



# Pottstown Play Streets

Evaluation Report  
Fall 2022



Report prepared by: Sarah Albrecht, MS; Laura Lessard, PhD, MPH

# Overview

The summer of 2022 marked the inauguration of the Pottstown Play Streets program. Play Streets is a summer outdoor program which temporarily closes a neighborhood block to traffic and provides play equipment to create safe, fun, and healthy spaces for children, families and neighborhoods to connect and play right outside their doors. It gives kids of all ages more space to be active.



Pottstown Play Streets is led by the Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department, who are part of the Pottstown Play Streets Coalition convened by the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. Pottstown Play Streets Coalition members also include 20 local businesses, organizations, and funders, all of whom played a critical role in the planning and implementation of Pottstown Play Streets 2022.\* Each Play Streets event was also made possible by 24 volunteers made up of parents, teachers, nurses, and members of several community organizations.

Between June and August, six Play Streets events were held at various neighborhood locations. The Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department provided equipment for activities including connect four, jump rope, sidewalk chalk, cornhole, life-size jenga, bean bag toss, hula hoops, footballs, kickballs, basketballs, and soccer balls. Pottstown Play Streets Coalition members attended one or more of these events to provide outreach for their organization and offer individual programs and activities.'

In addition to providing a safe, healthy and fun space for children and families to be active during the summer, Pottstown Play Streets is part of a larger effort to create a climate resilience capacity surplus in Pottstown. This summer, the Play Streets events were held in the borough's Environmental Justice Zone, 100- and 500-year floodplains, and heat islands\*



\* see appendix



# Overview

with a goal to offer resources and programs which provide:

- **Direct access** to health and social safety net-related resources and information;
- **Community Cohesion and Social Trust programs** focused on nurturing public/private partnerships like street clean-ups, block captain recruitment, emergency safety and planning outreach, or community-centered art, history, or recreation projects; and
- **Knowledge** regarding community-centered, sustainable green infrastructure through citizen science.



To help evaluate Pottstown Play Streets, volunteers counted participants and recorded their thoughts about successes and challenges at each event. Additional information was gathered from program stakeholders during informal discussions and a debrief meeting at the conclusion of the program. This evaluation report discusses the reach, collective impact, and event activities of Pottstown Play Streets 2022 and provides suggestions for Play Streets 2023.

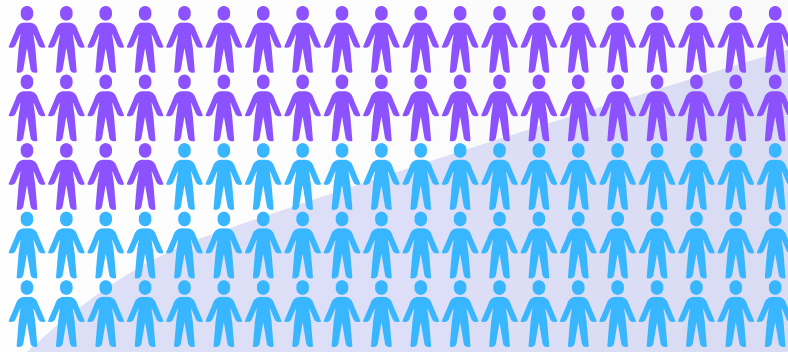


"My kids really liked being there. They had tons of fun engaging with the kids. My one daughter loved playing games... My other daughter loved doing the artsy chalk activities."

- Parent/Volunteer

# Reach

During the summer of 2022, Pottstown Play Streets drew nearly 500 neighbors to its 6 events. About half of the attendees were children and teens.

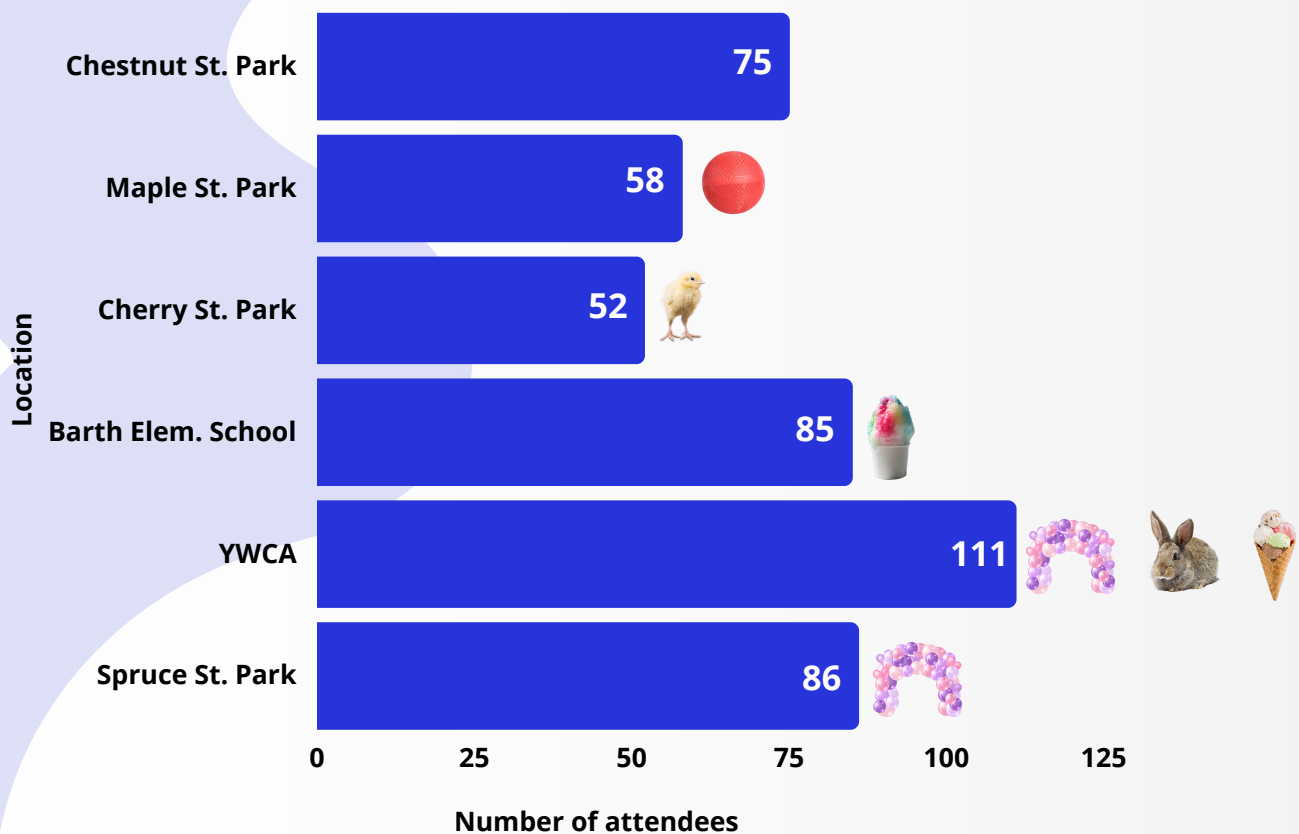


44% Children and Teens 56% Adults



## In total, 467 people attended Pottstown Play Streets 2022

Many locations featured unique attractions, activities, food, and even a few friendly animals for children and families to interact with.



# Collective Impact

Together, **16** members of the Pottstown Play Streets Coalition generated **22.6** hours of programming and outreach *per event*, creating **136** hours *total* across all six events, resulting in a **1,033%** *increase* in program delivery impact.

"We were able to come together, representing different corners of town, with different focuses, and deliver a really impactful program."

- Chris Wierzbowski,  
Pottstown Area Health & Wellness  
Foundation





# Programs & Activities

The 20 Pottstown Play Streets Coalition members including non-profits, healthcare providers, youth-serving organizations, social services, schools, and religious organizations coordinated to provide outreach, programs, and activities at one or more Play Street events:

- **Pottstown Parks and Recreation** supplied the free play equipment for each event as well as free t-shirts and water.
- **Montgomery County Community College** completed outreach for their Challenger Learning Center and academic programs. They also provided infrared beads and pipe cleaners.
- The **Maternity Care Coalition** took enrollments for Early Head Start and provided drawing activities using finger crayons to promote fine motor development of young children.
- **Pottstown Children's Discovery Center** provided racetracks and duplo blocks to build race cars.
- **Trellis for Tomorrow** offered scavenger hunt sheets while having the opportunity to promote their garden programs
- **Pottstown Community Action** delivered outreach for PCA Block Captains and volunteers.
- **Genesis Housing** offered program information as well as snacks.
- **Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation** engaged with attendees about their community survey.



- **ACLAMO** provided outreach information about immunizations and COVID-19 and additional free play equipment, including badminton, ring toss, bubbles, bouncing balls, shuffleboard, and an inflatable dart board.

# Programs & Activities

- **Pottstown Trauma Informed Community Connection** brought along some baby bunnies to interact with and also provided take-home sensory boards.
- **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities** offered free freeze pops as well as information for basic needs assistance, spiritual guidance, and self-sufficiency programs.
- **Family Services of Montgomery County- Pottstown, PA** provided outreach about their Parents as Teachers, Triple P, and Parents Cafe programs.



- **Pottstown Community Arts** partnered with **ACLAMO** and offered a balloon painting activity.
- **YWCA** ran an ice cream social and promoted their Youth Engagement Program at their event and also supplied additional free play equipment, including double dutch, giant jenga, human ring toss, a family obstacle course, and four square.
- **Pottstown Hospital Tower Health** offered healthy snacks while also providing health education.
- The **Tri-County Health Council- Community Education and Collaboration** work group offered wellness checks to attendees.

"All we did was get out there and answer questions and connect with people... It's not rocket science. It's community. It made a huge difference."

- Coalition Member





# Future Directions

Following Pottstown Play Streets 2022, members of the Pottstown Play Streets Coalition, as well as parents and volunteers, came together for a debrief meeting to share their thoughts on [what went well](#), [areas for improvement](#), and [suggestions for Pottstown Play Streets 2023](#). Individuals shared their feedback by writing their ideas on post-it notes that were then placed on three poster boards in the room representing each of the three categories. Feedback was also collected from coalition members during individual Play Streets events and via email. The most common themes are discussed below and the full list of ideas and feedback can be found in the Appendix.

## What Went Well

Pottstown Play Streets 2022 brought many positive experiences and opportunities to the families, community members, and neighborhoods they served. From providing the opportunity for kids to be outside and be active to increasing awareness of community resources, coalition and community members agreed that overall the program succeeded at fostering a sense of fun, safety, engagement, connection, and collaboration within the community. As one coalition member said,

*"I am fairly new to the community here... I looked forward to the next Play Streets [events], and the people in this room too. And I got to know who we are as a community better. It was just really nice."*



## Areas for Improvement

When asked how Pottstown Play Streets could be improved, coalition and community members described various ideas that could enhance the fun, safety, engagement, connection, and collaboration of the events. These ideas included playing more music, offering more ways to cool off, and increasing the duration of each event. The most commonly discussed area for improvement was hosting all Play Streets events in the street, as some events overlapped with other spaces, such as playgrounds and basketball courts. One coalition member described this idea by saying,

*"I think that really should be a focus. That even though there's a park nearby that we should be closing the street and let the kids have free right to the street because that's the really unusual part. The park is going to be there the next day."*



# Suggestions for Play Streets 2023



## Planning and Preparation

Coalition and community members offered their thoughts on what could be included in the preparation and implementation of Pottstown Play Streets 2023 to continue being successful. Creative ideas were discussed in detail, including recruitment of youth volunteers to engage and play with the children, enlisting the support of the local fire department to assist with road closures and safety measures, and offering more opportunities for volunteers to sign-up. The most commonly discussed suggestion, however, was [advertising about Play Streets events more](#), including the use of more physical fliers within the community and providing advertisements in Spanish. As one coalition member described,

*"I think we definitely need to get out into the community where it's being held earlier... just to give them a heads up that it's coming."*



# Appendix A. Coalition Members



**Mission statement:** Pottstown Parks and Recreation strives to create, support, and promote diverse recreation opportunities in the Borough, to enhance existing park facilities and promote tourism with new attractions and amenities for residents and visitors of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds. We seek to provide park improvements and recreation programming that promotes healthy lifestyles, benefits the community, connects residents and helps build a better Pottstown.

[www.pottstown.org/135/Parks-Recreation](http://www.pottstown.org/135/Parks-Recreation) | 610-970-6608 | [pottsparks@pottstown.org](mailto:pottsparks@pottstown.org)



**Mission statement:** to offer a high-quality, affordable, accessible education that leads to relevant, rewarding transfer and career opportunities.

[www.mc3.edu](http://www.mc3.edu) | 215-641-6551 | [admissions@mc3.edu](mailto:admissions@mc3.edu)



**Mission statement:** The mission of Maternity Care Coalition is to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women and parenting families, and enhance school readiness for children 0-3.

[maternitycarecoalition.org](http://maternitycarecoalition.org) | 215-972-0700



**Mission statement:** to provide an educational, hands-on, interactive atmosphere promoting healthy living for children, families and schools by stimulating curiosity and motivating learning. All children learn through hands on interactive experiences. These experiences enhance social/emotional growth by exposing children to interactions such as collaboration, exploration and self-control which lead to critical and creative thinking, self-confidence and healthy communication skills.

[www.pottstowndiscoverykids.org/home](http://www.pottstowndiscoverykids.org/home)



**Mission statement:** Trellis for Tomorrow delivers experiential programs in organic gardening, environmental education, and food security that provide practical and behavioral life skills for youth and adults. Our aspiration is to foster compassion and resilience in people and inspire them to build sustainable communities

[trellis4tomorrow.org/en](http://trellis4tomorrow.org/en) | (610) 886-4900



**Mission statement:** We are a grassroots community group formed to facilitate volunteerism, civic engagement, empowerment and leadership so we can improve the quality of life in Pottstown and beautify our neighborhoods.

[www.pottstowncommunityaction.org](http://www.pottstowncommunityaction.org) | [PottstownCommunityAction@gmail.com](mailto:PottstownCommunityAction@gmail.com)

---



**Mission statement:** Genesis Housing Corporation is dedicated to the development of affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization and the education of consumers on housing and financial issues.

[genesishousing.org](http://genesishousing.org) | 610-275-4357 | [info@genesishousing.org](mailto:info@genesishousing.org)

---



**Mission statement:** The Foundation enhances the health and wellness of area residents, providing education, funding, and programs that provide equitable access and opportunities for all residents to adopt healthy lifestyles.

[pottstownfoundation.org](http://pottstownfoundation.org) | 610-323-2006

---



**Mission statement:** ACLAMO is a nonprofit community service organization that provides educational programs, social services, and access to health and wellness programs to Latinos and other community members to empower them to fully achieve their life potential.

[aclamo.org](http://aclamo.org) | 610- 277-2570

---



**Mission statement:** Recognize, respond to and reduce the struggles that children and adults face every day in Pottstown.

[www.pottstownpeak.org/home](http://www.pottstownpeak.org/home)

---



**Mission statement:** The Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities transforms lives by offering basic needs assistance, spiritual guidance, and self-sufficiency programs to improve people's socio-economic stability in the Greater Pottstown Area through cooperation with our faith and community partners.

[www.pottstowncluster.org](http://www.pottstowncluster.org) | 610-970-5995





**Mission statement:** Family Services is committed to improving the lives of people in Montgomery County, PA.

[fsmontco.org](http://fsmontco.org) | 610-326-1610



**Mission statement:** We bring the community together through art and beauty. Collaborating with professional artists, art students and individuals in and around town, we help beautify public spaces in Pottstown.

[pottstowncommunityarts.org](http://pottstowncommunityarts.org) | 610-574-8016 | [topottstownarts@gmail.com](mailto:topottstownarts@gmail.com)



**Mission statement:** YWCA Tri-County Area is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

[www.ywcatricountyarea.org](http://www.ywcatricountyarea.org) | 610-323-1888 | [info@ywcatricountyarea.org](mailto:info@ywcatricountyarea.org)



**Pottstown Hospital**

TOWER HEALTH

Advancing Health. Transforming Lives.

**Mission statement:** to provide compassionate, accessible, high-quality, cost-effective healthcare to the community; to promote health; to educate healthcare professionals; and to participate in appropriate clinical research.

[towerhealth.org/locations/pottstown-hospital](http://towerhealth.org/locations/pottstown-hospital) | 610-327-7000



**Mission statement:** TriCounty Health Council (TCHC) improves the health and healthcare of TriCounty Area residents through collaboration, enhanced provider communication, and innovative patient engagement.

[www.tricountyhealthcouncil.org](http://www.tricountyhealthcouncil.org)



**Mission statement:** PEAK increases the school readiness and success of children in Pottstown by cultivating a network of organizations that support young children and partner with families.

[www.pottstownpeak.org/home](http://www.pottstownpeak.org/home)



**Mission statement:** We are a community bank committed to improving the quality of life in the communities we serve. We empower our employees to provide an exceptional customer experience.

[www.phoenixfed.com](http://www.phoenixfed.com) | 610-933-1000

---



[www.wawa.com](http://www.wawa.com) | 610-718-0889 | Store #8040: 1520 Highstreet Pottstown, PA

---



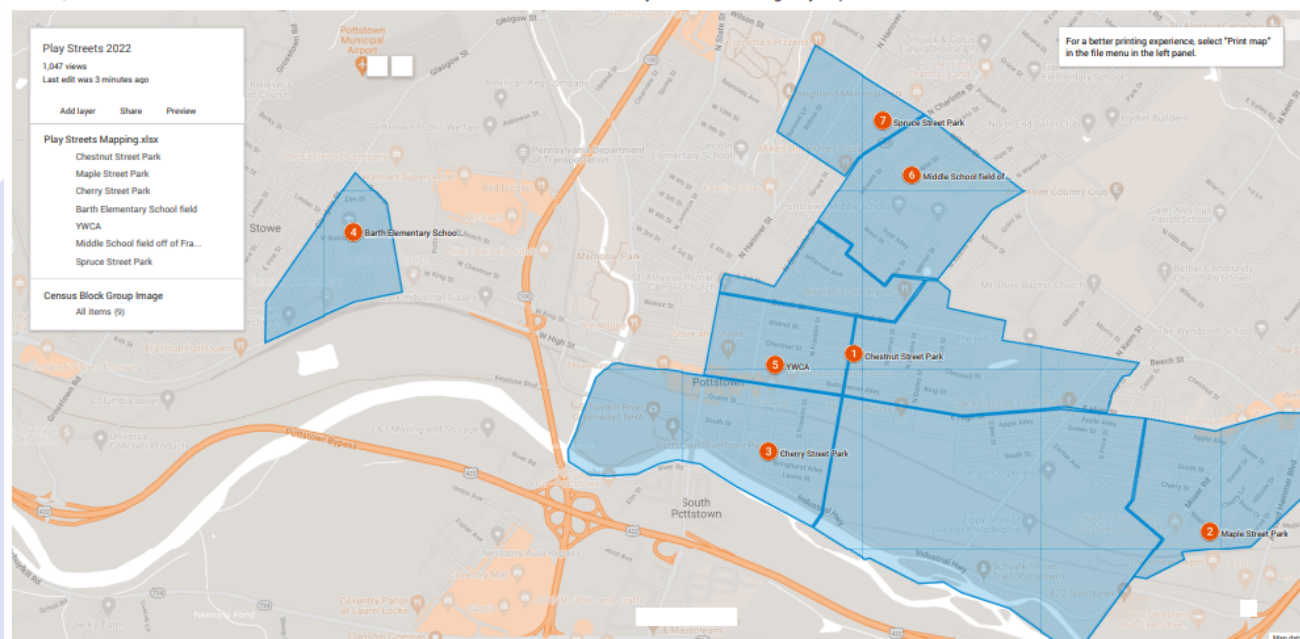
[www.mc3.edu/for-our-community/challenger-center](http://www.mc3.edu/for-our-community/challenger-center) | 610-718-1938 | [challenger@mc3.edu](mailto:challenger@mc3.edu)

# Appendix B. Area Maps

## Pottstown Play Streets 2022 Event Locations

12/14/22, 9:27 AM

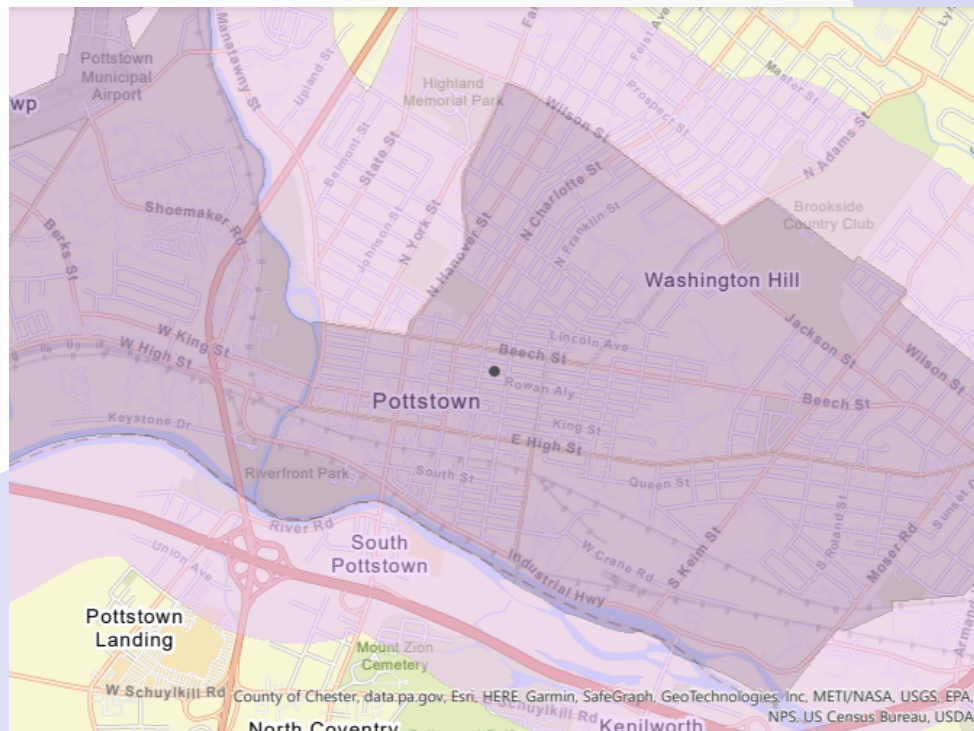
Play Streets 2022 - Google My Maps



SOURCE: Chris Wierzbowski, Grant Writer, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1SD1ELCo1FihVrGzTeD2pqRtLFw07Znuz&usp=sharing>



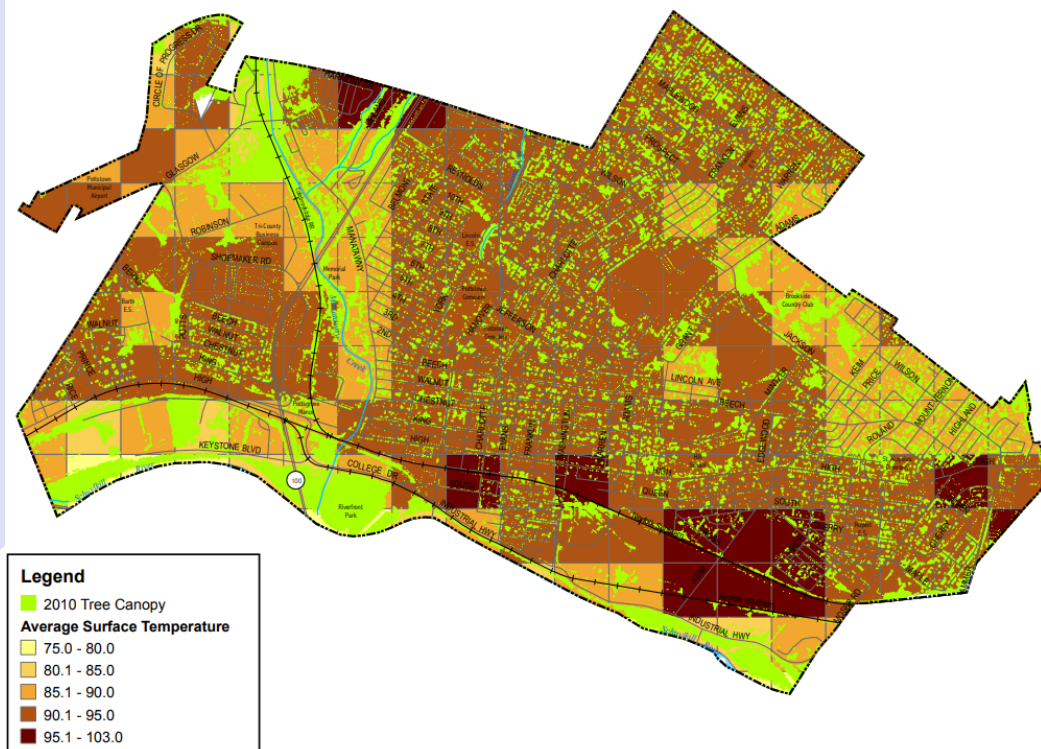
## Environmental Justice Area



## Pottstown Heat Island Effect Map

### Pottstown Borough Tree Canopy and Heat Island Effect

Source: PA DCNR 2010



# Appendix C.

## Debrief Feedback

### What Went Well

- Collaboration and coordination
- Meeting new people
- Community engagement
- Connecting with families
- Getting out and being active and off of social media
- Giving children a safe environment to learn and play
- Working together as a team for our community
- Learning more about community resources
- Providing a lot of things to do
- Fun, laughter, joy
- Seeing smiles on the kids faces
- Engaging the different areas of the town to come out and learn new things

### Areas for Improvement

- The length of time
- More music
- Go to areas with more concentration of kids
- More leaders who look like the community they are serving
- Partnering with local restaurants to provide food
- Offer events on different days
- More police officers, so they can engage with kids and show they are not bad people
- Build in rain dates
- Raffles
- Locations without established playgrounds
- Make events themed
- More community partners

### Suggestions for Play Streets 2023

- More advertisements
- Advertise in other locations, such as churches, doctors offices, schools, community bulletins, etc.
- Mini grants for agencies to support Play Streets year round
- More competitive games (3 legged races, sack races)
- Have a physical sign-up sheet for volunteers
- Incorporate more nutritional components
- Volunteer meet-up to review expectations
- Suggestion box
- Partner with local company who can provide moon bounces for kids
- Use areas without parks where closing the streets is more impactful
- Large Play Streets event at end of year
- Have an organization responsible to support the event
- More friendlier faces/smiling people running the event
- Get more neighbors
- Giant Foods has program where they pay employees to volunteer
- Dual language

# Appendix D.

## Logic Model

### Logic Model

<b>Pottstown Play Street</b>	<b>Goal:</b> Develop and Implement a Borough-Wide program that encourages physical activity among youth <b>Objective 1:</b> Create safe, healthy, fun places for recreational activity <b>Objective 2:</b> Re-build community cohesion in challenged areas across the Borough (Community Improvement & Community Building)			
<b>INPUTS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>What we invest</b>	<b>Objective Steps and Activities</b>	<b>Short-term Outputs</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
Staff Time Assessment Hours Materials Recreation Equipment Timeline Partner Resources Volunteers Funding Marketing Health Partners Communities Strategic Partners Public Works Police Fire	Identify common agenda Identify Neighborhoods and Locations Establish schedule of events Identify Strategic, Community and Funding Partners Secure Funding Coordinate logistics with Borough and Community Partners Align Health Partners Develop Evaluation needs and mechanism with strategic partners Secure equipment and storage Secure buy-in from supporting departments of the City Pre-Event Community Outreach	Create safe spaces for children to play; Treat recreation access gaps Opportunities for physical activity Remove the "last mile," to social safety net resources like benefit navigation, food, housing, healthcare, and employment; Exposure to healthy food options; Opportunity to socially engage with others; Workforce development opportunities for youth; Increase in community and youth engagement; Increase in partners ability to engage in collective impact while treating capacity gaps	Community cohesion; Improved interactions between community and with public departments; Improved community health and wellness	Community driven playstreets; Improved physical health of youth; Decrease in childhood obesity; Decrease in pediatric diabetes; Safer communities; Increased perception of safer communities; Improved mental health of youth; Decreased chance of children engaging in illicit and risky behaviors
<b>Assumptions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Borough youth don't get enough physical activity nor have access to safe open spaces for play</li> <li>- Borough Youth desire safe spaces for play</li> <li>- There is will among partners to engage in a collective impact approach</li> <li>- Funding can be secured through strategic partners to support cost of program</li> </ul>		<b>External Factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- Volunteers</li> <li>- Buy-in from community and partners</li> </ul>		