

Public Access Workgroup

February 17, 2026

Icebreaker

If you were in the Winter Olympics, which sport would you compete in?



Agenda

1	Management Board Updates	5	Tracking Access Discussion
2	Definitions Workshop Recap	6	Looking Forward
3	Census Places and Urban Areas	7	Member Updates
4	Post-Feedback Definition Draft		

Management Board Updates

Management Strategies

- One strategic plan with a collaborative executive summary, followed by four chapters: one management strategy for each goal
- Drafting led by Goal Chairs
- Template approved by June 2026

Engaged Communities Goal Chairs Approved
at February MB meeting:

- Julie Lawson, DC DOEE
- Julia Wakeling, DC DOEE



Public Access Workgroup chair updates

Recap of Greenspace Definition Workshop

- 38 people from around the watershed joined from both public access and protected lands workgroups
- Conversation on what a greenspace is and how we should be tracking it
- Learned about MD's Green Space Equity Program and Trust for Public Land's conservation and tracking efforts
- Breakout groups produced their own ideas that were used to create a draft definition

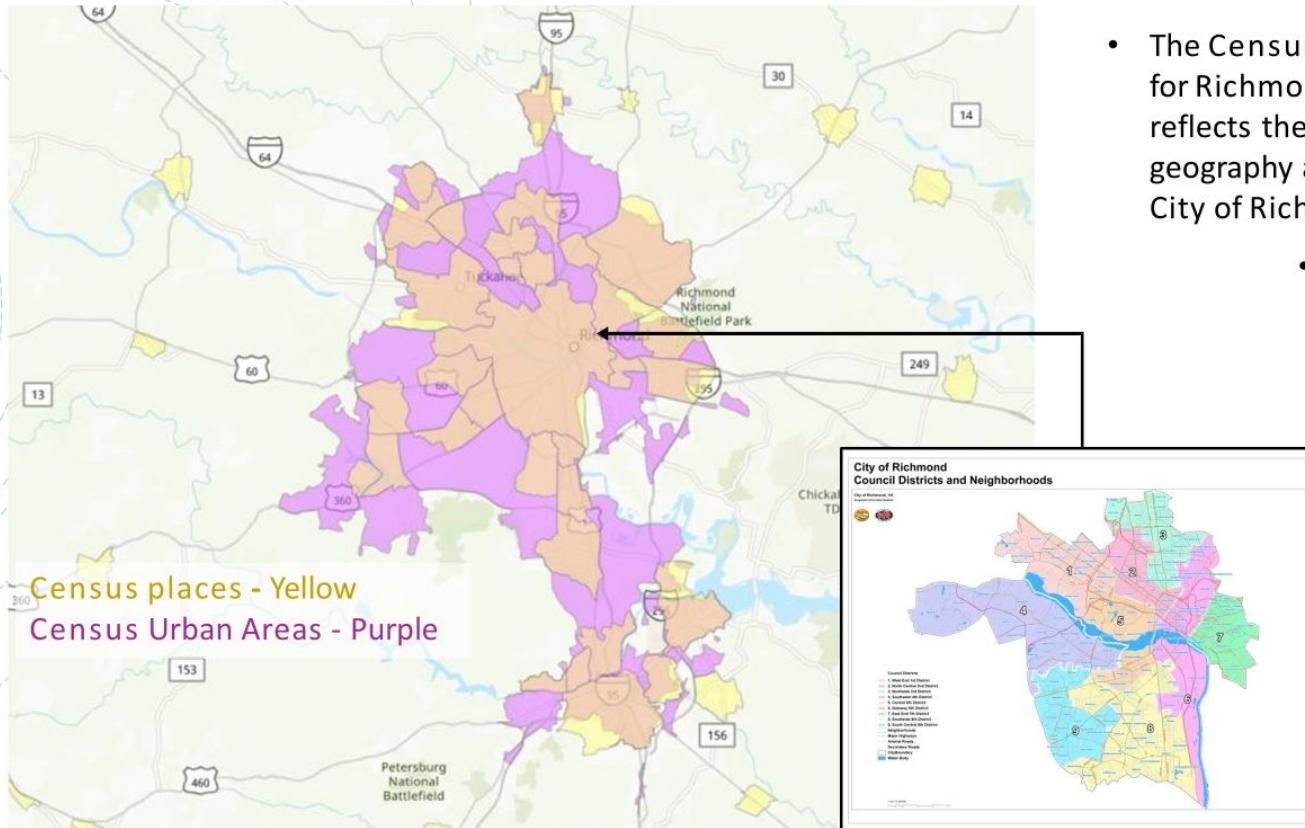
- We found that people agreed that we shouldn't be overly restrictive with both the definition and the area of interest
- Greenspace needs to be publicly accessible and people-centric. Protecting outdoor spaces not just for the ecological and water quality benefits
- Must include an outdoor component, including things like turf grass.

Breakout Group Definition Examples



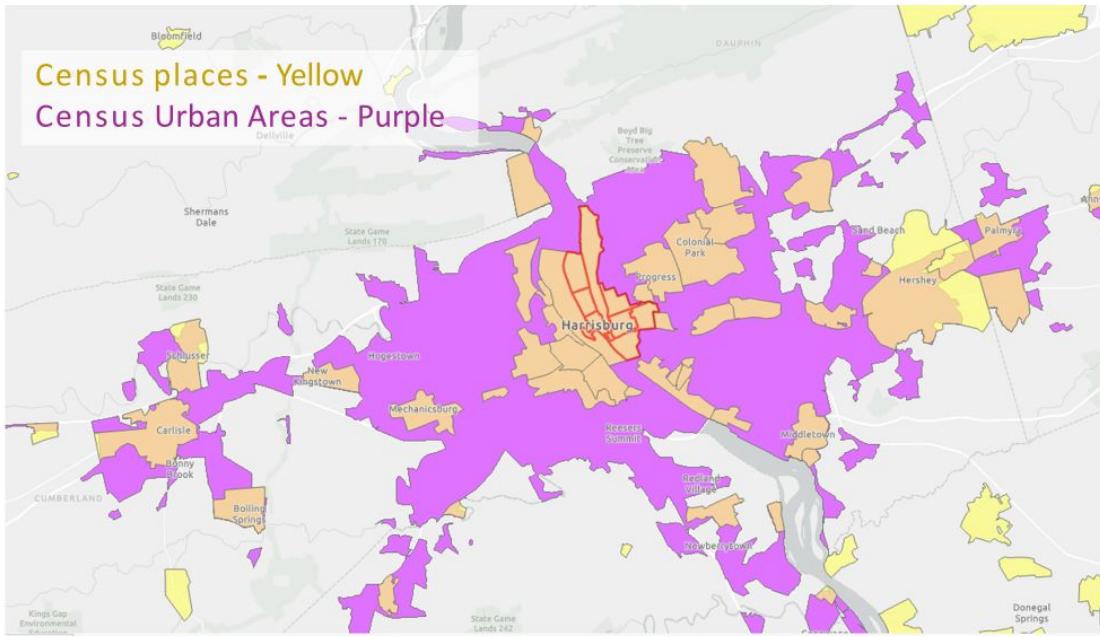
- Greenspace and Open space can overlap but greenspace has a more intentional focus on community benefit and public access.
- Community greenspace should include metrics of:
 - Accessibility – parking, pedestrian access, ADA, transit access, activation of space, costs/fees to access
 - Practicality – it's practical for the community (i.e. artificial grass may be a more economically sustainable option for some communities vs. real grass)
 - Greenspaces can serve to support ecosystem services but that shouldn't be the main goal; human use should be the priority
- Community Greenspace: A mostly natural place, open to the public, where people can gather for outdoor recreation and exposure to nature
- Publicly accessible vegetative area that can be used for active and passive recreation that can include but are not limited to:
 - Parks
 - Trails
 - Gathering Open Spaces
 - Community Gardens
 - Athletic Fields

CENSUS PLACES VS URBAN AREAS



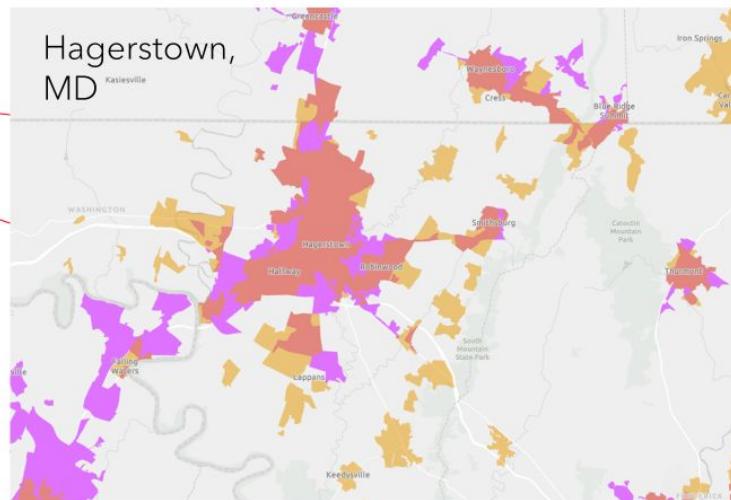
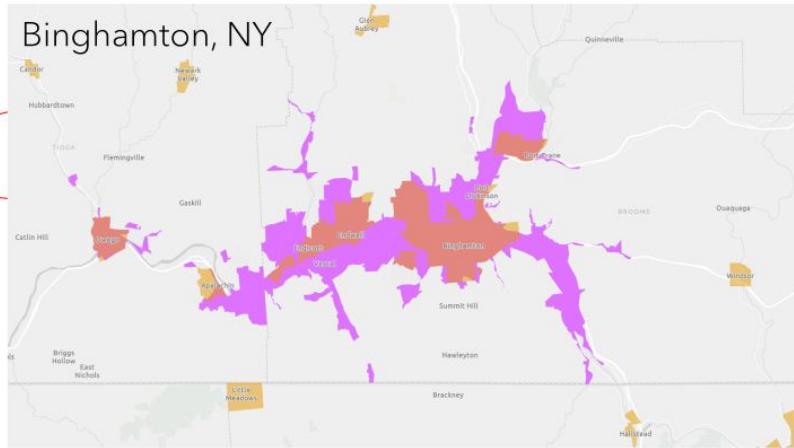
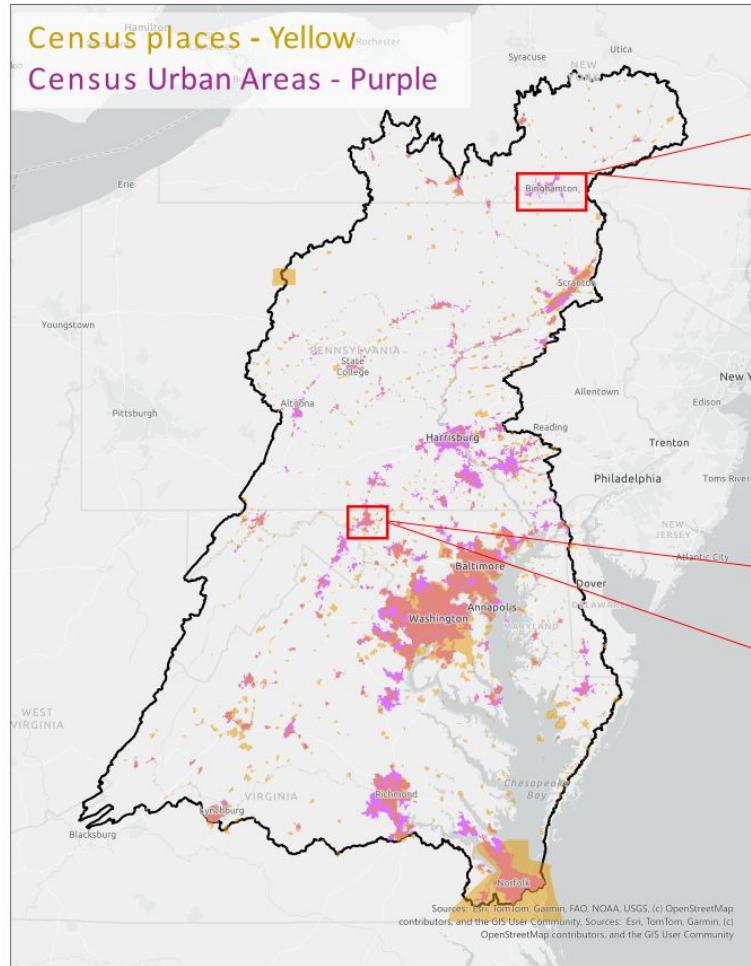
- The Census Place for Richmond reflects the same geography as the City of Richmond.
- The Census Urban Area for Richmond contains multiple Census Places

Census Places vs Urban Areas



City of Harrisburg is both a census-designated place and an urban area.

Urban Areas include more suburbs.
Census-designated places include more rural towns.



CENSUS PLACES VS URBAN AREAS

	Census Designated Places	Census Urban Areas
Definition	Includes cities, towns, villages (incorporated places) and unincorporated census-designated places (CDPs)	Areas classified based on population density and urbanization
Boundaries	Based on legal boundaries and census blocks	Based on population and development, can cross political boundaries. Boundaries determined by census blocks.
Purpose	Used to track characteristics of specific settlements	Identifies urbanization patterns for infrastructure and policy planning

Re-worked Definition Following Feedback

Community and Urban Greenspaces are ~~is-a~~ publicly accessible outdoor lands ~~place in census designated places and urban areas~~ that provides opportunities for both passive and active recreation while offering ~~meaningful~~ exposure to nature. These spaces deliver ~~public health~~, community, and environmental benefits and include, but are not limited to, parks, trails, gardens, sports fields, waterfronts, community gathering areas, and natural landscapes like community forests or grasslands.

Re-worked Definition Following Feedback

Community and Urban Greenspaces are publicly accessible outdoor lands in census designated places and urban areas that provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation while offering exposure to nature. These spaces deliver public health, community, and environmental benefits and include, but are not limited to, parks, trails, gardens, sports fields, waterfronts, community gathering areas, and natural landscapes like community forests or grasslands.

Additional ways to track access

- Proximity in acreage
 - Increase the percentage of greenspaces within a census place / urban area
- TPL's 10 Minute Walk
 - Increasing the percent of people who live within a 10 minute walk of those greenspaces

Looking Forward: Remaining Targets

Access to natural lands and waters

- Baseline of natural lands with public access needed
 - NPS / VOLPE Project

Site Upgrades / Maintenance

- Update dataset to include maintenance tracking
- Define upgrade, maintenance, and passive recreation

ADA / ABA Accessibility Features

- Update dataset to include tracking of ADA / ABA features and amenities

Member Updates