Atglen Borough, located in semi-rural Chester County with a population of 1,400 residents, lacks adequate public park space and recreational facilities. Despite a compact urban core and plenty of Borough-owned property, the only existing green spaces are privately owned.
Engaging the community at all stages of the Master Planning process was integral to the Team’s strategy. Residents enjoyed sharing their vision of Atglen through stories generated with a mad-lib style word game.
After gathering data on community needs through various engagement efforts, the Team asked residents to indicate which specific park site they preferred to have new facilities, programs, and amenities. This exercise helped prioritize improvements and greatly informed the Master Plans.
To keep momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative engagement strategies were implemented. Outdoor open house meetings, online surveys, and a scavenger hunt were planned to safely engage community members in giving feedback on the Team’s designs.
Community engagement efforts revealed three community priorities: implementing sustainable design, adding recreational amenities, and improving social and physical connectivity in the Borough. These priorities were incorporated into the master plans for each of the four park sites.
The Team’s design process included a thorough analysis of opportunities and constraints for each site, including historical uses, drainage, circulation, access, vegetation, habitat, viewsheds, and soils. This analysis ensured the development of contextually sensitive designs for each site.
For the largest of the sites, the Valley Avenue Master Plan creates a diverse suite of amenities for local residents, greatly improves access for pedestrians as well as those arriving by car, and prioritizes sustainability through major riparian and meadow restoration efforts.
Valley Ave Park contains sensitive ecological features on the western end of the site. A series of trails weave through a restored native meadow, with future pedestrian links to Enola Low Grade Trail and Wolf’s Hollow County Park.
The Master Plans for the three parks in Atglen's downtown will deliver much-needed, flexible green space within the Borough's fabric. They will animate the urban core, connect to existing trails, and provide gathering space for residents.
The Church Street Park Master Plan dramatically enhances this underutilized public facility near the municipal heart of Atglen. The design substantially increases recreational amenities, improves vehicular access, and proposes a variety of stormwater management practices to enhance ecological health.
Borough Hall Master Plan envisions this space becoming an important, multi-functional gateway for the community. A new public plaza will serve as a trail head for the future Chester Valley Trail extension, which will connect users to Enola Low-Grade Trail.
The Main Street Master Plan will transform this parcel into an exciting addition to the Borough’s core. A hardscaped plaza surrounded by planting draws visitors in from the street. A space for pop-food vendors will support lively community events.
A curved seat wall creates nooks for seating and socializing, while the plaza center remains open for community gathering and furnishings. A sprayground with at-grade jets will animate the plaza in summer and enables year-round flexibility as an event space.
RECOMMENDED PHASING

- **Phase 1: ATGLEN BOROUGH GATEWAY**
  - Immediate Impact & Downtown Gateway
  - Local Access to Recreation
  - Regional Draw

- **Phase 2: RECREATION DOWNTOWN**

- **Phase 3: PARKS NETWORK**

Phasing strategy starts small in Atglen's downtown, expands to recreational core, and finally results in a Borough-wide park system with regional draw. Prioritizing small parcels will have a dramatic impact at an affordable cost and signal Borough commitment to residents.
The Team produced a 135-page Master Plan, including site analyses, community engagement summaries, design plans, operation and maintenance plans, and cost estimates. The Master Plan has received Atglen Borough Council and DCNR approval, and is being used to secure funding.