

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities include parks, fire stations, municipal buildings, public schools and similar facilities. Community services include police and fire protection, sewage and water services and municipal government.

GOAL: Provide high-quality community facilities and services in the most cost- efficient manner, including addressing needs for future growth.

Education

Spring Township and Sinking Spring Borough and are part of the Wilson School District, which also includes Lower Heidelberg Township. The Wilson School District serves just over 6,000 students. West Reading Borough and Wyomissing Borough are part of the Wyomissing Area School District. The Wyomissing Area School District serves just over 1,900 students.

The Wyomissing School District recently renovated and expanded the High School tennis courts and the existing indoor pool. The football field received a new fence and the field hockey field was upgraded to artificial turf. The Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center recently had its HVAC system renovated. Growths in enrollment at the Wyomissing School District are much more modest than at Wilson, particularly because little undeveloped residential land remains in the Wyomissing School District.



West Reading High School

Enrollments are growing in several areas of the Wilson School District. Green Valley Elementary, Spring Ridge and Shiloh Hills had 4 classrooms per facility added in 2015. Wilson School District also recently upgraded and increased the size of the Swimming Pool. In addition to that, the Wilson School District stadium received artificial turf.

Higher Education

A campus of Pennsylvania State University, known as Penn State Berks, is located on 258 acres in northern Spring Township. A substantial portion of the College's landholdings are undeveloped. Since its addition of dormitories in 1990, Penn State Berks has been both a commuter and residential campus. The Berks campus offers both bachelors and associate degrees programs. In many cases, students transfer to other Penn State campuses after the first two years at the Berks Campus. As of 2017, approximately 2,900 students were enrolled at the campus. Housing is available for approximately 800 resident students as a result of new construction. The Reading Area Community College is located in the city of Reading, across the Schuylkill River from West Reading. Other area colleges include Albright College, Alvernia University and Kutztown University.

Library Service

The Wyomissing Public Library is located on Reading Boulevard. There are small libraries that exist on Penn Avenue in Sinking Spring and on Woodside Avenue in Spring Township. There is a branch of the Berks County library system located on Commerce Drive in Spring Township. The largest public library in the County is in Downtown Reading.

GOAL: Provide central water and sewage services in the most cost-efficient manner, with regular investments to provide reliable services.

Public Water Service

The former Wyomissing Hills Borough, Sinking Spring, and most of the developed areas of Spring Township are

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served by the Pennsylvania American Water Company. The Pennsylvania American water system is mainly dependent upon wells as its water source. Shillington sells water to customers in adjacent portions of Spring Township.

West Reading and Wyomissing are served by the Western Berks Water Authority. Each municipality maintains its own water lines.

Sanitary Sewage Service

Sewage from Wyomissing Hills, Wyomissing and West Reading is conveyed through borough-maintained lines to the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley sewage treatment plant. The plant is located along the Wyomissing Creek.

Sinking Spring Borough operates its own treatment plant along the Cacoosing Creek that serves the Borough and adjacent areas. Spring Township's Sewage Authority operates a second treatment plant along the Cacoosing Creek that serves most other developed parts of the Township. A portion of Spring Township is connected into lines that link to Reading's sewage treatment plant.

On-Lot Sewage Disposal Systems

Most properties in southern Spring Township rely upon on-lot septic systems. Public education is important to make sure that residents know how to properly take care of on-lot septic systems. Many residents have moved from suburban areas where they had public sewers. Of most importance, property-owners need to understand the need to have their septic systems pumped regularly (typically at least once every three years). If a system is not pumped regularly, the drain field eventually will need to be replaced. Where problems have become severe in other municipalities, they have established ordinances requiring that property-owners show proof that they have had their system pumped at least once every three years.

Recycling

The four municipalities in this region all participate in curbside pick-up of recyclable materials through private contractors. Berks County provides several recycling drop off locations throughout the County.

Parks and Recreation

GOAL: Improve parks and playgrounds to meet a wide variety of recreational needs.

The majority of the Region is well-served by existing parks that are well-distributed. The Region's park system includes an appropriate variety of facilities, including playgrounds in denser areas, athletic fields, passive natural areas along creeks and other areas. Continued efforts are needed to rehabilitate older recreation areas, particularly to make sure they meet modern safety standards.

It generally is most efficient and most convenient to concentrate most new athletic facilities for organized sports in one major park near a school. This is exhibited by the presence of the Shiloh Hills Community Park that Spring Township has developed adjacent to the Shiloh Hills Elementary School. The park includes a mix of active and passive recreation, including athletic facilities, trails and picnic areas.

Wherever practical, new developments should be required to include pedestrian connections with nearby parks, residential developments and existing trails. This particularly includes pedestrian and bicycle connections in new development in the southeastern part of Spring that can link with the trails at the new Shiloh Hills Park. In new business developments, stone or asphalt paths are valuable to provide a place for employees to walk over their lunch-time.

Regional Recreation Areas

Regional recreation areas attract visitors from throughout Berks County and beyond. The focus of these areas is usually picnicking, boating, fishing, camping, hiking or hunting. They may also have areas set aside for environmental conservation. Regional recreation lands within a 25-mile radius of the Suburban Berks area are listed as follows.

Federal Lands

Blue Marsh Lake National Recreation Area (Berks County)

State Lands

French Creek State Park (Berks County)

Nolde Forest State Environmental Education Center (Cumru Township)

State Games Lands stretching along the Blue Mountain and around Blue Marsh Lake

Berks County Lands

Camp Joy

Tulpehocken Creek County Park System

Youth Recreation Facility and Education Farm

Reading Water Authority Lands

Lake Ontelaunee

Hiking Trails

Bartram Trail (north of region along Schuylkill River)

Horse Shoe Trail (south of region in Lancaster County)

Thun Trail (east of region, running parallel to Schuylkill River)

Union Canal Trail (west of region, along Tulpehocken Creek)

Local Recreation Areas

Local recreation areas are parks and other recreation-related properties designed for use by residents of one or two municipalities, unlike regional recreation which serve a much larger geographic area.

Spring Township has an extensive park system which includes 260 acres of both active and passive recreation land. The park system is comprised of one mini-park, two special use parks, eight neighborhood parks, three community parks and two trail systems. The parks offer picnic pavilions; softball, soccer and multi-use fields; volleyball, tennis and basketball courts; play equipment; open green space; wooded areas and typical park amenities such as park benches and restroom facilities. The Werner Farm Trail system is an accessible paved trail along the outskirts of the Werner Farm Development. The Oaks Trail system is a loop nature trail through a forested area that begins and ends at a small wetland area. The newest addition to the park system, Shiloh Hills Park, hosts 3.5 miles of trails and an Environmental Education Center with a wildlife observation area and night sky viewing area.

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Sinking Spring Borough municipal playground includes opportunities for basketball, tennis, volleyball, various field sports and a tot-lot.

The West Reading Borough municipal playground has a tot-lot playground area as well as basketball and tennis courts. There are areas for various field sports and picnicking and a swimming area.

Wyomissing Borough has three municipal parks including Berkshire Heights Playground, Happy Hollow Playground and Wyomissing Park. Wyomissing Community Playground offers many outdoor activity opportunities including basketball and tennis courts. There is also biking and hiking trails available, as well as areas for field sports and activities. Berkshire Heights Playground and Happy Hollow Playground offer tot-lot and playground areas and opportunities for field sports and activities. In the Wyomissing Hills portion of Wyomissing, there also is a playground and a community park, Wyomissing Hills Park. Both locations have a to-lot/playground, basketball courts and areas for field sports. Wyomissing Hills Park also has a picnic area.

The Wilson School District facilities are used extensively by various groups based within the District boundaries and surrounding areas. All school activities take precedence over other groups. The groups using the facilities can change from time to time depending on the time of year.

The Wilson Senior High School has baseball fields, a football stadium and practice field, softball fields, tennis courts, soccer fields, a gymnasium, outdoor basketball and a 1/4-mile track.

Wilson School District Central Junior High School has a gymnasium, indoor pool, weight room, baseball and field hockey fields.

Southern Junior High School/Cornwall Terrace Elementary School has a gymnasium, fields for baseball, softball, soccer and football as well as tennis courts, a 1/4-mile track and various play equipment.

Lincoln Park Elementary, West Wyomissing Elementary and Whitfield Elementary all have various fields and play equipment and indoor, all-purpose rooms.

GOAL: Complete a system of bicycle and pedestrian trails to provide vital links between existing parks and recreational opportunities.

The latest Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan adopted by the Reading MPO in 2010 is a policy-based plan that built on the prior 2002 Plan. The 2002 Plan recommended a system of on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout Berks, including this region. The spine of the local system would revolve around the Cacoosing Creek with connections to local parks and, ultimately, the County's trail system along the Tulpehocken Creek.

Efforts are underway to improve pedestrian and bicycle access between West Reading and Center City Reading. An old railroad bridge across the river has been opened to bicyclists and pedestrians. This connection is beneficial not only for recreation, but also for persons commuting to work on foot or on bicycles. A long regional trail system is planned along the entire length of the Schuylkill River, which could interconnect with this river crossing. This includes an interconnection with the Thun Trail, which passes parallel to Route 422 and the Schuylkill River east of West Reading. This trail system should also be connected to the trail system that exists through the borough parks along the Wyomissing Creek.

Bicycle and pedestrian access between West Reading and the City is made via the old railroad bridge across the Schuylkill River near the Reading Area Community College (RACC). Currently owned by the County, the 'RACC Bridge' provides off-road recreational and commuting opportunities between these two communities, and provides a direct link to the Thun Trail, a portion of the larger Schuylkill River Trail, and also the Wyomissing Creek Trail System. Eventually, however, that bridge could potentially be removed as part of the planned reconstruction of the U.S. 422 (West Shore) Bypass. Revised connections are being designed as part of the preliminary engineering process at both the Penn Street/Penn Avenue and the Lancaster Avenue/Bingaman Street interchanges.

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In addition to serving local residents, trails can be valuable in attracting tourists to the region, particularly considering the dramatic increase in the popularity of mountain biking.

NRPA Guidelines

NRPA, the National Recreation and Park Association, suggests that most communities have 10.5 acres of active recreation land available for community use for every 1,000 persons. Active recreation land generally refers to land available for organized athletics and playground use. In the past, the NRPA has specifically named an acreage per 1000 persons. Most recently, it was 10.6 acres per 1000 persons. However, in recent years, they have gotten away from this as it is now the notion that different types of communities have different needs. As these needs vary, acreages vary as well.

Emergency Services

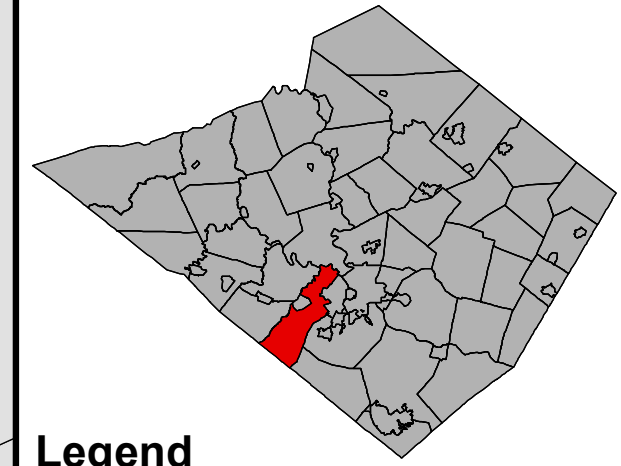
GOAL: Emphasize full coordination of municipal and emergency services across municipal borders.

Through an intergovernmental agreement executed in 2015, Spring Township and Wyomissing Borough merged the management of their fire departments. Both municipalities continue to operate their own fire stations and employ their own full-time fire department staffs, while sharing a fire chief and fire marshal.

Continued efforts are needed to make sure that fire, police and emergency medical services are fully coordinated across municipal borders. This is exhibited by the merger of the fire companies in Spring Township into one well equipped and staffed facility. It may be desirable to consider other jointures of operations, such as a joint police force between Spring Township and Sinking Spring. As described in the “Putting this Plan Into Action” section, shared police services make it much more cost-efficient to provide 24 hour coverage than if each municipality having its own police department.

It is essential that the emergency service providers continue to train together, and coordinate the provision of the specialized vehicles and equipment, police dogs and similar needs.

Spring Township Community Facilities and Recreation



Legend

- State Recreation Land
- County Recreation Land
- Municipal Recreation Land
- Non-Profit Recreation Land
- Private Recreation Land
- School Recreation Land
- Streams and Water Bodies
- US Route
- State Route
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipal Boundaries

* Includes sites identified by surveys conducted from one or more of the following groups:
 Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission, Berks Nature, George Meiser and local
 historical societies.

Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks County
 Mapping, Berks DES, Spring Township

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Community Facilities

- Hospital
- Libraries
- Municipal
- Municipal and Police
- Police Station
- Fire Station
- Fire and EMS Station
- EMS Station
- Senior Citizen Facilities
- Private Schools
- Public Schools
- Higher Education Schools

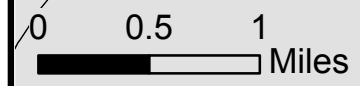
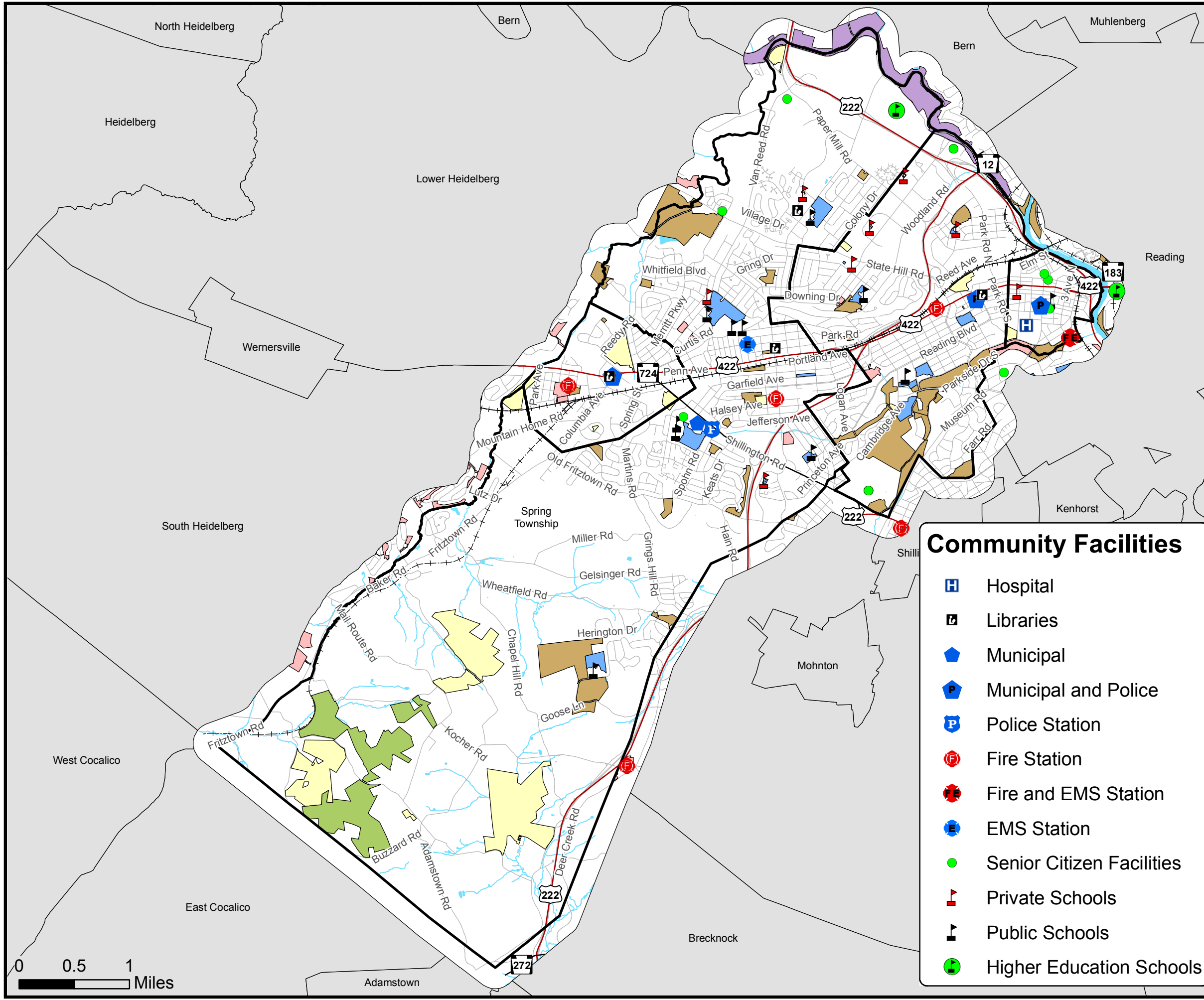
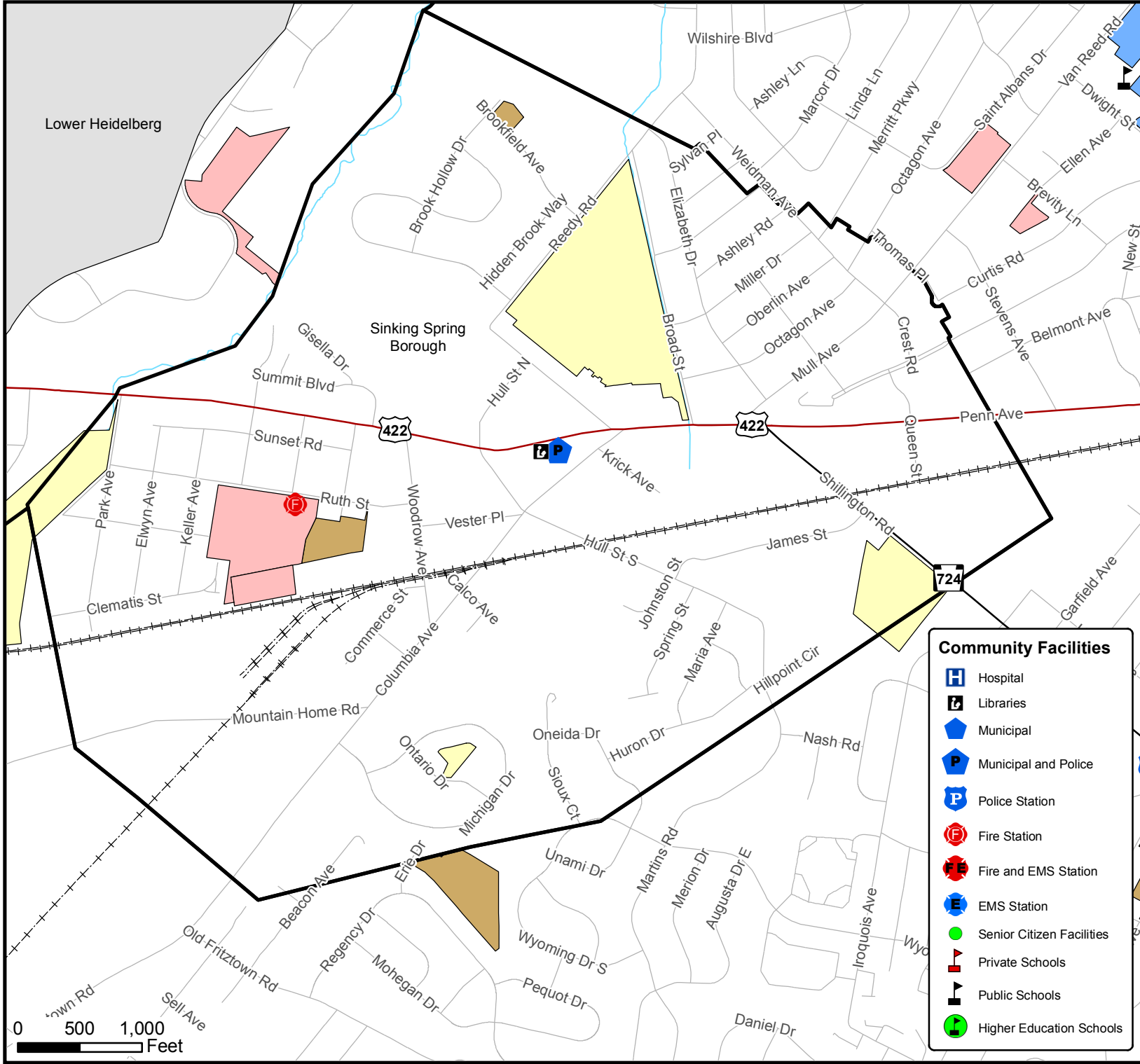
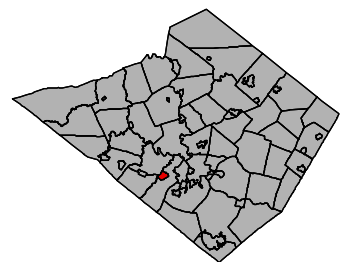


FIGURE 7

Sinking Spring, Spring, West Reading, Wyomissing Joint Comprehensive Plan Update September 2018

Sinking Spring Borough Community Facilities and Recreation



Legend

- State Recreation Land
- County Recreation Land
- Municipal Recreation Land
- Non-Profit Recreation Land
- Private Recreation Land
- School Recreation Land
- Streams and Water Bodies
- US Route
- State Route
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipal Boundaries

Community Facilities

- H Hospital
- L Libraries
- M Municipal
- P Municipal and Police
- P Police Station
- F Fire Station
- F/E Fire and EMS Station
- E EMS Station
- Senior Citizen Facilities
- ▲ Private Schools
- ▲ Public Schools
- Higher Education Schools

Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks DES, Spring Township

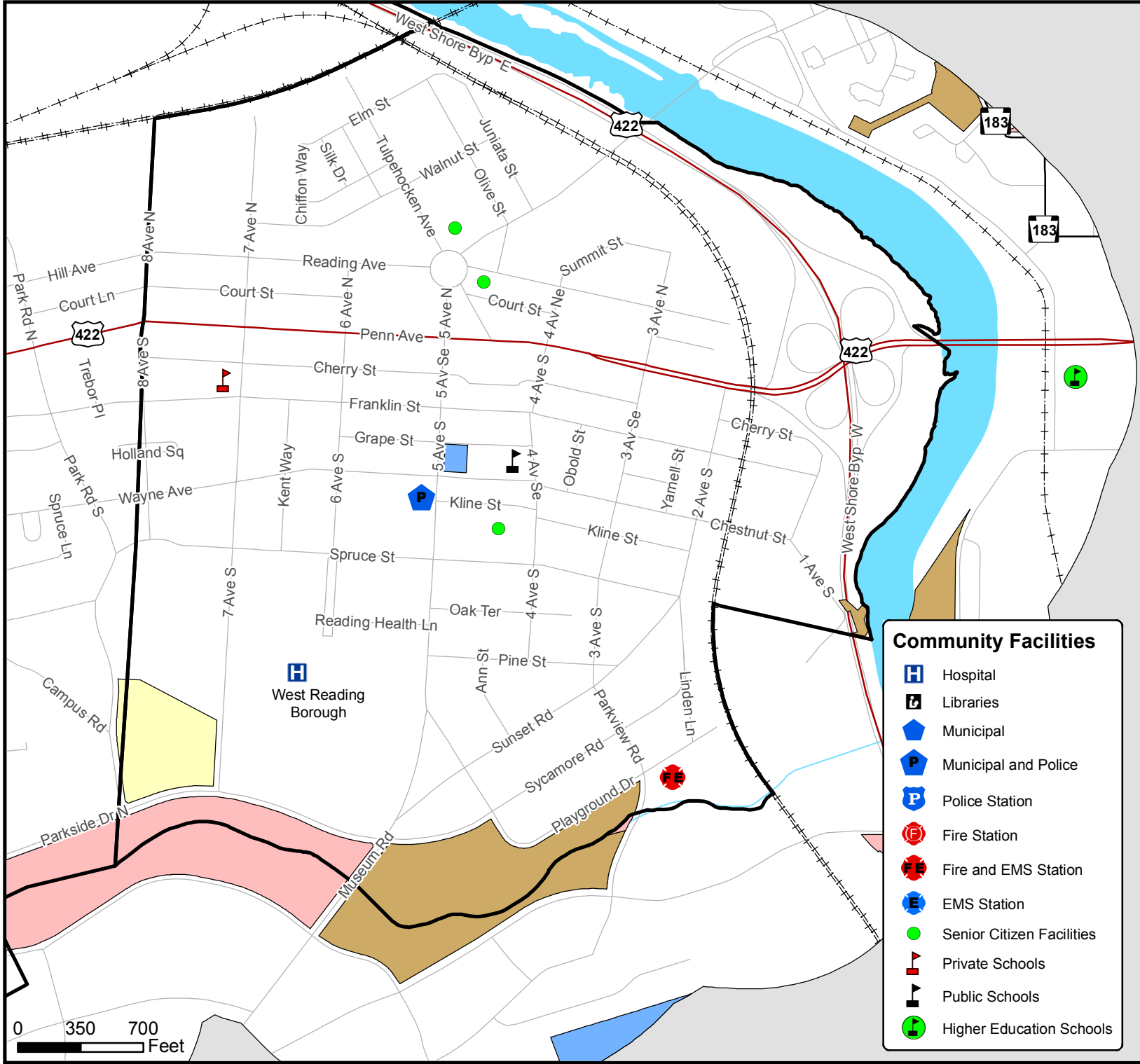
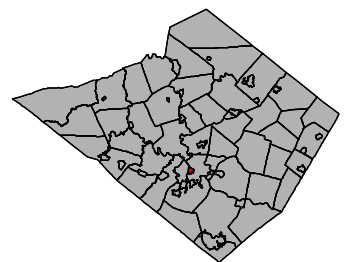
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FIGURE 8

Sinking Spring, Spring,
West Reading, Wyomissing
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update
September 2018

West Reading Borough Community Facilities and Recreation



Legend

- State Recreation Land
- County Recreation Land
- Municipal Recreation Land
- Non-Profit Recreation Land
- Private Recreation Land
- School Recreation Land
- Streams and Water Bodies
- US Route
- State Route
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipal Boundaries

Community Facilities

- Hospital
- Libraries
- Municipal
- Municipal and Police
- Police Station
- Fire Station
- Fire and EMS Station
- EMS Station
- Senior Citizen Facilities
- Private Schools
- Public Schools
- Higher Education Schools

Source data:
Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County
Mapping, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks DES

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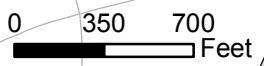
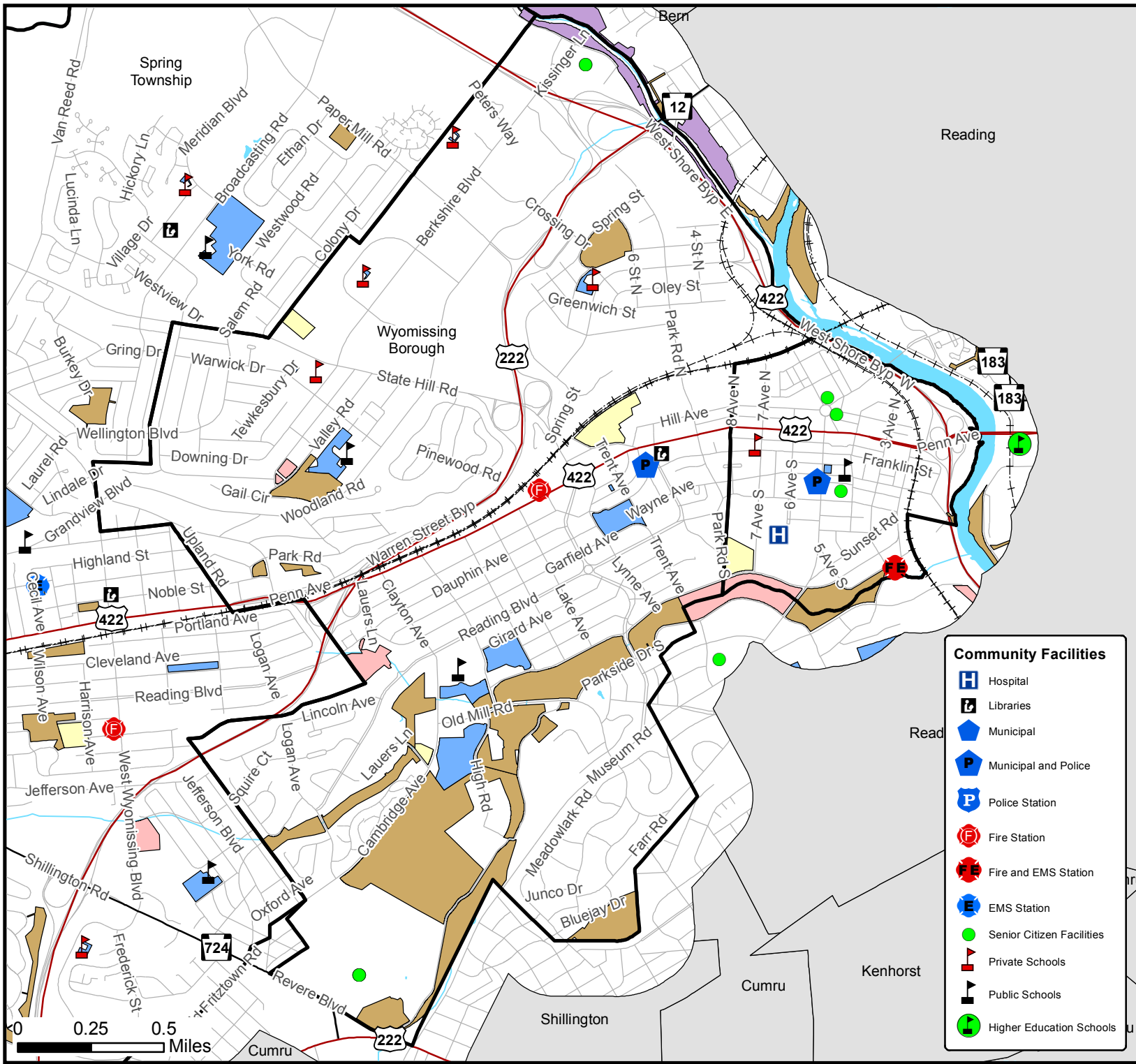
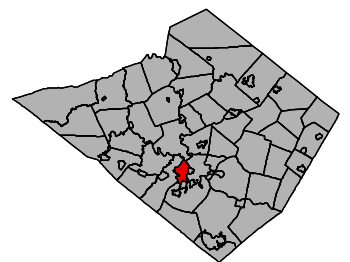


FIGURE 9

Sinking Spring, Spring, West Reading, Wyomissing Joint Comprehensive Plan Update September 2018

Wyomissing Borough Community Facilities and Recreation



Legend

- State Recreation Land
- County Recreation Land
- Municipal Recreation Land
- Non-Profit Recreation Land
- Private Recreation Land
- School Recreation Land
- Streams and Water Bodies
- US Route
- State Route
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipal Boundaries

Community Facilities

- Hospital
- Libraries
- Municipal
- Municipal and Police
- Police Station
- Fire Station
- Fire and EMS Station
- EMS Station
- Senior Citizen Facilities
- Private Schools
- Public Schools
- Higher Education Schools

Source data: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS/IS, Berks DES, Spring Township

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