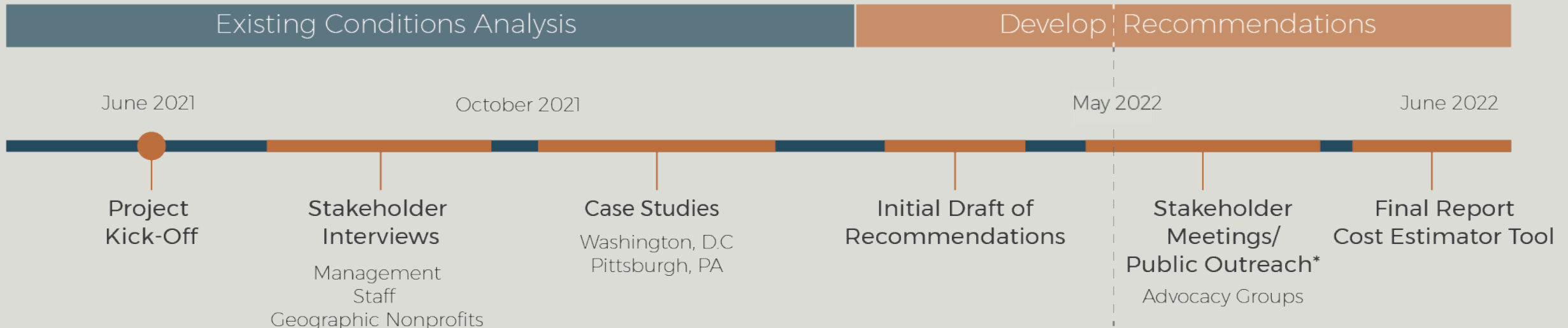
- document existing challenges to trail and sidepath maintenance, and
- recommend strategies to improve maintenance practices & outcomes across Philadelphia's trail network

The scope of this study:

- includes paved trails and sidepaths
- does not include on-road bicycle facilities



# Project Timeline

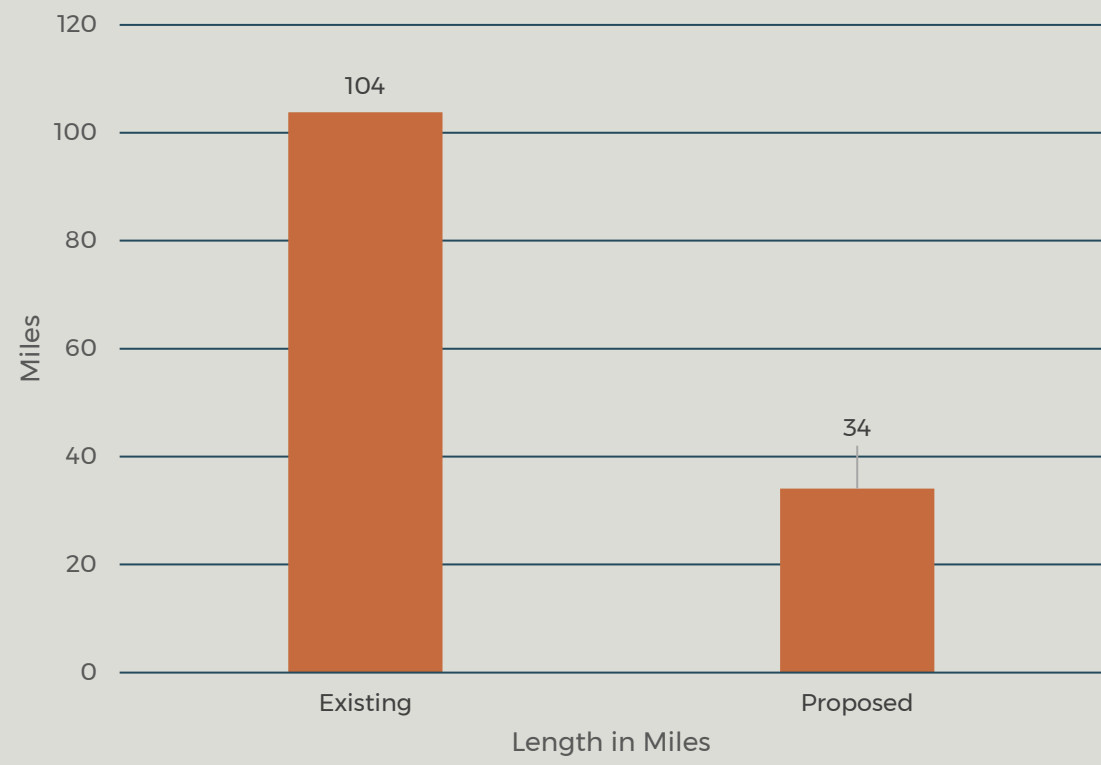


\* In progress

[Working Schedule]



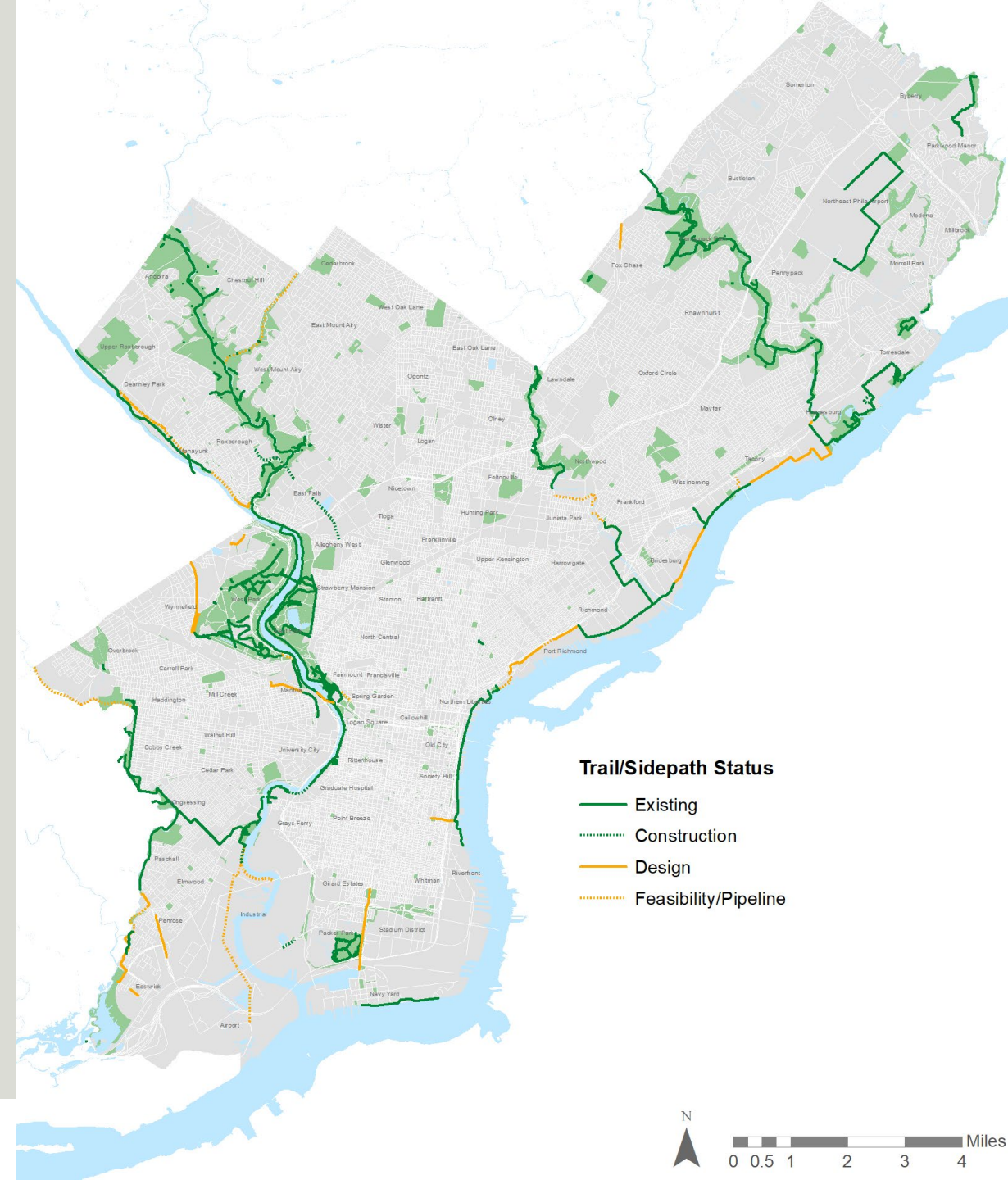
# Trail/Sidepath Status



*"Existing" includes only paved trails and sidepaths*

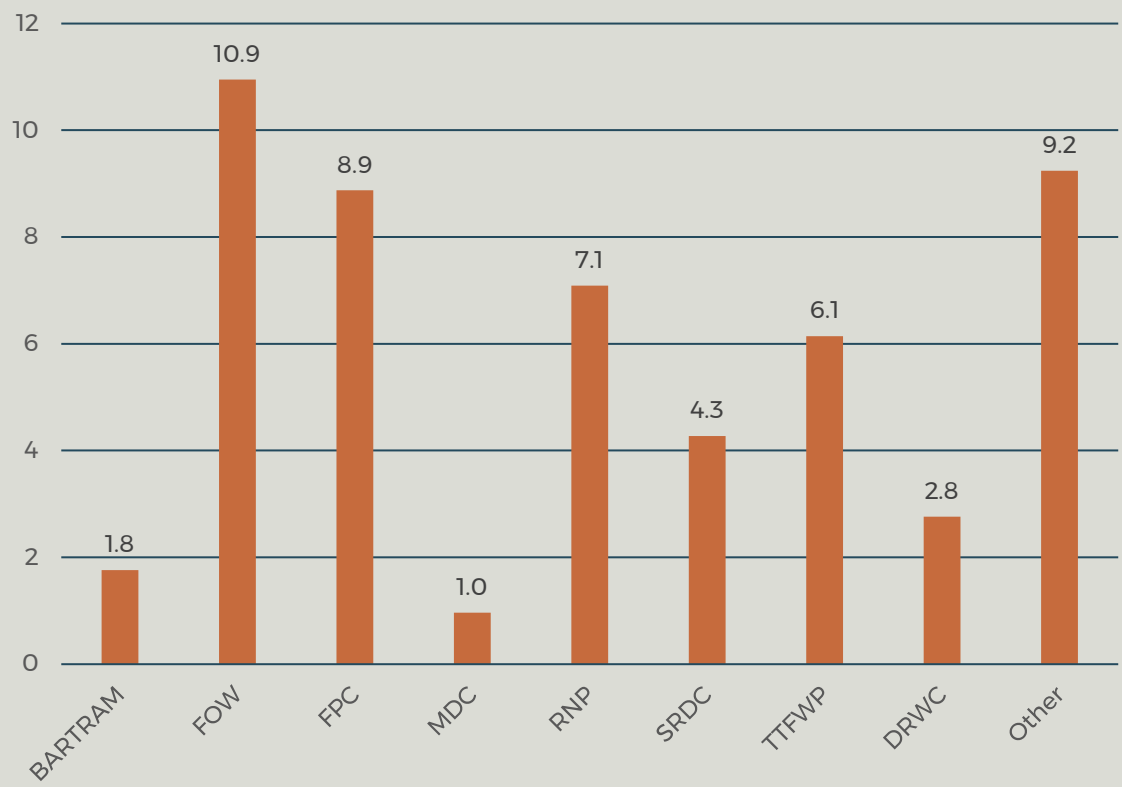
*"Proposed" includes Construction, Design, and Feasibility/Pipeline*

Source: Parks and Recreation and PCPC

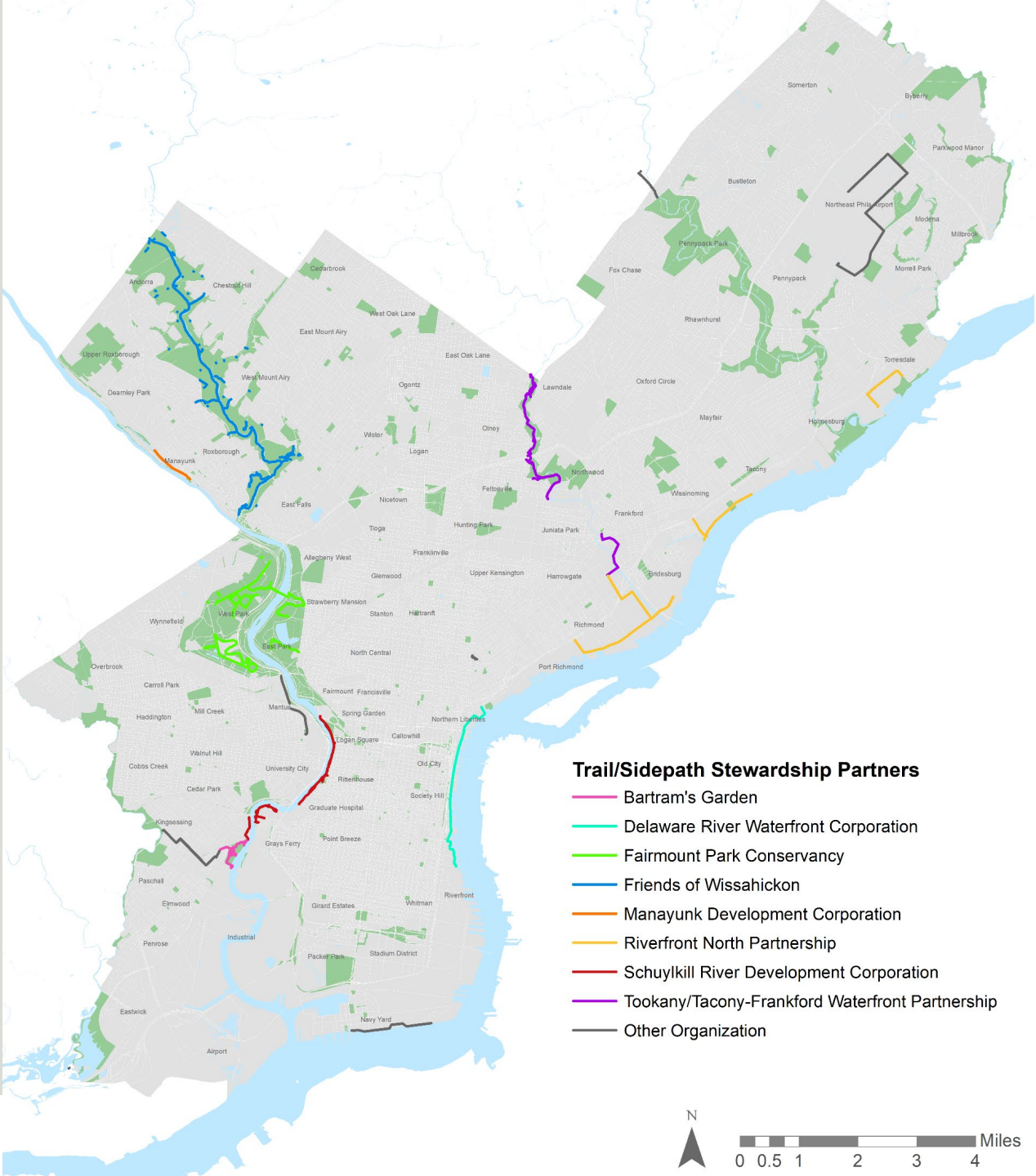


# Trail/Sidepath Stewardship Partners

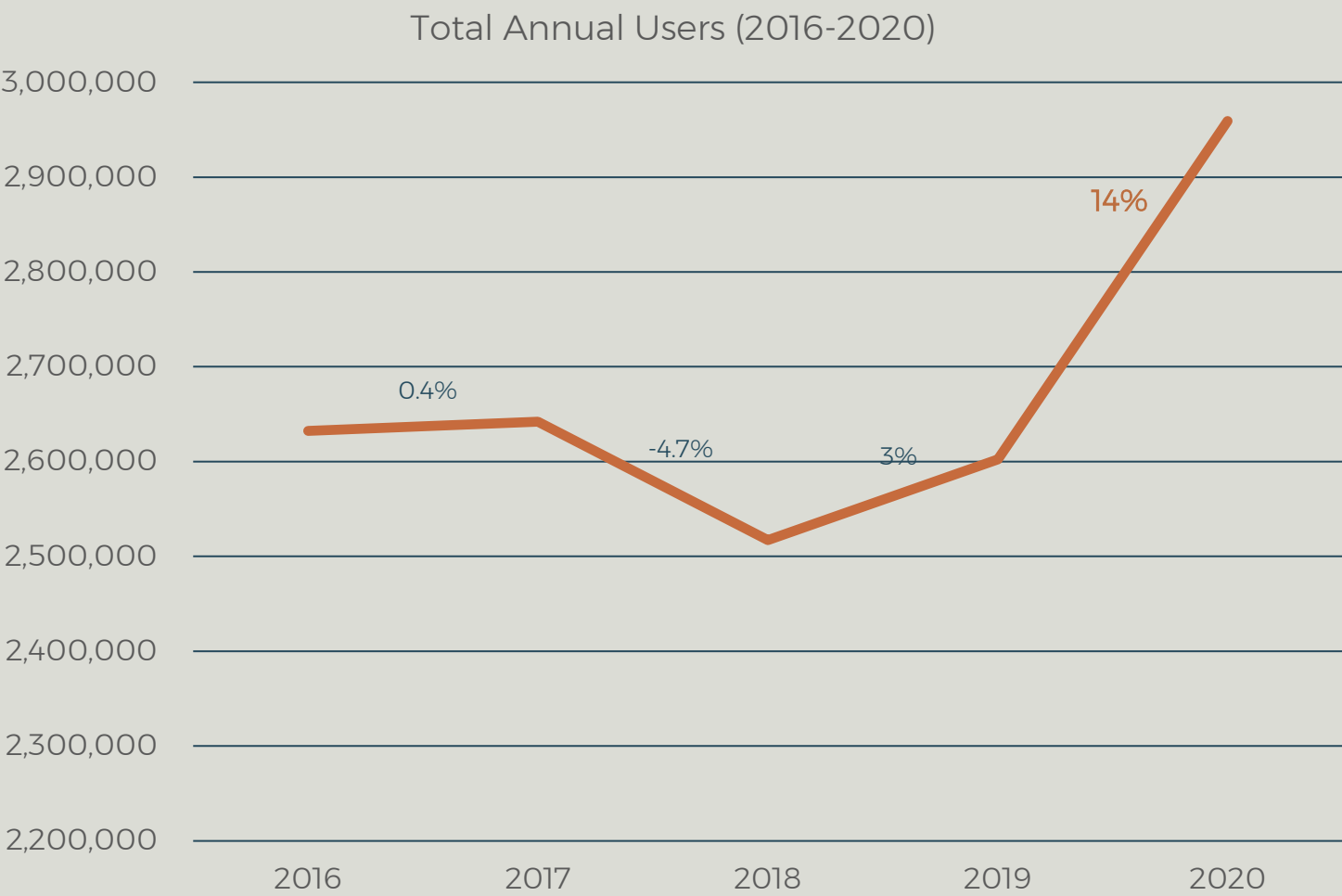
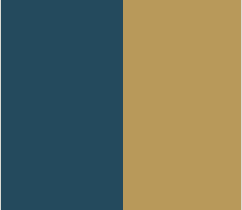
Length in Miles



Source: Parks and Recreation and PCPC



# Trail/Sidepath Usage



Facilities included in this analysis:  
Kelly Drive, Schuylkill Banks, Port  
Richmond, Wissahickon

*\* The trail counts are collected from DVRPC from 2014 – 2020. In certain years, the project team noticed undercounting and overcounting for specific days of the month. After careful consideration, the project team identified “consistent” average counts from adjacent years and substituted for “inconsistent” months of the year.*

Source: DVRPC



# Primary Maintenance Tasks

- Mowing
- Tree Removal and Maintenance
- Vegetation Management
- Surface Repair
- Drainage Clearing
- Short Dumping
- Vandalism/Graffiti
- Fencing, Signage, Amenities
- Clearing Snow



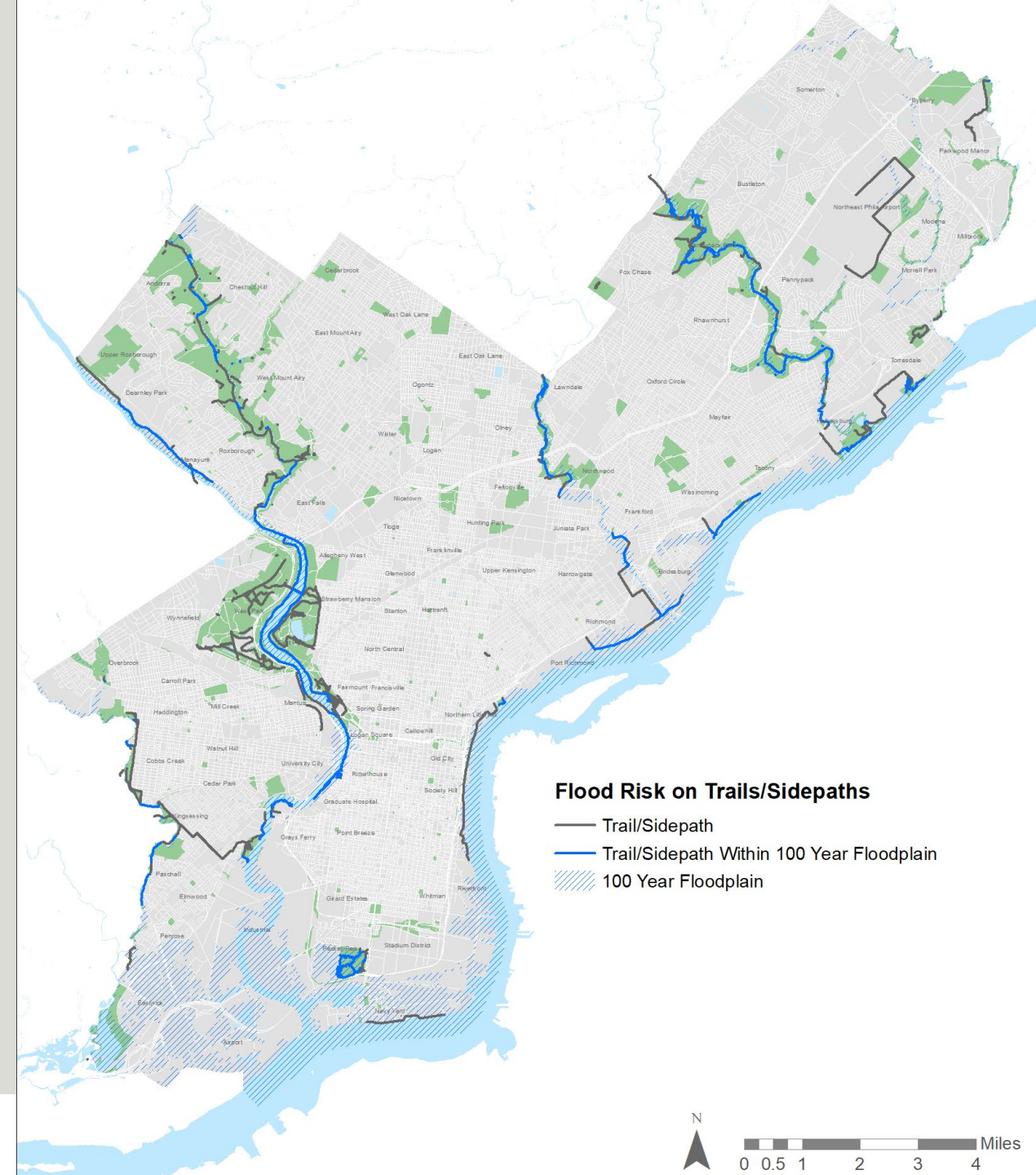
Location: Cobbs Creek



Location: Cobbs Creek

# Existing Trails/Sidepaths & 100 Year Floodplain

- 42% of existing trails and sidepaths in Philadelphia are located within the 100-year floodplain





# Impacts from Ida



Location: Wissahickon, Canoe Club Parking Lot



Location: Manayunk Towpath



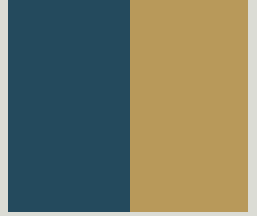
Location: Manayunk Towpath



# Stakeholder Input



# PPR/Streets Staff



## Common Themes Discussed:

- **Logistics** of how trail maintenance gets accomplished:
  - Interplay between PPR & Streets
  - Role of stewardship groups
- Challenges related to overall **maintenance budget, staffing, equipment**, etc.
- Transition from Fairmount Park Commission (FPC) to Parks & Recreation (PPR)

# Geographic Nonprofits

## Common Themes Discussed:

- Need for **formal maintenance agreements**
- Need for **common trail design/maintenance standards**
  - communicated and applied across the PPR districts
- **Retain, transfer, and solidify** institutional knowledge
- Storage facilities and/or shared facilities with PPR are needed
- Short-dumping and flooding are major challenges
- Challenges posed by **trail-related lawsuits**



# Geographic Nonprofits

## Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Partner with Commerce Department on **marketing the value of trails**
- Involve maintenance staff earlier in planning and design of trails
- **Regular meetings** to coordinate on trail maintenance
  - include PPR leadership, District Managers, and Geographic Nonprofits
- Document **“per mile” costs** of trail maintenance to better advocate for more resources

# Case Study Best Practices

## CASE STUDY – WASHINGTON, DC

- DDOT maintains a database of trail maintenance needs and activities
  - This data can help with data-driven prioritization as well as estimating budget needs
- DDOT now has dedicated trail maintenance funding
  - Starting FY 2022, DDOT will budget \$300,000 specifically for trail maintenance (along with one FTE staff member)
  - New requirement to include maintenance estimates with their capital budget request





# Case Study Best Practices

## CASE STUDY – PITTSBURGH, PA

- Funding trail maintenance equipment through the capital budget
  - The Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) has used this strategy to buy a thermoplastic striping machine along with a power-broom tractor (for clearing 6' wide swath)
- Coordinating letters for funding in advance of the budget season
  - DOMI reaches out to trail advocacy groups two months in advance of the budget season to help coordinate letters to politicians

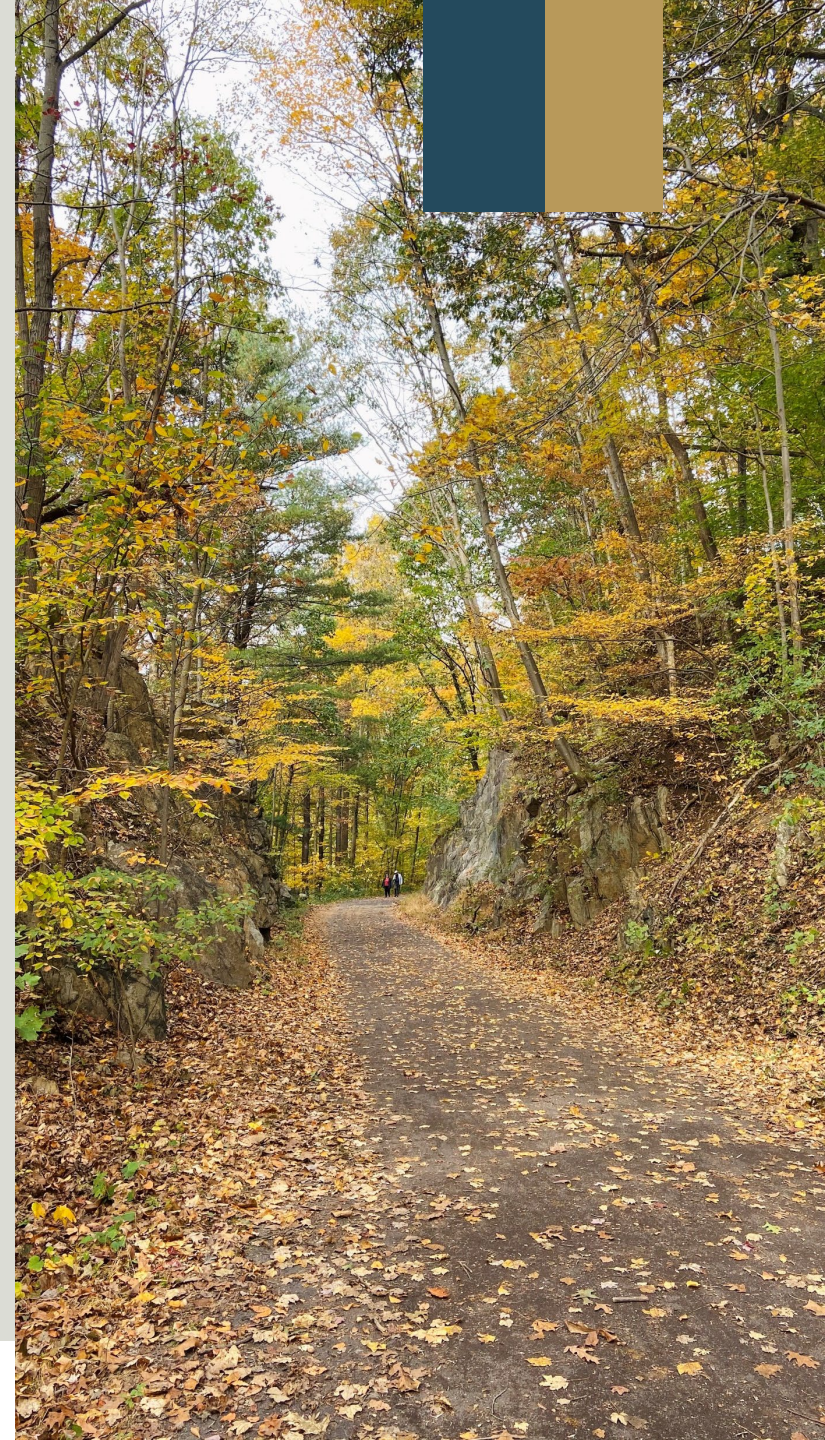


# Brainstorm Session



# Discussion Questions

- How can advocacy organizations become more involved in trail maintenance issues?
  - How does your group currently advocate around trail maintenance?
  - What efforts has your group undertaken in the past?





# Discussion Questions

- How can advocacy organizations become more involved in trail maintenance issues?
  - Lobbying for increased maintenance funding to sit in a dedicated fund
  - Advocacy around legal challenges
  - Advocacy around budget season

