

# Springfield Township

SPARC

Springfield's Park and Recreation Connections Plan



An action plan for enhancing the quality of life in Springfield Township through parks, recreation and natural resource conservation

2008

**Springfield  
Township**

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# Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2008

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# Acknowledgements

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## Reader's Guide

**SPARC**, the **Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Connections Plan**, is a comprehensive planning document. It represents broad research of parks and recreation in Springfield Township and includes analysis of the condition and operation of these resources. Most importantly, it crafts a vision for transforming the parks and recreation system into one that protects the township's natural and scenic resources and serves citizens of all ages and interests.

The planning process was based on the needs and desires of the public expressed through a public opinion survey, interviews, focus groups, and public meetings. The strategies and recommendations were developed with the assistance of the Plan Study Committee, community representatives with knowledge of the area and interest in parks and recreation.

The document is organized into four major sections: Executive Summary, The Plan, Foundations, and Appendix.

**Executive Summary** condenses the plan, public opinion, research, goals and recommendations into a few pages. It offers the reader a succinct version of the entire document.

**The Plan** presents information about the planning process, a call-to-action supporting the urgency for moving ahead with the plan, goals and recommendations, and the action plan with the timeline to undertake recommendations. It tells the reader what the township will do to improve parks and recreation over the next ten years.

The **Foundations** section presents a profile of Springfield Township's demographic characteristics, trends related to parks and recreation, and the detailed inventories of major functional areas of parks and recreation: parkland, recreation facilities, trails and greenways, programs, management and financing. It serves as a reference guide for those who wish to read more detailed information about all aspects of the township's parks and recreation system.

The **Appendix** contains various reports developed in conjunction with the planning process including related plans, the public opinion survey summary, and Capital Improvement Program.

We hope that **SPARC** conveys the pressing need for the township and its partners to take action. Community needs exceed the limited parkland, recreation facilities, and staff capacity for parks and recreation. Citizens are interested and supportive of the township continuing to increase its commitment to parks and recreation. Investments of time, professional knowledge and money through public and private sectors and partnerships are needed to seize the opportunities for creating connections in parks and recreation that are central to the quality of life in Springfield Township.

## Executive Summary

### Springfield's Parks and Recreation Connections Plan: SPARC

#### Springfield Township is a great place.

We have scenic beauty, top-notch municipal services, excellent schools, and nice parks. As a community of neighborhoods, we offer both the experience of small town living and the opportunities of a world-class city in neighboring Philadelphia. Our residents have convenient access to some of the finest natural areas and recreational resources found anywhere. Fort Washington State Park; Fairmount Park, including the beloved Wissahickon; and Morris Arboretum are minutes away. The renowned Montgomery County Bike Path system is within easy reach, connecting cyclists to a wide region beyond. In about a half hour, Springfield Township citizens can attend professional sports events; enjoy premiere performing arts; and visit major museums, galleries, and the Philadelphia Zoo.

It's not surprising that Springfield Township has been one of the best places in which to live in the Delaware Valley since it was incorporated in 1901. What is surprising is that most of the citizens go out of the township to use parks and recreation facilities. Although our parks are heavily used, we don't have enough parkland, recreation facilities or programs to accommodate the growing participation in recreation and sports and our aging population. Citizens have reported that they mostly use parks outside of Springfield as well as indoor recreation facilities at the Ambler YMCA, the Greater Plymouth Community Center, Upper-Dublin Township's EPI-Center for senior citizens, gyms rented by community sports groups, and adult enrichment programs in Cheltenham.



#### The Community Supports Parks & Recreation

We are fortunate in having wonderful places for recreation nearby but we would also like to be able to offer residents of every age and interest the opportunity to partake in lifelong recreation opportunities close to home right in our own community. In fact, our citizens told us that they would like Springfield Township to increase its commitment to parks and recreation in a recent community wide survey! While we are not going to recreate the nearby parks in our own community or duplicate recreation programs offered by others, we can improve the caliber of township parks and recreation and help our citizens to know about all of the opportunities available.



To that end, the Township created this parks and recreation plan, **SPARC: Springfield's Parks and Recreation Connections**. As the name conveys, this plan is all about connections. Connecting the township with partners in recreation. Connecting citizens to recreation opportunities. Connecting parks to neighborhoods via safe places to walk and bicycle where possible. Connecting citizens to nature. Connecting people of all ages to active healthy lifestyles. **SPARC** is a plan of action for improving our community through parks and recreation.

### What is This Plan All About?

**SPARC** provides recommendations to improve the quality of life in Springfield Township through parks and recreation over the next ten years. It strives to conserve our precious natural resources, take good care of what we have, expand parks and facilities, enhance recreational services, and increase public awareness about recreation opportunities. The plan recognizes that Springfield Township cannot do all of this on its own or all at once – partnerships, time, and funding are essential. Collaboration with others and a new approach to funding will be crucial in carrying out this plan successfully.

### Bold Actions – Big Benefits

In 1954, the Commissioners of Springfield Township made the courageous decision to preserve 56 acres of land for public recreation on what is now the Flourtown Country Club. Their prescience and desire to preserve open space was far ahead of the current efforts in land conservation nationwide. Recently, the Commissioners again stepped up with major commitments: adoption of the Open Space Plan, undertaking this parks and recreation plan and establishing a full-time parks and recreation department.

**SPARC** calls on Springfield Township to accept the mantle of community leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in once again making far-reaching decisions to improve the community through parks and recreation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The time is right to do this. Creating facilities and recreation opportunities for our citizens to engage in active healthy lifestyles will add years to their lives and life to their years. Safe places to walk and bicycle will connect our community. Having lots of things to do will encourage residents, especially our children, to stay in or return to our community. We need to do more and we can't wait any longer.

### Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Enhances the quality of life in a community. Increases property values. Spurs economic vitality. Deters crime and substance abuse. Adds life to your years... and years to your life. Improves the fitness and wellness of the residents. Reduces the isolation of the elderly. Helps children grow up great. Builds strong family bonds. Fosters a sense of community. Protects the environment. Conserves natural resources. Preserves land.



## A Framework for Decision-Making

The plan is not law or a regulatory document. It is a recommended approach to achieve a parks and recreation system that serves our citizens throughout their lifetime, close to home, with diverse recreation opportunities year-round. It suggests management strategies and policies to protect our natural resources and provide quality recreation opportunities. The plan will be used as a reference by township officials, management and advisory boards; county officials; community organizations; the School District and other interested parties. The plan is a guide for future actions and decisions.

## How Was This Plan Developed?

Springfield Township's 1998 Comprehensive Plan and 2006 Open Space Plan recommended the development of a parks and recreation plan with a goal of providing a system that serves all residents. To achieve this goal, the Township obtained a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the Parks and Recreation Plan. Work on the plan began in March of 2007.

### **Eight Step Planning Process**

- ▣▣▣ Inventory and Analysis
  - ▣▣▣ Assessment of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities
    - ▣▣▣ Synthesis and interpretation of findings to create options and directions
      - ▣▣▣ Formulation of guiding principles, vision and mission for parks and recreation
        - ▣▣▣ Development of Goals and Recommendations
          - ▣▣▣ Creation of an Action Plan with a time schedule
            - ▣▣▣ Plan production and public review
              - ▣▣▣ Plan Adoption

## Planning Team

The planning team included staff from the Parks & Recreation Department and township administration, consultants Toole Recreation Planning and YSM, and a Study Committee comprised of interested citizens. Participants represented the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Advisory Commission, youth sports, the Springfield Township School District, the Springfield Library, business, and parents. The Study Committee met regularly throughout the project to guide the development of the plan. The public was involved throughout the process through a community wide direct-mail survey; interviews; focus groups; public meetings; and articles in the township newsletter.

## VISION STATEMENT

By 2017, we envision having in place a full-service parks and recreation system that reflects Springfield Township's neighborhoods, charming character, diverse interests, and citizens of all ages. The parks will be vibrant public spaces with flourishing natural areas and diverse recreation opportunities that make our community a healthy, active, and beautiful place in which to live, work, and play. Parks will be connected to neighborhoods, schools, the library, town centers, Fort Washington State Park, Fairmount Park, and the region through pedestrian and bicycle friendly and safe trails wherever possible. Through partnerships, the township will be able to achieve this vision with the broad support of governmental and non-governmental resources.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Springfield Township Department of Parks & Recreation is dedicated to enriching the lives of the people who live, work, or visit here through attractive parks and recreation facilities, diverse recreation opportunities, excellent public service, and working in partnership with other public, private and community based organizations.

### What Does the Plan Recommend?

The plan develops the broad vision for parks and recreation into goals and recommendations. The goals include:

- Provide enough parkland throughout the township.
- Ensure that recreation facilities are assets to the community, providing a wide range of opportunities in the great outdoors.
- Interconnect the neighborhoods of the community and the region.
- Offer lifelong diverse recreation opportunities.
- Manage parks and recreation to convey the maximum value to the public while protecting our natural resources.

- Invest in parks and recreation for health, safety, and economic vitality.
- Increase public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities and benefits.

The goals and recommendations are further distilled into the Strategy, a carefully devised plan of action to guide the township and its partners in working towards accomplishing the goals. Not everything can be accomplished at once or by the Township alone. The Strategy is to be undertaken over the next ten years in collaboration with other public and private partners.

## The Strategy

1. **Take care of what we have.** Develop a formalized maintenance management system for parks and recreation facilities. Work towards increasing the parks maintenance budget. Continue to work with our partners in the parks including the park friends groups, youth sports organizations, the boy scouts and others.
2. **Improve our existing parks and recreation facilities.** Our parks have been developed mainly in response to pressing needs without proper planning. Prioritize projects that would improve the parks through professional design and high quality features in the following parks:
  - **Sandy Run Park:** Re-visit the master plan and begin to phase in the development of this park. Make this the signature park of Springfield Township with its opportunities for water and nature based recreation that appeal to the broadest range of citizens.
  - **Veterans Park:** Make it a better park by re-configuration of sports fields, restroom and playground improvements, sports courts, pavilion, sitting areas, paths and landscaping additions.
  - **Cisco Park:** Improve the ballfield and lighting and expand the playground to enhance this high use facility
  - **Oreland Park:** Provide ADA access and upgrade park facilities.
  - **Complete master plans for Mermaid Park and Wyndhill Park and revisit the master plan for Laurel Beech Park.** Phase in improvements based on the master plan recommendations.
  - **Add a memorial with a life affirming design such as a garden.** Use this in tribute to children who have been lost and for their families. Undertake this as a community involvement project with private fundraising.
  - **Create ADA access in all parks.**





- **Add pathways for safe and scenic walking in all parks.**
- **Protect natural resources.** Provide a public informational program to increase awareness about the benefits of naturalization. Use maintenance techniques that demonstrate that the site is being maintained such as signage and mowing narrow boundary areas. Protect natural resources, engage citizens with nature and reduce maintenance costs through naturalization where possible and through a strategic natural resource management program.
- **Include public participation as part of all park planning projects.**

**3. Acquire another 152 acres of parkland.** Potential parkland locations could include the following:

- Antonelli School
- Seven Dolores Church
- Erdenheim Farm – for passive use only in accordance with the current ownership
- Municipal Campus
- Property for public spaces in the Town Centers

**4. Add pathways for recreation and transportation where possible.** Connect parks to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, town centers, public facilities, Fort Washington State Park, Fairmount Park and other destinations.

- Create a trail committee to establish a strategy for a township-wide trail system including public involvement, education, and prioritization of trail projects with a high likelihood of success.
- Provide public education about trails and their benefits
- Identify pilot projects for trails.

**5. Undertake studies for expanding public recreation opportunities:** a feasibility study for an indoor recreation center and an evaluation of the township land leased by Flourtown Country Club. Include public participation in the studies.

- Conduct a feasibility study for an indoor recreation center. Work with the School District in this study with regard to the indoor pool and other potential partnership possibilities. Use the Municipal Campus Study to evaluate the potential for indoor recreation space, administrative area and storage for parks and recreation and outdoor public space.

- Conduct a professional outside evaluation of the use of the township land as a membership-based country club, swim club, and rental event space prior to the expiration of the lease in 2020. While the terms of the lease will be carried out through 2020 with an option to extend it through 2025, this parks and recreation plan includes and assessment of public parkland now and into the future. The recommendation in this plan serves as a placeholder to consider the formal detailed study of the country club when the plan is updated and at an appropriate time to undertake the study for the purpose of future decision-making regarding the lease and use of this public property.

**6. Establish a five to seven year Capital Improvement Program for parkland acquisition, park improvements and facility additions.**

This will enable sound multi-year planning to make the best decisions regarding the allocation of resources. With the exception of the Montgomery County Open Space funds of \$1.3 million, the Township has been investing about \$36,000 annually on park improvements. The sports organizations have been fund-raising and providing volunteer help and grants to undertake their sports facility improvements such as irrigation and buildings.

**7. Create a long-term financial management plan for parks and recreation for park improvements identified in this plan (shown in the Capital Improvement Program in Appendix A) as well as for operating the department.** Include both capital funding and operating funding. The financing plan should include a mix of tax and non-tax resources.

- Assess the potential for a bond for capital improvements over the next twenty years for parks and recreation. Identify the major purpose of the bond: parkland acquisition, recreation facility improvements, trails, indoor recreation center development or a combination of these.
- Identify the amount that could be available and develop a multi-year timeline for the projects. Use the first year of the timeline for the current fiscal year's operating budget.
- Assess the operating budget in terms of continuing to increase the parks and recreation operating budget. Strive for the statewide average per capita investment of about \$33 and/or 3.14 to five percent of the township budget. Springfield Township spends about \$21.28 annually on parks and recreation. In comparison other similar Pennsylvania municipalities have an average of \$33.35 per capita. Nationwide, it is \$65. The parks and recreation budget is about 2.14 percent of the township's operating budget. The nationwide average is 3.14 percent. Park systems that are considered successful and community assets by businesses nationwide generally have over 5 percent of the municipal operating budget. Phase this in over ten years.

- Develop a revenue management policy that includes a mix of township and non-township financial resources.
- Evaluate potential projects and programs prior to undertaking them to assess the township's capacity to carry out the project successfully as well as sustain it over its lifetime. Do not undertake any project or program that is not possible to deliver and support in a high quality way.



**8. Increase public awareness about the parks and recreation opportunities in the township and the region as well as the benefits of parks and recreation.**

Create and provide an on-going program of public outreach to inform citizens about parks, recreation facilities, and the benefits of engaging in recreational pursuits. Use the parks and recreation section of the township's fall and spring newsletter to increase public awareness about community parks, recreation opportunities and the benefits of parks and recreation. Continue to use the summer program brochure as the signature public outreach piece to convey high quality services designed to attract and retain participation and use of township parks. Consider expanding this publication to three productions annually. Direct mailing continues to be the single most effective way of communicating with citizens about parks and recreation. Design and manage a parks and recreation WEB site as the "go-to" source about real-time parks and recreation information. When staff is sufficient begin to develop target marketing for particular segments of the population.



**9. Expand programs and services to reflect changing demographics and the way of life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Services for an active aging population need to be planned. Programs in fitness and wellness, nature, and self-improvement would be important here. Schedule programs and support around the reality of the hours of working households as well as stay-at-home parents. Institute strategic changes with respect to the small staff.

**10. Capitalize on the establishment of parks and recreation as a full-time township service.**

Manage the department in a professional manner that incorporates leadership, collaboration, and business-like practices that maximize the best use of every dollar. Add staff over the next ten years for program coordination, increasing public awareness and park maintenance, including natural resource protection. Computerize all routine administrative functions as well as workload cost tracking for park maintenance. Use this information for effective decision-making and the sound allocation of resources.

**How Can We Begin Implementation?**

While it might appear that the job is complete because the plan is written, the work has only begun. Implementing **SPARC** in actuality is not one step, but more of an ongoing process of planning, doing, assessing effectiveness, and beginning the process anew over the next ten years to bring Springfield

Township ever closer to reaching its parks and recreation goals. To implement SPARC, an operational plan is needed. An operational plan will describe the specific actions that will be taken to accomplish each objective identified in **SPARC**. The operational plan will identify timelines, responsible parties, resource allocations and sources, and an evaluation plan that will identify specific outcomes to be achieved. SPARC focuses on the *what*. The operational plan focuses on the *how*. The operational plan should include the following:

- **Action Items** – Identify the specific tasks that should be done to achieve the identified objective.
- **Responsible Parties** – Designate the staff members, committees or others who will be accountable for accomplishing each task.
- **Schedule** – Create the exact dates in months and years for accomplishment of the task. Set milestones for important accomplishments by specific date.
- **Resource Requirements and Sources** - List all of the funds, materials, equipment, facilities and so on required to accomplish the task. Provide the source of these resources including Springfield Township, partners, sponsors, fees and charges or others.
- **Outcomes** – Specify the anticipated results to be achieved by the specified timeline.
- **Evaluation Measure** – Establish indicators to show if the effort has been successful.

### Ensuring Success for the Operational Plan

Generally, the Director of Parks and Recreation prepares the bulk of the operational plan that is used for an annual work program in consultation with the Township Manager. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board provides overall guidance, review and approval of the plan, and recommends it to the Board of Commissioners.

To get started, consider having a “retreat” for the Parks and Recreation Department and Advisory Board to identify how to kick-start this plan. Include the liaison to the Board of Commissioners. Plan this ahead thoroughly to get the maximum benefit. Consider applying for a PADCNR RecTAP grant of \$1500 with no match required to hire an outside facilitator.

Based on the outcomes of the retreat, the Director would create the operational plan for the next fiscal



year. It should address all of the functional areas of parks and recreation including programs, management, maintenance, parks, recreation facilities, marketing, and financing. The operational plan links the work of the Parks and Recreation Department and Advisory Board to the recommendations of **SPARC**.



Establish four review meetings to keep implementation and use of the plan front and center. Hold these quarterly or schedule them strategically. Use the first year of the Capital Improvement Program for the first fiscal year of this project.

Keep this plan before key stakeholders. The plan should be out and used regularly. All outcomes should refer to plan implementation. It is easy to get distracted in routine activities but the plan needs to be in use in all township planning and decision-making. Boards such as the Commissioners, Planning, Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Center planning, Open Space Board, Shade Tree Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board all need to have **SPARC** and refer to it repeatedly so that there is an on-going link to this plan.

**SPARC** is Springfield Township's adopted *plan* that serves as a guide; it is not carved in stone. It is intended to seize opportunities and meet emerging needs as circumstances warrant. The *process* of implementing the plan is ongoing and continuous, not a one time event, as set forth in the operational plan.

Springfield Township should move ahead with the plan as adopted, but be prepared to let go and switch strategies as necessary. Flexibility, patience, and adaptability will be essential in creating a parks and recreation system that suits a community the caliber of Springfield Township. A parks and recreation department that develops and executes a plan gains significantly from the experience. This experience helps to strengthen strategies and capacity every year. With a tangible plan and a sound implementation process in place, Springfield Township is likely to create a parks and recreation system that will be a community treasure, a source of economic vitality, and a reason to live, work, and play here.



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# **The Plan**

## **Chapters 1-4**

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## The Plan and the Process

**SPARC**, the **Springfield Parks and Recreation Connections Plan** will guide park and recreation improvements in the community over the next ten years. It addresses all aspects of public recreation from facilities to finances, from programs to parks, and from ideas to options.



### Community Based Plan

**T**his plan recognizes that Springfield Township has made a monumental step forward in parks and recreation making the department full-time in 2008. By implementing the parks and recreation strategies suggested in this plan, the Springfield community will enhance the sense of place here and foster feelings of community that will help attract and retain businesses, residents, and visitors. Throughout the public participation process, residents expressed the vision of a green and connected community, conservation of natural resources, year-round recreation, safe places to walk and bike, facilities for a wide range of outdoor enjoyment, and recreation opportunities for people of all ages and interests.

The **Springfield Park and Recreation Plan** creates a vision for the future, not merely a tune-up for what exists today. The recommendations of this plan are based upon an investigative and educational process to identify recreation initiatives and opportunities that are important to the citizens. This plan is timely. It is driven by a strong community participation process in which elected and appointed officials came together with citizens in a public conversation about how to improve the community through parks and recreation. Finding ways to provide services and facilities in response to ever increasing public expectations in a climate of fiscal austerity is the major challenge of this plan.

## Parks and Recreation:

- Improves health and fitness
- Increases property values
- Deters crime and substance abuse
- Protects the environment and preserves natural resources
- Establishes strong family bonds, the foundation of our society
- Attracts and retains businesses and residents
- Connects the mind, body and spirit of people leading active lifestyles

## Planning Process

The planning process included assessment of the Springfield Township parks and recreation facilities; development of conclusions and options; establishment of goals and implementation strategies; and creation of an action plan with a time frame for implementation. The planning process addressed five areas.

- Community recreation needs
- Park land and recreation facilities
- Programs and services
- Administration, management, and maintenance
- Financing

### Public Participation

This plan is rooted in public participation. Public involvement included five components: a study committee, key person interviews, focus groups, a community public opinion survey, and public meetings. This process provided valuable information from those in the community who are involved in various parks and recreation related efforts, as well as the general public. Through these components, the needs of both the general citizens and community organizations that provide recreation services were considered.

### Planning Goals

Springfield Township set forth the following planning objectives for this project as specified in the township's Request for Proposals (RFP) for this plan:

1. Identify the major improvements needed for each park. Review and comment on existing park site plans.
2. Explore the community's interest in studying the feasibility of building a full-service community recreation center.

3. Identify new recreation programming needed to fill service gaps and take advantage of new trends.
4. Examine ways of increasing customer participation, satisfaction and safety in programs and park use.
5. Identify alternative funding sources, grants and methods to generate revenue.
6. Look into partnership and sponsorship opportunities.
7. Consider a marketing strategy to increase public awareness of the department, parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is this plan a law?

No, it is a guide. The elected and appointed officials in Springfield Township will use the plan to make informed decisions and set policy relative to parks and recreation.

### What will the plan do?

**SPARC** will focus planning on community opportunities and issues that can be addressed through parks and recreation. It provides a common framework for decision-making and sets forth recommendations and strategies to improve the quality of life in the community.

### What will the plan *not* do?

The plan does not mandate or require actions. It does not preclude adding new projects based upon trends, evolving needs, and opportunities. The intent of the plan is to provide an overall framework and guidelines to improve the community through parks and recreation.

### How will the plan be used?

The plan is intended to be a living document that will play a role in the decisions that Springfield Township will make about parks, recreation, financing, management, greenways and trails,





and related efforts. This plan serves as a reference document and a framework for overall municipal and collaborative planning and management. It is essential that all related boards and commissions incorporate this plan into their own planning efforts in related areas including land development, open space conservation, trail planning, capital improvement planning and municipal financing.

### **How will the plan be implemented?**

The recommendations will be phased in over the next ten years. Not everything can be accomplished at once. Recommendations range from those that cost little to large projects that would require grants and other resources.

### **Why is it important to have a quality park and recreation system?**

Parks and recreation attract and retain businesses and increase property values. Recreation is the chief factor in establishing healthy family bonds, the foundation of our society. Recreation deters substance abuse and crime. Recreation adds years to our lives and life to our years. Parks protect our natural resources and provide clean air and water. Recreation helps to build a strong sense of community by connecting citizens through enjoyable hours spent together in the pursuit of happiness and health.

## Call to Action

The Call to Action outlines the strategy to achieve the vision that the community created for parks and recreation by 2017. Based upon citizen input, the strategy offers a ten-step approach to guide the Township in accomplishing the goals of this plan.



### The Springfield Community in Focus

Springfield Township is a great place to live. It is a community of neighborhoods with an interesting mix of different residential areas and architectural styles. Throughout the citizen participation process for this plan, the pride of the citizens was reflected in their attachment to a particular neighborhood that include Flourtown, Erdenheim, Oreland, Wyndmoor, and the Panhandle. The township is on the border of Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, about 20 minutes away from Center City. This location provides citizens with convenient access to Fort Washington State Park, Fairmount Park, the Morris Arboretum, the Montgomery County Bike Path system and regional cultural and entertainment venues. Springfield Township and the Springfield School District both serve the citizens within the municipal borders and no other municipality. Excellent municipal and educational services, parks, recreation opportunities, safety as well as access to employment centers, transportation, and world-class health care support the quality of life in Springfield Township.

#### The Next Ten Years

The population is expected to remain relatively stable with a slight decrease by 2025. The major demographic changes are in the areas of an aging population and increasing diversity. Achieving a balance of parks and recreational opportunities that meets the broad based needs of the entire community is the crucial goal. This includes children, youth, teens, adults, senior citizens, families, the arts, sports,

fitness and wellness, scheduled recreation as well as drop-in recreation that people undertake on their own terms at their own pace. Parks and Recreation in Springfield could encompass a broad base of services and facilities that people use throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis once they retire.

Springfield Township operates with a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility. The township has reduced property taxes several times in recent years. Nevertheless, notable anti-tax sentiment exists in the community primarily related to school tax increases for facility improvements and construction of a new elementary school.

The township has been nearly fully developed for decades and is undergoing planning for re-development such as town vision plans for Erdenheim and Flourtown to create vibrant town centers. Land in Springfield Township is very expensive and highly desirable for development.

In the 1950's, the Springfield Township elected officials made the courageous and far-sighted decision to purchase the land that is now leased to Flourtown Country Club as the means to preserve open space. This was decades ahead of today's statewide efforts in open space preservation.

That same level of commitment and far-sighted thinking will be necessary to move parks and recreation from a modest operation into a full-scale year round professional parks and recreation system. The most pressing parks and recreation need of this municipality is to establish and grow a full-time professional parks and recreation department as an essential public service befitting a community the size and caliber of Springfield.

The major challenges in growing such a system for Springfield over the next ten years will be to find ways to provide a broad range of recreation opportunities for more citizens, improve and better use existing facilities, add parkland, rehabilitate sports fields, heighten public awareness about parks and recreation, offer indoor recreation year round and continue deliberation about the feasibility of trails. Another important focus area emerged in the planning process: the establishment of a formalized planned maintenance management system, including sports turf management and the conservation of natural resources. Public opinion clearly underscored the support for the conservation of the natural and scenic beauty of the community. Sports groups attested to the need for higher quality maintenance and additional facilities. The level of the municipal investment needed for parks and recreation facilities mandates the establishment of a system to formally plan, direct, control and evaluate maintenance management.

**Findings of the Public Participation Process**

To meet the needs of residents and users of the system, SPARC was developed through a vigorous and varied community involvement process. This process ensured that plan recommendations have a citizen focus. It also helps to guide the township in delivering on resident needs as well as having a clear understanding of their interests. The planning team interviewed over 45 people in stakeholder interviews, focus groups and public meetings. A public opinion survey captured the ideas, concerns, and perceptions of the citizenry about parks and recreation.

**Note:**

The following section provides a summary of key public input findings from the information generated from residents in the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and the survey.

**Public Perception of Community Parks and Recreation**

Overall, the residents appreciate the nice parks in the community. They also recognize that the parks are small and that they go out of the township to use indoor recreation centers, nature based parks and trails in other communities. The citizens want to achieve a balance of resource protection, programs, parks, recreation facilities, and trails. Protecting natural resources is a major public concern. Other priorities for parks and recreation are maintaining existing recreation facilities, upgrading parks, and enhancing programs and services.

**Willing to Support Parks and Recreation**

The survey respondents expressed support for parks and recreation to the extent that most stated that they are willing to pay more for parks and recreation. They want the township to increase its commitment to parks and recreation: 55 percent of the survey respondents want to increase township support while only one percent want to decrease it. This message was supported with 62 percent expressing their willingness to pay from \$6 to \$10 or more per person annually for parks and recreation. Only 14 percent said that they would not be willing to pay any more. This finding was surprising as there is a public perception of strong anti-tax sentiment. Interviews revealed that this is mainly attributable to school district taxes and the district's capital improvement projects.

**Natural Resource Conservation: Crucial**

Natural resource protection and conservation is a community priority. Residents recognize that the community is nearly fully developed. Consequently, the conservation of natural areas, tree planting, beautification and gardens are all important here. Places for people to walk and enjoy the outdoors and nature are important. The conservation of the Erdenheim Farm was mentioned, as was the desire to limit additional commercial and residential development.

**Maintaining and Enhancing What We Have: Essential**

Taking care of existing facilities and maximizing their use is important to the citizens. Most citizens rate the parks as clean, safe, and well located. Cisco Park is the township





park with the highest township use. But residents reported mostly using Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park. The facilities preferred by township residents are also the facilities that are lacking in most township parks: natural features and conservation areas, trails, and more park-like amenities. Making the township parks more park-like would probably attract more local use.

Additional sports facilities, both playing fields and indoor game courts in gyms are needed for year round sports, indoors and outdoors. Sports participation is increasing. New sports leagues such as lacrosse are emerging. Sports now play year round instead of only in one traditional season. Springfield Township School District facilities are booked solid. Some of the district's facilities such as the pool are aging.

### **Trails: Popular Yet Controversial**



Bicycle trails are a contentious topic in Springfield Township. While 67 percent of the survey respondents indicated that bicycle trails were important and 62 percent indicated that developing trails and paths should be a priority for Springfield Township, three issues underlie concerns about trails according to written comments in the surveys, focus groups, and interviews: proximity to Philadelphia, private property rights, and loss of privacy. Recent meetings in Springfield, as well as in Cheltenham, brought out both trail supporters and trail opposition for trails proposed by Montgomery County. The opposition was primarily focused on trail sections that adjoin private residences.

### **Indoor Facilities and Year Round Recreation: Needed**

Indoor recreation facilities emerged as a top priority. Opinions about indoor recreation centers ranged from making better use of school facilities to building a community recreation center. The Greater Plymouth Community Center stands as a reference point as many township residents use it. Expressions ranged from residents wanting something like the Plymouth center to a center that is smaller in scale with simpler types of facilities. Recreation opportunities year round are important.

### **More Programs and Outreach Would Benefit Citizens**

Citizens of all ages with varied interests should have access to programs and services. Serving citizens throughout their lifetime in a broad range of opportunities year-round indoors and outdoors would benefit most residents. Additional staff, partnerships, and a solid plan for phasing in additional services would be necessary. One of the most important things the township can do is to increase advertising and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities.

## Compelling Issues

While Springfield Township is regarded as a highly desirable place in which to live, the parks and recreation system is lagging behind other communities in the Delaware Valley. Although major regional parks serve Springfield residents, facilities outside of the township do not completely replace the need for close-to-home parks and recreation opportunities. The issues include:

**Need for more parkland, park types and distribution throughout the township. There is not enough parkland.** The Township has 118 acres of public parkland but 53 of those acres are leased to the Flourtown Country Club. With a population of nearly 20,000, Springfield should have a minimum of 205 acres of parkland according to the traditional national standard set by the National Recreation & Park Association, which is recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the chief funding agency for parks and recreation in this state. Springfield has only eight parks. They range in size from 4.5 to 13 acres, except for the .8-acre Oreland Park. By size and definition, these are neighborhood parks. Springfield Township does not have a community park, which would be a minimum 25 acres. Certain neighborhoods such as the Panhandle and the neighborhood near the municipal campus do not have a community park.

**Indoor recreation facilities would expand recreation opportunities and build a sense of community here.** There are no indoor recreation facilities. School facilities are used to the maximum for both education and recreation.

**Recreation programs and services need to be expanded.** The township has been expanding and diversifying recreation programs and has established the department as a full-time operation. However, programs are rooted in a long history of traditional activities oriented towards summer, youth, sports, and the outdoors. The program needs to evolve into 21st century opportunities that serve an aging population, changing family structure, major health issues, and a citizenry pressed for time, wanting convenience, and seeking memorable experiences. Township residents use parks, recreation facilities and programs outside of Springfield including the regional parks, adult enrichment in Cheltenham, and the senior citizens center in Upper Dublin. These regional opportunities are a valuable asset to the community but they do not meet all community needs. While it is essential not to replicate services or facilities available elsewhere, it is important to recognize that close-to-home recreation helps to build a sense of community, enhances the quality of life here through economic, environmental social and personal benefits.

**Support for parks and recreation needs to increase.** The township spends about \$20 per capita annually for operating parks and recreation. The statewide average is about \$33 while the national average is \$65. The parks and recreation budget is about 2.14 percent of the operating budget. In comparison with the national average is 3.14 percent. Parks and recreation systems that are viewed as successful systems nationwide have at least five percent of the operating budget. Springfield Township cannot provide all that is needed on its own – a mix of public and private sector support is needed.

**Future Directions**

Based upon public opinion, existing conditions and opportunities, the following vision and mission statements were created to guide Springfield Township in the implementation of the plan. All decisions should be made based upon working towards achieving this vision. The vision is based upon public opinion and ideas generated throughout the planning process. The mission statement describes how Springfield Township will work to achieve this vision.

**VISION STATEMENT**

By 2017, we envision having in place a full-service parks and recreation system that reflects Springfield Township’s neighborhoods, charming character, diverse interests, and citizens of all ages. The parks will be vibrant public spaces with flourishing natural areas and diverse recreation opportunities that make our community a healthy, active, and beautiful place in which to live, work, and play. Parks will be connected to neighborhoods, schools, the library, town centers, Fort Washington State Park, Fairmount Park, and the region through pedestrian and bicycle friendly and safe trails wherever possible. Through partnerships, the township will be able to achieve this vision with the broad support of governmental and non-governmental resources.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Springfield Township Department of Parks & Recreation is dedicated to enriching the lives of the people who live, work, or visit here through attractive parks and recreation facilities, diverse recreation opportunities, excellent public service, and working in partnership with other public, private and community based organizations.

## The Strategy

The Strategy is a carefully devised approach to guide the township and its partners in working towards accomplishing the goals and recommendations set forth in the following chapter. It consolidates the seven goals and the numerous recommendations into a streamlined, reasoned approach for achieving the vision. The goals and recommendations provide the multiple discrete actions to be undertaken. The recommendations are put into an action plan for 2008 through 2017.

Not everything can be accomplished at once or by the Township alone. The Strategy is to be undertaken over the next ten years in collaboration with other public and private partners.

**1. Take care of what we have. Develop a formalized maintenance management system for parks and recreation facilities.** Work towards increasing the parks maintenance budget. Continue to work with our partners in the parks including the park friends groups, youth sports organizations, the boy scouts and others.

**2. Improve our existing parks and recreation facilities.** Our parks have been developed mainly in response to pressing needs without proper planning. Prioritize projects that would improve the parks through professional design and high quality features in the following parks:

- **Sandy Run Park:** Re-visit the master plan and begin to phase in the development of this park. Make this the signature park of Springfield Township with its opportunities for water and nature based recreation that appeal to the broadest range of citizens.
- **Veterans Park:** Maximize existing park land and enhance the facilities by re-configuration of sports fields, restroom and playground improvements, sports courts, pavilion, sitting areas, paths and landscaping additions.
- **Cisco Park:** Improve the ballfield and lighting and expand the playground to enhance this high use facility
- **Oreland Park:** update the playground and provide ADA access
- **Complete master plans for Mermaid Park and Wyndhill Park and revisit the master plan for Laurel Beech Park.** Phase in improvements based on the master plan recommendations.
- **Add a memorial that is life-affirming in tribute to children who have been lost at an early age and their families.** Undertake this as a community involvement project with private fundraising.
- **Create ADA access in all parks.**



- **Add pathways for safe and scenic walking in all parks.**
- **Protect natural resources. Provide a public informational program to increase awareness about the benefits of naturalization.** Use maintenance techniques that demonstrate that the site is being maintained such as signage and mowing narrow boundary areas. Protect natural resources, engage citizens with nature and reduce maintenance costs through naturalization where possible and through a strategic natural resource management program.
- **Include public participation as part of all park planning projects.**

**3. Acquire another 152 acres of parkland.** Potential parkland locations could include the following:

- Antonelli School
- Seven Dolores Church
- Erdenheim Farm – for passive use only in accordance with the current ownership
- Property for public spaces in the Town Centers
- Municipal Campus

**4. Add pathways for recreation and transportation where possible.** Connect parks to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, town centers, public facilities, Fort Washington State Park, Fairmount Park and other destinations.

- Create a trail committee to establish a strategy for a township-wide trail system including public involvement, education, and prioritization of trail projects with a high likelihood of success.
- Provide public education about trails and their benefits
- Identify pilot projects for trails.

**5. Undertake studies for expanding public recreation**

**opportunities:** a feasibility study for an indoor recreation center, the municipal campus study, and an evaluation of the township land leased by Flourtown Country Club. Include public participation in the studies.

- Conduct a feasibility study for an indoor recreation center. Work with the School District in this study with regard to the indoor pool and other potential partnership possibilities.
- Consider indoor recreation facility and administrative space needs for parks and recreation when undertaking the study of the municipal campus.
- Conduct a professional outside evaluation of the use of the township land as a membership-based country club, swim club, and rental event space. Do this in advance of the negotiation/renewal of the property lease to determine if this is the best use of public land. Identify implications and options for the future lease or public use of this land.



**6. Establish a five to seven year Capital Improvement Program for parkland acquisition, park improvements and facility additions.** This will enable sound multi-year planning to make the best decisions regarding the allocation of resources. With the exception of the Montgomery County Open Space funds of \$1.3 million, the Township has been investing about \$36,000 annually on park improvements. The sports organizations have been fund-raising and providing volunteer help and grants to undertake their sports facility improvements such as irrigation and buildings.

**7. Create a long-term financial management plan for parks and recreation.** Include both capital funding and operating funding.

- Assess the potential for a bond for capital improvements over the next twenty years for parks and recreation. Identify the major purpose of the bond: parkland acquisition, recreation facility improvements, trails, indoor recreation center development or a combination of these.
- Identify the amount that could be available and develop a multi-year timeline for the projects. Use the first year of the timeline for the current fiscal year's operating budget.
- Assess the operating budget in terms of continuing to increase the parks and recreation operating budget. Strive for the statewide average per capita investment of about \$33 and/or 3.14 to five percent of the township budget. Springfield Township spends about \$19.36 annually on parks and recreation. In comparison other similar Pennsylvania municipalities have an average of \$33.35 per capita. Nationwide, it is \$65. The parks and recreation budget is about 2.14 percent of the township's operating budget. The nationwide average is 3.14 percent. Park systems that are considered successful and community assets by businesses nationwide generally have over 5 percent of the municipal operating budget. Phase this in over ten years.
- Develop a revenue management policy that includes a mix of township and non-township financial resources.
- Evaluate potential projects and programs prior to undertaking them to assess the township's capacity to carry out the project successfully as well as sustain it over its lifetime. Do not undertake any project or program that is not possible to deliver and support in a high quality way.

**8. Increase public awareness about the parks and recreation opportunities in the township and the region as well as the benefits of parks and recreation.** Create and provide an on-going program of public outreach to inform citizens about parks, recreation facilities, and the benefits of engaging in recreational pursuits. Use the parks and recreation seasonal program brochure as the primary vehicle for public awareness. Continue to improve the quality of this publication as the signature piece to convey high quality services designed to attract and retain participation and use of township parks. Design and manage the parks and recreation portion of the township's WEB site as the "go-to" source about real-time parks and recreation information. When staff is sufficient begin to develop target marketing for particular segments of the population.

**9. Expand programs and services to reflect changing demographics and the way of life of the 21st century.** Services for an active aging population

need to be planned. Programs in fitness and wellness, nature, and self-improvement would be important here. Schedule programs and support around the reality of the hours of working households as well as stay-at-home parents. Institute strategic changes with respect to the small staff.

**10. Capitalize on the establishment of parks and recreation as a full-time township service.** Continue to manage the department in a professional manner that incorporates leadership, collaboration, and business-like practices that maximize the best use of every dollar. Add staff over the next ten years for program coordination, increasing public awareness and park maintenance, including natural resource protection. Computerize all routine administrative functions as well as work-load cost tracking for park maintenance. Use this information for effective decision-making and the sound allocation of resources.

## Goals & Recommendations

Goals and Recommendations provide direction to achieve the community vision of a full-service parks and recreation system that serves the entire community. The goals address parkland, recreation facilities, neighborhood connections, management, programs, investment, and public awareness. Recommendations identify specific activities for each goal.



The vision of **SPARC** sets a high standard for Springfield Township in parks, recreation programs, operations, and investment - but this standard is truly worth working towards. The plan recognizes that there are strengths within Springfield Township's government and civic organizations, challenges in status quo policies, and opportunities in the community through collaboration with partners. The plan challenges the township to look back and once again be audacious in decisions as leaders were in the 1950's regarding parkland in this community.

The investment strategy outlined in this chapter ranges from duties and tasks of existing staff to large-scale collaborative efforts for capital improvements. In the **Action Plan** in Chapter 4, the recommendations are accompanied by a suggested schedule for initiation and implementation as well as potential cost and funding sources.

### Leadership for Plan Implementation

The Springfield Township Board of Commissioners will ultimately direct implementation of **SPARC**. The range of recommendations and the need to address policy, services, capital improvements, land acquisition and creating connections presents a formidable agenda. Therefore, the Commissioners will need to target township investment and engage a variety of general and special interest partners in advancing this plan.

The Board of Commissioners can direct implementation of **SPARC** through the annual budgeting and planning for a long-term financial



strategy for capital improvements in the parks and additional facilities. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will continue to serve the Commissioners in an advisory capacity regarding parks, recreation facilities, programs, trails, and operations. The Parks & Recreation Director, recently established as a full-time position, will be responsible for recommending and implementing policy as well as the all-important responsibility of collecting real-time facts and figures to support effective informed decision-making by elected and appointed officials.

Outreach, increasing public awareness about parks and recreation, and leveraging partnerships are the foundation of this plan. Springfield Township, working in partnership with many organizations, can create a parks and recreation system that will enhance the quality of life for its citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Goals for Springfield Township Parks and Recreation

The key findings that emerged from the planning process are organized around seven goals. The goals represent the long-term condition for which the Township and the Borough will strive. They include the following:

**Goal 1:** Provide parkland that is sufficient in acreage, location, suitability, and configuration to serve the citizens of Springfield Township.

**Goal 2:** Insure that recreation facilities offer safety, accessibility, variety, appearance, availability, beauty, and function to meet the needs of the community.

**Goal 3:** Interconnect the neighborhoods of the community and the region.



**Goal 4:** Manage the parks and recreation system in a professional manner that conveys the greatest possible benefit to the public.

**Goal 5:** Build upon the existing programs and services to create recreation opportunities that enrich the quality of life for people who live, work, and visit here.

**Goal 6:** Invest in parks and recreation to sustain and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

**Goal 7:** Increase public awareness and stewardship regarding parks, recreation greenways, trails and natural resource conservation in Springfield Township.

**Each goal is presented with an overview of the goal, the significant issues related to the goal, objectives and recommendations.**

## Goal 1

Provide parkland that is sufficient in acreage, location, suitability and configuration to serve the citizens of Springfield Township.

### Overview

Springfield Township has 118.6 acres of parkland located within 10 recreation sites distributed throughout the municipality. The current acreage available for resident use is approximately 53 acres which excludes Sandy Run Park which is not currently open for public use and the Flourtown Country Club which is a membership based facility. Based on the prevailing standard of 10.5 acres of parkland per thousand population, Springfield Township is significantly under the recommended parkland acreage by approximately 152 acres.

The Township showed foresight with the acquisition of the Flourtown Country Club as open space. With 51 acres, this is the largest recreational land in the township occupying 43 percent of the township's total park acreage.

### Significant Issues

- While the township has a shortfall of 152 acres of parkland, the highly developed nature of the community limits opportunity for the acquisition of parkland and will make acquisition of large parcels for parkland a challenge.
- The parks are small ranging in size from less than an acre to 14 acres. None of them is large enough to accommodate a full range of recreation facilities
- Many of the small neighborhood parks function as single-purpose parks, lacking the diversity of facilities and use areas to address the broad community's recreation interests.
- Although nearby regional parks offer passive recreation opportunities, municipal parks offer limited opportunities for walking and enjoying the outdoors close to home.
- The Township does not have an indoor recreation facility. Although there is a good relationship with the school district, school use of facilities has priority, which limits community recreational use of



school facilities. Community groups rent private gyms for sports leagues. The Township pays Upper Dublin Township an annual fee for use of the EPI-Center by Springfield Township senior citizens.

- The Erdenheim Farm property is of statewide and regional importance.

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### Objective 1

**Provide adequate parkland for present and future residents.**

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### Recommendations

**1. Acquire parkland for the development of community parks.** Based on traditional national standards for public parkland established by the National Recreation and Park Association, Springfield Township's deficit is 152 acres. This equates to two to three community parks, 50-80 acres in size. Potential community park sites identified through the planning process include the Flourtown Country Club, Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography, and the Erdenheim Farm property.

**2. Due to the challenge of acquiring large parkland parcels, the Township should have a parallel goal of having a "signature park" in each neighborhood.** Just as Oreland has Oreland Park and Marlow Fields, each of the community's neighborhoods should have a neighborhood park. Parks in the neighborhood near the municipal complex and in the Panhandle would be valuable additions. Small neighborhood park parcels can become the gems of the neighborhood.



**3. Conduct a feasibility study of the Flourtown Country Club to determine if golf is the best use of this public parkland and that the township is getting maximum value for this facility in advance of its lease expiration. The Flourtown Country Club is a significant asset of the Springfield Township. It is under lease through December 31, 2020 with an option for another five years.** Retain an objective professional consultant with expertise in golf course management and public recreation to evaluate this question. Incorporate a strong citizen participation process in this study. Consider the membership based swim club and the banquet facilities in this study.

**4. Expand existing park sites through acquisition of contiguous acreage where possible.**

**5. Acquire/develop additional neighborhood parks within new and infill development through the mandatory dedication of parkland.** This would be important in conjunction with the Flourtown Erdenheim Vision Plan. Locate recreational space in the town centers for close-to-home recreation as well as entertainment space for lively downtown areas. Potential sites include the small

town green proposed in the Flourtown Village along the Bethlehem Pike at the Acme or the small plaza that has been developed at the Black Horse Inn as part of the implementation of the Flourtown Erdenehim Vision plan. Boost Oreland's potential for being a 21<sup>st</sup> century community designed around public transit by locating recreation sites and opportunities there as a boon to local economy.

**6. Work with the Open Space Committee in approaching large landowners within the community regarding the township's desire to acquire land for recreation purposes.** Define the landowner benefits and explore if lands are available for purchase or long-term lease.

**7. Continue to work on the future of the Erdenheim Farm property.** Strive to have that property conserved and preferable for natural resource based recreation and responsible environmental use.

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## Objective 2

**Expand the park system to serve the needs of all segments of the community.**

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## Recommendations

**1. Develop two to three community parks with sufficient acreage to serve citizens of all ages and interests.** Provide a mix of facilities for a broad range of citizens and uses including organized competitive sports, special events, nature enjoyment, fitness and wellness and enjoyment of the great outdoors.

**2. Revisit the master plans for Veterans Park and Laurel Beech Park to explore modifications.** Work towards making these more park-like settings with natural features, loop trails and play areas to balance the organized sports facilities.

**3. Review and assess the Sandy Run Park master plan to insure that it conveys the potential of this site as a flagship park in Springfield Township.** Its water body, natural features, and potential for the facilities of most interest to the citizens at large has enormous potential to solve the community's challenge of providing more recreation opportunities for a broader range of citizens.

**4. Complete master plans for all the remaining park sites.** Strive to maximize the diversity of recreation opportunities offered and transition from single-purpose parks to neighborhood parks that meet the general recreation needs of the neighborhood. Consider undertaking several master plans simultaneously in order to develop plans for each park with respect to the township's park system as a whole. Plan each park to have:

- Walking paths
- Play area
- Scenic sitting areas
- Natural features
- Shade
- Port-a-potties installed in framed structures if restrooms are not available
- Sports fields designed and constructed as athletic facilities, if the park can accommodate fields.
- Extend the park signage system to interpretive and directional signs.
- On-site storage if programs are held on site

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### Objective 3

**Expand opportunities for creating sustainable parks, naturalizing parks, nature based recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors within the parks.**

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#### Recommendations

**1. Introduce natural features and environmental recreation into existing park sites as possible.** Mermaid Park and Sandy Run Park should be developed to emphasize passive recreation and promote the quiet enjoyment of the outdoor setting. Enhance these parks with trails, benches, picnic areas, and other amenities.

**2. Manage the public lands for natural resource conservation not just for public use.**

**3. Consider adding beautification areas and gardens to enhance the visual image of the parks if plantings could be maintained through volunteers and/or private funding.** Work with community organizations, especially the Morris Arboretum, to plan on how to establish and maintain these areas.

**4. Design the parks with nature, incorporating natural features, native plants, and utilizing best management practices for site development.** Protect and enhance natural resources such as the riparian corridors that traverse Cisco Park, Mermaid Park, and Marlow Fields. Transform over-maintained park areas into more naturalized settings. Strive to minimize mowing where possible. Add educational exhibits to promote this effort to the public as it will reflect a change in maintenance patterns and park appearance.

**5. Develop a pond management strategy.** The ponds are a hallmark of Springfield Township parks. The department should develop a pond management and restoration plan to ensure their long-term health and appearance.



## Goal 2

Ensure that recreation facilities are sufficient in number and location and that they offer safety, accessibility, variety, availability, aesthetics, and function to meet the needs of the community.

### Overview

Springfield Township is blessed with scenic beauty and charming neighborhoods that house community parks with recreation facilities. These facilities are primarily used for organized sports. Parks such as Cisco (the park with the most general use) attract park visitors for walking, playing and enjoyment of being outside. The problem is that there are not enough facilities for either organized or self-directed recreation. There are not enough ball fields for organized sports. The top facilities that most citizens want in the parks include shade trees, natural areas, walking trails, and restrooms. There are no indoor recreation facilities, which appear to be needed here. Over 70 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they think an indoor recreation center is needed. Community groups and the township rent indoor recreation space both inside and out of the township. Regional recreation providers offer township residents opportunities to use facilities and services outside of Springfield including the senior citizens center in Upper Dublin and adult enrichment in Cheltenham. Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park are the two facilities most used by township residents according the public opinion survey and interviews.

### Significant Issues

- Many parks require the development of accessible trails to connect parking areas and sidewalks to recreation facilities and accessible viewing areas for active facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The majority of the parks in Springfield Township emphasize active recreation. Passive recreation opportunities such as walking and picnicking should be introduced into existing parks and natural park sites as possible.
- The overall lack of parkland has resulted in the over development of several park sites with facilities presenting functional challenges and other concerns.
- Each park is disparate from the rest of the parks. The township is moving forward to unify these discrete sites into a system through design with a common vocabulary of furnishings, signage, features and other aspects. Unifying these separate parks through design and management would help the township increase public awareness and appreciation of the municipal park and recreation system.
- The need for indoor recreation facilities is pressing.

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**Objective 1**

**Evaluate, design and upgrade parks with consideration of safety and security of users.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Maintain clear sight lines into the parks from public streets and sidewalks.** Avoid locating facilities in isolated areas to promote safe recreation environments.
- 2. Locate recreation facilities safely.** Provide safety zones, separation and physical barriers between parking and roadways, and avoid conflicts between park users and pedestrians and vehicles.
- 3. Continue to work towards meeting Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines for Public Playground Safety.** Provide play equipment that meets the safety and age-segregation criteria.

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**Objective 2**

**Provide accessible trails, viewing areas, and other accommodations to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Develop trails within parks to provide accessible routes from parking areas and sidewalks to recreation and support facilities.**
- 2. Provide accessible viewing areas adjacent to activity areas that are connected to an accessible route.**
- 3. Consider the needs of the athlete with disabilities.** Provide clear openings at gates and along fence lines. Provide other accommodations to enable use of recreation facilities by persons with disabilities.



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**Objective 3**

**Enhance the parks through the introduction of diverse recreation facilities to broaden their appeal in the community.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Provide “lifetime” facilities.** Add trails and tennis courts that are enjoyed throughout ones lifetime.
- 2. Develop unique facilities.** Broaden appeal of the parks by adding features such as spray park/splash pad, bocce courts, etc.
- 3. Make parks attractive for pet owners and non-pet owners.** Consider the park use for walking dogs and continue to offer dog waste accommodations within existing and new park sites.
- 4. Consider the needs of senior adults when completing park upgrades.** Locate sitting areas and facilities in shaded locations that can be conveniently accessed from parking areas.



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**Objective 4**

**Enhance the parks with facilities that encourage extended visits and make the parks more convenient to use.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Design parking with drop-off areas.** Provide convenient parking.
- 2. Make facility comforts for park visitors available.** Provide benches, restrooms, trash receptacles, bike racks, and other amenities in the parks as appropriate. Locate benches in shaded locations.
- 3. Offer storage space.** Provide buildings for sports equipment and summer program storage.
- 4. Light sports fields and courts.** Evaluate potential locations as appropriate, to maximize use and be in harmony with surrounding land use.
- 5. Enhance the playgrounds.** The playgrounds are a main attraction to the residents. Create great playgrounds developed with neighborhood themes. Foster opportunities for socializing and learning. When more parkland is secured, consider creating a signature playground as a community destination.



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**Objective 5**

**Enhance the parks to provide great public places as part of a first class park system.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Establish design guidelines for the parks to achieve a high quality unified design theme.** Consider designs that unify the park system while celebrating the neighborhood in which the park is located.
- 2. Undertake park improvements in a holistic manner.** Provide support, accessory facilities and landscaping that create a premier facility.
- 3. Integrate the parks within neighborhoods through connections and improvements desired by residents.** Use parks to spur neighborhood revitalization and beautification.
- 4. Adopt the "Rule of 10" for each park and recreation facility.** This is a simple rule that says every park should have 10 great features. The Rule of 10 should be carried down within each park to apply to park hubs, facilities or features. It will enable the township to pursue park excellence.

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**Objective 6**

**Provide indoor recreation facilities.**

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**Recommendations**



- 1. Continue to partner with Upper Dublin Township in the use of the EPI-Center.** Until an indoor recreation center is available, continue to support the EPI-Center as the senior citizens center for Springfield Township. Single purpose senior centers will likely not be used by the next generation of senior adults. An intergenerational recreation center in Springfield would be used by people of all ages and interests throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis once they retire.
- 2. Consider the exploration of a partnership with Plymouth Township regarding use of the Greater Plymouth Community Center.** Initiate discussion with Plymouth Township to determine if an agreement could be reached in which Springfield

Township could contribute a fee that would entitle Springfield residents to obtain a discount in fees to use the Plymouth facility and its programs.

**3. Continue to work with the Springfield School District in cooperative use of facilities.** Determine if school facilities can be used more for recreation.

**4. Continue to partner with commercial recreation providers as this is a way of making indoor recreation available to the residents.**

**5. Coordinate with the School District in community use of the high school pool.**

The pool is an important community recreation facility. A school district/township effort helps to maximize the facility as community recreational and educational resource.

**6. Conduct a feasibility study to explore the potential for an indoor recreation center.** Potential sites for an indoor center include Antonelli Institute, the Springfield Township municipal campus, the Flourtown Country Club, and the Seven Dolores church property. The feasibility study could be a cooperative effort with the Springfield School District and include the potential for a swimming pool.



## Goal 3

Interconnect the neighborhoods of the community and the region.

### Overview

Springfield Township is a densely developed municipality with a heavily traveled network of roadways and extensive residential neighborhoods. Village centers and parks are located throughout the municipality though walking and bicycling connections are limited. Many natural stream corridors have not been protected and are degraded with severe erosion. Most stream corridors are privately owned. The township is currently in the process of evaluating the potential of establishing an ordinance for riparian buffers. Opportunities for trails and greenways exist and Montgomery County has identified several priority trail and greenway corridors within and near the Township. Although the public participation process found support for trails from the community at large, important concerns emerged regarding possible negative impacts from trails related to public safety, individual property rights and the loss of privacy by adjoining neighbors. While Springfield Township is not opposed to the Montgomery County trail system, there are residents in this community with concerns that must be addressed as part of the public participation process in all trail planning efforts. It is important to balance the needs of the whole community with the specific needs of potential trail neighbors.

### Significant Issues

- The densely developed nature of the municipality presents significant challenges for creating a connected community.
- Existing regional trail corridors offer nearby linear recreation opportunities but are not linked to the municipality via local trails.
- Residents at large have indicated that bicycle trails are important to them.
- Some proposed trails have public opposition regarding concerns about property rights, privacy and safety. The Township will not force trails with citizen opposition.
- There has been no community outreach program about the benefits and experiences with trails elsewhere.
- Uncertainties regarding the oil supply and escalating energy costs have sparked planning for non-motorized transportation nationwide in order to enable citizens to walk or bicycle to work, school and other activities.

**Objective 1**

**Plan and develop a comprehensive network of greenways and trails throughout the municipality to link residential, village centers, schools, and parkland.**

**Recommendations**

- 1. Form a Trail Committee.** Plan, evaluate, promote, and coordinate trail initiatives. Strive to get a pilot trail project in place for transportation enhancement funding that would be of sufficient scale and value to Springfield Township to make fulfilling the grant requirements worth the township's time and effort. A grant round is anticipated in 2010.
- 2. Use a public process to master plan greenways and trails.** A crucial aspect of this is a public education process about the benefits and experiences of other trails elsewhere. Identify on-road bicycle opportunities. Incorporate the trails, trail connectors, trail links, community hubs and destination identified in this plan.
- 3. Evaluate the Cresheim Valley Trail study.** This study was a privately funded effort. Incorporate public involvement as part of the evaluation process.
- 4. Identify land and easements necessary to complete eight trails, connector trails and community links.** Define a strategy, priority, and action steps for each corridor.
- 5. Seek access easements to create trail corridors.** Coordinate with other township committees and boards on land development and planning. Extend links to designated trail corridors.
- 6. Develop an official map that promotes greenway and trail objectives.**
- 7. Coordinate greenway and trail initiatives.** Work with Montgomery County, Cheltenham Township, Whitmarsh Township, Upper Dublin Township, and Philadelphia County.
- 8. Move ahead with trail projects with a high likelihood of success.** Develop trail segments that will serve as pilot projects for success in Springfield Township. A good example is the Sandy Run Trail. A great deal of this trail is to be constructed by the developers of the Boorse and Pizek properties.
- 9. Undertake projects that will extend and support bicycling in the township.** This would include the installation of bicycle racks in public and commercial locations, signage, and bicycle accommodations on roads to be undertaken with road improvement projects. An example of such a project could be Haws Lane from Bethlehem Pike to the high school with branching off to get to the Flourtown Country Club.
- 10. Coordinate with township efforts on sidewalk planning to make the community more pedestrian friendly.** This is especially important in the town centers.



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**Objective 2**

**Raise citizen awareness about the benefits of greenways and trails.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Design and carry out a public awareness campaign about trails.** Promote the understanding and benefits of trails and greenways.
- 2. Provide information to citizens about successful trails.** Include information about solutions that relate to concerns expressed by residents in Springfield Township.
- 3. Work with Montgomery County to share trail success stories and trail design solutions found elsewhere in the County.** Seek out trail supporters in the county who may have been opposed to trails before a trail went in. Use them for selected outreach and educational efforts.

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**Objective 3**

**Promote the protection and conservation of green resources and greenways throughout the municipality.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Coordinate greenway conservation opportunities and initiatives** with the EAC, the Open Space Committee, and the Montgomery County Conservation District and others concerned with riparian buffers and linear conservation issues.
- 2. Enhance stream corridors within parks** (Cisco Park, Marlow Fields, and Mermaid Park) with riparian buffer plantings and streambank stabilization.
- 3. Designate one of the parks as a demonstration area.** Provide interpretative signage with information about the benefits and techniques use for stream corridor enhancement. Provide resource information to landowners.
- 4. Seek conservation easements to protect and buffer natural resources along designated greenway corridors.**



## Goal 4

Continue to manage the parks and recreation system in a professional manner that conveys the greatest possible benefit to the public.

### Overview

Springfield Township made the monumental step forward in 2008 in making the Parks & Recreation Director full-time. This move reflects the Board of Commissioners' responsiveness to public wishes for the township to increase its support for parks and recreation. Park maintenance is a collaborative effort between the Parks & Recreation Department and the Public Works Department where most of the responsibility lies. Since about 75 percent of the lifetime cost of a park is in operations and maintenance, this aspect of public recreation system is crucial. The township is moving from a part-time system that managed functions largely in response to pressing public needs into a system in which functions are planned, directed and evaluated for maximum use of all resources and the greatest benefit to the public possible.

### Significant Issues

- Although the director's position was part-time, the level of service provided was actually closer to full-time due to the amount of time, dedication and commitment of the part-time director. The challenge is to recognize this and set realistic expectations on what one full-time director can accomplish.
- Creating policies and procedures is essential for the proper management of public facilities and services. Developing written formal workload/cost tracking systems for major operational functions such as maintenance management, program management and others is pivotal in insuring that all resources are used for maximum benefit.
- Phasing in staff as programs, services and facilities expand can happen. There are fine examples in the region of how this was accomplished. Springfield Township is fortunate in having support from the citizens through elected and appointed officials for this.
- Setting specific goals and objectives with an annual work program and evaluation of benchmark success will help to keep everyone on track in achieving a full-service department.



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**Objective 1**

**Establish an annual work program for parks and recreation.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Identify the actions for major functional areas of parks and recreation.** Include programs and services, facility planning and development, maintenance management, policies, and partnerships.

**2. Reconfigure the role of the Director from that of principally a program coordinator to that of management and planning.** Strive to target the director's time into the following units:

- Planning and Outreach: 60 percent
- Planning and Facility Projects: 20 percent
- Administrative Functions: 20 percent

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**Objective 2**

**Establish the appropriate level of staff as programs and services expand.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. If warranted by program additions and increasing non-tax revenues, consider adding additional positions over the next ten years.** Use the organizational structure depicted on page 157 as the model. The idea is that as programs grow and revenues from non-tax sources are generated, additional staff could be added to enhance public service. Positions could be a mix of seasonal, part-time, temporary and full-time.

**2. Establish a program coordinator position.** The program coordinator could manage program areas such as youth, families, active adults, fitness and wellness, nature, sports and other areas as fitting with departmental services.

Consider creating additional positions such as an operations specialist and a marketing coordinator who would be responsible for organizing day-to-day management tasks and logistics for recreation services and public relations. This position would be dedicated to carrying out routine tasks to enable the Director to focus on planning, management, partnership, and generating alternative revenue sources and support.



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**Objective 3****Increase public involvement in parks and recreation.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Continue ongoing coalition building and support of citizens organized for specific parks and recreation purposes.** With a small department, the best way to get the most accomplished is by leveraging management time by working with small citizens groups dedicated to a specific purpose.

**2. Consider specific citizens groups that address important township and parks and recreation issues and opportunities.** Potential groups include: an umbrella organization for organized sports; a trails group; parents group for youth services such as summer recreation; an indoor recreation center group; and a town center recreation space and event group.

**3. Organize these groups as spin-off committees of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board where possible.** This will facilitate coordination of varied interests working towards the common vision of this plan.



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**Objective 4****Invest in technology as a way to maximize production and reduce staffing requirements.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Develop an inventory and assessment of the information needs that require data and procedures that are repetitive and could be computerized.** Use this to assess the kinds of software that would help the department. Consider software for program registration, customer data bases, facility scheduling, reservations, financing management, maintenance management, and others that may emerge

**2. Visit other departments to see what software they are using, their issues and insights.** Seek a range of examples of software to see in action.

**3. Coordinate software planning with township systems.**



4. **Plan for the procurement of software and on-going technical support over the next three to five years.**
5. **Incorporate software training into the annual work program.**
6. **Investigate the use of PDA's for maintenance and field staff to keep records up to date and in real time.**

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**Objective 5**

**Build on Springfield Township's commitment to excellent customer service.**

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**Recommendations**

1. **Involve the municipal finance department in planning financial services such as credit card payments.**
2. **Create and implement credit card payment system for programs and services.**
3. **Create and implement Internet registration.**
4. **Provide customer service training for both internal staff.**

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**Objective 6**

**Create and implement a five-year employee development program for parks, recreation, park maintenance, and administrative support for parks and recreation.**

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**Recommendations**

1. **Conduct a needs assessment regarding training in parks and recreation.** Assess training from two perspectives: municipal parks and recreation capacity building and professional development of the employees.
2. **Develop a five-year employee development program** based on the needs assessment. Use a mix of training methods including memberships in parks and recreation and related areas, seminars, conferences, executive development programs, publications, brown bag lunches, networking, and other opportunities that may emerge. Consider for the Director:
  - NRPA's Director's School
  - NRPA's Revenue School
  - NRPA's Park Maintenance School

- Annual Attendance at the PRPS conference and district meetings
- Bi-annual attendance at the NRPA Congress
- Membership in NPRA, PRPS, and the Montgomery County Recreation Council
- Software training

**Consider for the Park Maintenance Managers and Staff:**

- Continued certification in playground safety inspections (CPSI)
- Membership in PRPS
- Membership in KAFMO (Keystone Athletic Field Maintenance Organization)
- Training in sports turf management at schools such as Penn State or Rutgers.
- Training in natural resource management. This is often held through the county extension service and Penn State.

**3. Allocate one to two percent of the operating budget for training annually.** Based on the current budget, allocate two percent in order to get the knowledge and networking into the recently established full-time department. This would be about \$6,000 in the current year.

**4. Enroll the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in the National Recreation & Park Association and the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society.** Encourage committee members to attend the citizen forum at the annual PRPS conference.

## Recommendations

### Objective 7

#### Formalize the park and recreation maintenance management system.

**1. Undertake the development of a formalized maintenance management system in the Township.** This should be a joint effort of the Parks & Recreation and the Public Works Departments. Involve the key stakeholders of the parks in the process such as the organized sports groups.

**2. Establish and implement park maintenance standards.**

**3. Update the annual, seasonal and monthly schedules in accordance with the formalized system.**

**4. Establish a computerized information tracking system to generate information about cost centers.** This will enable the township to make real-time informed decisions about planning, directing, controlling, and evaluating maintenance.



**5. Consider seeking a Peer Grant to formalize the system.** Obtain the services of park management specialist to assist in the development of the formalized maintenance system.

**6. Create an annual report of accomplishments, opportunities, and issues prior to budget planning.** Use this information to allocate resources, create policies, and set fees and charges.

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**Objective 8**

**Establish a program to monitor the use of the parks and recreation areas on a regular basis.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Use a monitoring system such as the Site Watch program in Upper Dublin as a model.** This would be especially important when trails are developed in order to document actual circumstances related to trail use. Programs such as neighborhood watch and adopt-a-park can often serve as models.

**2. Secure a RecTAP grant** (Recreation Technical Assistance Program) through PRPS (Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society) for assistance from Upper Dublin to implement the program.

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**Objective 9**

**Develop policies and procedures to guide how parks and recreation is administered.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Continue to develop and implement policies such as the recently adopted policy on background checks for people involved in youth parks and recreation services.**

**2. Create a policy manual and a manual of operational procedures to address the specific course of action to be followed in managing parks and recreation. The development of policies is an on-going process.**

- Involve key stakeholders, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Board of Commissioners on identifying the type of policies that would enhance public services and operations. Examples include: field use policy and a field allocation policy, relationship of the parks and recreation department and committee to other township functions and boards.

- Operational procedures should be developed for the handling of money, seasonal staff, maintenance tasks, notification of the public on closures or changes of venue and man many others. These should be developed over time.

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### Objective 10

**Use the Impact Statement tool to evaluate projects and programs prior to taking on the project.**

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### Recommendations

- 1. Create a Management Impact Statement (MIS) as shown in Figure 1 on page 36 prior to undertaking new projects.** Projects would include park and recreation facility improvements or major recreation programs. Add only projects or programs that would maintain a high level of quality and that would not negatively impact other existing programs, facilities, and human resources. This would include projects such as an indoor recreation center feasibility study, a major new program areas such as services to senior adults or teens, and a new park development such as Sandy Run Park.

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### Objective 11

**Provide sufficient office space for parks and recreation operations.**

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### Recommendations

- 1. Explore how or where to house the parks and recreation administration as the department grows.** This can be in conjunction with existing township administrative space, the expansion of the township's municipal campus, or an off-site location.
- 2. Use the following factors as criteria for parks and recreation administrative space.**
  - Accessible to the public
  - Adequate reception area
  - Comfortable and attractive meeting rooms for planning and in-service education by staff and volunteers
  - Adequate office space of personnel with satisfactory workspace, storage facilities and filing area.



- Library for research materials
- Warehouse space for recreation and park equipment and materials

**3. Consider the need for housing the Parks and Recreation Department as part of the plan to reconfigure and expand the municipal campus.**

**Figure 1  
MIS - Management Impact Statement**

**PURPOSE**

1. To assess the impact of a significant proposed project or a major program considering the capital and operating costs including human resources and the effect on other parks and recreation facilities and services.
2. To use the assessment to make an informed decision about feasibility and viability of the proposed project.

**METHOD**

*Determine:*

1. Capital cost of the proposed project.
2. Operating costs of the proposed project. Include:
  - Number of staff hours required
  - Cost of the staff hours
  - Cost of materials and supplies
  - Miscellaneous costs
  - Volunteer support over the long term
3. Impact on other facilities and programs with the implementation of the proposed project.
  - Will the project/service require funds needed for other facilities/programs?
  - Will the project/service require staff time needed for other services/programs?
  - How will the project impact the quality of service in Springfield Township?
  - Will the project require resources from the community and are they available?
4. Revenue Sources
  - Grants
  - Donations
  - Municipal funds – additional appropriation
  - Municipal funds – within current budget
  - Non-tax funds to be generated from the project/program

**DECISION-MAKING**

Based upon the above information, does Springfield Township have the resources to move ahead with this project?

## Goal 5

Build upon the existing programs and services to create recreation opportunities that enrich the quality of life for the people who live, work, and visit in Springfield Township.

### Overview

Public recreation services introduce citizens to a variety of recreation opportunities. Municipal recreation is the foundation for building lifelong active healthy lives. Current focus of organized scheduled programs is on youth, outdoors, summer recreation and sports. The department has begun to branch out in to some arts and enrichment programs. The planning process for this plan revealed that a broader range of recreation opportunities for people of all ages and a wide variety of interests is needed. However, this department is small and cannot be all things to all people. The strategy here is to grow the services over the next ten years as staff is added and supported to a large extent by fees and charges. The most effective thing to do is to start with the best customers, children and families and branch out from there, building upon success.

### Significant Issues

- Planning focus has been on organized, scheduled programs.
- Future directions in recreation opportunities can move into the self –directed realm of recreation facilities where citizens can enjoy their recreation at their own discretion. This would include paths for walking and bicycling, scenic areas for enjoying nature, and gathering places for families and friends.
- Volunteer organizations provide major public services such as the sports associations, the business and civic associations and the fire companies.
- Opportunities for enhanced collaboration and partnerships are ripe with potential including the Springfield Library, the Springfield School District, the Morris Arboretum, Fort Washington State Park and neighboring communities with their pathway connections to expand self-directed recreation.
- Increasing public awareness about recreation opportunities is important..
- Continuing to include people with special needs in all aspects of parks and recreation is crucial. Finding news and better ways to serve citizens of all abilities is an important direction for the future.

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**Objective 1**

**Develop a program management plan.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Establish a three year program management plan.** The program management plan should include a mix of organized programs and self-directed recreation opportunities. For the organized programs, set goals for desired outcomes for the participants as well as the number and types of programs to be offered. Develop a municipal revenue policy with guidelines for fees and charges that are reasonable and attainable. Take into consideration the program type, facilities, and staff resources. Set a goal for cost recovery based upon this policy. Typically such a goal reflects the percentage of the operating budget that is supported with non-tax dollars generated through fees and charges, donations, and other means.

- Focus on effective customer service rather than on a “cafeteria-style” menu of programs.
- Target the following in order of priority as the department grows and more resources are available: children and families, tweens, empty nesters, and young adults between school age and having families. Focus organized programs on families and children. Add services for tweens when a part-time youth recreation coordinator can be hired. Focus services to empty nesters and young adults in self-directed opportunities, special community events and increasing their awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities in the community.
- Adopt a formula of 50 percent repeat programs, 30 percent seasonal programs and 20 percent new programs annually.



**2. Broaden the perspective on service delivery from organized scheduled programs to providing opportunities for self-directed recreation.**

This will enable the community to expand recreation opportunities without increasing demands on staff time.

**3. Include the role of “information broker” in which the parks & recreation staff presents ideas for how people can spend their leisure time on their own.**

This could be a feature on the parks and recreation WEB site when the WEB site is re-designed and managed with adequate staff or contractor availability to make it a real time community resource.

**4. Insure that the program management plan addressed services and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.**

Create, sustain and enhance partnerships with community organizations such as the Library, School District and others. Include input and involvement from organizations that serve people with special needs such as the Special Olympics, Senior

Olympics, Autism, and others to be identified. Consider creating an ad hoc advisory committee for people with special needs and or including a representative for people with special needs on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

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## Objective 2

**Develop and implement an advertising program to build community awareness about parks and recreation.**

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### Recommendations

**1. Build on the pride of people living in Springfield as the “brand” for parks and recreation.** Position the advertising and outreach in a way that showcases this community as the special place it is recognized to be.

**2. Create a logo for Springfield Township parks and recreation.** Use professional graphic designers to create the logo

**3. Create a tag line.** Use the logo on all possible surfaces. Examples of tag lines include: “Parks for Life” “Creating a Lifetime of Memories” “Healthy Parks, Healthy People”.

**4. Use promotional give-away items and sales** to heighten public recognition and support for community parks and recreation.

**5. Continue to offer the program guide through direct mail to households.** This is the single most effective tool the township has for advertising parks and recreation.

**6. Create a customer database.** The ability to create a customer database should be a major consideration when choosing parks and recreation software. Use the database to develop a targeted outreach and advertising program. **Develop information about customer preferences, interests, and demographic characteristics.** Knowing who the customers are and their characteristics is essential to expand and position services effectively. This can be done through registration, program evaluations, focus groups, and intercept surveys in the parks, special events or programs.

**7. Strive to make direct contacts with the best customers of the department throughout the year.** Set a goal of 12 direct contacts with the departments’ “best customers”. This is the method by which the township will expand services to a larger group of citizens.



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**Objective 3**

**Develop and implement a marketing strategy for parks and recreation.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Recognize that needs assessment is ongoing.** It need not be expensive or complex. Obtain public input from a variety of means including:

- A community-wide needs survey every three years. Build upon the recent community survey conducted for this. Use this plan as the basis for the next survey. To begin planning for active adult programs for empty nesters, consider a targeted survey of people age 45 and over.
- Letters and telephone calls from residents. Suggestion boxes. The WEB site(s) for parks and recreation. Other WEB sites.
- Focus groups. Community boards and organizations including the sports groups, service organizations, people with special needs, and others.
- Periodic interviews in parks with park visitors.

**2. Participate in community advisory groups and organizations as a liaison to parks and recreation.**

**3. Evaluate programs, services, and facilities on an on-going basis to determine public preferences.** This should be a formalized process instituted for the programs overall. Target both leaders and participants for the evaluations. Ask for testimonials and permission to use the testimonials in advertising.

**4. Develop an action plan for three years based upon the assessment of community needs, programs, and services.** Develop specific strategies with goals and actions for the first year of the three-year plan.

**5. Develop measurements to determine if the budget and resources devoted to marketing achieve the goals of the marketing program.**

**6. Create a 21<sup>st</sup> century parks and recreation WEB site that operates in real time.** This will require staff time not presently available for this purpose. Set a goal of having this be the “go-to” site for the most current information about recreation, parks, cancellations, time changes, registration and so on.



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**Objective 4**

**Build upon community nature based recreation opportunities over time.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Focus on creating self-directed nature based recreation experiences in the community.** Consider using Eagle Scouts as a way to develop interpretive areas in parks. Facilitate the provision of such opportunities by the school district, scout troops and other groups.
- 2. Advertise these areas and opportunities to the public.** Promote these recreational experiences that people can enjoy at their own discretion for relaxation, nature study, photography, bird and wildlife watching year round.
- 3. Explore partnerships with the Montgomery County Parks & Heritage Services Department, Morris Arboretum, Fort Washington State Park and the Springfield School District.**
- 4. Encourage group use of environmental areas of the parks.** Work with groups such as scouts, school groups, day care centers, senior centers, and other community organizations to conduct their own self-directed programs and experiences.
- 5. Consider the addition of nature and environmental education as a program area.** Start with existing programs such as Kidz Klubhouse and add a nature activity each day in order to foster stewardship of the outdoors. Only move into this if sufficient staff time and resources can be dedicated to developing and implementing it.

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**Objective 5**

**Address the need to provide and promote recreation opportunities aimed at improving lifelong fitness and wellness.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes facilities, services, promotion, and partnerships.**
- 2. Promote and advertise facilities** such as pathways, year-round recreation, and scenic natural areas to entice people to participate.
- 3. Promote the need for an active lifestyle,** its role in disease prevention, and how Parks & Recreation can help citizens to lead healthy lifestyles.

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**Objective 6**

**Take a leadership role in providing a forum and encouraging cooperation among community sports organizations.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Hold an annual forum for community sports organizations.** Invite all organizations to the forums to discuss topics of common interest such as fields, scheduling, permitting, common issues and opportunities, potential areas of collaboration and other topics that may emerge. Determine an action plan to foster future collaborative efforts.

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**Objective 7**

**Continue to help facilitate community recreation services by other providers.**

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**Recommendations**



**1. Recognize that supporting community recreation efforts such league sports and community special events offered by other groups require dedicated staff time.** Assess the availability of staff time and make that information known to municipal managers and officials before assuming responsibilities.

**2. Continue to develop public/private partnerships with commercial recreation providers in offering public recreation opportunities.** This provides an important public service as well as operates as a feeder program to strengthen local recreation type businesses.

**3. Continue to provide support and advertisement in a one-source recreation guide for community groups with their contact numbers.**

**4. Monitor trends to determine how services can be enhanced or rejuvenated.**

## Goal 6

Invest in parks and recreation to sustain and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

### Overview

Municipal investment in parks and recreation is an investment in improved health, clean water and air, a vibrant economy, rejuvenation of town centers, decreased crime, increased property values and a citizenry with a high level of satisfaction in their community. It is essential to make the case for raising parks and recreation as a priority in municipal support. Parks and recreations services clearly address some of the issues that Springfield citizens are most concerned about: conservation of natural resources, preservation of the scenic beauty, creation of a strong sense of community among the citizens along, and their ability to get around safely in a pedestrian and bicycle friendly community. In 2008, the township increased the proportion of the municipal operating budget of parks and recreation from 1.87 percent to 2.14 percent. The national average is 3.14 percent of a municipal operating budget for parks and recreation. Research conducted by the National Park Service found that parks and recreation systems viewed as community assets by the business sector received at least five percent of the municipal operating budget. Springfield Township spends about \$9.11 per capita on parks and recreation compared with the statewide municipal average of about \$33 and a national average of \$65. Although improvements are made, there has been no true parks capital improvement program.

### Significant Issues

- Major capital funding would be needed for land acquisition and park development for a new community park(s) or indoor facilities.
- Capital funds are needed for improvements in existing facilities such as ball fields, playgrounds, and the cyclic rehabilitation of the parks as well as new park development at Sandy Run Park.
- The Township's per capita operating budget is about 27 percent of the statewide average.

### Public Opinion: Financial Support for Parks and Recreation

Most survey respondents (55%) would like to see Springfield Township increase its commitment to parks and recreation. Over three out of five respondents are willing to pay another \$6 to \$10 or more annually in public tax-based funds for expanded or improved parks and recreation.

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**Objective 1**

**Provide adequate financial support for operating parks and recreation through a mix of township and non-township sources.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Continue to increase municipal support for parks and recreation operations.** Use this support for program staff that would generate additional revenues through expanded programs and services. Work towards 3.14 percent of the budget and the average of \$33 per capita at minimum. On the optimum side, strive for five percent of the operating budget and to exceed the Pennsylvania state average per capita municipal investment.

**2. Assess the municipal policies regarding fees and charges** to determine if they are adequate or if they can be increased to help offset operating costs. Include a review of policies regarding fees and charges for maintenance of athletic facilities.

**3. Develop a revenue policy.** The revenue policy would incorporate four categories of revenue sources including: compulsory resources (taxes), earned income (fees and charges), financial assistance (grants, gifts, donations etc.), contractual receipts (leases, rentals, and concessions). Base the policy on the township's position as stated in the goals for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board ordinance, which is to operate recreation programs on a self-sustained basis to the extent possible.

**4. Continue to use a mix of tax funds, partnerships and non-tax funds to support public recreation.**

**5. Try to channel tax funds towards parks and recreation facilities and generate user fees for recreation services.** Recognize that the department will always have a need for substantial support from tax dollars.

**6. Use the outreach and advertising program to increase public awareness of the benefits of park and recreation.** Collect testimonials, facts and figures to document the specific benefits in terms of the environment, social, personal and economic impact of parks and recreation in Springfield Township.

**7. Use the Management Impact Statement to insure that adequate financial and human resources are available** to carry out, operate or maintain the initiative, before undertaking new projects or programs.



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**Objective 2**

**Establish a capital improvement program based upon decisions made for implementing this plan.**

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**Recommendations**

- 1. Consider a bond issue or low interest loans for funding capital projects and land acquisition.** Projects that would merit a large financial program of up to 20 years would be parkland acquisition, development of new community parks, establishment of an indoor recreation center, or major capital improvements in existing parks. Tie a parks and recreation funding program with one for overall township projects such as storm water management, library expansion, or police administrative space.
- 2. Increase the annual allocation for capital improvements significantly.** Historically, the township is spending about \$20,000 to \$36,000 annually in the operating budget for park improvements. Over the course of a decade, this translates into a relatively small investment in the public parks. Adopt a capital improvement definition of projects of over \$10,000 that last more than five years. Strive to obtain a designated amount that could be available annually for the next five to ten years as a way to maximize planning park improvements holistically.
- 3. Set a goal of leveraging county open space and local tax funds.** Apply for grants and use the county open space funds as a match. This would yield a dollar for every municipal dollar available up to a certain maximum.
- 4. Establish a five-year capital improvement program** based upon the recommendations of this plan.
- 5. Establish strategic alliances with other providers as a way of maximizing all of the available resources for specific projects.** These could include community sports groups, Springfield School District, the business associations and so on.
- 6. Use the criteria in Figure 2 on page 46 to select projects for the capital improvement program.**
- 7. Undertake a professional fundraising campaign if appropriate for a major project.** Facilitate the formation of a community-based organization to take the lead on the fundraising program if a community-based organization can be formed for such a purpose. Projects that lend themselves to fundraising include major destination playgrounds, indoor recreation centers, trails, and amphitheaters.

Figure 2 Sample Criteria for Selection of Capital Improvement Projects Applied for an Example Project						
Project Title: Project X		Capital Cost: \$100,000		Funding Source(s): Muni's. & DCNR		
Annual Operating cost: \$10,000		Operating budget source(s): User Fees				
Criteria	Yes (2)	No (1)	High Priority (3)	Medium Priority (2)	Low Priority (1)	Total Points
1. Does proposed project meets broad public need?	2		3			6
2. Does the project benefit a majority of the citizens?		1			1	1
3. Will the project meet safety and accessibility needs of community?		1			1	1
4. Is the project consistent with <b>Springfield Township Parks &amp; Recreation Plan</b> , design guidelines, park master plan and mission?	2				1	2
5. Will the project improve <b>existing</b> park conditions? That is, it will fix up what the township has rather than build new?	2		3			6
6. Is project in an area of the community that needs municipal investment?		1			1	1
7. Is funding available for the project?	2		3			6
8. Does a community group support(s) the project?	2		3			6
9. Will the township or other provider be able to maintain the improvement/project upon completion?	2		3			6
10. Will the quality of the project enhance the public image of the Springfield Township?	2			2		4
11. Do you have time to undertake the project?	2					2
<b>TOTAL Points</b>						<b>41</b>

(#) = point value

**Chart Formula**

- Step 1.** Answer each question of the criteria with a yes or no.
- Step 2.** Mark either "2" in the yes box or "1" in the no box.
- Step 3.** Determine if the project is a high, medium or low priority.
- Step 4.** Mark either a "3", or a "2" or a "1" in the appropriate priority box.
- Step 5.** Multiply the Yes (2) or No (1) points times the Priority Points High (3), Medium (2) or Low (1). Put that answer in the total point's column for that criterion.
- Step 6.** Continue working your way through all of the criteria in the same manner.
- Step 7.** Add the Total Points Column. Write the score in the box in the bottom of the column. Compare this score against the scores of other projects under consideration. In the example above, Project X scored a value of 41 out of a total 60 points possible. Compare this score with other projects that could range in value from 10 to 60. Use as part of decision-making process.
- Step 8.** Adjust the criteria and point values as merited based upon the use of the rating scale.

**Goal 7**

Increase public awareness and support regarding parks and recreation and their benefits in Springfield Township.

**Overview**

Having up-to-date-real time access to information about parks and recreation opportunities in Springfield Township is important to the citizens. After lack of time, the lack of information is usually the chief block to recreational participation and use of the parks. Increasing public awareness requires developing a data base about community interests and preferred ways to access information in order to develop effective advertising and outreach programs. Finding out more about citizen preferences on an ongoing basis will help the department to position its programs and services to serve citizens most effectively. This would include finding out what citizens are interested in, preferred days and times of programs and services, how to make procedures convenient and hassle free. Segmenting the market by life-stages and interests will further enable the township to reach citizens in the most meaningful ways possible.

**Significant Issues**

- Establishing parks and recreation as an essential public service in Springfield Township is essential and a main function of advertising and outreach.
- Marketing is both on-going needs assessment and promotion/advertising.
- The parks and recreation department does not have a line item in the budget for advertising and out reach although they do undertake this function through the direct mail brochure, posters and so on.
- The target market for services and parks in Springfield Township is considered the citizenry as a whole. This should be broken down in order to facilitate planning, management and advertising.
- Survey results show that there is a high awareness of township parks and relatively low usage by the citizens at large. Interpretation of this finding zeroed in on the fact that the parks are lacking in the facilities most of the general public would like to use: trails for walking and cycling, restrooms, shade, sitting areas and playgrounds.
- The department is small and undertaking a major marketing program has to fit within the capacity of the staff time and resources.



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**Objective 1**

**Continue to distribute the direct mail brochure for programs to all township households.**

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**Recommendations**

**1. Evaluate the brochure to determine the content in increasing public awareness about parks and recreation issues, opportunities and other public information offerings.** The brochure is the single most important and effective vehicle for getting the word out about parks and recreation. Hold focus groups about the brochure annually to see how this important investment can be improved. Join LERN in order to get an annual brochure review and participate in a brochure exchange to get ideas from other departments.

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**Objective 2**

**Create and use an identity system for Springfield Township parks and recreation.**

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**Recommendations**



**1. Retain a graphics design professional to develop an identity system.** Include a logo, color scheme, signage and other aspects of public identity. Use the logo and color scheme on every surface possible in parks and recreation including park signs, stationary, forms, internet WEB page, advertisements, uniforms, trucks and equipment and so on.

**2. Provide uniforms for all recreation and parks employees.** This includes whatever garb is appropriate such as hats, shirts, jackets, and pants for the respective position. This should be a high quality to capture public respect in much the same way as the National Park Service uniforms do.

**3. Treat good customer service as part of the department's identity.** Create a policy and a procedures manual for customer service. Send employees to customer service training periodically to keep this concept fresh and center in departmental operations

**Objective 3****Develop a publicity program.****Recommendations**

- 1. Set objectives for parks and recreation publicity.** Identify the target audience. Strive to contact each main target group twelve times annually.
- 2. Develop a customer database through the software system to be acquired for parks and recreation.**
- 3. Identify the staff and budget resources available for publicity.** Set a line item in the operating budget for this purpose. Designate how much staff time to spend. Set a goal of 15 percent of the operating budget for promotions.
- 4. Design a strategy for outreach media.** Include the brochure, newspapers, WEB page, word-of-mouth- direct mail lists, e-mail lists. Set a schedule for publicity.
- 5. Use the department's identity system in all products.** Insure that the highest quality image of the department is conveyed to the public.
- 6. Set up a booth at all township fairs, festivals and events.** Include photos of parks and recreation facilities and events, program information and other items of interest. Also create a feedback mechanism to receive public opinion about parks and recreation.
- 7. Consider getting an automated sign for outside of the Township Building for events.** Insure that this sign is current in real time. Automation would make this easier than changing the words manually.
- 8. For every evaluation, add the last section for comments.** Ask permission to use these comments with the person's name in township advertisements. Keep a book of the evaluations in the reception area as a way of promoting the favorable public evaluations of the department's programs.
- 9. Phase in the use of the WEB site for parks and recreation.** Get a separate WEB site for parks and recreation that has linkage to the township WEB page. Strive to make it the 'go to' place for real time information about programs, services and parks. Get adequate staff time to manage this WEB page. Include expertise in WEB site management with program coordinator job qualifications to try to get a dual-purpose hire. Having a real time WEB site will reduce calls to the township building about



cancellations and other program questions. It will also provide better public service as it is a quick way to get work to thousands of citizens at once about things liked cancellations, weather delays, changes in venue etc.

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### Objective 4

**Conduct needs assessment on ongoing basis.**

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### Recommendations

**1. Use quick and inexpensive methods such as asking participants for their opinion about programs, park visitors about their park impressions, event participants for their reactions and so on. Track and use this feedback.**

**2. Use program evaluations for every program to assess customer needs.**

**3. Investigate factors that indirectly contribute to program success such as hours and days that activities are slated, locations. Transportation, public perceptions about quality and safety and so on.**

**4. Use focus groups to target programs to obtain feedback for planning purposes.**

**5. Create a link for customer feedback on the WEB site. Promote this in the program guide.**

**6. Explore both current participants as well as non-participants and non-users of parks to find out where to expand offerings.** Always seek ways to improve services to existing customers first then expand programs to new target audiences. Work with respect to staff capacity and the mantra of providing high quality experiences in parks and programs.

**7. Conduct a community wide public opinion survey every three to five years.**



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## Action Plan

The Action Plan is the implementation schedule through 2017. The schedule presents an orderly time frame for parks and recreation improvements when the financial and human resources are available to support undertaking the recommended action.

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**T**he implementation schedule sets forth the time frame for the actions that Springfield Township will undertake over the short, medium, and long term through 2017. The implementation plan is scheduled around the seven goals of the plan including: parkland, recreation facilities, greenways and trails, management, recreation opportunities, financing, and increasing public awareness about parks and recreation.

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>Provide parkland that is sufficient in acreage, location, suitability and configuration to serve the citizens of Springfield Township.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project    ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Acquire 152 acres of parkland configured as two to three community parks or as smaller “signature parks”. - Explore the acquisition potential for the Flourtown Country Club, Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography, and Erdenheim Farm property. - Approach large landowners regarding acquisition potential. - Explore acquisition of properties identified in the Springfield Township Open Space Plan	To be determined. Source: Grants, township funds	√	⇒	⇒
Complete a feasibility study regarding the feasibility of acquiring land for an indoor recreation center. Include the exploration of the following properties and structures as part of the study: - Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography - Flourtown Country Club - Seven Dolors	\$45-60,000 Source: Grants, township funds		√	⇒
Approach landowners regarding the desire to acquire parkland.	Staff and volunteer time	√	⇒	⇒
Complete master plans for existing parks which incorporate facilities for diverse recreation opportunities. - Re-visit the existing master plans for Sandy Run and Laurel Beech Park. Sandy Run Park should be evaluated for opportunities to create a signature park with premiere amenities. - Complete master plans for Mermaid Park and Wyndhill Park. - Complete master plans for Bysher Fields and Marlo Fields. - Veterans Park should be re-evaluated (cost not included) if the concept plan developed as part of this planning project is not utilized to guide development.	\$25,000  \$25,000  \$40,000  Source: Grants, township funds	√	√	
Expand opportunities for passive recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors within the parks.	To be determined – reference CIP. Source: Grants, township funds	√	⇒	⇒

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>Ensure that recreation facilities offer safety, accessibility, variety, availability, aesthetics, and function to meet the needs of the community.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project    ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Complete safety upgrades within the parks. - Clear vegetation at Wyndhill Park to provide visual access - Provide safety surfacing per the CPSC at Wyndhill Park and Oreland Court. - Enhance age-segregation in the playgrounds at Laurel Beech Park, Cisco Park, and Wyndhill Park. - Modify bleaches to meet the guardrail requirements of the CPSC.	Reference CIP. Source: Grants and township funds.	√  √  √  √		
Renovate parks with accommodations to meet the requirements of the ADA. - Provide accessible routes to facilities. - Install handicap parking spaces at Bysher Fields and Marlo Fields. - Install accessible viewing areas when renovating parks. - Provide accessible picnic tables and water fountains when renovating parks.	Reference CIP Source: Grants, township funds	√ √	√  √	
Complete improvements to existing parks. - Oreland Park - Laurel Beech Park - Veterans Park - Cisco Park - Sandy Run Park - Mermaid Park - Wyndhill Park - Bysher Fields - Marlow Fields - Total	\$57,510 \$268,430 \$876,290 \$388,380 - \$339,130 \$244,930 \$255,780 \$121,790 \$2,552,240	√ √ √	√ √ √ √	⇒  √ √
Provide facilities for year round indoor recreation. - Explore expanded use of the schools with the expansion of programs and services. - Continue to use the EPI-Center for the senior citizens center until the township has an indoor multi-generational center. - Conduct a feasibility study for a community recreation center. - Work in partnership with the school district and the Aquatics Club and other potential partners regarding future swimming pool rehab or replacement to include public recreation.	To be determined.	√  √  √	√	

<b>Goal 3</b>				
<b>Interconnect the neighborhoods of the community and the region.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project    ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Form a trail committee	Staff and volunteer time	√		
Design a public awareness campaign to raise citizen awareness about the benefits of greenways and trails	Staff and volunteer time	√	⇒	⇒
Undertake a project to add improvements that can be done to make safer and convenient such as installation of bicycle racks in public and commercial areas.	Staff and volunteer time	√		
Develop a plan for the on-road bicycle routes. - Evaluate roadways for on-road bicycle routes. - Engage a traffic engineer to design on-road bicycle enhancements. - Apply for transportation enhancement funding for implementation of on-road enhancements.	Staff and volunteer time, trail committee To be determined. Staff and volunteer time	√ √ √		
Master plan greenways, trails, and on-road bicycle opportunities. - Cresheim Trail/Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector - Cresheim Trail - Wissahickon Avenue Trail Connector - Sandy Run Creek Trail - Oreland Connector - Manor Creek Trail - North Hills Country Club/Marlo Fields Trail - Wissahickon Creek Connector	\$60-80,000 depending on length and configuration. Source: Grants, township funds	√ √ √ √	√ √ √ √	
Seek land and easements to establish the eight trails, trail connectors, and community links. - Cresheim Trail/Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector - Cresheim Trail - Wissahickon Avenue Trail Connector - Sandy Run Creek Trail - Oreland Connector - Manor Creek Trail - North Hills Country Club/Marlo Fields Trail - Wissahickon Creek Connector	To be determined. Source: Grants, township funds	√ √ √ √	⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒	⇒ ⇒ ⇒ √ √ √ √
Collaborate with Montgomery County, Philadelphia County and surrounding municipalities on trail initiatives	Staff and volunteer time	√	⇒	⇒
Promote the protection and conservation of green resources and greenways through cooperative efforts with the Montgomery County Conservation District and others.	Staff and volunteer time Source: Grants, township funds	√	⇒	⇒
Complete enhancements to stream corridors within Cisco Park, Marlo Fields, and Mermaid Park.	Reference CIP Source: Grants, township funds	√		

<b>Goal 3 continued</b>				
<b>Interconnect the neighborhoods of the community and the region.</b>				
<b>Project Key</b> √ Start Project    ⇒ Continue Implementation	<b>Cost/Source</b>	<b>2008-2010</b>	<b>2011-2013</b>	<b>2014-2017</b>
Provide interpretative signage at a park stream enhancement to demonstrate benefits and techniques of stream enhancements to landowners	\$2,500 Source: Grants, township funds	√		
Seek conservation easements to protect and buffer natural resources along designated greenway corridors.	To be determined. Source: Grants, township funds	√	⇒	⇒



<b>Goal 4</b> <b>Continue to manage the parks and recreation system in a professional manner that conveys the greatest possible benefit to the public.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Transform the director's position into a true management function with time dedicated to 60% planning and outreach; 20% programs & facilities; and 20% daily operations.	In director's salary; administration support	√	⇒	⇒
Use a strategic management approach instead of reacting to immediate needs.	Staff time in creating and promoting awareness of management philosophy.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Focus on developing/fostering coalitions of citizens groups for specific purpose such as sports umbrella group, trails, indoor recreation, etc.	Director's time. Potential P&R Advisory Committee time.			
Create and carryout a five-year employee development program supported by a budget line item for training.	1-2% of the operating budget; \$6600 annually in 2008 figures	√	⇒	⇒
Conduct an assessment of information needs for planning and decision making as first step in procuring software.	RecTAP grant of \$1500. No match required.	√	⇒	⇒
Evaluate projects, programs and events using the Impact Statement tool to determine if the resources are available to carry out the tasks.	Staff time	√	⇒	⇒
Procure software for parks & recreation management along with technical support and training.	To be determined	√	⇒	⇒
Develop a formalized maintenance management system.	\$10,000 - \$25,000. Consider a \$10,000 Peer-to-Peer Grant. Match: \$1,000.	√		
Implement and modify the maintenance management system. Include partners in development.	Staff time		⇒	⇒
Add divisions for park maintenance for active recreation and natural resource conservation	Organization of personnel and training for specialty areas.		√	
Continue development of formalized polices and procedures.	Staff and volunteer time. Potential committee work.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Explore the establishment of Site Watch to monitor and control use of public recreation space, especially game fields to insure that the fields are payable for community sports. Include CBSD. Negotiate and agreement and implement it.		√	⇒	⇒
Grow the staff over time as programs expand and facilities increase. Do not undertake any program or facility for which there is no staff support to manage it.	To be determined.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Review the recommendations of this plan and the municipal accomplishments every year prior to budget season. Determine emerging needs and opportunities to evaluate and update the recommendations.	Staff, management and committee member time.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Update this plan every five years.	\$30,000 - \$40,000. Grant funding for 50%.		√	⇒

<b>Goal 4 continued</b>				
<b>Continue to manage the parks and recreation system in a professional manner that conveys the greatest possible benefit to the public.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Explore the concept of Site Watch as a way to enhance security of the parks and recreation facilities.	RecTap grant of \$1500. Staff time to visit Upper Dublin and develop the program. User fees to offset operating costs.		√	
Add recreation program coordinator	\$50,000. Offset partially by fees and charges.	√		
Add marketing coordinator with some programming functions. As department grows, dedicate this to only marketing.	\$50,000. Offset in part by fees & charges.		√	
Add operations person full time. Consider transition of part time administrative stat to full-time.	\$30,000-40,000	⇒	⇒	⇒
Assess programs and customer service annually to determine staff requirements. Addition of indoor space will merit additional staff who will produce additional revenues.	To be determined			
Evaluate projects, programs and events using the Impact Statement tool to determine if and how the resources can be available to carry out the tasks and sustain the effort for its lifecycle.	Staff time	√	⇒	⇒
Obtain memberships for staff and committee where appropriate. Include NRPA, PRPS, PRPS District III, LERN, KAFMO, and Montgomery County Recreation Council.	To be determined based on subscription. Part of training budget.	√	⇒	⇒
Make it a policy to obtain a RecTAP grant every year to address an issue or broaden expertise in a specific area.	\$1500 grant. No match required. Eligible for one grant per year.	⇒	⇒	⇒

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Build upon the existing programs and services to create recreation opportunities that enrich the quality of life for people who live, work, and visit here</b></p>				
Project Key	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
√ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation				
Develop a three year program management plan	Staff time	√	⇒	⇒
Adopt a foundation of serving citizens rather than on delivering products and programs. Focus on children and families and branch out from there with staff additions and program successes.	Staff, committee and commissioners' commitment	⇒	⇒	⇒
Promote self-directed recreation opportunities principally walking and bicycling. Include this in every brochure. Add links on WEB site to trails in region.	Staff time. Advertising budget.			
Hold an annual sports forum with community sports organizations, parks and recreation, and the school district.	Staff time	⇒	⇒	⇒
Add customer target groups for tweens, empty nesters, and young adults prior to establishing families	Staff time. Partial cost recovery through program fees.		√	√
Incorporate nature based recreational programs and activities. Consider partnership with Montgomery County Parks & Heritage Services, Ft. Washington State Park & Morris Arboretum.	Staff time. Revenue potential through program fees.		√	⇒
Incorporate fitness and wellness programs and activities for people of all ages, especially youth, families and empty nesters.	Staff time. Potential additional staff. Support through fees and charges and municipal budget.		√	⇒
Focus on high quality on every aspect of program planning, management, delivery and advertising.	Staff time	⇒	⇒	⇒
Implement a credit card registration and internet registration system.	To be negotiated with credit card provider.	√	⇒	⇒
Create an on-going needs assessment program. Include program evaluations, focus groups, non-users, and community surveys.	Staff time. Survey every five years: \$10,000-12,000.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Facilitate recreation offered by other providers. Continue effective communication to collaborate on important recreation services that could not be provided by local government.	Staff time.	⇒	⇒	⇒

<b>Goal 6</b> <b>Invest in parks and recreation to sustain and enhance the health, safety and welfare of the community.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project    ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Continue the trend of increasing support for parks and recreation to achieve at least statewide municipal investment through the operating budget and in comparison with per capita rates.	\$33 per capita or \$644,559. 2008 budget is about \$330,000 plus \$___ for park maintenance.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Operate with a four-part revenue strategy that includes both township taxes and non-tax revenues.	Sources: fees and charges, grants gifts, donations and sponsorships.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Develop a revenue management policy. Network with other departments for examples.	Staff time.	√		
Procure financial management software.	To be determined	√		
Develop a workload cost tracking system for parks and recreation to be able to determine the exact costs of specific functions. Establish cost centers to parks, facilities, programs and services.	Part of software and management functions.			
Develop an implement a procedural guide for the handling of money. Insure that employees are bonded in accordance with guidance from attorney and DVIT.	Staff time. Consult with finance department and solicitor.			
Explore a long-term financial strategy for land acquisition and capital improvements.	Time of municipal managers and their advisors. Amount of financing to be determined.		√	⇒
Establish a five-year capital improvement program based on the recommendations of this plan and future park studies.	Staff time. Create an annual budget for capital improvements that would be forecast over the next five years for effective planning and resource allocation. Amount to be determined.	√	⇒	⇒
Retain an outside professional consultant to evaluate the Flourtown Country Club from two perspectives: its function with respect to overall township recreation needs and its lease conditions with respect to maximizing township revenues.	Staff time. Consultant and Attorney fees. Staff time to network with other municipally leased/operated golf course.	√	⇒	⇒
Consider private fundraising for special major projects such as the amphitheater if staff time is available to manage the campaign.	Staff time, volunteer time. Potential fundraiser fee of \$25,000+. That would be offset by donations.	⇒	⇒	⇒

<b>Goal 7</b> <b>Increase public awareness and support about parks, recreation greenways, trails and natural resource conservation in Springfield Township.</b>				
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
Continue to do a direct mailing of the parks & recreation program guide to every household. Long term when staff are added, consider more frequent distribution of guides.	Determine the actual cost of this task. Include it in the line item for advertising and outreach.	⇒	⇒	⇒
Create an identity system for Springfield Township's parks and recreation.	\$10,000		√	
Commit to using this identity system on all departmental equipment, materials, WEB site and uniforms. Make the use of uniforms a key strategy in fostering a public image of high quality first class service.	Departmental and township administration support		⇒	⇒
Develop a publicity program.	Staff time.		√	
Establish an on going needs assessment.	Staff time		√	⇒
Use program evaluations to assess public opinion about needs and interests. Consider doing interim evaluations for programs such as Kids Klubhouse, which extend for many weeks.	Staff time			
Conduct a community wide survey every three to five years	\$10,000	√	⇒	⇒
Establish a budget line item for promotions. Creating public awareness is crucial.	Up to 15 percent of the operating budget.		√	⇒
Commit to doing four focus groups annually. Targets could be youth, empty nesters, adults prior to having families, neighborhoods, interests such as environment, trails, town centers etc.	Staff time and/or volunteer time.	⇒	⇒	⇒

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# **The Foundation**

## **Chapters 5-9**

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## Community Profile

The Community Profile presents the township, the municipal government, and the citizenry. It describes the public participation process and findings regarding public opinion about parks and recreation.

Understanding community needs and interests will help municipal officials, managers, and partners provide optimum public service.



### The Facts and Figures

#### Background and Location

**Location** Located in eastern Montgomery County. Bordered by the Townships of Cheltenham, Upper Dublin, and Whitemarsh, and the neighborhoods of Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia. About 11 miles from center city Philadelphia. Near several major employment centers such as Fort Washington, Willow Grove, Plymouth Meeting, and King of Prussia. Convenient access to several major roads, including the Fort Washington Expressway (PA 309), which extends northward through the North Penn area and into Bucks County and southward to the city; PA Route 73 (Church Road), which runs the length of the county from Philadelphia to Douglass Township; Bethlehem Pike, which connects the Township with Chestnut Hill and the North Penn area; and Germantown Pike, which runs east-west between Philadelphia and Collegeville Borough. SEPTA operates five bus routes and the R-5 commuter rail line serving many areas. A train station is located in the Oreland section of the Township. Two nearby train stations are located in Glenside and Chestnut Hill.

**Size** 6.2 square miles. Seven sections of the Township include Edgehill, Erdenheim, Flourtown, Laverock, Oreland, the Panhandle, and Wyndmoor.

**Natural Features**

Major natural features in the Township include the Wissahickon Creek and surrounding woodlands in the panhandle area (a section of the Township that remains largely undeveloped and includes part of the Morris Arboretum site). The area also lies within the regionally important open space and recreation corridor comprised of Andorra Park (part of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia), the Wissahickon Trail, and Fort Washington State Park (in Whitemarsh Township).



**History**

*Adapted from the Springfield Township Historical Society's "Springfield Township, Montgomery County," 2002 and the Springfield Township Open Space Plan.*

Springfield Township harkens back to 1681, William Penn gave this land to his wife, Gulielma Maria Springett Penn, and was surveyed as "Penn's Manor of Springfield." Springfield's early development and economic growth are directly related to its location. Situated northwest of Philadelphia, it was an area rich in mineral deposits with fertile land for agriculture. These resources led to its development as a farming community and as a provider of raw materials to early industries in lime burning and iron ore mining. Many of the early settlers and founders of the area built homes and carved out farms that still exist today.

Springfield's location also made it a way station for the large numbers of travelers and settlers moving along the major roads in and out of Philadelphia. Germantown Pike, Bethlehem Pike and Ridge Pike. Springfield Township's early economy featured paper and flour mills near its many streams. The arrival of the railroads in the 1800's made the township accessible to Philadelphia residents who made Springfield Township their summer home due to its scenic beauty. Between 1945 and 1970, much of the current community infrastructure and residential development was built.

**Today**

A charming and highly desirable community in which to live, Springfield Township is rooted in strong neighborhood identities. Largely a bedroom community, about 60 percent of its land use is in

*The Commonwealth is pleased to be a partner in helping to protect Erdenheim Farm. We must continue to invest in saving our agricultural heritage and dwindling open spaces to ensure a better tomorrow for our children."*

**Governor Edward G. Rendell**



residential development. Trends since 1993 show increasing residential use and decreasing industrial and commercial use. Only about 184 acres of land remain undeveloped with open space potential. A significant event in terms of open space in this township was the passing of F. Eugene Dixon, the owner of Erdenheim Farm. Erdenheim Farm, one of the few remaining, large, unfragmented, open space landscapes in the heavily developed eastern part of Montgomery County. About 34 acres of Erdenheim Farm is in Springfield Township. It is a symbol of the landscape heritage of the region and an important part of the greenway that stretches from Fairmount Park to Fort Washington State Park.



## Government

**Types** Township of the First Class.

**Elected Officials** In the Township, the Board of Commissioners has seven members elected by the seven wards. They serve four year overlapping terms.

**Advisory Boards** The Township has ten advisory boards including the: Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, Springfield Township Emergency Services Advisory Board. Library Advisory Committee, Shade Tree Commission, Police Civil Service Commission, Open Space Planning Committee, Black Horse Inn Advisory Committee, Environmental Advisory Board.

### Municipal Administration

Springfield Township operates with a council-manager form of government, which seeks to achieve the value of representation through the elected Board of Commissioners and the value of efficiency through the appointment of a professional municipal manager. The center of power in the council-manager plan is the elected Board of Commissioners, Springfield's governing body who, in turn, appoints a manager to administer the affairs of the government and supervise the service departments and agencies. Springfield Township provides a full range of municipal services including police protection, refuse and recycling collection, sewage conveyance, highway maintenance, recreational activities, programs and park areas, economic development initiatives, zoning and codes enforcement and building inspection. The Parks and Recreation Department was made full time in 2008.

**Demographics**

According to the U.S. Census of 2000, the population of Springfield Township is 19,533 as shown in **Table 1**. Springfield Township experienced a slight decline of less than one percent (79 people) from 1990 to 2000. Springfield Township ranks twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) in population among Montgomery County’s 67 municipalities. While the township lost population, trends within the township are important to note. The portion of the township adjoining Whitemarsh actually increased by 377 citizens while the corner adjoining Upper Dublin (and a smaller portion of Whitemarsh) declined by 285.

Information for Springfield Township’s demographics was derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Pennsylvania State Data Center, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Montgomery County Planning Commission and the School District of Springfield Township Enrollment Projections for the district wide master plan.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>State, County, and Township Population 1990-2000</b>			
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change 1990-2000</b>
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	3.5%
Montgomery County	678,305	750,097	10.6%
Springfield Township	19,612	19,533	-0.4%

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission projects slight population decline in Springfield Township through 2025 as shown in **Table 2**.

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Springfield Township Population Projections 2005-2030</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>% Change</b>
1990	19,612	-0.4%
2000	19,533	
2005	19,550	-22%
2010	19,490	
2015	19,380	-87%
2020	19,320	
2025	19,320	

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Montgomery County Planning Commission.

## Age

As interests change throughout one's lifetime, it is important to look at age groupings in order to target services. **Table 3** represents population by major age groups and their changes between 1990 and 2000 as well as comparisons with Montgomery County and Pennsylvania. Springfield Township has one of the highest concentrations of people ages 65-74 in Montgomery County. Many are longtime residents who have remained in their homes. The U.S. Census Bureau considers a change of 2.5 percent or more to be a significant change. In Springfield Township, the age cohort of 20 to 44 reached that level of significance with a decrease of 3.1 percent.

The School District of Springfield Township's enrollment projections show a stable enrollment through 2014 from a 2008-09 enrollment of 1,997 to a 2014 enrollment projection of 2,030. The school district's projections indicate that elementary grade population would increase while grades eight through twelve would experience a slight decrease. Overall the enrollment as a whole would remain stable.

### Powerful Demographic Changes Ahead

Table 3 Springfield Township Percent of Population by Age Group 1990-2000				
Age Group	Springfield 1990 Population %	Springfield 2000 Population %	Montgomery County 2000 %	PA 2000 %
Under 5	5.8	5.4	6.3	5.9
5-19	15.9	17.8	13.6	20.6
20-44	32.1	28.8	35.4	18.8
45-64	21.2	24.8	23.3	29.7
65+	24.9	23.3	14.9	15.6
Median Age	42.3	43.9	38.2	38.0

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

Springfield Township's median age of 43.9 is higher than the median age of both Pennsylvania 38 and Montgomery County at 38.2. The median age in the community increased by 19 months in the 1990's. In 2006, the first baby boomers turned 60 and more than half of all boomers were over age 50. People ages 45 to 54 have the highest average household income and the highest household spending of any age group. Old age is still a long way off as 50 year olds can expect to live another 30 years (women, 82.5 and men, 78.5).<sup>1</sup> About 48 percent of Springfield Township's population is 45 years of age and older.

- U.S. Census Bureau predicts a 72 percent increase in adults 50+ between 2000 and 2020 and a slight decrease in adults under 50.

<sup>1</sup> Ad Age.Com. **Implications of Latest Baby Boomer Milestone.** <http://www.adage.com>. 7/5/05.

- Adults 50+ control 77 percent of this country’s assets.
- Women are responsible for 80 percent of household spending.
- Per capita spending is 2.5 times the national average in 50+ households.
- Women ages 50-70 represent a major opportunity for marketing as they have the time, money and motivation to take control of their future and that of their household<sup>2</sup>.

**Population Target Groups**

The Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Department can use population figures to target age group planning. **Table 4** presents the raw number of citizens by age group. For example, one of the Department’s prime target groups is the age group 5 to 14. This group has 2,390 people. The family life stage age group of 35 to 54 has about 5,923 people verifying that family oriented programming is important. About 3,100 people are 65 and older.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Springfield Township 2000 Population</b> <b>Age Group Raw Numbers</b>	
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>
Under 5 Years	1,054
5-14 Years	2,390
15-19 Years	1,072
20-34 Years	2,692
35-54 Years	5,923
55-64 Years	1,846
65- 84 Years	3,660
85 Years+	896

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

**Different Generations - Different Views of the World**

Longer lives have produced several generations with different views of the world: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. Their formative experiences have molded specific preferences and beliefs. Each age group has its own attitudes, sensibilities, hot buttons and cultural expectations. Clarifying the needs and desires of all generations is essential in public service. Finding out how to reach and involve different generations of people in everything from programs and services to funding for parks and recreation

<sup>2</sup> Ad Age.Com. Targeting a Powerhouse Female Demographic: Older Women. <http://www.adage.com>. 10/10/05

<sup>3</sup> Paul, Pamela. September 2001. *Getting Inside Gen Y, American Demographics*, Volume 23(9) pp 42-49.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, J. Walker and Clurman, Ann. 1997. **Rocking the Ages: the Yankelovich Report on Generational Marketing**. (New York, NY: Harper Business).

in a positive manner is complex. For example, one generation alone, Gen Y, has three segments: adults, teens and children.

For program planning and public outreach, understanding potential client groups is essential. **Figure 3** represents information about various generations along with implications for program and service planning and for devising outreach strategies to implement this plan.

### Figure 3 Generations<sup>3</sup> and Implications<sup>4</sup>

<b>Traditionalists</b>	<i>Born before 1946.</i> Affected by the Great Depression. Hard work. Self-sacrifice. Respect for authority and institutions. Earned their material comforts the good old-fashioned way. <b>Reaching this group:</b> Stress frugality & their right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Use endorsements of well-known people with wisdom of experience.
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<i>Born 1946 – 1960.</i> Born into prosperity and affluence. “Permissive” upbringing. Feel special and privileged. Challenge authority. Champion the unconventional. Focused on self-fulfillment. Strong sense of entitlement and self-worth. <b>Reaching this group:</b> Stress family and family activity. Supply products and services that make boomers feel like young active winners.
<b>Gen X</b>	<i>Born 1960-1980.</i> Lived with social and economic obstacles that are harder than those faced by Traditionalists and did not exist for Boomers. Technology and media opened them to wider choices in lifestyle than previous generations. Sophisticated and savvy about the world. Skeptical. <b>Reaching this group:</b> Use candor, humor, and pragmatic approaches.
<b>Gen Y (Echo Boomers)</b>	<i>Born 1980-2000.</i> Group so large and complex that it is viewed as three distinct groups: adults, teens and children. Multi-cultural diversity. Broader definition of family. Affected by violence and scandal: 9/11, Columbine, Iraq, terrorism, and political scandals. More watchful and careful about their personal safety. Mistrustful of the media. Information Age influence: shorter attention spans, boredom and over-stimulation. <b>Reaching this group:</b> Use technology: videos, computers, WEB. Capitalize on hope and optimism. Inclusive multi-cultural programs and services. Participative planning enabling people to be heard through pulling together.
<b>Gen M (Media Generation)</b>	Recently spun off of Gen Y with people born in the mid 1990’s forward. This generation is exposed to over 8.5 hours daily of various forms of electronic media. This includes 2.5 hours in which they are using more than one form of electronic communication at one time.

#### Family Structure

One of the most marked changes in Pennsylvania’s population in recent years has been the alteration of the family structure. Households have experienced a decline in married couples and households with children. U.S. Census

Bureau began to track the number of grandparents as caregivers. In Springfield Township, 27 households indicated that the grandparents were responsible for grandchildren. Households with single people, single heads of households and single parents have increased. Between 1990 and 2000, the following occurred in Springfield Township:

- Two person non-family households increased by 50 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- One-person non-family households increased by 28 percent.
- The percentage of family households decreased by two percent, a significant trend.
- Householders living alone increased from 22.1 percent to 26.9 percent.
- Single head of households increased from 3.8 % to 4.8%.
- Percentage of non-family households increased from 25.2 percent to 31.2 percent.
- Proportion of households with all working parents is significant. About 66 percent of households with children under the age of six have all parents working.
- Most women work: while 64 percent of the employable population is in the labor force, 56 percent of females over 16 years are in the work force.

**Income**

Springfield Township’s trends in income between 1989 and 1999 show that the median household income has increased in real purchasing power. For example, the median 1989 household income of \$49,203 indexed for inflation would be worth \$65,830 in 1999 dollars. However, the actual median household income in Springfield in 1999 was \$67,226. Springfield Township’s median household income is higher than that of the county and the state.. The percentage of families in poverty in Springfield Township remained stable from 1989 to 1999 at about 1.3 percent. **Table 5** presents information on the median income, the value of 1989 dollars indexed for inflation, and poverty level.

Table 5 Median Income & Poverty Level 1989 - 1999					
Area	1989 Median Household Income	1999 Median Household Income	1999 Dollar Value of 1989 Income	1999 Per Capita Income	% Families in Poverty
Pennsylvania	29,069	\$40,106	\$39,060	20,880	7.8
Montg. County	43,720	60,829	58,713	30,898	2.8
Springfield	49,203	67,226	65,830	32,628	1.3

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

**Education**

Educational attainment is the strongest indicator of an individual’s income potential, attitudes and spending habits. The national trend is toward higher levels of education. Montgomery County ranks second highest among counties in Pennsylvania in the proportion of residents over 25 with bachelor’s degrees at 23 percent. The County also ranked third with the proportion of residents with a high school diploma. Springfield Township outpaces Montgomery County in terms of residents with higher educations. The Township exceeds the proportion of residents statewide and in Montgomery County) with bachelor’s, advanced or professional degrees. **Table 6** represents the educational attainment levels for the township, county and the state.

<b>Table 6 Educational Attainment of People 25 Years and Older 2000</b>			
	<b>High School Graduate + %</b>	<b>Bachelor’s Degree %</b>	<b>Advanced or Professional Degree %</b>
Pennsylvania	38.1	14.0	8.4
Montgomery County	49.8	23.1	15.7
Springfield Township	42.9	26.9	18.7

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

**Race**

The face of Springfield Township is changing as shown in **Table 7**. The community is becoming more diversified. People of color represent about 11.5 percent of the population. In 1990, they made up 7.6 percent of the community. While the numbers themselves are not large, the significance is in the growth rate. The African American population more than doubled in the 1990’s.

<b>Table 7 Racial* Composition by Percentage of Population</b>						
	<b>Springfield Township</b>		<b>Montgomery County</b>		<b>Pennsylvania</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
White	92.4	88.5	90.6	86.5	88.5	85.4
Asian	3.3	1.9	2.3	4.1	1.1	1.8
African American	3.4	8.7	5.6	7.5	9.1	10.0
Latino – of any race*	0.8	1.0	1.2	2.0	1.8	3.2
American Indian	0.1	0.3	.009	0.1	0.1	0.1

\*Numbers do not total 100% because the Latino group includes multiple races.

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

**Housing**

**Table 8** shows information about housing in Springfield Township. Housing is an indicator of affluence. Generally those who can afford to own their homes are more affluent than those who rent. More than four out of every five housing units in Springfield were built before 1960. About 79 percent of the housing units in Springfield Township are owner occupied a good rate. This is down from 84 percent in 1990. Housing values and rents are higher than the state and Montgomery County. About 21 percent of the renters in Springfield Township pay 35 percent or more of their gross household income for rent. The minimum income needed to buy a house in Springfield Township is about \$50,000 to \$75,000 (2004 dollars) according to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. About one in five households is spending 35 percent or more of this income on housing. Government housing agencies and mortgage lenders suggest that 30 percent is the maximum amount a household should spend on housing costs.

Limited land is available for development in Springfield Township; minimal new construction is planned. About 83 percent of the housing was developed before 1969 including 20 percent built before 1940. Housing turnover has been occurring in Springfield Township since 1996 and it accelerated since 2000. The majority of the sellers were older residents (or estate sales) and families with children seeking larger homes north and west of the township. Very few homes of 2,200 Or more are available in the township. Realtors have observed that more single persons and couples without children tend to be buying homes in Springfield.

<b>Table 8</b>			
<b>Housing Information 2000</b>			
	<b>Springfield Township</b>	<b>Montgomery County</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>
Owner Occupied %	78.6	79.2	71.3
Renter Occupied %	17.9	20.8	28.7
Detached single family homes %	75.2	56.1	55.9
Median House Value	\$166,900	\$160,700	\$97,000
Median Gross Rent	\$793	\$757	\$531

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

In 1989 the median value of a house was \$154,100. That value in 1999 dollars would be about \$206,910 thus showing that the median house value did not increase in line with other trends. It is still higher than the county and the state. Montgomery County’s median value in 2000 was \$160,700 both higher than Pennsylvania’s at \$97,000.



**People with Special Needs**

**Table 9** presents the statistics regarding people with special needs in the community. The Springfield Community has a lower proportion of people with disabilities than Montgomery County or Pennsylvania. About 2,300 people in the community report having a disability. This does not include children younger than five.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is defined as a substantial limitation in a major life activity. It is commonly measured as difficulty on performing activities of daily living (personal care tasks), instrumental activities of daily living or difficulty (household management), and in performing more general mobility-related activities.

<b>Table 9</b>			
<b>Disability Status of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population in 2000</b>			
	<b>Springfield Township Number / %</b>	<b>Montgomery County</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>
Ages 5-20	223 / 6.3%	5.7%	7.5%
Ages 21-64	879 / 8.6%	12.2%	17.5%
Ages 65+	1,190 / 31.6%	32.1%	39.4%
Total*	2,292/ 11.7%	12.6%	17.2%

**Public Participation Process**

This planning project included a five part public participation process: a Plan Advisory Committee, interviews, focus groups, public meetings and a community survey.

**Plan Advisory Committee**

Residents representing a broad base of community interests participated on the Plan Advisory Committee. They included representatives from elected and appointed officials, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the Springfield Township School District, Springfield Township Planning Commission, youth sports, environmental interests, bicycling, natural resource conservation, senior adults, marketing, the Library, and general community interest. The Advisory Committee met monthly during the planning process.

**Key Person Interviews**

The planning process included interviews with key stakeholder in the com-

munity. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain the ideas, concerns and suggestions from individuals and organizations that provide park, recreation and related services and facilities. The interviews included the following:

- Township officials
- Township Manager
- Assistant Township Manager
- Public Works Director
- Parks & Recreation Director
- Recreation Coordinator
- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Montgomery County Open Space and Bicycle Planning Coordinator
- Campbell Thomas, Bicycle Planner
- Springfield Township Organized Sports Groups
- CYO Sports
- Epi-Center in Upper Dublin
- Upper Dublin Township Parks & Recreation Department
- Montgomery County Office on Aging
- Springfield Township School District Superintendent
- Springfield Township School District Business Manager
- Springfield Township School District Athletic Director
- Whitemarsh Township Foundation
- Fort Washington State Park Superintendent
- Morris Arboretum
- Springfield Library
- Playground Program parents
- Wissahickon Watershed Association
- Erdenheim Flourtown Vision Plan planners
- Realtor
- Friends of Hillcrest Park

### Focus Groups

The planning team held focus groups with the organized sports groups, teens, and playground parents. The purpose of the forums was to determine the ideas, opportunities, and issues regarding the particular needs and interests of the target group.

The planning team held work sessions with the Springfield Township School District and Springfield Township officials. The purpose of these sessions was to determine areas of common interests and potential collaborative projects in the future and to learn about the school district and township future plans with ramifications for parks and recreation.

### Public Meetings

Public meetings were held to obtain citizen input for the parks and recreation plan.



## Community Direct Mail Survey

A direct mail survey of households in Springfield Township was conducted to obtain public opinion about parks and recreation, programs, services, recreation facilities, future directions and level of public support for parks and recreation. A full report on the survey is in Appendix A. The survey process yielded a return rate of 47 percent. This is much higher than typical return rate on a direct mail survey is about two to four percent. Survey respondents expressed the opinion that they would like to see the township increase its commitment to parks and recreation. About three out of five respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay another \$6 to \$10 more person annually for parks and recreation efforts. Most of the respondents reported that they were most interested in natural resource protection, an indoor recreation center, natural features in parks, and trails. Programs for adults and in nature ranked among the top interests along with special events and fitness in which most respondents already participate.

*Thanks for asking my opinion, I like and use our parks and the ones I have been in are nice but some are hidden and hard to find. Keep up the good work!! And thank you for all you do.*

**Springfield Township  
Survey Respondent**

## Findings of the Public Participation Process

- 1. Overall the public participation process revealed a great deal of pride, love and enthusiasm for Springfield Township.** The process clearly showed that this is a community of neighborhoods. The residents particularly identify with the neighborhood in which they reside. The following points summarize the findings and are presented without respect to priority:
- 2. Genuine pride and appreciation for the high quality of life in Springfield Township.** People expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Township to provide high quality community services. About 67 percent of the survey respondents rated community parks as good to excellent. The location of the township adjacent to the City of Philadelphia was of concern to residents and this plays a role in attitudes about trails and parks. The city's challenges with crime and violence affect regional perceptions.
- 3. The general public is supportive of parks and recreation to the extent that most of the survey respondents are willing to pay more for parks and recreation.** The citizens responding to the survey sent the message of their desire for the township to increase its commitment to parks and recreation. About 55 percent of the survey respondents wanted to increase township support while only one percent wanted to decrease it. This message was supported with 62 percent expressing their willingness to pay from \$6 to 10 or more per person annually for parks and recreation. Only 14 percent said that they would not be willing to pay any more. This finding was



surprising as there is a public perception of strong anti-tax sentiment. Interviews revealed that this is mainly attributable to school district taxes and the district's capital improvement projects.

**4. Natural resource protection and conservation is a community priority.** Residents recognize that the community is nearly fully developed. Residents expressed the desire for the conservation of natural areas, tree planting, beautification and gardens are all important here. Places for people to walk and enjoy the outdoors and nature are important. The conservation of the Dixon property was mentioned, as was the desire to limit additional commercial and additional residential development.

**5. Regional parks and trails are important to the citizens of Springfield Township but serve a different purpose than municipal parks.** Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park are very important parks that serve a high proportion of township residents. The role of these parks needs to figure in the recommendations for the Springfield Township parks and recreation system. Written comments and interviews about township parks indicated that residents recognize that township parks are small and have limited facilities. Regional parks and trails serve as destinations for resource based recreation and for visits that are several hours long. Close to home municipal parks provide active recreation facilities that can be used for scheduled recreation, daily fitness and wellness, family play, socialization, environmental education, community special events, league sports and other uses unique to the needs of the township residents.

**6. Taking care of existing facilities and maximizing their use is important to the citizens.** Most citizens rate the parks as clean, safe and well located. Most use Cisco Park. But most used parks by township residents are Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park. A review of the facilities most preferred by township residents shows that facilities most lacking in township parks such as natural features and conservation areas, trails, and more park-like amenities are exactly those that are provided on the regional parks. Making the township parks more park-like would probably attract more local use.

**7. There are not enough parks or enough parkland.** Additional sports facilities, both playing fields and in door game courts in gyms are needed for year round sports, indoors and outdoors. Sports participation is increasing. New sports leagues such as lacrosse are emerging. Sports now play year round instead of in just traditional season. Springfield Township School District facilities are booked solid.

**8. Bicycle trails are controversial.** Bicycle trails are a contentious topic in Springfield Township. While 67 percent of the survey respondents indicated that bicycle trails were very important or important and 62 percent indicated that developing trails and paths should be a high priority or a priority for Springfield Township, two issues underlie concerns about trails according to written comments in the surveys, focus groups and interviews: proximity to Philadelphia and loss of privacy. Recent meetings in Springfield as well as in Cheltenham brought out both trail supporters and trail opposition for trails proposed by Montgomery County.



**9. Indoor recreation facilities emerged as a top priority.** Opinions about indoor recreation centers ranged from making better use of school facilities to building a community recreation center. The Plymouth Center stands as a reference point as many township residents use it. Expressions ranged from residents wanting something like the Greater Plymouth Community Center to a center that is smaller in scale with simpler types of facilities. The use of the high school pool for swimming was a frequent comment. More information about recreational times at the high school pool would be a valuable service.

**10. Citizens of all ages with varied interests should have access to programs and services.** Serving citizens throughout their lifetime in a broad range of opportunities year round indoors and outdoors should be a township goal. Expanding services can only happen with additional staff, partnerships and a solid plan for phasing in additional services.

**11. Increase public awareness about parks and recreation in Springfield Township.** One of the most important things the township can do is to increase advertising and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities. It will be important to explore a variety of mechanisms from the printed media to electronic means such as e-mail, RSS, WEB site and emerging mechanisms such as teen oriented electronic methods like text messaging. It is also important to provide information about financing, trails, and how to access recreation opportunities.

**12. Year-round recreation is a priority.** Focus has been on outdoor recreation. There is a need for indoor facilities for a variety of activities ranging from gyms for youth sports to fitness and wellness facilities for the aging population and facilities and services in the arts, culture, and family recreation. School facilities are very limited in terms of times available. About 70 percent of the survey respondents indicated that developing an indoor recreation center is a priority or a high priority.

**13. Municipal parks and recreation serves as a catalyst for developing lifelong interests.** The community has many recreation opportunities. An important finding emerged from the public participation process: municipal parks and recreation has a significant role in creating lifelong active lifestyles through basic community recreation programming and opportunities. They offer important feeder services from which residents move onto higher-level leisure pursuits in private enterprise, schools, colleges, and specialized training.

**14. Special events are the top program area for reaching the broadest base of citizens.** Analysis of the survey findings show that the community festivals reach a broad segment of the population.



**15. Partnerships are important.** Citizens recognize that the Township cannot accomplish everything in parks and recreation on their own. Partnerships with a host of community organizations are crucial. Building upon relationships with community providers and the school district should be a major initiative of this plan.

## Community Analysis

### Strengths

Springfield Township has a high quality of life, outstanding municipal services, a top-notch educational system, scenic beauty and access to all of the amenities of a major metropolitan area.

### Challenges

The population of about 19,533 is relatively stable and is likely to remain so over the next twenty years is aging. Housing turn over has been underway since 1996. The major demographic trend that will affect the provision of parks and recreation is the aging of the population. The baby boomers are emerging as an active, healthy, well-educated and engaged group of people. The community continues to be family oriented as well the home to many empty nesters. The size of the homes of mostly less than 2,200 square feet is conducive to people remaining in their homes once the children have left. Population changes warrant planning ahead for adult park and recreation consumers who comprise about 75 percent of the population. The large number of older citizens that will emerge with the baby boomers is the single most significant demographic change that parks and recreation managers must address in planning.

The community is nearly fully developed and minimal land remains for additional parkland. This makes the conservation of natural resources and scenic beauty all the more important as is securing the remaining undeveloped land as open space.

### Opportunities

Although Springfield is a township, it is a first ring-urbanized community in a major metropolitan area with town centers including Flourtown, Erdenheim, and Oreland. The town centers with convenient access to public transit including a train station in Oreland are the type of communities forecast to attract residents in the future including Gen X, Gen Y and empty nesters. Park focus in the township in the past has been on existing parks but addressing the potential for public recreation space and opportunities in the town centers could help them to be highly desirable vibrant public spaces in Springfield. Coordination between this plan and the Erdenheim Flourtown Town Center Plan is important.



The public participation process found areas for improvement which include the need for additional sports fields and improved athletic field maintenance, interest in fitness/wellness, environmentally oriented programming, and indoor and year round recreation. Concern about the preservation of open space and the pressure to develop the last remaining parcels was raised throughout the public participation process.

## Recommendations

The following are global recommendations reflect demographics, community characteristics, and findings from the public participation process. They are not in order of importance.

- **Adopt natural resource protection and open space conservation as a priority.** Explore how to preserve the remaining open spaces through easements and planning tools. Strive to acquire land for park purposes. Increase and foster communication among all township boards and entities that deal with land planning issues. Consider how to add parkland to accommodate additional sports fields and facilities that balance nature and recreation for citizens to lead active lifestyles. This is urgent here due to the minimal amount of land left. Opportunities to revitalize developed areas could be considered. Add natural resource management as a maintenance function in parks.
- **Plan for an active aging population.** Community demographic composition is changing resulting in the need to focus planning efforts on the changing composition of the population: primarily towards an active aging population and families.
- **Include people with special needs in all aspects of planning, service delivery and facilities design and operation.** About 2,300 citizens over the age of five reported having a disability in the 2000 U.S. Census. People with special needs should be represented on the parks and recreation committee. Strive to accommodate people with special needs in all programs and facilities. Collaboration with community organizations and social service agencies regarding service to those with special needs could be considered.
- **Organize the citizenry into target groups for planning and service delivery.** Include three groups: young adults, families with children (with a focus on youth services), and empty nesters. Since the department is small, focus on expanding services into these areas as staff time and quality service delivery permit.
- **Balance facility development for lifetime and self-directed recreation.** Municipal parks and recreation in Springfield Township needs to achieve balance in its facilities and services. Three out of four survey respon-



*At our ages of 90 and 91,  
we can't participate  
but wish that all the  
programs you offer will  
make people happy.*

**Springfield Township  
Survey Respondents**

dents listed achieving balance as a priority. This includes providing facilities and services for organized sports, natural resource protection, programmed recreation, and self-directed recreation.

- **Explore how to add sports fields.** Involve sports groups, the school district and other potential partners that might be able to get involved with this effort. Explore how to obtain additional parkland on which to locate sports fields. Update or create master plans for township parks to determine how to maximize athletic facilities. Lighting at existing and future parks, where appropriate can enable extended use of playing fields to meet the current and future demand.
- **Explore the potential for an indoor recreation center.** Develop a vision for a community recreation center in Springfield Township to define its size and functions, a mission statement, and a feasibility study for how the center would be managed, operated, and financially supported over time. Consider re-use of existing properties in the township, partnership with the school district regarding an indoor pool and gyms, and maximizing use of all properties owned by the township.
- **Establish methods for public outreach for monitoring the pulse of the community on a regular basis when the plan is being implemented.** The public participation process found that involving the public regularly beyond organized appointed committees provides fresh eyes and information to guide decision-making.
- **Develop a communication system that would yield coordination among the various township entities regarding open space conservation, natural resource conservation and management and trail planning and development.** Include potential conservation partners such as the state park, watersheds, river conservation plans that are regional that could benefit township parks, greenways and trails.
- **Explore and procure funding sources that are a mix of public and private funding.** Work with all levels of government and the private sector to secure additional funding to help realize the goals of this plan.



## ***Parks & Recreation Facilities***

The inventory and analysis of Springfield Township's parks and recreation facilities explores park uses, the types of parks available, their locations, amount of parkland, connections between parks, recreation facilities, and facility conditions. Opportunities for improving the parks and recreation facilities are identified.



Parks, plenty of recreation opportunities, and scenic beauty have a significant positive impact on the livability of a community and how happy citizens are regarding their place of residence. Beautiful vistas, open space, play areas, trails and clean air and water all contribute to community aesthetics, health, wellness, a vibrant economy. Recent studies regarding citizen satisfaction have found that the higher people rate the beauty of their community, its physical environment and recreational offerings, the higher they rate their overall level of community satisfaction. These important factors include parks, playgrounds and trails. This chapter is an inventory and assessment of Springfield Township's parks and recreation facilities. It also identifies potential ways to improve them.

### **Springfield Township Park and Recreation Facility Assessment**

**T**he purpose of the assessment of parks and recreation facilities is to evaluate the recreation opportunities in terms of meeting community needs. The goal of the assessment is to determine if current recreation needs are being met and to project how the system should change to meet future recreation needs. Springfield Township's existing public facilities will be assessed to determine how they could be improved or expanded, and what changes must be made to comply with safety and accessibility standards. Areas of the municipality that need facilities will be identified, as well as strategies for linking the community with a Township-wide greenway and trail system.



The analysis of parks and recreation facilities, as presented in this plan, was developed by:

- Conducting on-site investigation.
- Evaluating park and facility conditions.
- Assessing the distribution of parkland throughout the Township.
- Exploring trends and community needs for recreation facilities through public participation.

Six factors guided the park and recreation facility assessment in Springfield Township. They included:

1. Configuration of parks
2. Amount of parkland
3. Location of parks
4. Connection between parks
5. Recreation facilities
6. Conditions of parks

**Table 10** presents the inventory of public recreation lands in Springfield Township. The **Existing Facilities Map** on page 83 illustrates the locations of parks, schools, and other recreation lands in the municipality.

### Park Factor 1: Configuration of Parkland

Different types of parks provide differing opportunities for the residents of the Township. **Table 11** presents the Springfield Township Classification System. It shows the range of park types, their benefits, appropriate facilities, and the maintenance levels appropriate for the type of park and resources available. The classification for Springfield Township was developed with consideration of the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association classification categories. The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the Springfield Township Classification System:

- No park has enough acres to qualify as a community park.
- The Flouertown Country Club is the municipality's largest park site at 51 acres. The Club is membership-based and opened to both residents and nonresidents. The Club is the only recreation site in the municipality that has the acreage required for a community park.
- Oreland Park at 0.8 acres is classified as a mini park.
- Mermaid Park has the acreage of a neighborhood park but is a passive site without active facilities and classified as a natural resource area.

- Wyndhill Park functions as a neighborhood park, but contains less acreage than is typically recommended for a neighborhood park.
- Sandy Run Park is currently an undeveloped open space parcel with an abandoned quarry occupying more than one-half the site. A master plan has been completed for the park proposing a passive configuration.
- There are no athletic complexes, school/community parks, or trails in the municipality.
- Cisco Park, at 13 acres, has the acreage of a neighborhood park but comes the closest to functioning as a true community park as any other park in the municipality.
- If Laurel Beech, Veteran’s, Bysher Fields, and Marlow Fields had more diversity of facilities and opportunities for a wider user base they would function as neighborhood parks. As currently configured, the parks serve single purposes for youth athletics. For purposes of classification and distribution analysis these parcels are listed as neighborhood parks.

<b>Table 10 Springfield Township Public Park/Recreation and Schools Land Inventory</b>				
<b>Municipal Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Characteristics/Facilities</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Laurel Beech Park	6.5	Neighborhood	Soccer field, playground, parking	Wyndmoor
Mermaid Park	7	Natural Resource Area	Pond, benches	Wyndmoor
Veterans Park	6	Neighborhood	Picnic pavilion, 2 baseball fields (60’), 2 t-ball fields, in-line skate rink, parking, concession/ storage building	Wyndmoor
Wyndhill Park	4.5	Neighborhood	Playground, 1 tennis court, open field area	Wyndmoor
Cisco Park	13	Neighborhood	Softball/multi-purpose field, playground, baseball field (60’), band shell/pavilion, trails, pond, picnic area, parking	Erdenheim
Bysher Fields	10.5	Neighborhood	2 baseball fields (60’), 2 t-ball fields, 1 softball field, batting cages concession/restroom building, storage building, parking	Flourtown
Marlow Fields	5.3	Neighborhood	2 baseball fields (60’), batting cages, basketball court/parking, concession/restroom building	Oreland
Oreland Park	0.8	Mini	3 basketball courts	Oreland

**Table 10  
Springfield Township Public Park/Recreation and Schools Land Inventory**

<b>Municipal Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Characteristics/Facilities</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Sandy Run Park	14	Natural Resource Area	Undeveloped open space, quarry/lake	Oreland
Flourtown Golf Club	51	Special Use	Golf course, swimming pool, club house	Flourtown
<b>Total acreage</b>	<b>118.6</b>			
<b>Total excluding undeveloped open space and membership only acreage</b>	<b>53.6</b>			
<b>Public Schools</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>Characteristics/Facilities</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Springfield Township Elementary School – Enfield Campus	5.4	Elementary School	Ballfields-2, basketball court, playground	Oreland
Springfield Township Elementary School - Erdenheim Campus	4.7	Elementary School	Open field, basketball court, playground	Erdenheim
Antonelli Institute formerly Penn Manor Elementary School. Property is owned by the School District and leased to Antonelli.	7.0	Elementary School	Ballfields-2, playground	Erdenheim
Springfield Township Middle School	13.8	Middle School	Tennis courts-10, basketball court, open field, ballfields-2, track	Oreland
Springfield Senior High School	21.1	High School	Ballfields-4, open field, tennis courts-4, track	Erdenheim
<b>Private Schools</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Characteristics/Facilities</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Carson Valley School	103.0	Multi-Service Child Welfare Agency	Tennis courts, basketball court, open fields	Flourtown
Mount St. Joseph Academy	77.0	College Preparatory School	Tennis courts-4, open fields	Flourtown
La Salle College High School	43.0	Male College Preparatory School	Swimming pool, tennis courts-5, ballfields-2, open field-2, track,	Laverock
Phil-Mont Christian Academy		k-12 Independent School	Gymnasium, 3 tennis courts, basketball court	Flourtown
Holy Martyr’s School		k-8 Private School		Oreland
St. Genevieve School		k-8 Private School		Flourtown
<b>Other Recreation Areas</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Characteristics/Facilities</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>
Sandy Run Country Club	107.0	Golf Course	18-Hole	Oreland
North Hills Country Club	115.0	Golf Course	18-Hole	Enfield
Morris Arboretum	70.0	Arboretum	Open space, protected landscape	Flourtown

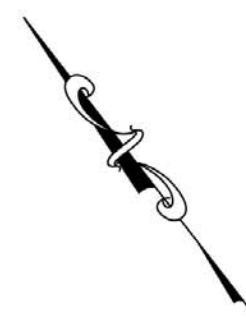
(L) = Lights

# EXISTING FACILITIES MAP

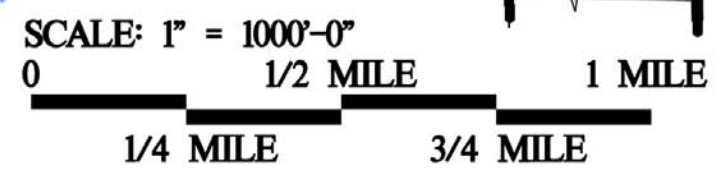
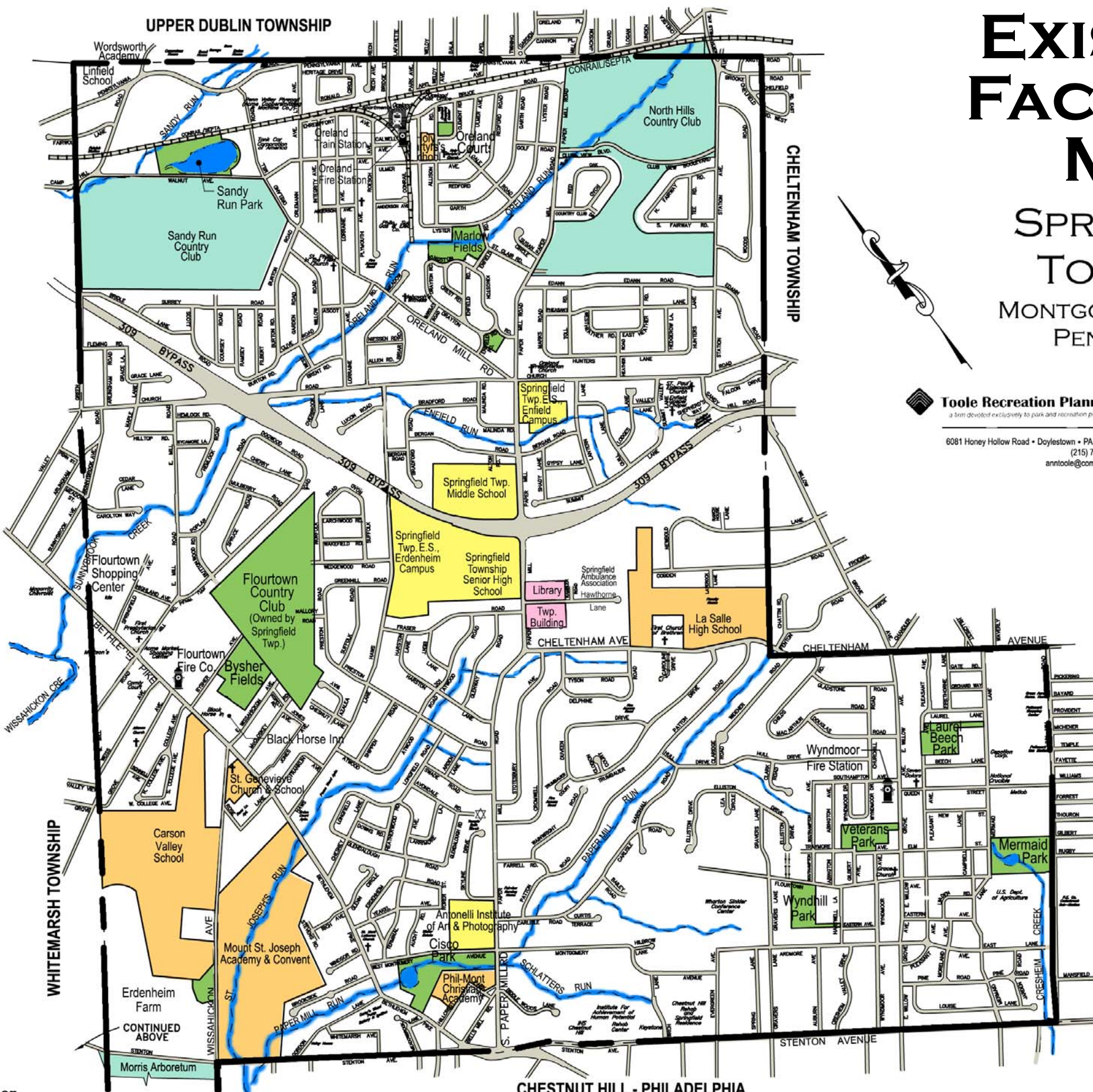
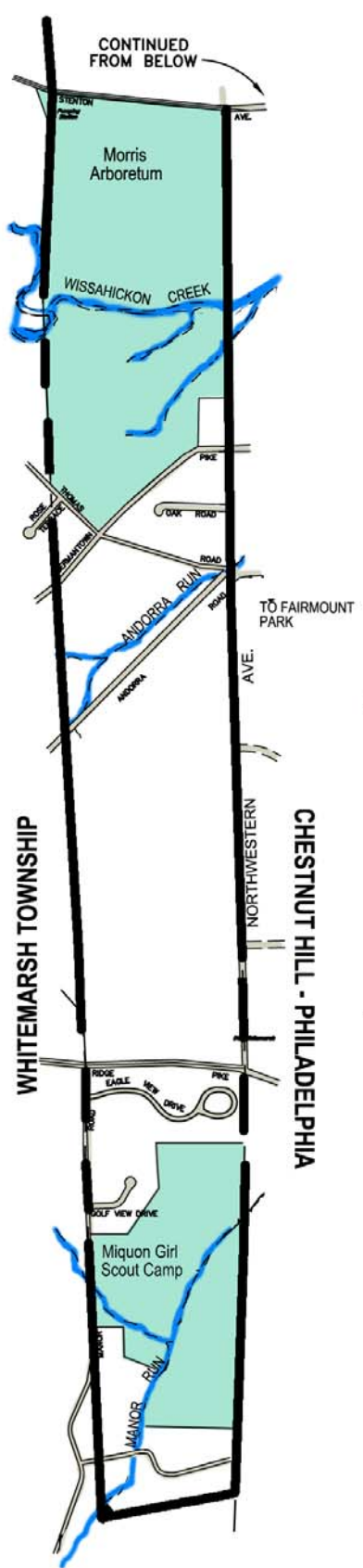
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA  
2008

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- Legend:**
- Publicly Owned Parks
  - Public Schools
  - Private Schools
  - Privately Owned Recreation Areas
  - Municipal Lands
  - Rivers/Streams
  - Railroad
  - Roads and Streets





**Table 11  
Springfield Township Park and Recreation Classification System**

Type/Size/ Service Radius	Definition	Benefits	Appropriate Amenities	Maintenance Level
<b>Mini Park</b> 0-5 acres _ -mile service radius	Smallest park type, addresses limited recreation need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides close to home recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground</li> <li>Benches, seating area</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well developed park and playground and reasonably high visitation
<b>Neighborhood Park</b> 5-15 acres minimum _ -mile service radius	Focus of neighborhood; in walking/biking distance of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides access to basic recreation opportunities</li> <li>Contributes to neighborhood identity</li> <li>Establishes sense of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play areas</li> <li>Ballfields</li> <li>Game Courts</li> <li>Picnic/Seating</li> <li>Pathways</li> <li>Community gardens</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and reasonably high visitation.
<b>Community Park</b> 25-50 acres, preferably 50-80 acres 2-mile service radius	Large park for active & passive recreation; serves residents municipality-wide. Accommodates large groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and interests</li> <li>Space for organized, large scale, high participation events</li> <li>Family destination</li> <li>Fitness and wellness opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play areas</li> <li>Organized sports facilities</li> <li>Pavilions</li> <li>Permanent restrooms</li> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Amphitheaters</li> <li>Pools, Rinks</li> <li>Parking</li> </ul>	Moderate level of maintenance associated with moderate level of development, budget restrictions, inability to perform higher levels of maintenance. Potential for park "friends" or adopt-a-park partners.
<b>School/Community Park</b> Variable	Parkland adjoining a school used for both recreation and education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combines two public entities for expanded year round recreation.</li> <li>Maximizes public resources</li> <li>Expands recreation opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth-oriented game courts and ball fields</li> <li>Play areas</li> <li>Seating</li> <li>Pathways</li> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Parking</li> </ul>	Moderate level of maintenance associated with moderate level of development, budget restrictions. Potential for cooperative agreement with school.
<b>Sports Complex</b> 30+ acres; preferably 50-80 acres	Consolidates sports fields and related facilities in a centralized location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economy of scale</li> <li>Improved management</li> <li>Municipal showcase</li> <li>Attracts visitors who stimulate local economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ball fields</li> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Spectator areas</li> <li>Restrooms, Concessions</li> <li>Landscaping</li> <li>Parking</li> </ul>	State of the art maintenance applied to high quality facilities. Associated with high visitation; revenue generating facilities, tourism.
<b>Special Use Facility</b> Variable	Facility for a single purpose use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides special focus recreation opportunities</li> <li>Contributes to community identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends on purpose</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and reasonably high visitation.
<b>Greenways and Trails</b> Variable	Tie park areas and community together to form a contiguous park environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connects community</li> <li>Reduces auto dependency</li> <li>Improves air quality</li> <li>Contributes most desired recreation facility for people throughout their lifetime</li> <li>Attracts visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathways – multipurpose</li> <li>Trailheads</li> <li>Support facilities</li> <li>Signage</li> </ul>	Lowest level of maintenance. Focus on trailheads and trail safety.
<b>Natural Resource Area/ Preserve</b>	Natural areas for the protection and management of natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protects resources</li> <li>Provides wildlife habitat</li> <li>Offers opportunities for environmental education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trails</li> <li>Signage</li> <li>Support facilities</li> </ul>	Lower level of maintenance.



**Park Factor 2: Amount of Parkland**

*Over the past 30 years, it has been the accepted practice within the recreation and park profession to adopt a uniform national land standard such as 10.5 acres per thousand.*

**NRPA Park, Recreation, and Open Space Guidelines 1995**

Springfield Township has 118.6 acres of public parkland within 10 recreation sites. It should be noted that one of the park sites (14 acres) exist as open space with no current access by the general public. Additionally, the 51-acre Flourtown Country Club is available on a membership basis to municipal residents. These two park sites do not contribute to the overall parkland function in the community.

A population-based analysis is typically used to evaluate active public parkland only. Passive parks, greenways and trails, and nature preserves are not evaluated using an acreage standard because they are typically sized based on the resources and the area necessary to protect the resource and make it available for public enjoyment.

The prevailing standard for active parkland acreage is 10.5 acres per thousand-population minimum. For assessment purposes the 10.5 acres is divided between community parks (8 acres) and neighborhood parks (2.5 acres). Using the 10.5-acre standard, Springfield Township, based on year 2000 population of 19,533, should have approximately 205 acres of active public parkland. The current acreage currently available for resident use is approximately 53 acres as shown on Table 3. Although Mermaid Park is not an active park it has been included in the parkland acreage analysis below because of its potential to be enhanced with passive recreation facilities.

**Table 12** compares the parkland acreage for the two major park types, based on 2000 census population figures and forecast populations, to the actual parkland acreage of Springfield Township. For purposes of this analysis no parks have been classified as community parkland based on total acreage. Neighborhood parkland acreage includes all parks except the Flourtown Country Club and Sandy Run Park.

<b>Table 12 Parkland Acreage/NRPA Standards Analysis</b>							
<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Existing Active Parkland Acreage</b>	<b>Recommended Acres/2000 Population (19,533)</b>	<b>2000 Deficit (-) Excess (+)</b>	<b>Recommended Acres/2010 Forecast Population (19,490)*</b>	<b>2010 Deficit (-) Excess (+)</b>	<b>Recommended Acres/2020 Forecast Population (19,320)*</b>	<b>2020 Deficit (-) Excess (+)</b>
Community Parks @ 8 Acres/1,000 Population – Total acreage	0	156.24	-156.24	155.92	-155.92	154.56	-154.56
Neighborhood Parks @ 2.5 Acres/1,000 Population	53.6	48.83	+4.77	48.73	+4.88	48.3	+5.3
Totals (Total community park + neighborhood park)	53.6	205.07	-151.47	204.65	-151.04	202.86	-149.26

\* Delaware Valley Regional Planning and Montgomery County Planning Commission.

When the parkland acreages are compared to the 10.5-acres/1,000-population standard the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Springfield Township has approximately 53 acres of active recreation land within eight parks.
- When the parkland analysis is completed for active parkland there is a deficit of approximately 156 acres of community parkland in 2000. The deficit decreases slightly as the municipality projected population decreases through 2020. This deficit equates to the need for two to three community parks.
- There is sufficient neighborhood parkland based on the 2000, which is maintained through 2020.
- This need for community parkland could be somewhat offset by development of the Flourtown Country Club as a community park.

### Park Factor 3: Location of Parks

Springfield Township is a highly developed municipality with numerous established neighborhoods. Neighborhood parks are typically walk-to destinations serving the immediate neighborhood surrounding a park site. Physical barriers such as major roadways, railroads, and watercourses typically affect access to neighborhood parks. Due to the location of the neighborhood parks in Springfield Township only Marlow Fields is slightly affected by the barrier of the active railroad to the north, other parks generally serve residents within their service radius. The major barrier of Route 309 does not limit access to the existing park sites. In Springfield Township, because many of the neighborhood parks are primarily developed with sports fields and function as single purpose facilities, they tend to serve a much larger area of the community. There are no parks that meet the definition and size of community parks in Springfield Township. Typically, community parks are over 25 acres and serve a radius of two-miles and are not affected by physical barriers such as highways.

Parkland is not evenly distributed throughout the municipality. Gaps in service generally occur in the east-central portion of the municipality and throughout the Panhandle. As opportunities for acquiring additional parkland are explored the underserved areas of the community should be targeted as priority areas for additional parkland.

Springfield Township is fortunate to be located in close proximity to Fairmont Park, Fort Washington State Park, and the Morris Arboretum that provide additional recreation opportunities and access to nature by Township residents.





### Park Factor 4: Connections between Parks

Trails and greenways provide passive recreation opportunities and green corridors of protected open space. Easy access to trails facilitates exercise and fitness, as well as, safe linkage to connected locales. Connecting the parks of Springfield Township with trails and greenways will add to the livability and quality of life for citizens. There are no trails developed in Springfield Township at this time. Greenways and trails will be further discussed in the Greenways & Trails Chapter.

### Park Factor 5: Recreation Facilities

Recreation facilities should be provided within a community to meet the needs of individuals, community groups, and organized adult and youth leagues. The appropriate number of park facilities in a community should be based on need as defined by current facility usage and local trends in recreation and leisure activities. **Table 13** provides the facility inventory for Springfield Township.

Table 13 Springfield Township Existing Municipal Recreation Facility Inventory	
Activity/ Facility	Springfield Township
Basketball	4 *
Tennis	1
Volleyball	0
Baseball	
- Adult (90')	0
- Youth (60'-75')	7
- T-ball (45')	4
Softball	2 **
Soccer (variable sizes)	2 **
Field Hockey	0
Lacrosse	0
Football	0
Swimming Pools	0
Golf Courses	0

\* Basketball court at Marlow Fields also used as a parking area.

\*\* Softball field at Cisco Park has a multi-purpose field overlaying the outfield.

An analysis of facilities must be considered in the context of the municipality and the trends and popularity of the sport that the facility serves. Facility trends and observations in Springfield Township further illustrate the need for additional recreation facilities as described in the Facility Assessment.

## Facility Assessment

**Softball** – Girls softball is popular in the community and girls play at the softball field in Bysher Fields. This is the only dedicated softball field in the community and there are no opportunities for informal play associated with picnicking or non-programmed park use. Additional softball fields are recommended in new community parks to meet the need of youth programs as well as adult programs and informal play.

**Baseball** – Eleven baseball fields exist in the Township and baseball facilities dominate the recreation opportunities offered at three parks: Marlow Fields, Bysher Fields, and Veterans Park. Oreland/Wyndmoor Little League (OWLL) and Flourtown/Erdenheim Little League (FELL) serve the youth baseball needs of the community. Participation for OWLL is on the rise while FELL participation is currently down. Additional fields would benefit these organizations. There are currently no 90' baseline baseball fields in the municipality. T-ball is where the programs see the highest area of growth and the organizations fit t-ball fields in where possible in existing parks. Baseball fields should be provided in community parks and provided with lights where location is appropriate.



**Basketball** – Three basketball courts are located in Oreland Park and a small basketball court is located on the parking area of Marlow Fields. Basketball is popular in the community as evidenced by 105 teams in the league using Oreland Park. Additional courts are recommended in community parks and in re-configured neighborhood parks where possible. Courts should be located in banks of at least two courts and located near parking areas, if possible, and separated from younger children and passive activity areas. There is a need for both indoor and outdoor courts. Court lighting will extend playtime and lights are suggested in community parks where appropriate.

**Soccer** – Soccer is a growing sport nationally and continues to grow in the Springfield Township. Youth soccer is organized through the Springfield Soccer Club (SSC). The SSC youth soccer program identified a need for fields in the municipality, especially full size fields to meet the needs of the older participants that have come up through the program. Additional soccer fields will be needed to meet the continued growth in the sport and as field hockey, lacrosse, and other flat field sports expand the competition for multi-purpose fields. Soccer/multi-purpose fields should be developed in new community parks. Field lights are suggested in community parks to extend playing times and maximize the use of existing facilities. Neighborhood parks should have open space configured for informal non-scheduled field use, to include soccer.

**Lacrosse** – The Spartan Lacrosse Club provides youth lacrosse programming in the Township. The program is growing and participation has more than doubled in one year from 140 to 286. The club currently uses the informal open field in Wyndhill Park. As community parks are developed, field fields should be developed for multiple sports to include lacrosse, soccer, and field hockey.

**Volleyball** – There are no volleyball courts in the municipality. Volleyball is a popular sport with teens and families and courts should be installed as new parks are developed or existing parks renovated. Families and adults generally prefer lawn volleyball while teens and young adults prefer sand volleyball courts. Volleyball should accompany picnic pavilions where room permits and should be developed in banks of two or more in community parks for league play. Multiple volleyball courts for league play should be developed with lights, as most league play is typically evenings.



**Tennis** – There is one municipal tennis court in Springfield Township at Wyndhill Park and additional courts are available at the middle school and the senior high school. Tennis popularity has waned in recent years although it is a lifetime recreation activity and opportunities to participate in the sport should be maintained in the community. Tennis courts should be developed in banks of two or more and should be located in visually accessible areas preferably near parking areas and park entrances. Court lighting is recommended where site conditions are appropriate. As community parks are developed in Springfield Township the need for tennis courts should be assessed and incorporated as appropriate.

**Swimming Pools** – Three private membership based swim clubs are in Springfield Township. They include the Oreland Swim Club, the Flourtown Swim Club and Flourtown Country Club. There are no municipal swimming pools in the Springfield Township and residents typically swim at the Senior High School. Swimming is a lifetime recreation activity and has important health and wellness attributes. The high school swimming pool is over 40 years old and has been updated. The need to address swimming opportunities did emerge in the planning process and development of a community indoor recreation center with a pool emerged as a priority in the public opinion survey. Springfield Township could partner with the school district to explore opportunities for expanding swimming in the community.

**Playgrounds** – Currently, playgrounds are only available in Laurel Beech Park, Wyndhill Park, and Oreland Park. There should be more opportunities for tot and youth play at playgrounds throughout the municipality. Develop age-segregated playgrounds in all neighborhood and community parks. Playgrounds complement parks dominated by athletic facilities as a facility to occupy younger siblings during practices and games.

Playgrounds should be designed to stimulate imaginative play as well as physical activity. Playgrounds should be stimulating environments that engage children while providing convenience facilities for adults such as benches and shaded areas. Playgrounds must meet the CPSC guidelines for public playground safety and be developed with surfacing material that meets safety criteria. Playgrounds must also meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires that an accessible route be provided from the walkways/parking areas to the playground equipment and that a portion of the equipment offer activities that can be utilized by physically challenged children.

Develop accessible walkways to link sidewalks, trails, and parking areas to playground areas. Locate playgrounds for safety. Provide adequate separation from parking areas, ballfield foul ball and home run territory, and drives/roadways.

**Trails and Pathways** – Trails and pathways should be provided in every park for recreation purposes and to meet the requirements of the ADA. ADA requires an accessible route from parking areas and drop-off areas to recreation facilities. Additionally, viewing areas for physically impaired spectators must be provided at sports fields and courts. In new community parks development of at least an eight-foot wide trail is recommended to permit multiple users. In existing neighborhood parks where space is limited, trails should be developed to connect facilities at a minimum and encircle the park perimeter where possible. Trails should be paved to provide multiple recreational opportunities such as bike riding, inline skating, jogging, and walking. Walking is an activity widely enjoyed by all segments of the population and is important for fitness and wellness benefits. Where space requirements can be satisfied walking trails should be developed in each municipal park. Trails and bikeways that connect throughout the community discussed are in the Greenways & Trails Chapter.

**Indoor Community Center** – Currently, Springfield Township does not have an indoor community center for year round recreation use but developing a center emerged as a top interest in the citizen opinion survey. Public input revealed significant interest in a community center with a gymnasium, fitness center, and areas for year round activities for people of all ages and interests.

## **Park Factor 6: State of the Parks**

Each park site was viewed during the tour of facilities and subsequent fieldwork. Generally, the parks are in good condition from a maintenance perspective. The findings of the facility inventory for each site have similarities that relate to accessibility and the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the need to expand from single-purpose parks to diverse recreation settings, and recommendations to enhance the users experience through the addition of convenience facilities. Specific findings of site observations and recreation opportunities include the following.

## Laurel Beech Park



*Park Description:* A 6.5-acre neighborhood park is located in the Wyndmoor neighborhood. The park offers active recreation facilities that cater to youth soccer programs in the school district and community.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* Full-size soccer field and playground equipment.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Support Facilities:* Aggregate parking area for 50+/- vehicles, shade, portable restroom, and player's benches. A shallow storm water management basin is located adjacent to residential properties to the north.

*General Site Observations:* The park is primarily used for soccer activities. The aggregate parking area is partly shared by an adjacent business, but meets the needs of the park activities at the present time. The playground is separated from the parking area and a trail does not connect the parking area, soccer field, and playground. No shade is provided at the playground for caregivers. The open lawn which is a shallow storm water basin includes a storm water inlet in the middle of lawn preventing this area from further active recreation use.



*Opportunities:* A trail should be developed to connect the parking area, soccer field viewing areas, and playground as well as new facilities that may be introduced. A trail encircling the park should be considered with benches. Add picnic opportunities in the park with picnic tables and a pavilion. Enhance the entry to the park from the parking area to create a park hub. Develop a restroom building in this area and introduce landscaping with seasonal color, amenities such as bike racks and benches, and an information kiosk.



## Mermaid Park



*Park Description:* The 7-acre neighborhood park is located in the Wyndmoor neighborhood along the eastern border of the Township. Cresheim Creek traverses the park site and a small pond, mature trees, and open lawn provide areas for passive leisure activities.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* Open lawn.

*Support Facilities:* Two pedestrian bridges and benches around pond.

*General Site Observations:* Mermaid Park is largely undeveloped open space with minimal park amenities. No off street parking is provided. Park users cross Mermaid Lane to access the park site. The streambanks of Cresheim Creek are highly eroded and vegetation along its banks is a concern. Some of the trees on site are past their maturity and could become hazards. The pond is covered with Duckweed, a free-floating green plant that detracts from the visual appearance of the pond. There are no residential neighbors surrounding the site.

*Opportunities:* The open nature of the site with the stream and pond provides a natural setting for passive recreation. The park should be developed with a trail that encircles the site that is separated into several loop trails. A pedestrian bridge should be developed to cross the stream below the pond outfall. Benches should be placed along the trail in shaded locations. Picnicking should be promoted in the park by adding a pavilion as well as picnic tables scattered throughout the site.

Access to the site should be improved by adding a cross walk across Mermaid Lane from the adjoining neighborhood. A small parking area could be introduced at the current curb cut. Enhancements to stabilize the streambanks of the Cresheim Creek are necessary to address the erosion and prohibit loss of trees along the stream edge. A qualified tree specialist should assess the health of the trees throughout the park. The park character could be enhanced by taking measures to control Duckweed on the pond and introducing low maintenance landscaping for seasonal color. Existing and new trees could be identified with botanical and common name markers.



## Veterans Park

*Park Description:* This 6-acre neighborhood park is located in the Wyndmoor neighborhood.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* Two youth baseball fields (60'), two T-ball fields, one in-line skate rink.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* Picnic pavilion which accommodate two picnic tables.

*Support Facilities:* Parking and a concession/storage/restroom building.

*General Site Observations:* Veterans Park is an active recreation facility that primarily serves Oreland/Wyndmoor Little League. One t-ball field is currently developed with a preferred orientation, other field orientations are compromised. The roller hockey court does not appear to receive significant use. The picnic pavilion and restrooms are not accessible via an accessible route. The park is primarily a single use facility for baseball activities. The Township's summer Kids Camp is held in the park.

*Opportunities:* A master plan should be developed for Veteran's Park. The master plan should create a neighborhood park that meets the needs of the broad neighborhood while continuing to serve the Little League. Baseball fields should be laid out with preferred field orientations as possible. The master plan should explore adding a playground, basketball court(s), a larger pavilion, and updated restroom/storage building. A perimeter-walking trail with benches should be added as an amenity and to meet ADA accessibility requirements. The parking area should be maximized. The recreation facilities should be organized on the site to create a hub area for socializing and gathering before and after athletic activities.

## Wyndhill Park



*Park Description:* This 4.5-acre neighborhood park is located in the Wyndmoor neighborhood adjacent to the former Wyndmoor Elementary School Building, which is now an office building.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* One tennis court and playground equipment.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* Non-programmed open space.

*Support Facilities:* Shade and benches.

*General Site Observations:* Wyndhill Park is a walk-to facility with shared parking potential on evenings and weekends with the adjacent business. The tennis court is the only tennis court in the Township and needs resurfacing. The park is a popular destination for dog walking.



*Opportunities:* The open space in the park could be graded to accommodate an active multipurpose field for youth soccer or lacrosse. The tennis courts should be resurfaced and connected to the parking area with a paved trail. Trails and a picnic pavilion should be developed to offer more recreation opportunities and make the park accessible to people with disabilities. The playground could be expanded into age-segregated areas with more equipment. The township should work with the adjacent businesses to prune or remove some of the existing vegetation surrounding the parking to enhance visual access into the park site for safety.

## Cisco Park

*Park Description:* Cisco Park is the largest park in Springfield Township currently available for recreation at 13-acre. This neighborhood park is located in the Erdenheim neighborhood next to the Phil-Mont Christian Academy.



*Active Recreation Facilities:* Softball/multi-purpose field, playground, and baseball field.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* Band shell/pavilion, trails, Hillcrest Pond, Paper Mill Run, fishing opportunities, picnic area, and garden area. Interpretative signs about the site’s history as the “White City” amusement park.

*Support Facilities:* Parking and benches.

*General Site Observations:* Cisco Park is the Township’s most frequently used park and has a diversity of recreation opportunities. The pond, mature trees, and pavilion add to the park’s scenic beauty and attraction. The walking trails, stocked fishing pond, and programmed activities make this park a destination within the neighborhood and Township. The active recreation facilities are augmented with cooperative use of Phil-Mont Christian Academy’s gymnasium and outdoor recreation facilities.





*Opportunities:* Expand the playground into an age-segregated facility with equipment for different ages and a pavilion to offer shade and a sheltered area for caregivers. The idea of developing a memorial garden has been suggested in memory of children who have died in the community. A small, life-affirming vibrant garden setting should be considered rather than a typical memorial composed of traditional stone markers should be used in keeping with the mission of parks as restorative places and gardens as locations for healing. The memorial garden could be located in Cisco Park, Sandy Run Park or Mermaid Park. Explore acquisition of land to the west of the park and extend the walking trail around the pond. Address ADA accessibility throughout the park. The baseball field could be improved with lights, sideline fences, and players' benches. Additional vegetative enhancements should be made to control invasive species along the Paper Mill Run streambanks.

## Bysher Fields



*Park Description:* This 10.5-acre park is located in the Flourtown neighborhood at the dead end of Bysher Avenue. The park is primarily a destination for baseball and soccer and is home of the Flourtown/Erdenheim Little League. The park is contiguous to the Flourtown Country Club to the east.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* Two baseball fields, two T-ball field, one softball field, and batting cages.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* Undeveloped woodlands/open space along south property line.

*Support Facilities:* Concession/restroom building, storage building, and parking.

*General Site Observations:* The site is maximized with athletic fields for active recreation. There is limited area for development of accessory and complementary facilities. Soccer is played on the outfields of the ballfield during the fall season.



*Opportunities:* Develop a master plan to explore how the park can be enhanced with complementary and access facilities. If room exists, add facilities that complement the athletic fields such as a small playground, small picnic pavilion, and restrooms. If room exists consid-

er adding a basketball court as well. Develop a storage area to screen material and store equipment separate from the general public area of the park site. Develop a trail system to offer walking opportunities in the park and make the facilities ADA accessible. Undeveloped woodlands along south property line, and adjacent to the Flourtown Country Club, allows design flexibility for possible redevelopment of park to address needs.

## Marlow Fields

*Park Description:* Marlow Fields is a 5.3-acre neighborhood park located within a residential neighborhood. The park is dominated by youth baseball fields. Oreland Run traverses the site and separates the baseball fields from the small basketball court on the parking area. The western portion of the site is not open and available for public recreation. This area was previously a landfill and lawn waste recycling area.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* Two baseball fields (60'), batting cages, basketball court

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Support Facilities:* Concession/restroom building and parking.

*General Site Observations:* The park primarily serves the Oreland-Wyndmoor Little League. The facilities onsite are maximized for active recreation. Oreland Run in the area of the park is severely eroded.

*Opportunities:* The basketball court could be made more usable with play lines painted and a color coat. Oreland Run streambanks are eroded in the area of the park and should be stabilized. The streambanks should be enhanced to stabilize in areas of severe erosion and planted with riparian vegetation. A trail should be developed to connect facilities and provided ADA access. The restroom should be upgraded to meet ADA accessibility guidelines. The trail and restroom upgrades will be a challenge due to the limited area and small size of the park. A master plan should explore the long-term reuse of the western portion of the site and how accessibility challenges can be addressed.



## Oreland Park



*Park Description:* Oreland Park is a 0.8-acre mini park located in the Oreland neighborhood in northeastern Springfield Township.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* Three lighted basketball courts and playground equipment

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Support Facilities:* Benches, bleachers, and portable restrooms



*General Site Observations:* The site is a small dynamic space. The basketball courts are very popular and in good condition. The courts are a walk-to facility with on-street parking.

*Opportunities:* The playground should be updated to meet all current playground safety requirements. Provide ADA access to the playground and restroom.

## Sandy Run Park



*Park Description:* This 14-acre open space park is located in the Oreland neighborhood. The site was a former quarry and used for sonar testing by the United States Navy. Sandy Run Park is not currently developed with recreation facilities or open to the public. The Sandy Run traverses the northern edge of the site.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* n/a.

*Support Facilities:* Informal paved parking area.

*General Site Observations:* The park has opportunities for passive recreation. However, there are safety concerns associated with the quarry.

*Opportunities:* A master plan has been developed for the site that should be implemented as funding becomes available. The master plan proposed a small parking area, the establishment of trails throughout the site, and interpretative signs to promote environmental education and stewardship and recount the quarry's history. The existing woods, meadows, and Sandy Run are enhanced with native plantings and habitat enhancements for wildlife. Fencing is suggested to limit access to the quarry for safety and viewing

structures are provided to view wildlife at the quarry. This park has the potential to become a flagship park for Springfield Township with its water feature that could host water based recreational activities such as non-motorized boating, fishing, environmental education, miniature sail boats and so on. DVIT suggests coordinating with them for reviews of potential uses and designs for their assistance in reducing exposure to liability and enhancing visitor safety.



## Flourtown Country Club

*Park Description:* The Flourtown Country Club is the largest Township-owned recreation facility. It is leased to the country club operator.

*Active Recreation Facilities:* 9-hole golf course, swimming pool and small playground.

*Passive Recreation Facilities:* n/a

*Support Facilities:* Club house, banquet facility, and parking.

*General Site Observations:* The facility is currently leased and operated as membership based golf course. This is the only township facility that generates income to sustain itself. Residents who are not members are allowed to play two rounds of golf annually. Swimming pool memberships are also available. Bysher Fields is contiguous to the Country Club to the west.

*Opportunities:* This property was purchased for open space and is the largest public recreation land. Since the property is under lease, the use of the property will continue as a country club until 2020; or 2025 if the lease is renewed for an additional five years. Before discussion regarding a lease in the future, a study should be undertaken to determine golf is the best use of this public land for the overall community of Springfield Township. A review of the lease by an outside professional golf course management company should be undertaken to insure that the lease arrangement yields the greatest benefit to the citizens of Springfield.



## Park and Recreation Facility Analysis

### Strengths



Springfield Township has eight parks with approximately 54 acres of parkland. They serve the residents of Wyndmoor, Erdenheim, Flourtown, and Oreland neighborhoods. The parks are a mix of neighborhood parks, natural areas, and sports facilities. The Township had the foresight in acquiring the Flourtown Country Club many years ago to preserve open space. This has proven to be a major decision demonstrating foresight at a time when open space preservation was not the priority it is today.

Residents identify with their neighborhood and enjoy the recreation opportunities offered in the parks close to their homes. The youth sports organizations are very active in the community, taking great pride in the parks and athletic fields which they use. The youth sports organizations actively partner with the municipality in the maintenance of athletic facilities.

The community is fortunate to be located within close proximity to Fort Washington State Park, the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Greenway, Fairmont Park, and the Morris Arboretum which provide open space and recreation opportunities to the citizens of Springfield Township. The school district permits public use of their athletic facilities when not used for school activities.

### Challenges

There are significant challenges for Springfield Township relative to parks and recreation facilities. Foremost among the challenges is the need for additional parkland. As a developed community, there is little open space remaining and land is expensive. Other challenges include the lack of true community parks, the predominance of single-purpose parks, and the need to upgrade and expand existing facilities to meet accessibility requirements, safety guidelines, and address recreation trends.

**Parkland:** There is a significant need for land for additional parks and recreation facilities to serve Springfield Township residents. The highly developed nature of the community results in only limited open space for development of new or expanded parks and recreation facilities. Using the standard of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, Springfield Township has a deficit of over 152 acres of parkland based on the U.S. 2000 Census population. The current parkland acreage is 53.6 acres equating to a need of almost three times the current acreage to meet the population based recreation land standard. Two park sites owned by the Township are not included in the current 53.6 acres: Sandy Run Park and the Flourtown Country Club because they are not currently available for public use. Sandy Run Park is undeveloped and use of the site

is restricted by a fence and the Country Club is a membership-based facility leased out by the municipality to a private operator.

**Community Park:** The eight park sites currently available to residents of the Township range in size from 4.5 acres to 13 acres, with the exception of Oreland Park, which is 0.8 acres. The size of the parks corresponds to a “neighborhood park” classification that typically has an acreage range from 5-15 acres. Neighborhood parks serve as close to home recreation areas for basic recreation opportunities such as play areas, informal ballfields, picnic areas, trails, and game courts. Community parks typically range in size from 25-80 acres and provide facilities for organized competitive sports, special events, and expanded picnic and play areas. Springfield Township does not have a community park with diverse recreation opportunities typical of a larger park site and the current neighborhood parks are over developed with sports facilities to compensate for the lack of community parkland.

**Single-Purpose Parks:** Many of the neighborhood parks are primarily programmed with facilities by the youth sports association and do not function as neighborhood parks. This is primarily due to the lack of community parkland and the need to accommodate youth sports programs. The one exception is Cisco Park which has a mix of facilities and serves the broad community. Bysher Fields primarily serves Flourtown/Erdenheim Little League and the Springfield Soccer Association, Marlow Fields primarily serves Oreland/Wyndmoor Little League, Veterans Park primarily serves Oreland/Wyndmoor Little League, and Laurel Beech Park primarily serves Springfield Soccer Association. These park sites lack diversity of recreation facilities and opportunities that are typically found in neighborhood parks. It is important to provide diversified facilities to address recreation opportunities beyond team sports and permit un-scheduled non-programmed play.



**Park and Facility Upgrades:** Springfield Township parks have developed over time and many park improvements pre-date accessibility requirements. It is natural that a mature community will have older park sites that will need upgrades to address accessibility issues as well as new trends in recreation and leisure time activities. Addressing accessibility requirements will open the parks to all users. Adding facilities and park upgrades to address recreation trends will further enhance the parks as assets in the community.

## Opportunities

The interest in parks and recreation facilities in Springfield Township is extremely high and this planning process revealed the real desire of program providers and general citizens to enhance parks throughout the Township and expand and improve recreation facilities. The three most important recreation opportunities to secure in response to public recreation preferences are creating a community park, providing indoor recreation facilities, and connecting the community with trails.

While undeveloped land remaining in the Township is limited, there are some opportunities that could be solutions to adding parkland. Significant properties that have potential for expanding parks and recreation in the township include the:

- Dixon property – about 54.3 acres, this property, known as Erdenheim Farm, may have to be preserved as open space and for passive recreation as consistent with the Dixon family estate wishes. Working with the Whitmarsh Foundation would help to bolster Springfield Township efforts in open space conservation.



- Flourtown Country Club – about 53 acres, this township-owned site is leased for use nine hole golf course, outdoor swim club, and renovated banquet facility. Its use can be evaluated in terms of the needs and resources of the township as a whole.
- Antonelli property - about 11.5 acres, this site owned by the Springfield Township School District has been discussed as having recreation potential for both indoor and outdoor recreation. Likewise the Flourtown Country Club offers buildings that may offer some utility for indoor recreation.
- Seven Dolores Church – this 1.6 acre site may become available if the Archdiocese of Philadelphia divests itself of this parish. The site is most attractive for its buildings that could be evaluated for indoor recreation purposes. The school has classrooms and a gym.
- Girl Scout Camp – the 135 acre Miqoun Girl Scouts Camp is located in the Panhandle section of the township. The girls scouts have been selling off camps and moving towards a direction of indoor and urbanized recreation that may offer the potential for acquisition of this site. Already a recreation facility and located in an underserved area of the community, recycling this

camp into a public park has great potential for Springfield Township.

- Flourtown and Erdenheim town centers have the potential for increasing recreation opportunities and event space to create lively communities include the opportunity for park plazas such as the small town green proposed in the Flourtown Village along the Bethlehem Pike at the Acme or the small plaza that has been developed at the Black Horse Inn as part of the implementation of the Flourtown Erdenehim Vision plan. With the train station in Oreland, this area of the township has the potential for being a 21<sup>st</sup> century community designed around transit. Locating recreation sites and opportunities here would be a boon to the community.
- The Carson Valley School in Flourtown has undeveloped land that could possibly be considered for acquisition and the township should consider contacting the school to discuss their plans for this area and township interest in the property, currently and in the future.

The Township has three potential directions for parks and recreation facilities: undertake basic improvements to existing parks and facilities to address concerns; improve the parks to make them more park-like to provide a broader range of public services to more citizens; or to pursue the establishment of a first class parks and recreation system.

The existing parks provide great opportunities for addressing the findings of this plan. The first level of improvements to the parks can begin at once and should target improvements to address accessibility and safety concerns. Providing trails and pathways in each park will provide a highly desired amenity and address accessibility requirements. Providing stabilized viewing areas at athletic fields connected to the trails will serve not only residents with disabilities but families with strollers and the elderly. Addressing safety concerns such as visibility into park sites will enhance users comfort when visiting the parks.

Improvements to enhance the existing parks and the users experience could include improvements to make the parks more convenient and enjoyable to use such as additional benches, trees for shade, and pavilions near playgrounds for caregivers to relax and after play picnics. Adding additional facilities to existing parks would also fall into this second level of improvements. Adding playgrounds, pavilions, and small game courts such as horseshoe pits and bocce courts will provide a more diverse offering of recreation opportunities and expand the user base for existing parks.

The third level of improvements; achieving the full vision of the parks system, encompasses all of the recommendations of this plan. Acquiring additional parkland and developing premiere park sites based on master plans developed through a public process, developing an indoor community recreation center, connecting the parks and community village centers via a comprehensive trail network, and improving each parks site to its fullest potential are all opportunities within reach for Springfield Township.



**Recommendations**

**1. Target acquisition and development of parkland to meet current and future needs for expanded facilities.**

There is significant need for additional parkland in Springfield Township. New sports programs and expanding sports seasons compound this need. There is very limited amount of remaining open space suitable for recreation development within the community and Springfield Township should prioritize acquisition of land for recreation purposes. The Township, through this plan has committed to a guideline for parkland of 10.5 acres per 1,000 citizens. To achieve this guideline and meet the needs of the community based on population, Springfield Township should acquire an additional 152 acres of parkland. Acquisition strategies include:

- Acquire community parkland through purchase, donation, dedication, or grants to meet the current and future recreation needs of the municipality. The parkland analysis indicates that 152 additional acres of parkland is required to meet the needs of the municipality, based on the nationally recognized standard of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The 152 acres is needed for community parks to serve the diverse interests of the broad community. Based on the parkland classification for Springfield Township, this equates to two to three community parks of 50 to 80 acres in size. The following potential scenarios exist for new community parks:
  - Conduct a study of the municipally owned Flourtown Country Club to determine if its current use as a nine-hole golf course is the best use of this publicly owned parkland. Use a public process where citizens are encouraged to provide input regarding the exploration of the best use of this parkland. The 51-acre size of the tract, the existing recreation facilities of the site, and the centralized location within the municipality make the site ideally suited for use as a community park. Since a study of this nature would generate debate, the importance of public participation cannot be overstated. It should be noted that the Club is currently leased to a private entity for operations and any study of this site must include review of the lease agreement terms and stipulations.
  - Acquire the Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography site on West Montgomery Avenue from the Springfield Township School District for development of a community park. Another viable option may be a long-term lease of the property. The Antonelli site combined with Cisco Park, across West Montgomery Avenue, together approach the recommended size for a community park. The site has two existing ballfields, open lawn area, parking, mature vegetation, and a former elementary school building. The existing lease between the School District and Antonelli may limit the potential of this site through the current lease period and should be considered in the feasibility of this option.
  - Consider working in partnership with Montgomery County and the Whitemarsh Foundation regarding the conservation of the Erdenheim Farm property and its potential use as parkland. Working with other partners could help to create a more powerful alliance than a single township working independently. The Whitemarsh Foundation wants to

ensure that the story of Erdenheim Farm does not end like those of so many other historic farmlands lost to development. Its preservation will ensure that it continues to speak for generations to come, helping to connect future residents of the region with the agrarian landscapes that once defined this area and providing a permanent reminder of the restorative power of nature and open space.

- Approach the significant landowners within the community (country clubs, schools, churches, girl scout camp, and urban lots/spaces in the towns center) to make know the desire of the municipality to acquire land for development of a community park. Explore if all, or a portion of the landowners land holdings are available for purchase or long-term lease.
- The Springfield Township Open Space Plan prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission identified three properties that could be considered for acquisition. The properties contain abandoned, underused, or derelict buildings that could be demolished to create open space. The properties include: the PECO Building at Roesch Avenue in Oreland, the Tank Car Corporation property at Walnut Avenue in Oreland, and the AT&T Tower Building on Southampton Avenue in Wyndmoor. These sites could be brownfields sites; if so put a committee together to assess potential for public use, if they can be acquired and to pursue grants to clean up and revitalize the sites for public use, hopefully for public recreation.
- Acquire neighborhood parkland in neighborhoods without a park. Each neighborhood would have a “signature park” associated with it and neighborhood which could be the starting point of revitalization efforts to make the community and neighborhoods more park-like.
- Maximize the recreation potential of parks through the expansion of existing park sites with contiguous acreage, as possible.
  - The lands owned by the Springfield Township School District, at the western boundary of Cisco Park, with frontage on Bethlehem Pike have been discussed as possible additional lands for Cisco Park.
- Indoor year-round recreation facilities emerged as a high priority identified by the residents. The general public, seniors, youth sports groups, and others have indicated that an indoor recreation center is important for this community. Undertake feasibility study to determine the potential for development of a community center. A study should provide recommendations regarding the facility location, configuration/program, size, capital and operating cost, potential partners, level of public support, and other factors that may emerge. A firm experienced in state-of-the-art community center planning, financing, operating, and development should complete the study. Potential features for a community recreation center include a gymnasi-



um, fitness area, class rooms/meeting rooms, and recreation storage. Several potential properties have been mentioned as having potential for acquisition for development of a community recreation center, to include.

- The Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography site owned by the Springfield Township School District includes open space, ball fields, and an older elementary school, currently leased by Antonelli.
  - The Flourtown Country Club site has the size and central location suitable for development of a community recreation center. Exploration of this potential should be explored when the feasibility of acquiring the site is studied.
  - The Seven Dolors church property located in Wyndmoor adjacent to Laurel Beech Park includes a building with a gymnasium.
  - Consider the condition of the high school pool that has been grandfathered into meeting current state guidelines for swimming pools. Major capital improvements have been made in accordance with current guidelines and the grandfathered. While this is a school district facility, the pool serves both educational and recreational needs as well as being the home to the local competitive swim club. The exploration of a potential community recreation center could include an assessment of this pool with respect to a potential joint venture between the township and the school district for a community school facility that could incorporate a pool for education, recreation and wellness along with other indoor facilities. A joint venture would help to maximize limited financial and human resources.
- Acquire additional neighborhood parks for close-to-home recreation in neighborhoods as new and infill residential subdivisions are planned. Neighborhood parks should have a minimum of five acres of usable land for recreation purposes and preferably 10-plus acres for development of both active and passive facilities.
  - Target acquisition of parkland through purchase or donation of land and/or easements to create a connected community through linear parks, trails, and greenways.
  - Coordinate park and recreation facility planning as part of the Flourtown-Erdenheim Vision Plan. This improvement area should incorporate public recreation spaces that could serve citizens and visitors as well as provide potential entertainment spaces that would contribute to lively town centers.

**2. Maximize the use of existing parks to respond to the expanding needs, interests, and desires of citizens and improve the safety, function, convenience, and aesthetics of park sites through the following initiatives:**

- Implement the master plan for Sandy Run Park. This master plan developed in 2003 recommends facilities for passive recreation and environmental education. Consider making this a signature park incorporating recreational use of the water for such activities as no-motorized boating, paddle boats and so on. Risk management would be an important aspect of park planning in this location.

- Revisit the master plan for Veterans Park and consider modifications to expand park use by adding facilities that appeal to a wide range of park visitors such as a playground and walking paths. A reduction in the number or size of the proposed ballfields may be necessary to transform the park from a single-use athletic facility to a neighborhood park. These facilities will also enhance the use of the park for the Kidz Klubhouse summer program. Include input from neighbors and the general public in the planning process. Refer to the figure that depicts a potential re-design for Veteran's Park on page 114.
- Revisit the master plan for Laurel Beech Park and consider ways to maximize the recreation potential of the facility. Communicate with the municipal engineer regarding the potential for sub-surface storm water management/infiltration to convert the area on the north side of the park to recreational use. Anticipate and address neighbor concerns through the provision of buffer plantings and screens to separate the public lands from residential lots. Consider other facilities that would complement the existing facilities and expand the use of the site.
- Complete master plans of remaining park sites to explore how each park can be enhanced to achieve the objectives outlined in this plan. Incorporate public participation as part of the planning process. Master planning is an important means to address management issues through park design and aligning facilities with recreation trends, as well as, current and projected community needs. Design park sites to provide order to facilities and activity areas. The master plans should include the plan for the park sites, as well as, a phased cost estimate that outlines the anticipated development costs.
- Provide areas for the quiet enjoyment of the outdoors and natural resources. The opinion survey found that citizens are interested in spending time in the outdoors in natural settings and enjoying passive recreation pursuits for exercise and fitness. Fortunately nearby regional parks provide opportunities to enjoy natural settings as well as Mermaid Park and Sandy Run Park. Improvements to Mermaid Park and implementation of the Sandy Run Park master plan are important to provide close-to-home passive recreation opportunities in a natural setting.
- Provide walking and bicycling trails within parks and to park sites, as possible. Trails are enjoyed by all segments of the population and are highly desired recreation facilities. The ADA requires access to recreation facilities and activity areas via an accessible route. The existing roadway network in Springfield Township creates barriers to easy connections to park sites throughout the community. It will be important to work with PennDOT, municipal public works, and others to creatively address connections to parks.
- Connect park sites to designated greenways and multi-use trails as possible. Extend sidewalks to park locations within neighborhoods.
- Enhance the park sites to be comfortable and convenient to use by adding benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, grills, bike racks, restrooms, and other convenience facilities as appropriate. Provide



benches near playgrounds, in shaded locations, and at other activity areas for caregivers to sit and watch park activities. Provide buildings for sports equipment storage.

- Incorporate field and court lighting in park sites, as appropriate, to maximize the use of existing facilities.
- Provide facilities for lifetime recreation and leisure pursuits such as trails, volleyball courts, tennis courts, bocce courts, horseshoe pits, and picnic pavilions.
- Add unique facilities to broaden the appeal and use of the parks. Consider a spray park/splash pad play area, skateboard park, and bocce courts. These facilities have community-wide appeal and would be most appropriately developed within a community park. An open public participation process should include consideration of these facilities.
- Consider the needs of the senior adult population. Make facilities pedestrian friendly, convenient to use, and provide sitting areas in the shade that are conveniently spaced along trails and near activity areas. Provide pavilions near parking areas.
- Undertake the renovations and enhancement opportunities identified for existing parks as part of Park Factor 6: Conditions of Parkland portion of this plan.
- Consider residents who enjoy walking their dogs in the parks. Provide pet waste disposal bags and trash receptacles along trails.

### 3. Create great public places.



Parks are the public spaces of our communities. The care and dedication we commit to their design, development, operations, programming, and ongoing maintenance speaks volumes about a community. Commit to the great design of new and expanded parks and the sensitive, thoughtful master planning of existing parks.

Establish design guidelines that provide unified principles, concepts, furnishings, materials, colors, and so on for all township parks. Establish policies for review, design, development and management of facilities offered by community organizations and/or individuals. Strive to achieve a high quality design theme for Springfield Township parks.

- Strive to undertake improvements to the parks that are holistic and not piecemeal in order to provide a sense of presence and accomplishment in the public view.

- Provide support and accessory facilities that create premier recreation facilities such as dugouts for baseball fields; picnic areas designed as a unit with grills, picnic tables, horseshoe pits, shaded areas, and water; restrooms in high use neighborhood parks and community parks, and benches at game courts.
- Enhance park sites with landscaping for color and interest and trees for shade.
- Create great playgrounds that promote fun, socialization, learning, and creativity. Playgrounds should be provided in each neighborhood and Oreland Park. A playground to serve younger siblings of sports participants complements parks that are primarily used for league sports.
- Design parks with consideration of safety and security of users:
  - Provide visual access into the parks from surrounding streets and sidewalks. Avoid designs that create “hidden” areas. Wyndhill Park is a location where the vegetation between the playground and picnic area should be opened up to the adjacent parking area to provide improved visual access and safety.
  - Provide adequate safety zones around sports facilities and play equipment.
  - Provide physical barriers between adjacent roadways and parking areas.
  - Where possible and practical, limit the extent of vehicle penetration into the site and vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas
  - Provide trails of adequate width for the intended user groups.
  - Provide adequate safety zones surrounding ballfields, especially with consideration of foul balls. Do not locate trails, playgrounds, and other facilities in foul ball zones. Spectator seating at ballfields should be separated from the field of play by fencing.
- Establish a readily identifiable image in the community for public parks. The wooden park name signs at the entrance to each park site currently promote this recommendation. Other opportunities to promote the image of the park system include:
  - Use Springfield Township’s attractive park name signs as the basis to create a uniform signage system for all other signs within park sites that conveys the image of a premier public park system. Maintain uniform color, layout, materials, and graphic image.
  - Establish design standards through the master planning process. The goal of the standards would be to provide a consistent quality design and construction features in all facilities. This would include quality materials, harmonious colors, and prime consideration of the natural environment.
  - Provide street trees along park road frontage and park drives.
  - Consider planting attractive, low-maintenance landscaping such as perennials and ornamental grasses at the park name signs.



- Design with nature.
  - Protect and enhance natural resources of the park sites.
  - Provide buffer areas around sensitive natural resources that should have limited or no public access.
  - Enhance riparian buffers along streams. The channel of Oreland Run in the area of Marlow Fields is severely eroded and requires stream enhancements to restore and stabilize the stream banks, establish a riparian buffer planning along the stream, and remove the sediment and debris in the channel. Cresheim Creek's corridor in Mermaid Park is eroded and should be addressed as well.
  - Locate facilities with consideration of prevailing wind and solar orientation.
  - Use native plant material to enhance wildlife habitats and minimize maintenance.
  - Consider the site soil, underlying geology, and ground water during the planning and development phase. Soil, geology, and depth of ground water directly affect facility constructability, drainage, and long-term maintenance.
  - Incorporate natural features such as wetlands and rock outcrops into park designs.
  - Develop park sites using Best Management Practices for erosion control and storm water management.

**4. Provide facilities for public uses that comply with accessibility and safety regulations and guidelines.**



- Address accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within existing parks. The ADA is federal legislation that prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. Municipal parks are public accommodations and must meet the requirements of the ADA. The list below identifies ADA issues within the Springfield Parks but is not an all-inclusive ADA audit of each park site but is provided for consideration as the park sites are enhanced.
  - Accessible route - Develop walkways to provide an accessible route from handicap parking spaces and sidewalks to and between recreation facilities. This requirement is lacking in each park site with the exception of Cisco Park and Oreland Park. Walkway shall not exceed five-percent slope to be accessible and this appears readily achievable in most of the park sites. Additionally, DCNR requires that when bench areas are provided along a trail that a stabilized area for a wheelchair also be provided adjacent to benches.

- Provide stabilized handicapped parking space in each parking area. Marlow Fields and Bysher Fields are examples of two parks that require designated handicap parking spaces.
  - Playgrounds must offer play equipment that provides play options for the physically challenged. Playground manufacturers are aware of this requirement and work with communities as new playground equipment is specified to make sure that this requirement is achieved.
  - Athletic fields and courts must be accessible and provided with accessible viewing areas and this accommodation has not been provided at any of the existing facilities.
  - Fences surrounding game courts should have gates with clear opening widths that meet or exceed the ADA requirements to allow use by disabled athletes. This is not currently an issue at the tennis courts and basketball courts as they are not enclosed within fence.
  - Picnic areas should offer accessible picnic tables. Picnic tables at Wyndhill Park, Veterans Park, Bysher Fields, and Cisco Park do not offer this accommodation. Every picnic table in a park need not provide this accommodation but as new tables are added, a portion of them should be an accessible model.
  - Drinking fountains should be accessible. The drinking fountain at Cisco Park meets this requirement and all new fountains should be accessible.
- Provide play equipment that meets the safety criteria of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines for Public Playground Safety. Springfield Township has compliant playgrounds throughout the park system which have been relatively recently upgraded with the exception of Oreland Park and this playground is slated for improvements this year. Based on a generalized review of playground equipment throughout the system two issues exist relative to the CPSC guidelines.
    - The safety surfacing surrounding the swings at Oreland Park and Wyndhill Park does not meet the CPSC spatial requirements. Adequate safety zones with safety surfacing material must surround each piece of play equipment. The safety zones are defined by the CPSC and the surfacing material must meet the test requirements of the CPSC and the latest American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) criteria.
    - The CPSC guidelines state “In playgrounds intended to serve children of all ages the layout of pathways and the landscaping of the playground should show the distinct areas for the different age groups. The areas should be separated at least by a buffer zone, which could be an area with shrubs or benches.” At Cisco Park, Wyndhill Park, and Laurel Beech Park this requirement has not been incorporated into the playground layout. Signs should identify age appropriate use of equipment. These signs are available from playground manufacturers and the areas should be evaluated for other means of accommodating this guideline.
  - Address safety concerns associated with bleachers. The CPSC provides “Guidelines for Retrofitting Bleachers” which addresses the need for guardrails on bleachers as follows: “Guardrails should be present on the backs and portions of the open ends of bleachers where the footboard, seat-





board, or aisle is 30 inches or more above the floor or ground below. Bleaches with the top row nominally 30 inches above the ground may be exempt from this requirement.” Although some compliant models are provide at Marlow Fields, not all the bleachers at this park were compliant and models at Bysher Fields, Oreland Park, and Cisco Park do not meet this guideline.

- It is important to identify and prioritize improvements needed to bring existing facilities into compliance with the ADA and CPSC. A phased implementation schedule should be developed and improvements should be included in the capital improvement program budget. The planned renovation of the Oreland Park playground illustrates the Townships commitment to playground safety. Additionally, it is important to conduct ongoing playground safety inspections.

## **5. Undertake park improvement identified above in a prioritized manner.**

### **Highest Priority**

- Improvements that enhance visitor safety and security.
- Improvements necessary to meet the intent and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Improvements that protect important natural resources, such as improvements that enhance the quality and appearance to the ponds in township parks.

### **Secondary Priorities**

- Improvements, enhancements, and support facilities within existing parks. The recommendations above outline numerous opportunities to improve the existing parks and enhance them as community assets. Some of the suggestions are easily achieved such as placing benches in shaded locations, while others such as provide accessible trails and viewing areas in Marlow Fields are more challenging due to the extensively developed nature of the park site. The prioritized strategy outlined below presents one scenario for achieving the recommendations presented.
  1. Undertake the redevelopment of Oreland Park. Evaluate potential improvements to enhance this neighborhood park and the location of summer basketball leagues.
  2. Complete improvements to Veterans Park. This park is the site of the Kidz Klubhouse summer playground program and a master plan has been prepared for the park, which makes the park more park-like and provides more diversity of facilities. Implementation of the master plan improvements will

achieve improvements desired by sports teams as well as provide facilities that complement the playground program. Refer to the site plan on page 114 to see the potential for this park.

3. Complete improvements to Cisco Park. Although this is Springfield Township's most diversely developed park, there are minor improvements that will enhance the users experience. A significant enhancement suggested in lighting and improving the existing baseball field. The baseball field renovations will help address the significant need for athletic fields in the community. This is the park that gets the most general visitation by a broad range of citizens. While improvements to Oreland Park, Veterans Park, and Cisco Park are being undertaken, Springfield Township should work with professional landscape architects versed in park and recreation design to complete master plans for Mermaid Park and Wyndhill Park and revisit the master plan for Laurel Beech Park.
4. Master plan and complete improvements to Mermaid Park. This park offers a natural setting for passive activities such as walking and picnicking. Developing trails and picnic areas in the park will enhance the park and provide a passive recreation setting to complement the other active recreation sites.
5. Complete a master plan and improve Wyndhill Park. This park offers a nice playground setting and the anticipated renovations to the open lawn into an athletic field will address a high need facility of the organized sports groups.
6. Revisit the master plan for Laurel Beech Park and undertake improvements defined by the revised master plan.
7. Bysher Fields and Marlow Fields are suggested as the last parks for improvements. Both of these parks are primarily athletic parks that have been maximized with facilities out of need to meet the growing demands of athletic programs. The best scenario for these two sites is that the Township acquire additional parkland for development of a community park and accommodate the majority of the athletic facilities needs within a new community park. When a new community park site is developed Bysher Fields and Marlow Fields should be master planned based on the needs of the immediate neighborhoods.
8. The development of Sandy Run Park is undefined in the scenario above. The phased development of this park should occur as funding is available. The existing master plan defines a vision and phased development scenario for this park site. This master site plan should be assessed to determine if it sets forth a vision for this park as a signature park. This could be a grand park that would serve as a community focal point and source of great community pride. Having access to a water body transforms parks into higher caliber facilities.





**VETERANS PARK**  
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA  
JANUARY 2008

## Greenways and Trails

This chapter explores greenways and trails. Springfield Township is nearly fully developed. Opportunities for connections are limited. Balancing the needs of the whole community with the specific needs of potential trail neighbors through an on-going public participation process in trail and greenway planning is essential.



**G**reenways and trails are components of a community's comprehensive parks and recreation plan. Through the assessment of linear resources, strategies are formulated to link community destinations and green infrastructure to create a connected community. Trails and greenways provide both recreation opportunities and green corridors of protected open space. Easy access to trails facilitates both recreation and non-motorized transportation. Connecting Springfield Township's parks and other community destinations with trails and greenways will add to the livability and quality of life for citizens.

### Springfield Township Park Greenway and Trail Opportunity Assessment

#### Greenways

Creating a network of green corridors throughout a municipality is one effective means of protecting the character and landscape setting of a community. Greenways provide an array of direct and indirect benefits that add to the quality of life of both a place and region. Protection of green corridors and open spaces provides numerous economic, social, transportation, recreation, environmental, education, and ecological benefits as identified the following pages.

## What are Greenways?

A greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways may vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wider corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural and scenic features. They can incorporate both public and private property, and can be land- or water-based. They may follow old railways, canals, or ridge tops, or they may follow stream corridors, shorelines, or wetlands, and include water trails for non-motorized craft. Some greenways are recreational corridors or scenic byways that may accommodate motorized and non-motorized vehicles. Others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage.

Greenways differ in their location and function, but overall, a greenway will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.

*Source: Pennsylvania Greenways – An Action Plan for Creating Connections*

## Benefits of Greenways and Trails

### Social Benefits

- Provide access to historically and culturally significant features in our communities.
- Provide opportunities to reconnect with the natural environment and urban fabric of our communities.
- Help to preserve the character and aesthetic appeal of a place or landscape.
- Provide significant new public places which can help to connect people and communities.
- Increase quality of life.
- Improve health and wellness of greenway and trail recreation users.
- Heighten sensitivity to the natural environment by providing for interaction between people and nature.



### Transportation Benefits

- Promote non-motorized transportation.
- Provide safe alternative transportation routes for pedestrians and bicyclists which will lessen our dependency on automobiles.
- Provide emergency access via trails to undeveloped areas.
- Reduce roadway congestion through redistribution of users to alternative transportation routes.

## Ecological Benefits

- Promote plant and animal species diversity.
- Serve as a filtering zone; wetlands absorb pollutants and nutrients and slow surface run-off.
- Provide corridors for wildlife migration and movement.
- Preserve and protect vital wildlife, plant, and aquatic habitats.
- Improve air quality and reduce noise.
- Reduce stormwater damage and promote flood mitigation within protected floodplains.
- Protect natural areas.
- Connect fragmented landscapes.
- Store and convey floodwaters.
- Clean up abandoned corridors.



## Recreation Benefits

- Provide areas to jog, walk, bike, ride horses, and canoe.
- Serve as sites for passive pursuits such as picnicking, fishing, and enjoying nature.
- Connect existing and planned trails.
- Encourage ecotourism.
- Provide landscapes for environmental education.
- Provide connections between parks and other protected lands.

## Economic Benefits

- Increase nearby property values.
- Precipitate new and expanded businesses related to greenway and trail use. New businesses will provide employment opportunities and revenues.
- Create tourist destinations which will generate expenditures on food, services, and lodging.
- Reduce damage and financial loss from flooding by providing buffer areas along stream and river corridors.

**State and County Greenway and Trail Initiatives**

**Pennsylvania**

In 1991, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge enacted Executive Order 1998-3, charging DCNR, DEP, and PENNDOT, assisted by the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission to develop an action plan for advancing a Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Program. In June 2001, Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections was completed. The plan sets forth a series of goals and action items in a coordinated and strategic approach aimed at developing a statewide system of connected greenways.

**Pennsylvania Greenways Vision**

Pennsylvania and its many partners will develop an outstanding network of greenways across the Commonwealth, creating an asset highly valued by Pennsylvanians and enhancing the quality of life for all. This network of greenways will connect Pennsylvanian’s open space, natural landscape features, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites, and urban and rural communities. Greenways will become one of the Commonwealth’s most powerful tools to achieve sustainable growth and livable communities.

*Source: Pennsylvania Greenways – An Action Plan for Creating Connections*

It is envisioned that Pennsylvania’s greenways network will consist of individual greenways and regional networks of greenways of all kinds. While every greenway is important and adds value to Pennsylvania’s landscapes and communities, a statewide greenways network achieves broad connections that are fundamental to sustainable environments in rural, suburban, and urban settings. The landscape connections that will result throughout Pennsylvania will create a “green infrastructure” of open space vital to the health of Pennsylvania’s ecological systems and manmade communities. The statewide greenways network also can provide a new connectivity within and among Pennsylvania’s communities, and promote healthier lifestyles with more abundant recreational opportunities and transportation alternatives, and stronger connections to cultural and historic places. This connectivity can be represented by the metaphor of the “hubs” and “spokes” of a wheel.

**Montgomery County**

Montgomery County has proposed a comprehensive greenway network that includes primary and secondary greenways. The County’s greenway network is intended to be a “connected system of preserved natural,

recreational, historic, and agricultural nodes that provides residents and visitors enjoyment and appropriate access to natural and scenic resources while protecting these resources for future generations.”<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County has identified four primary greenways and one of these; the Wissahickon Greenway traverses the panhandle of Springfield Township. Additionally, the County has identified 19 secondary greenways including the Sandy Run Greenway, which crosses the northwestern corner of the township.

## Springfield Township Greenway and Trail Network Potential

**A**lthough the public participation process found support for trails from the community at large, important concerns emerged regarding possible negative impacts from trails related to public safety, individual property rights and the loss of privacy by adjoining neighbors. While Springfield Township is not opposed to the Montgomery County trail system, there are residents in this community with concerns that must be addressed as part of the public participation process in all trail planning efforts. It is important to balance the needs of the whole community with the specific needs of potential trail neighbors.

### Networks

Greenway networks are composed of “hubs and spokes.” The “hubs” of Springfield Township’s network will include parks, schools, community facilities or destinations, commercial areas, and neighborhoods. The “spokes” of the network will be protected linear corridors or greenways connecting to the hubs. **The Potential Parks & Recreation Opportunities Map on page 123 includes potential trails and greenways. These potential opportunities would undergo a public participation and decision-making process to determine if Springfield Township would move ahead with the particular improvement.**

### Spokes

A community’s linear resources make up the spokes of a greenway system. Streams, drainage ways former rail corridors, and utility corridors

<sup>1</sup> Shaping Our Future: A Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County, Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2005.



provide the linear resources for Springfield Township’s greenway and trail system. The two greenways identified by Montgomery County provide the beginning of a greenway network for the township.

- **Wissahickon Creek Greenway** – The Wissahickon Creek Greenway consists of significant preserve lands along the stream corridor. First protected as part of Fairmount Park in the City of Philadelphia and subsequent efforts of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, have permanently protected extensive acreage along the creek corridor as part of this greenway. The greenway contains numerous trails that extend along the creek and some of its tributaries. In Springfield Township the Wissahickon Creek is bordered by lands of the Morris Arboretum and Whitemarsh Valley Country Club. The Wissahickon Creek Greenway extends a total of 18 miles within Montgomery County and the City of Philadelphia.

**Sandy Run Greenway** – The Sandy Run Greenway extends 6.5 miles along the stream from Abington Township through Upper Dublin and Springfield Townships to join the Wissahickon Creek in Whitemarsh Township. Protected lands along the greenway include Sandy Run Park and Sandy Run Country Club in Springfield Township. Montgomery County has developed a system of 16 multiuse trails that connect the federal, state, and county parks within County. The County system is complemented by municipal trails and trails developed by conservancies and volunteer organizations to create a fully connected trail system. Two County trails traverse Springfield Township; a short portion of the Wissahickon Trail and the Cresheim Trail. These trails and additional trails and trail linkages as identified in the Springfield Township Open Space Plan are described below:

- **Cresheim Trail/Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector (a.k.a. Plymouth Rail Trail)** – The trail would connect the proposed Cresheim Trail to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail and Fort Washington State Park. The trail uses the former railroad right-of-way that is adjacent to the northern side of the Flourtown Country Club. This corridor is located in close proximity to residential homes and will require privacy accommodations or rerouting in areas to address privacy issues.
- **Cresheim Trail** – The trail uses the former Philadelphia/Germantown/Chestnut Hill railroad between Stenton Avenue and Paper Mill Road. Route 309 and PECO use this corridor as well. This trail would link Mermaid Park, Fairmont Park, and the Springfield Township school campus. The Cresheim Trail links to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail via the connector described above.
- **Wissahickon Avenue Trail Connector** – This trail parallels Northwestern Avenue in the pan-handle and the opportunity of extending the trail across Stenton Avenue through the Mount Saint

Joseph Academy has been explored with an extension north to the Flourtown Country Club. This connector trail, if completed, could link the Flourtown Country Club, Bysher Fields, and the Black Horse Inn to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail. The trail would be composed of sidewalks and off-road trails within road rights-of-way. Montgomery County has proposed to develop the trail within the township and public meetings have been held to discuss the trail and its potential route with residents voicing opinions both pro and con.

- **Sandy Run Creek Trail** – Sandy Run Creek extends across the northwest corner of Springfield Township. To the northeast the creek connects to Upper Dublin Township’s greenway and trail system and to the west the creek flows through Whitemarsh Township to Fort Washington State Park where it merges with the Wissahickon Creek. A trail along this corridor would promote regional connections.
- **Oreland Connector Trail** – This trail links the north-central portion of the municipality to the Cresheim Trail, via Haws Lane, Church Road, Meadow Lane, and Montgomery Avenue. Nearby destinations include the Oreland Park, Marlow Fields, and the Springfield Township school campus.
- **Manor Creek Trail** – Manor Creek flows through the southern panhandle of the municipality across lands of the Girl Scouts of Philadelphia that is permanently protected. Possible connections exist to Fairmont Park via Northwestern Avenue to the north and to the Schuylkill River Trail to the south.
- **North Hills Country Club – Oreland Ballfield Trail** – This trail linkage is located along the Oreland Run, an intermittent stream/drainage way. This trail linkage would tie the North Hills Country Club to Marlow Fields and ultimately could extend regionally by linking with the Cresheim Trail via the Oreland Connector.
- **Wissahickon Creek Connector** – The Wissahickon Creek crosses the upper panhandle at the Morris Arboretum and Whitemarsh Valley Country Club and a trail link within this corridor would connect to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail.
- **Other Corridors** - Potential linear connections in Springfield Township include Paper Mill Run, Schlatters Run, Joseph’s Run, Enfield Run, Sunnybrook Creek, and Andorra Run. There are active rail corridors that run through the municipality presenting possible future potential for additional trail linkages.



### Hubs

The parks, schools, library, town centers, and other community destinations in Springfield Township are destinations that should be incorporated into a comprehensive greenway network. Several municipal parks and the Springfield Township school campus are connected to the “spokes” identified above.

### Trail Links

Connecting community places typically cannot be totally achieved with greenway corridors and designated trails. Trail links further expand a greenway and trail system by connecting nearby parks and schools to trail corridors. In most instances, a natural or manmade corridor does not exist to connect these community destinations. Links utilizing sidewalks, road rights-of-way, and access easements should be developed to link these community resources to designated trail corridors. Municipalities, school districts, institutions, and private land owners must work together to develop these functional linkages, which connect local parks and schools to the designated trail system. In Springfield Township, links should be explored to connect the Springfield Free Library, Laurel Beech Park, Veterans Park, Wyndhill Park, Cisco Park, Antonelli School and other school and community destinations.

The developed nature of the community and significant roadways such as Route 309 are barriers to trail development in Springfield. Alternative routes or engineering solutions such as bridges or underpasses must be incorporated to provide a connected network across these barriers. To create a comprehensive greenway system that provides the maximum benefit to the community it is important to find linkages across these barriers. It is important to work with PennDOT to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle friendly linkage solutions when bridges and underpasses are upgraded. It will be necessary to evaluate existing sidewalks and road rights-of-ways as part of a comprehensive system of greenways, trails, and trail links.

In addition to the County and municipal greenways, trails, and trail connectors discussed above, Springfield Township should explore the following potential trail links to enhance trail connections to create a community with safe walking and bicycling opportunities.

- Extend a trail on the Springfield Township Senior High School property to the existing sidewalk at Paper Mill Road. Enhance the crosswalk striping at the Hawthorne Lane intersection and install additional traffic calming measures to improve the safety of the crossing from the school property.
- Evaluate the right-of-way of Mermaid Lane to determine if a safe connection can be made to Mermaid Park and in doing so connect to the Cresheim Trail.
- Extend the trail established from Bethlehem Pike at the recently developed drug store near the Black Horse Inn, east to Bysheer Park. A short access easement across private property will be required to make this connection.
- Explore the potential to use the Hawthorn Lane right-of-way as a bike lane to extend a link from the Springfield Free Library to the end of the street cul-de-sac and an access easement to link to La Salle High School.
- Seek an access easement to link La Salle High School to the Cresheim Trail.
- Provide a crosswalk to provide a safe crossing from Cisco Park to Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography.
- Connect Sandy Run Park to the Sandy Run Creek Trail. A direct connection is possible.
- Connect Mermaid Park to the Cresheim Trail. A direct connection is possible.
- Link the Springfield Township Elementary School Erdenheim Campus and Springfield Township Senior High School to the Cresheim Trail. Link the Springfield Township Middle School, via the pedestrian tunnel to the Cresheim Trail. These links can be made as direct connections to the trail.
- Explore sidewalk connections within the town centers of Erdenheim and Flourtown to link to future trails.

The above trail link initiatives are small incremental steps and many can be implemented at once. So undertaking these improvements is an important means of creating momentum for trail initiatives.

### **Bicycle Compatible Roadways**

While trail links can provide small incremental steps toward creating a

connected community, another bicycle route strategy is to work within the existing roadway infrastructure. Evaluating existing roadways within the township for bicycle compatibility may reveal opportunities for on-road bicycle corridors via wide curb lanes or bicycle lanes. A prime candidate for this is Haws Lane from the high school to Bethlehem Pike with branches off that to the Flourtown Country Club to enable people to bicycle there.

- **Wide Curb Lanes** - Wide curb lanes are not specifically a bicycle facility but provide an area where cyclists can travel on existing roads. Wide curb lanes should provide sufficient space (typically considered to be 14 to 15 feet from the road center line to the curb or gutter) for vehicles to share the road with bicycles.
- **Bicycle lanes** - Bicycle Lanes are specifically designed to accommodate bicycle traffic. The lanes are one-way corridors designated for bicycles located parallel to traffic lanes. They are typically four to five feet wide and designated by a solid white line. On two-way streets there should be bike lanes on both sides of the roadway.

All bicycle use of roadways required special considerations and accommodations at railroad crossings, drainage grates, open-grate and narrow bridges, on street parking areas, and intersections. These considerations and a full analysis of roadways in Springfield Township should be undertaken to determine if there are roads with the appropriate width and configuration for the safe promotion of bicycle use.

### Intermediate Actions



Since the community is urbanized, undertaking incremental improvements to foster bicycling should be undertaken. This would include actions such as installing bicycle racks in public and commercial areas, adding signage and exploring the easiest improvements to make on roads. Also important is coordinating township bicycle planning with road improvements. All road improvements should include planning for the accommodation of bicycles. This is especially important on PennDOT funded projects.

## Greenways and Trails Analysis

### Strengths

Springfield Township is located in Montgomery County, which has made greenway preservation and trail development a priority. Segments of Montgomery County's Wissahickon Greenway (a primary greenway) and the Sandy Run Greenway (a secondary greenway) traverse Springfield Township. Montgomery County's trail network here includes the Wissahickon Trail, a portion of which extends along Northwestern Avenue to Stenton Avenue, and the planned Cresheim Trail that traverses the township in the area of Route 309. Connecting to these trails would link Springfield Township to a regional network of greenways and trails and bring the many benefits of greenways and trails to Springfield Township residents. The public opinion survey for the township's parks and recreation plan revealed significant citizen support for both bike trails and walking trails.

### Challenges

There are significant challenges for Springfield Township relative to greenways and trails. The highly developed characteristic of the community and the extent of private ownership of land along natural and rail corridors present difficult hurdles in the protection of linear resources and trail development. Although the public opinion survey indicated general public support for bike trails, residents located near proposed trail routes within the community oppose the trails because of concerns regarding private property rights, potential loss of privacy, safety, and security. Educating the general public and land owners about trail benefits and dispelling myths about trails is a critical challenge ahead if Springfield Township is to develop a comprehensive trail system. There is no organized bicycle support group which often helps to educate the public about bicycle benefits, dispel myths, advocate for trails and undertake trail projects.

### Trails: The Challenge

- 67% of survey respondents indicated that bicycle trails are important or very important.
- The township has experienced opposition to trail development when the trail would be close to homes.

The planning process for trails needs to be collaborative, rooted in citizen involvement and educational regarding benefits and actual trail use factors.

## Opportunities

Springfield Township contains several streams that provide linear corridors through the community. These resources and the identified Montgomery County greenways and trails can be the spokes of a community greenway and trail network. Additionally, there are sidewalks in numerous locations that can expand a greenway and trail network to the township's many neighborhoods. Recent trail discussion has exposed several of the trail opportunities in the community to residents.

## Recommendations

Springfield Township is nearly fully developed with open space and linear resources primarily found on private lands. The opportunities that exist to create a connected community are fragmented. The following recommendations promote important linear recreation and green connections through greenways and trails in Springfield Township:

### **1. Develop a greenway and trail network that protects the green corridors and linear natural resources of Springfield Township and connects neighborhood, parks, schools, and community destinations.**

- Establish a trail committee to guide planning and advocate for a greenways and trails in Springfield Township.
- Work to raise public awareness of the benefits of greenways and trails throughout Springfield Township through a targeted public awareness campaign. The trail committee should lead this effort.
- Consider collaborating with Montgomery County in conducting a trail users study in and near Springfield Township similar to studies done on the York Heritage Rail Trail and the Pine Creek Trail in Lycoming County. Use the findings to promote the facts and figures on trail use and trail users. Collect testimonials and information about trail successes in Springfield Township and disseminate this information in a strategic fashion.
- Undertake trail links and hubs identified in this plan as a means to create momentum for trail initiatives and a broader understanding of trail benefits. Providing trails for the following would be important:
  - Providing trail connections so that citizens could get to Fort Washington State Park via bicycle.
  - Safe routes to schools.
  - Enabling cyclists to get to regional destinations such as West River Drive for bicycling.

- Extend a trail on the Springfield Township Senior High School property to the existing sidewalk at Paper Mill Road. Enhance the crosswalk striping at the Hawthorn Lane intersection and install additional traffic calming measures to improve the safety of the crossing from the school property to the Springfield Free Library.
- Evaluate the right-of-way of Mermaid Lane to determine if a safe connection can be made to Mermaid Park and in doing so connect to the Cresheim Trail.
- Extend the trail established from Bethlehem Pike at the recently developed drug store near the Black Horse Inn, east to Bysher Park. An access easement across one private property will be required to make this connection.
- Explore the potential to use the Hawthorn Lane right-of-way as a bike lane to extend a link from the Springfield Free Library to the end of the street cul-de-sac and an access easement to link to La Salle High School.
- Seek an access easement to link La Salle High School to the Cresheim Trail.
- Provide a crosswalk and traffic calming measures to provide a safe crossing from Cisco Park to Antonelli Institute of Art & Photography.
- Connect Sandy Run Park to the Sandy Run Creek Trail. A direct connection is possible.
- Connect Mermaid Park to the Cresheim Trail. A direct connection is possible.
- Link the Springfield Township Elementary School Erdenheim Campus and Springfield Township Senior High School to the Cresheim Trail. Link the Springfield Township Middle School, via the pedestrian tunnel to the Cresheim Trail. These links can be made as direct connections to the trail.
- Explore sidewalk connections within the town centers of Erdenheim and Flourtown to link to future trails.



The above trail link initiatives are small incremental steps and many can be implemented readily to demonstrate successful pathways. Undertaking these improvements are an important means of creating momentum for trail initiatives.

- Evaluate local roadways within the township for bicycle compatibility to reveal opportunities for on-road bicycle corridors via wide curb



lanes or bicycle lanes. Start with Haws Avenue from Bethlehem Pike to the high school with branches to the Flourtown Country Club.

- Add bicycle racks and signage to public and commercial areas to support bicycling.
- Create community hubs and destinations for cyclists and pedestrians. These could include:



- The village centers of Erdenheim, Flourtown, Oreland, and Wyndmoor. Coordinate with the implementation of the Flourtown Erdenheim Vision Plan regarding pedestrian and bicycle friendly town center development.
- A non-motorized/public transit hub at the Oreland train station with access by pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- Schools
- Parks
- Library, fire houses, and other community destinations.

- Based on mixed response to trails in the township ranging from public sentiment that trails are important to public opposition to specific trails, start with establishing trails and on-road bicycle opportunities that would have a high chance of success. Strive to engage a community group as a trail partner. Use successful trail projects as demonstration projects in order to build public understanding, trail use, and support for future trails.
- Develop a master plan for greenway and trail network in Springfield Township.
  - Use public participation to gather input and provide educational information about greenways and trails to residents. Address and seek solutions to resident concerns.
  - Create a township-wide greenway and trail network composed of hubs (important destinations and originations for people and wildlife), corridors, and links, which maintain the “green infrastructure” of the municipality and provide trail opportunities for recreation, transportation, environmental education, and the movement of wildlife.
  - Create a township-wide greenway network along stream corridors that promotes the ecological benefits of riparian buffer areas, advances the movement of wildlife, and maintains green natural corridors for the enjoyment of residents. Encourage streambank restoration and protection in riparian corridors.
  - Promote greenway and stream enhancements within parks (Cisco Park, Marlow Fields, and Mermaid Park) to include riparian buffer

plantings and streambank stabilization. Promote one area of enhancement as a demonstration project geared to homeowners as the most stream corridors in Springfield Township are on private property.

- Evaluate the trail opportunities utilizing existing rights-of-way in the township.
- Include the eight trails, trail connectors, and potential trail links identified in this plan and the Springfield Township Open Space Plan:
  - Cresheim Trail/Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector
  - Cresheim Trail
  - Wissahickon Avenue Trail Connector
  - Sandy Run Creek Trail
  - Oreland Connector
  - Manor Creek Trail
  - North Hills Country Club/Marlow Fields Trail
  - Wissahickon Creek Connector
- Develop an implementation action plan to move from the master plan to greenway conservation and trail development.
- Explore creation of greenways and trails through land acquisition/donations, easements, and use of existing road rights-of-way.
  - Seek conservation easements to protect and buffer natural resources along designated greenway corridors.
  - Seek access easements from developers through re-development or new development along designated trail corridors or could extend a link to a designated trail corridor. Work with private landowners to acquire access and/or conservation easements along designated greenway corridors.
  - Develop and adopt an official map for the municipality that promotes the greenway and trail objectives of the township. An official map may identify lands that are targeted for acquisition by the municipality for various public uses, including land for existing and proposed public parks, greenways, and trail reservations. The map may address all or a portion of the municipality. The municipality may fix the time for which public grounds on the Official Map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. The reservation for public grounds lapses and becomes void one year after an owner of such property has sub-



mitted a written notice to the municipal governing body announcing the intention to build, subdivide, or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation. The Official Map tool essentially gives a municipality the right of first refusal on a piece of property.

- Develop trails based on the recommendations and guidelines presented in the statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan and AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

**2. Partner with other government and private entities to promote the protection of greenway corridors and development of trails for bicycling and walking.**

- It is essential to establish an effective communication system among various governmental and non-governmental entities regarding greenways and trails.
- Work with Springfield Township School District to explore linkages from school sites to trail corridors.
- Communicate and partner with Whitemarsh, Upper Dublin, Cheltenham, Philadelphia, and Montgomery County as well as Fort Washington State Park, and the Wissahickon Watershed Association regarding regional greenway and trail opportunities and initiatives.
- Forward this Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan to groups responsible for regional and municipal plans to promote coordination and for incorporation of initiatives into regional implementation efforts.
- Work with PennDOT and the Springfield Township Public Works Department to provide bicycle and pedestrian friendly paths and facilities when upgrades are undertaken for public roads.






















# POTENTIAL PARK AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES MAP

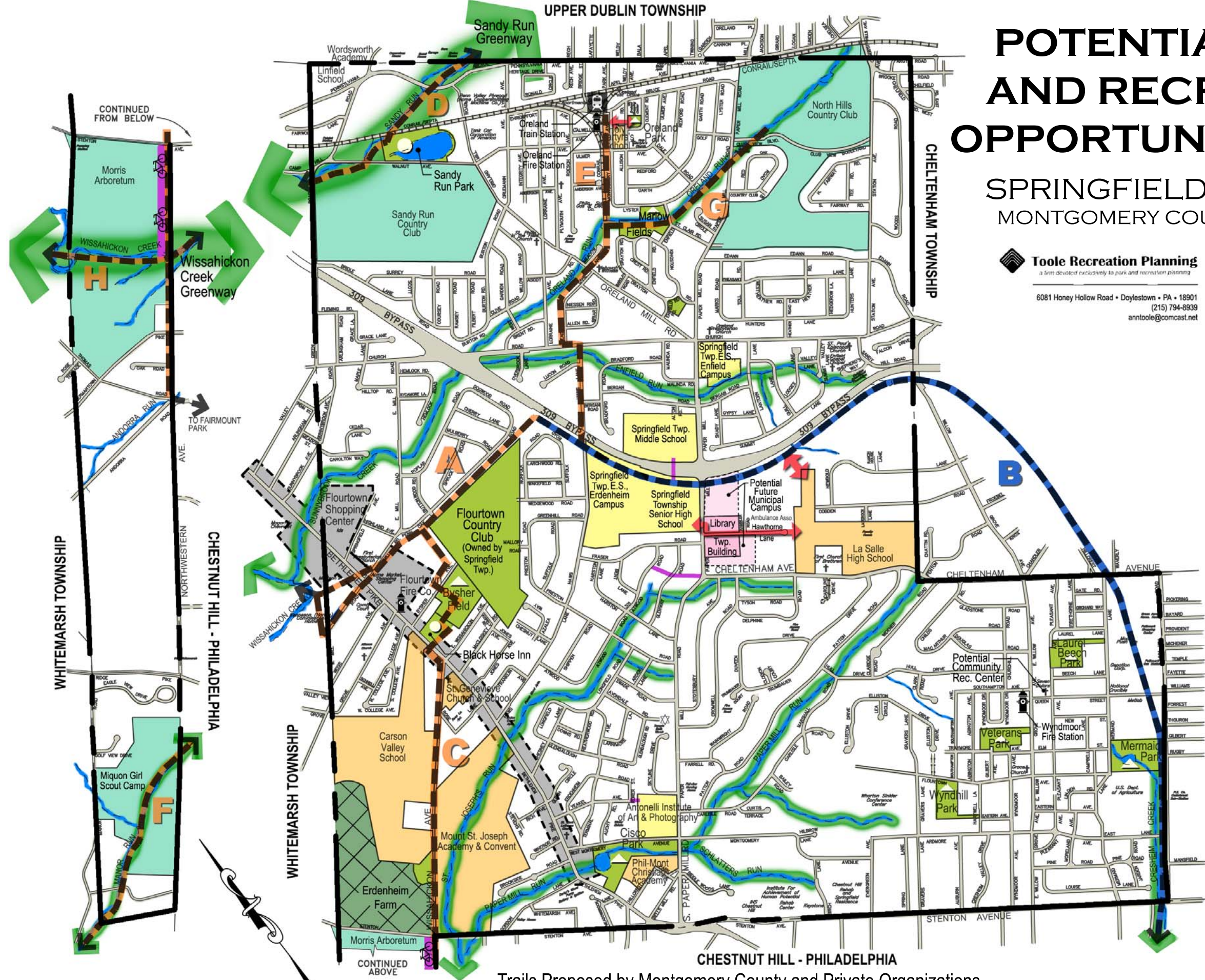
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA 2008

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## Legend:

-  Publicly Owned Park
-  Publicly Owned Park w/ Planned Improvements
-  New Public Park
-  Privately Owned Recreation Areas
-  Potential Conservation Area
-  Public Schools
-  Private Schools
-  Municipal Lands
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Railroad
-  Roads and Streets
-  Existing Bicycle Trail
-  Existing Pedestrian Connection
-  County Greenways
-  Municipal Greenways
-  Montgomery County Proposed Trails
-  Privately Proposed Trail
-  Proposed Pedestrian Connections
-  Flourtown-Erdenheim Enhancement Area



### Trails Proposed by Montgomery County and Private Organizations

- A** - Cresheim Valley Trail/Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector
- B** - Cresheim Valley Trail
- C** - Wissahickon Avenue Trail Connector
- D** - Sandy Run Creek Trail
- E** - Oreland Connector
- F** - Manor Creek Trail
- G** - North Hills Country Club/Marlow Fields Trail
- H** - Wissahickon Creek Connector

## Recreation Opportunities

Having lots of things to do makes a community vibrant and enjoyable. This chapter explores the recreation opportunities of Springfield Township and identifies ways to meet community recreation needs for people of all ages and interests year round.



The Springfield community parks and recreation system is the catalyst for the citizens to try out, explore, and enjoy the arts, music, drama, dance, nature, fitness, sports, volunteering, “spectating”, family activities, and social events. Research shows that what people do as children, they tend to do as adults. At a time when the lack of physical activity among adults and obesity for people of all ages have been identified as the chief public health issues in the United States, it is impossible to overstate how important local parks and recreation is. Recent research shows that structured planned activities help adolescents to develop a sense of intrinsic motivation and initiative in other aspects of their lives.

### Best of the Best – Close to Home

Montgomery County Trail System. Fort Washington State Park. Morris Arboretum. The Wissahickon. Philadelphia sports, arts, & culture. Cisco Park. School District of Springfield Township. Golf. Swimming. Community Festivals.

In an effort to leverage its programs and services, the Parks & Recreation Department collaborates with many community organizations including youth sports, service clubs, schools, sponsors of programs, businesses and others in facilitating community services.

## Recreation Trends

**P**ublic recreation trends are those changes that go beyond fads and that have affected society so much that they are now a part of our culture. Trends include the following:

### Public Recreation: Important Tool for Social Change

- Today public recreation is viewed by major forces at regional, state and federal levels as a means to achieve important public policy objectives including the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, state tourism and economic development agencies, anti-crime agencies, and environmental organizations.
- Programs and activities that directly affect the health of the residents of the community, and the minimum support required to maintain those services, is becoming a principle mission of a public park and recreation agency. The focus of public parks and recreation is becoming directed towards essential and fundamental life and health services, not only community vitality and enrichment.

### Participation Trends

- Nearly half of all Americans say they spend time together outdoors at least once a month. Recreation is important to families with young children.
- Today, 66% of all Americans recreate outdoors monthly. In 1994 only 50% did.
- In 1971, fewer than one out of 27 girls participated in high school sports. By 2004, that figure increased to more than one out of three.
- Emerging sports include lacrosse and rugby. Even cricket is beginning to appear in southeastern Pennsylvania.
- Sports are played throughout four seasons, including soccer year-round.
- Today's empty nesters with extensive free time, unprecedented good health and solid retirement plans, are indulging in active lifestyles that are well beyond rocking chairs, front porches, and bingo. There is a mismatch between what retirees are looking for and what society provides.
- The first of the Baby Boomers will turn 65 in 2011! They represent the major planning challenge for parks and recreation. They will be more active, well educated, and healthier than previous generations and will most likely be more involved in recreational pursuits. This is especially true in Springfield Township. The sheer number of baby boomers will require more facilities and services than did previous generations of people over the age of 60.



- Generation X'ers (born 1964-1980) have launched the development of new activities such as in-line skating and snowboarding.
- Gen M (born 1985 forward) is the Media generation. Citizens in this age group are exposed to 8.5 hours of electronic media daily. This includes 2.5 hours in which they are "multi-tasking" with two or more media sources.

### Favorite Activities<sup>1</sup>

**Top Four Activities:** The top four activities of all Americans are watching television, reading, socializing with family and friends, and shopping. While these have been the top activities for decades, what has changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is that the amount of television watching and reading are down, people are spending more time hanging out with friends and family.

- **Next Tier Activities:** Comparison of the activities that ranked five through 11 in preference in 1990 and 2000 is shown below:<sup>2</sup>

1990	2000
Gardening	Using computers
Swimming	Rest & relaxation
Walking	Housekeeping
Eating out	Eating at home
Rest & relaxation	Eating out
Sewing & Knitting	Watching spectator sports
Church Activities	Reading the newspaper

- **Top Ten Active Recreation Activities of Men and Women<sup>3</sup>:**

Men	Women
Golf	Walking
Basketball	Aerobics
Walking	Exercise
Jogging	Biking
Biking	Jogging
Lifting weights	Basketball
Football	Lifting weights
Hiking	Golf
Fishing	Swimming
Hunting	Tennis

<sup>1</sup> Leisure Trends Group. Facts on Leisure Trends. <http://www.leisuretrends.com>. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Leisure Trends Group.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Leisure Trends Group

### Springfield Township Recreation Participation and Interest

The public opinion survey found that respondents' top recreation activities include special events (55%) and exercise and fitness (54%). The following list presents participation rates for all activity types listed in rank order:

- Special events – 55%
- Exercise & fitness – 54%
- Recreational swimming – 32%
- Winter sports – 30%
- Non-league sports – 28%
- Performing arts – 25%
- Township sponsored sports – 25%
- Private community sports leagues – 24%
- Nature study – 23%
- Adult classes – 21%
- Summer recreation camps – 17%
- Arts & crafts – 17%

The following list shows the activities in which they would like to participate in rank order:

- Adult classes – 32%
- Nature study – 25%
- Exercise and fitness – 23%
- Performing arts – 23%
- Recreational swimming – 22%

### Active Recreation's Competition

- **Activities with high participation by younger ages include the following:**
  - Movies – especially young, singles and women
  - Computers – young, singles
  - Socializing – by both males and females
  - Health clubs – young, less affluent and male
  - Video and Computer games, musical instruments and dedicated listening to music.

### Natural Resource Protection and Stewardship Trends

- The President's Commission: Americans Outdoors<sup>4</sup> issued a report that stated that the protection of natural resources and open space was the first priority for the future. Public recreation is positioned to lead in land stewardship because collectively they are often one of the largest land managers in a community. Because public recreation professionals tend to be activity serv-

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<sup>4</sup> President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. (1987) *Americans Outdoors: The Legacy, The Challenge*. Washington D.C. U.S. Department of the Interior.



ices oriented and because they have not formulated an environmental ethic to guide decision making, anti-land stewardship dilemmas result. "Our philosophy must be grounded by ecological principles, not in merchant values".

- Linking parks together with green corridors and trails and linking public transportation systems with trails, parks, and recreation facilities. Much of the new park land acquisition that is desired today appears to be of this type: developing linear green spaces designed to link people using foot and bicycle transportation to parks, to shopping, to other neighborhoods.



### Challenges of the Times

Despite these changes demonstrating increasing participation in recreation, new sports and activities, and a broadening of the participation base from younger males to both males and females of all ages, there is a conundrum regarding recreation. The conundrum is that obesity and the lack of physical activity in the United States is at an all-time high.<sup>5</sup> The United States Surgeon General issued a report in 1996 that physical inactivity among Americans is the number one public health issue.<sup>6</sup> Obesity costs the United States \$238 billion annually in expenses associated with diseases such as diabetes stroke and heart disease not including the cost of treating the obesity itself.<sup>7</sup>

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that public park and recreation departments have a primary role in addressing this issue. They can provide attractive and safe places for people to walk, hike, bike, and enjoy other active pursuits.

Another challenge facing both private enterprise and all arenas of public recreation is that the growing demand for facilities is outpacing availability and the resources to develop and manage new ones. Combined with rapid development in the metropolitan areas of Pennsylvania, the available open space is dwindling and land costs are escalating. Public recreation opportunities in the future may be limited because of large demand and/or tight budget constraints. There is already evidence of this with respect to sports fields and gyms.

It will become increasingly important to find creative ways of bringing recreation opportunities and facilitating healthy active lifestyles of the citizens in the

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Center for Disease Control. (1999). CDC's Guidelines for School and Community Programs Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity. <[Http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/phactag.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/phactag.htm)>.

<sup>6</sup> Surgeon General. (1996). Physical Activity and Health. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Public Health Service, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <[Http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/npai.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/npai.htm)>.

<sup>7</sup> Fox, Maggie. (1999). Obesity costs U.S. \$238 Billion A Year – Survey. Reuters: Science Headlines. <[Http://daily.news.yahoo.com/h/nm/19990916/sc/hralth\\_obesity\\_2.html](http://daily.news.yahoo.com/h/nm/19990916/sc/hralth_obesity_2.html)>.

future. Consideration needs to be given to the perception of “senior citizen” centers with respect to what will be in demand in the future. While senior centers have been in operation for many years, the trend now is to plan community recreation centers that people use throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis upon retirement.

### **Programming Shifts – Forget the Stereotypes!**

Recent research conducted into preferences of the active aging senior adult community in Montgomery County found that the old stereotype of senior adults and bingo just doesn't work anymore. When a municipality offered bingo, only one or two people attended. In a focus group of senior adults, the participants said that they wanted active fitness programs, dining and culinary arts, tours of cultural institutions, gardening programs, speakers on current events, and a network to form new relationships.

### **Springfield Recreation Trends and Issues**

Based upon key person interviews, work sessions with Township officials, the community survey, and visits to the parks, the following trends are apparent in Springfield:

- Participation in soccer is increasing.
- Lacrosse is emerging as a major sport in the area.
- Trails are highly desired by the community at large. However, there is strong resistance to trails located in “people’s back yards”.
- Nature based recreation is of great interest.
- Residents want the opportunity to participate in recreation year round.
- There is interest in opportunities beyond sports, youth and summer recreation.
- Many recreation opportunities of interest to the residents could be created in community parks, through the addition of walking paths, scenic sitting areas, amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains and pavilions.
- One of the biggest blocks to recreation opportunities is the lack of information and public awareness about them.
- The School District and the Township have facility and service issues in common with respect to community recreation: need for more gyms; the aging swimming pool and community desire for an indoor recreation center, services for households without children in the public school system, the potential for after school non-sport recreational/educational services for middle schoolers.



## Community Recreation Services in Springfield

Springfield Township operates under a program philosophy of reaching as many people in the community that would fall into the category of families with children. This philosophy is rooted in a number of factors:

1. The reality of the demands on township services for youth, outdoor, summer recreation and sports by the citizens
2. Limited staff time of one full-time director and part-time recreation staff.
3. Facilities that include parks and outdoor recreation facilities, access to school buildings during non-school hours, and no dedicated indoor recreation facilities.
4. The intent to provide a mix of active and passive programs; inclusive and welcoming to people of all abilities; cost recovery, and to include all who wish to participate regardless of ability to pay.

The department delivers its recreation programs and services in a way that insure quality not quantity, a sound approach to public service. In addition to directly providing programs, the department facilitates services provided by other community groups as well as private sector enterprises. The Parks & Recreation Department offers about 50 *scheduled* programs and events annually.

### Parks and Recreation Municipal Program Inventory

**Tables 14** and **15** present the program inventory for the public recreation programs and services for Springfield Township. The inventory is presented in tabular form, organized around seven elements: program, age group, gender, activity classification, activity format, season, participation numbers and comments. The chart depicts organized schedule programs. In addition to these programs, facilities such as the county bike trails offer citizens the opportunity to pursue their own recreational activities on their own.

**Program** – Title of program.

**Gender** – Males, females, both, or both/emphasis on one gender.

**Age Group** – Target age group for the program.

**Classification** – The classification system presents a grouping of activities according to the functional areas of recreation. The number of activities is vast. Classifying activities by functional area provides a simple



method of coding activity into a system that is easily understood. It guides measuring the balance and variety of the total services of the agency.

**Format** – Format expresses the idea of what form the leisure experience takes. Program formats are tools for offering a variety of experiences within activities. Formats include: self-improvement, competition, social, participant-spectator, and self-directed. For example, “soccer” could include league play, a trip to a soccer game, or volunteerism through coaching.

**Season** – Springfield Township uses a three “season” programming schedule: Summer, Spring, and Fall/Winter. Springfield focuses mainly on spring and summer recreation.

**Comment** – Information about the program such as number of sessions, weeks etc.

**Inventory Key**

The Program Inventory offers a significant database for program planning. With 28 factors and 48 organized programs, the data need to be focused on summary types of information. For this reason, the data are organized in **Tables 14** and **15**. While program data can be sorted in a variety of ways, the tables are consolidated according to the above noted program elements. **Table 14** shows the key to the programs in **Table 15**.

Table 14 Key to Springfield Program Inventory										
Age Group		Class		Format		Gender		Season		Number
C	Children: pre-school	A	Arts	S	Social	F	Female	F/W	Sept.	# of participants
Y	Youth 5-14 Yrs.	C	Crafts	SI	Self Improvement	M	Male		Through February	
T	Teens 15-17 Yrs.	Dc	Dance	C	Competitive	B	Both			
A	Adults 18+ Yrs.	Dr	Drama	PS	Participant/ Spectator			Sp	March through May	
SC	Senior Citizens	E	Environ.	SD	Self-Directed					
F	Families	F	Fitness					S	June through August	
		Mt	Mental							
		Ms	Music							
		Sp	Sports							
		So	Social							
		V	Volunteer							

**Table 15**  
**Springfield Program Inventory 2006-2007**

Program	Age	Gender	Class	Format	Season	#	Comment
<b>Community Events</b>							
Concerts in the Parks	All	B	So	S	S		Five free concerts
Movies in the Parks	All	B	So	S	S		Two free outdoor movies
Montgomery County Senior Games	A – 50+	B	So,C	S,C	S		4 days of fun and competition
Discount Ticket Sales	All	B	So	SD	All		Amusement parks, Zoo, Water parks, Movie tickets, Aquarium
<b>Sports &amp; Fitness Programs</b>							
Lacrosse Clinic	Y,T	M, F	S	S,SI	S		
Softball Clinic	Y,T	F	S	S,SI	S,F	40	\$30
Summer Fun Softball	Y,T	F	S	S,SI,C		15	\$55
Recreational Softball	Y,T	F	S	S,SI,C	S	135	\$55
Football Camp	Y,T	M	S	S,SI	S,F	30	\$75
Lacrosse Camp - boys	Y,T	B	S	SI	F	17	\$70
Lacrosse Camp - girls	Y,T	F	S	Si	S	70	\$75
Baseball Camp	Y,T	M, F	S	Si	S		
Basketball - girls	Y,T	F	S	S,SI,C	S,FW	15	\$75
Basketball - boys	Y	M	S	S,SI,C	S,FW	33	\$75
Basketball Clinics	Y	M,F	S	S,SI,C	FW	80	\$40
Youth Basketball	Y,T	M,F	S	S,SI,C	FW	161	\$65
Travel basketball	Y	M,F	S	S,SI,C	FW	50	\$120
Roller Hockey	Y,T	M	S	S,SI,C	S	24	\$55
Field Hockey	Y,T	F	S,FW	S,SI,C	S,FW	65	\$75, More popular in fall.
Cheerleading	Y,T	F	S	S,SI	S		New. Tried, no go
Soccer	Y,T	M, F	S	S,SI,C	S	115	\$65-75 Two sessions
UK Elite Soccer Camp	Y,T	M, F	S	S,SI,C	S	20	\$80
Pee Wee Soccer	C	M, F	S	S,SI	FW	205	\$25
Youth Soccer	Y	M, F	S	S,SI,C	FW	410	\$40
<b>Sports &amp; Fitness Programs continued</b>							
Golf Clinic	Y,T	B	S	S,SI	S,FW	14	\$150
Tennis	Y,T	B	S	S,SI	S	32	\$105
Larry Hyde Tennis	Y,T	B	S	S,SI	S	17	\$140
Kids in Motion	Y,T	B	S	S,SI	S	26	\$115
Karate	Y,T	B	S	S,SI	Sp,FW	43	\$55.
Cardio Blast							\$110. Tried, no go.
Twisters Yoga							New
<b>Educational/Recreational</b>							
Rock & Roll Camp	Y,T	B	Ms	S,SI	S		
School of Rock	YT	B	Ms	S,SI	S,FW	6	\$290
Mad Science Camp	Y	B	Mt	SI	S	40	\$140
Kids Klubhouse	C,Y	B	All	All	S	106	\$210 Six week program, four days/ wk
College Prep SAT Camp	T	B	Mt	SI	S	\$200	New. Three sessions.
<b>The Arts</b>							
Creative Arts	Y	B	A	SI	FW	31	\$75
<b>TOTALS</b>							
						1911	Total registered 2006
						1894	Total registered 2005
						1789	Total registered 2004

Sources Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Department interviews and reports.

### Chart Highlights

There are a number of key points to note about the Springfield Program Inventory. These include information about participants, classification, and service to clients.

- **Participants** – The participation numbers reflect a single registration by an individual for a program. It does not include multiple visits by one client for most of the programs. The numbers shown do not include spectators. With multiple visits and the spectators factored in, the volume of service and the real numbers become very large. Participants have been increasing annually since 2004.
- **Program Numbers** – The Township sponsors about 50 programs annually.
- **Large Scale Programming** – What the chart does not reflect is the enormity of many of the programs. Large-scale programs such as the concerts, movies, and Kids Club all require many hours of planning, volunteer coordination, event management, security, coordination, financial management and customer service.
- **Classification** – The program classification is focuses primarily on sports and fitness with an emphasis on teaching participants how to play and act in community sports.
- **Service to Clients** – The programs are targeted to both males and females and is gender specific when appropriate.
- **Location** – Most of the programs are held outdoors. Indoor programs are offered at facilities that are not owned by the Township including faith based institutions, schools, and commercial enterprises.
- **Partnerships** – Several programs are the product of partnerships that the municipality formed with other providers. This enables the small staff to leverage their hours for additional services and programming expertise that would not be possible to provide with municipal staff alone. Partnering with commercial recreation-related enterprises has the added benefit of providing uniquely qualified specialists that serve as recreation leaders in community recreation programs. A major benefit to the commercial partners is that the Township advertises their programs in the community recreation guides. This helps community businesses to gain public visibility through direct mailing to households.

## Recreation Partners

Springfield Township School District. Christ Lutheran Church. Cardio Blasters. Twisters Yoga. Sound Stage School of Music. Fire Company. Rotary Club. Flourtown Erdenheim Enhancement Association. Springfield Soccer Association. Oreland Wyndmoor Little League. Spartan Lacrosse Club. Holy Martyrs. Springfield Township Free Library. Flourtown Erdenheim Little League. St. Genevieve's CYO. Springfield Aquatics. Upper Dublin's Epi-Center.

## Program Growth

Programs have been increasing in number of programs and in participation. In 2005, the township's program guide was only a slim newsletter. In 2007, the guide is a 20-page two color glossy publication.

## Facility Rentals

The public can rent township picnic pavilions. This enables citizens to plan and schedule their own social outings. When the facilities are not reserved, they are available for use on a drop-in basis without charge. The picnic pavilion rentals are popular. The township issues permits with a fee for special events.

## Other Recreation Providers

Springfield residents are fortunate to have a number of recreation service providers in addition to the municipal park and recreation services. The role of the Township is to work in cooperation with the other providers and to facilitate their programming wherever possible. A host of community groups contribute to parks and recreation including the sports organizations, the Springfield Township School District, and the civic associations.

## Organized Sports

Springfield Township has organized community sports groups for soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball and swimming and diving. These groups include the following:

**Springfield Soccer** serves about 366 boys and girls ages eight through fourteen. The group has a spring season and a fall season. The participation fee is \$115 per season. Participation is increasing. Due to limited field availability, league play starts at age eight. If additional fields were available, younger players could be accommodated.



**Oreland Wyndmoor Little League** provides tee ball, machine pitching, minors, majors, junior, and senior leagues for boys and girls ages five through 12 and for boys ages 13 through 16. The majority of league play operates in the spring and summer. The Little League Divisions offer a fall program for one to four teams. League fees range from \$40 to \$100 with most paying \$90. The league reports increasing participation.

**Springfield Aquatic Club** uses the high school pool for practice and competition for 220 participants. The league fee is \$145. The pool has recently been renovated.

**St. Genevieve's CYO offers field hockey, softball, football and track.** Field hockey, softball, and football have about 20 participants each. The track team is large with 75v participants.

### **Free Library of Springfield Township**



Established in 1966, the library is committed to serving as “a community center for lifetime learning”. In addition to lending books, the library serves as a hub of community activities. The activities are wide ranging and diverse including crafts, lectures, book clubs, social events, a teen focus, health and fitness support and special events. Providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the library would increase its use and opportunities for more residents to use the library services.

### **Springfield School District**

The Springfield School District is vital to community recreation. The District offers interscholastic and intramural sports, clubs, and events related to educational services. The community aquatics programming includes instructional swimming, competitive swimming and diving. At one time there was an Adult Evening School that is now defunct.

### **EPI-Center**

Located in Upper Dublin Township, the EPI-Center is the hub of activity for active senior citizens. Springfield Township contributes an annual fee for township senior adults to participate. Operating Monday through Friday, the center offers activities, special events, education, fitness, trips, health and wellness support. Springfield Township contributes \$3,000 annually to Upper Dublin for township residents to be able to use the EPI-Center.

### **Community Organizations**

Community organizations such as the fire companies and civic associations provide major community events such as festivals and celebrations.



## Recreation Opportunity Analysis

### Strengths

- Springfield Township has a long history of providing community recreation services.
- Community sports groups provide important public service in terms of sports leagues for children.
- The school district provides recreational opportunities such as aquatics, sports fields, and indoor facilities for recreational use.
- The Parks & Recreation Department provides recreation programs that cover their direct costs. At the same time, the programs are affordable.
- The department tries new, innovative programs every programming season.
- The department has a collaborative working relationship with other recreation providers and recreation-based businesses. One of the most important is the partnership with Upper Dublin for use of the EPI-Center by senior adults from Springfield.
- Springfield Township's recreation programs serve as a springboard for lifelong leisure interests. They provide basic choices for citizens to experience a variety of activities. Then they can continue to enjoy the activities, pursue them at a higher level in other venues, or move onto another choice. Participation in activities in youth sets the stage for lifelong leisure engagement.
- The special events that are provided by community groups are important aspects of the quality of life here. Having these done by volunteers and partners is a great benefit to the township.
- Programs in the area such as Adult Evening School in Cheltenham enable township residents to participate in programs of interests such as adult enrichment that are not available in Springfield.
- The area is rich with recreation opportunities such as Fort Washington State Park, the Montgomery County Bike Path, Fairmount Park, and venues in the City of Philadelphia.



### Challenges

- Springfield Township's organized programs are traditionally focused on youth, outdoors, summer and sports.
- Diversification into new program areas would enable citizens with varied interests access to other recreation opportunities such as environmental programs, fitness and wellness, and programs for citizens of all ages.
- The lack of indoor recreation facilities limits year round recreation opportunities.
- Recreation facilities such as places to walk and cycle safely would provide a major opportunity for citizens to engage in the top recreational preferences. The trend nationwide is more towards self-directed recreation rather than on only programmed, scheduled organized activities.
- The limited amount of parkland restricts close to home recreation opportunities.
- Township recreation staff has a finite time capacity for planning, program delivery and evaluation. In order to add programs and services, more staff would be needed. Fortunately programs and services produce revenues that help to support costs.

### Opportunities

- The formal designation of the department as a full-time operation enables the township to grow its services commensurate with the caliber and size of Springfield Township.
- Serving a broader base of citizens would benefit the community. This would include adults, families, pre-schoolers, and tweens and a wider range of opportunities such as the arts, music, fitness and wellness, and nature.
- Making registration more convenient would enhance public service.



- Adjusting hours of programs, especially in the summer and on school holidays would benefit working parents. Offering a custodial type of summer camp program in addition to the Kidz Klubhouse could help working parents. Improve the parks for more camp-like facilities for summer recreation such as shade.
- Exploring, developing, and enhancing planning and procedures for programs would streamline operations.

## Recommendations

- Develop a three-year program management plan. Adopt the mantra of “Quality, Quality, Quality” for every aspect of recreation opportunities in this plan.
- Focus on customer management rather than on the products and services. The customers should drive the program.
- Adopt a formula of 50 percent repeat programs, 30 percent seasonal programs and 20 percent new programs annually.
- Conduct on-going needs assessment of the community. Use focus groups to explore customer needs and wishes.
- Join PRPS, NRPA and LERN in order to track trends and keep services up to date, better yet: in anticipation of customer preferences.
- Recognize that this small department cannot be all things to all people. Focus on existing customers for now and increase services to those customers. Therefore, focus on the following client groups:
  - Families and Youth
  - Tweens – to be added with additional staff
  - Empty Nesters – to be added with additional staff
- Explore how to enhance customer service
  - Credit card registration
  - Internet registration
  - Hours of programs to serve community needs such as working parents, programs on Sunday afternoons
  - Evaluate every program to determine how to improve it.
  - Include testimonials in the evaluation process to use in advertising the department. Add a for request permission to use the quotes.
- Consider generating additional revenues through programs and activities. Use the following formula in setting program fees:
  - Production costs: 45%
  - Promotion costs: 15%
  - Administrative costs: 35%
  - Net: 5%
- Set prices for programs competitively. Consider what the citizens are used to paying. If an increase is warranted, increase the program price by up to 14 percent without changing the program; test out a price increase of 15-24 percent; add new features to a program with a price increase of 25 – 49 percent; and create a whole new program if an increase of 50 percent is needed.

- Develop a three-year marketing plan to increase public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities. Build a strong case for the importance of recreation services in filling an important role in the community. Create a logo that will be used on every surface used by the department from paper to trucks. Segment the department's market into the customer service areas recommended above.

## Management and Financing

Springfield Township supports parks and recreation as an essential public service. This chapter explores operations and financing of the community parks and recreation system with an eye toward building support through a mix of public and private resources and enhanced management systems.



**T**he Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Department manages a vast array of complex and challenging functions. Every day, the department performs a myriad of tasks and handles multiple projects. These include the planning and delivery of programs and services; park planning; park maintenance; budget management; citizen response; and risk management. The scope of management responsibilities ranges from helping a Boy Scout earn a badge to orchestrating major park improvements.

A parks and recreation management team requires expertise and a diverse set of skills to manage the complexities of an ever-changing and demanding world. Successful systems are rooted in effective management. While it is important to do things right, it is even more important to do the right things. Determining where to spend the level of effort and allocate appropriate resources to benefit the entire citizenry is essential.

### **Purpose of the Management and Financing Assessment**

The purpose of the management and financing assessment was to review how parks and recreation is planned, managed, directed and financed in terms of meeting community goals and with respect to municipal resources. The assessment addressed organizational structure, staffing, public involvement, partnerships, information management, maintenance, and budget with revenues sources.

## Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

The Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is the chief method for citizen involvement in municipal parks and recreation. The purpose of the board is to recommend to the Board of the Commissioners policies and procedures that will encourage year-round active and passive recreation programs for all township residents; to coordinate township recreation activities with those provided by other organizations so as to unify a township recreation program under the leadership of the township's Recreation Director. The board meets monthly. The public is invited to attend the meetings and provide their input. The Advisory Board recommends policy and the Board of Commissioners sets policy while taking the board's recommendation under advisement. The board has seven members with a three years term of office. The School District appoints two members. The Board of Commissioners appoints five members. The Parks & Recreation Director serves as secretary is non-voting. The Board of Commissioners is a non-voting participant. Represented by their official liaison. Special sub-committees may be appointed by the board. The Commissioners may also appoint a representative of the Friends of Hillcrest Park to serve as an advisor concerning issues related to Hillcrest Park.

## Parks & Recreation Management

Springfield Township operated with a part-time parks and recreation director for many decades until January 2008 when this position was made full-time. This was a monumental step forward for public recreation in Springfield Township.

### Goals and Objectives for Springfield Township Recreation

The three major goals for parks and recreation include:

- A. To make use of all public and private facilities and activities as a means to accomplish the major goal of bringing people together to know and understand each other; to develop a healthy union of mind and body; and
- B. To operate, to the extent possible, recreation programs of a self-sustained basis; and
- C. To coordinate the use of Township-owned play areas with play fields and school facilities owned by the School District in order to maximize the use of publicly owned property that is adaptable for recreational use.



## **Role of the Director**

The Director is responsible for the operations and management of recreation, park planning and maintenance coordination. While the Director was hired on a part-time basis with primarily a program emphasis, responsibilities expanded well beyond this framework, setting the foundation for the transition into a full-time position. The director manages and coordinates all functional areas of parks and recreation. This includes recreation programs and services, park planning, budget and finance, outreach and promotion, sports league facilitation, policy recommendations and implementation, grant pursuits and all aspects of daily functions. He also sits on the Springfield Township Open Space Board, works on trail initiatives, oversees maintenance through coordination with the Public Works Department, and fosters School District collaboration.

## **Support Staff Roles**

Two administrative assistants support departmental operations. These positions are shared with other municipal departments. They provide customer assistance; process registrations; assist with the production and distribution of the program guide; and support program planning, development, and implementation. The administrative assistant is also responsible for accounting, deposits and vendor payments.

## **Seasonal Staff**

The Parks & Recreation Department contracts with program instructors for specialized programs such as sports camps, winter recreation, and instructional programs. Contracting enables the Department to retain top-notch experienced professionals such as the school district sports teams' coaches and private sector business owners in activities such as martial arts. The Department hires seasonal part-time staff for programs such as the Kidz Clubhouse. About 40 part-time seasonal staff and contractors serve the department annually.

## **Public Works Department**

The Public Works Department provides park maintenance. The directors of the Public Works and the Park and Recreation Departments have a collaborative working relationship. Park maintenance staff wages are in the Public Works budget while the Parks and Recreation budget contains funding for park maintenance materials and supplies.

## Township Unmet Functions

Public parks and recreation has a broad set of mandates. These mandates are related to the health, safety and welfare of the citizenry. Trends and issues that have impacted parks and recreation include legal requirements, potential litigation, risk management, the aging of the population, custodial care issues of youth participants, obesity as the number one public health issue, dramatic loss of open space, need to generate alternative revenue sources, increasing participation in sports, life-time leisure interests beyond sports alone, natural resource conservation, planning, and formalizing management systems.

### Need for Policy and Operating Procedure Development

Full-time departments have the expertise and time required to develop policies, procedures and guides that contribute to the professionalism and accountability of a public parks and recreation option. These include: creation of a data base for participants; facility scheduling procedures; facility use policies; a public recognition system including a logo; press packages; real-time WEB site functions; maintenance management program; personnel policy manual; operations manuals; seasonal and part-time staff orientation and training; orientation and training for Park & Recreation Board members; and coordination for county and regional park and recreation planning projects such as open space conservation and trail and greenway planning. A function of a full-time director would be to develop a multi-year strategic plan for identified functional areas such as programming, park planning, maintenance, a municipal revenue strategy and others. A director typically works on polices and procedures as a major element of management responsibilities, updating these as needed. An example of a policy that was developed and implemented in 2007 was the Background and Criminal Checks policy for those associated with township youth programs. Policies that are needed include the following:

- Gifts and Donations
- Naming of parks and facilities
- Fees and charges
- Revenue
- Cash Management and Deposits
- Rules & Regulations
- Park Closure and Notification Procedures
- Use of township facilities
- Field permitting and usage/field use sanctioning
- Staff training manuals
- Staff personnel policies
- Volunteerism

*I think the Township does a good job with the resources we have. I favor expanding our recreational facilities with the hope of enhancing the health and welfare of all of our citizens including our seniors.*

**Springfield Township  
Survey Respondent**



## Maintenance Management

Park maintenance is a joint function of the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. The Parks & Recreation Director oversees park maintenance tasks such as field maintenance, field preparation, rehabilitation projects, tree work, emergency repairs, and safety audits.

The Public Works Department provides the maintenance staff. Two of the department's employees are certified as Playground Safety Inspectors. The Parks and Recreation Director has this certification as well. The Township places a strong importance on playground safety as evident in having three certified employees and in their conduct of inspections on Saturday mornings when staff can focus on this important task without distraction of competing tasks. The Public Works Department conducts all capital improvement projects that are done with township forces. The Parks & Recreation Director manages outside contracts such as the mowing contract for township parks. The Department has established some policies with positive results such as the standardization of equipment such as playground equipment. The Public Works Department provides a monthly report to the Parks & Recreation Department regarding park maintenance.

## Risk Management

Springfield Township is a founding member of the Delaware Valley Insurance Trust (DVIT). DVIT is actively involved in helping its municipal members provide full municipal services with reduced exposure to risk and litigation. The trust conducts annual safety inspections of the parks and recreation facilities with the Parks & Recreation Director, offers advice and suggestions on enhancing safety and eliminating hazardous conditions and provides feedback on potential park and recreation facility plans. Park planning that would depart from traditional park elements should go through DVIT for review and feedback. This would include Sandy Run Park which includes a former quarry. DVIT has assisted municipalities with grants to develop formalized maintenance management systems.

The most effective means to reduce exposure to liability is through the establishment of a formalized maintenance management program. This program would set forth in writing the policies and procedures to plan, direct, control, evaluate, monitor and report all actions regarding park maintenance. Written and filed documentation either manually or through a computer software program serves as the municipal record regarding the action taken on park maintenance as well as what remediation was done to correct problems in the parks. A formalized maintenance management system provides information on which to make decisions such as staffing, fees and charges, partnership agreements and allocation of human and financial resources. A formalized system facilitates transitions through the inevitable changes in management, personnel, and elected and appointed officials.

**Future Directions**

**Part-time to Full-Time Operation**

Springfield Township has been operating at maximum levels given the part-time nature of the department for decades until the 2008 designation of the director’s position as full-time. It is important to note several points:

- Having a full-time Director of Parks & Recreation is a major positive step forward for Springfield Township.
- Making the department full-time in 2008 is responsive to public opinion found in this plan that citizens favor an increased commitment to parks and recreation by the township.
- Although the director was part-time until 2008, it is likely that his workload and job performance was more in line with full-time hours. Expectations regarding the extent of additional output and service need to be mitigated by the understanding that the part-time job products were more in line with full-time hours.

Program staff additions could help to generate more revenues as shown in the **Table 16**, comparisons with similar operations. Over time the following additional positions should be established: Program Coordinator(s), an Operations Professional, and a Marketing Coordinator. These could be part time positions to be phased in to full-time over time as the results of their labor result in additional public services and revenues. By adding program staff, the director would be able to focus on projects, facilities and planning. **Figure 3** presents the ideal organizational structure. This organizational structure is a goal to work towards by adding a mix of staff resources including full-time, part-time, seasonal and contract employees as the programs and revenues grow over the next ten years.

**Phasing In Staff**

It is essential to note that this is a ten-year plan.

Phasing in staff as the Parks & Recreation Department becomes broader based and reflective of the size of Springfield Township over time is essential to the plan. Not everything can be accomplished at once. Changes are incremental. Staff can be added in steps moving from part time and seasonal to full time. Customer service staff can be placed from part time peak hours to more full-time year round commensurate with services and facilities.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are important to every parks and recreation department. They are heavily involved in Springfield Township in the sports leagues. Citizen volunteers for facilities, programs and services such as the Friends of Hillcrest Park, organized sports, special events and park improvements. The Erdenheim and Wyndmoor Civic Associations and the Fire Companies also provide major community festivals. This is an important service as 55 percent of the survey respondents indicated that participation in special events is their most preferred recreation activity.

There is no formal method for recruiting, training supporting, recognizing and tracking volunteer time. Volunteers include: the Parks & Recreation Board, community sports organizations, Eagle Scouts, and the Plan Study Committee. Volunteers undertake projects in to use their expertise or contribute to bettering their community.

It is important to stress here is that volunteers are not free. They require time, supervision, training, monitoring and recognition. Given the small staff of the Parks & Recreation Department, volunteerism should be restricted to large organized groups who can take on and carry out projects independently. The exception would be Eagle Scouts who are capable of independent responsible work. Too often volunteer projects become the responsibility of the director and staff. There is not enough staff in the Parks & Recreation Department to have a formal volunteer program much less track volunteer hours. An extensive volunteer program would require dedicated staff time from additional personnel not currently available. Such a program could be phased in over time as the department becomes full-time, year round and is adequately staffed. Volunteerism is an area that requires policy formulation. Often, community volunteers will emerge for a specific project that becomes expected in the township and then the volunteer interest wanes leaving the Parks & Recreation Department to step up and assume that responsibility.

## Maintenance

The role of park maintenance could be more fully explored. A formalized park maintenance management system should be developed, implemented and computerized. Four distinct areas of maintenance could be addressed in the formalization of a maintenance management system: parks, recreation facilities, natural resources, and trails. By organizing maintenance into these areas, decision-making regarding staffing, financing, training, setting priorities and partnerships could be enhanced.

## Employee Development

A five year employee development plan should be established for

the Parks & Recreation Department staff, identified individuals in the Public Works Department, and municipal employees working on parks, recreation, natural resources and trail maintenance (e.g. the administrative assistants working in recreation programming). Consider setting a goal of allocating one percent of the respective operating budget annually for training and phase in increases to 1.5 percent then two percent over the next ten years. Keeping up with technology, trends, regulations, and all aspects of the field is an important investment.

With the director becoming full-time, an employee development plan would be especially important. Consideration should be given to formalizing a five-year schedule of attending programs such as the National Recreation & Park Association's schools for executive development, alternative revenue generation, maintenance management, and environmental stewardship. The Director's School is a two-year program that would particularly benefit Springfield Township in growing its parks and recreation department. Continuing the Public Works Department's practice of having two playground safety inspectors certified is important. Consideration should be given to additional park maintenance training such as in sports turf management and natural resources conservation. Joining KAFMO (Keystone Athletic Field Maintenance Organization) would offer management and staff additional venues for training and networking.

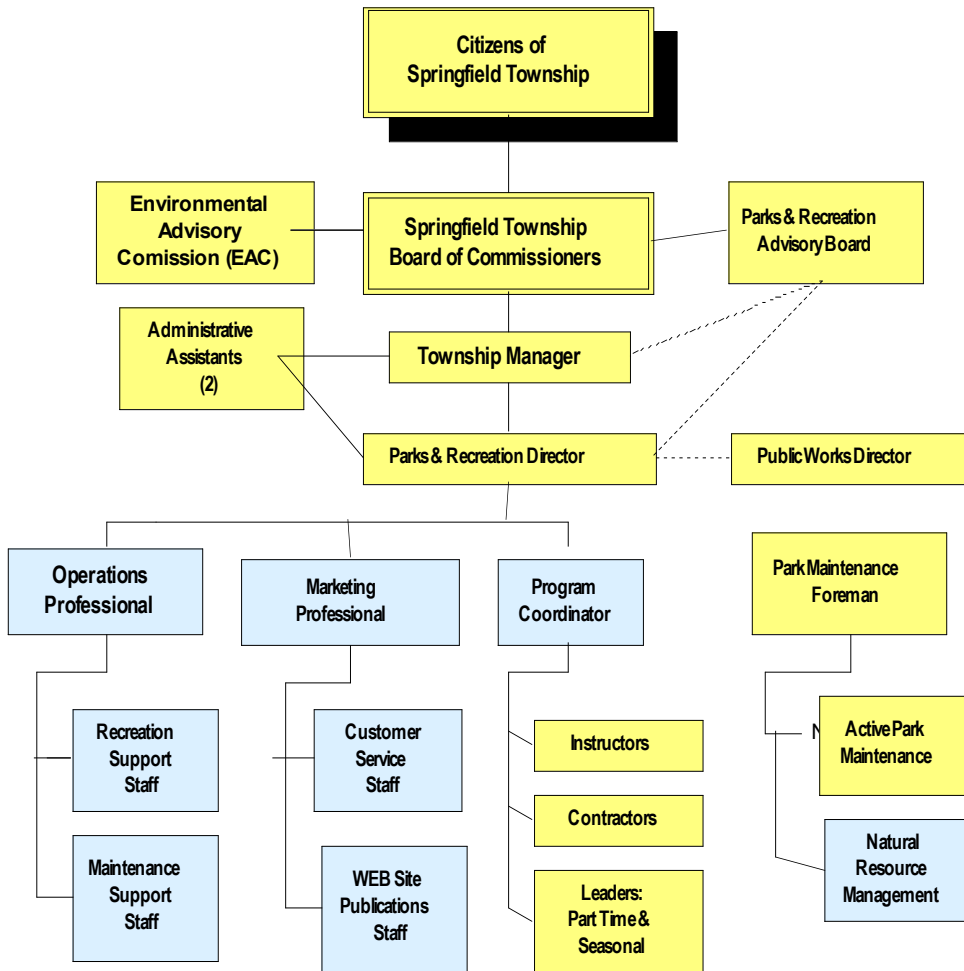
In addition to employee development, training is essential for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, especially for new members. Enrolling the Director and the board in PRPS (Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society) provides opportunities for increasing knowledge and understanding of the parks and recreation including trends. PRPS offers training and seminars that keep department current. Annually, PRPS offers citizen board training. Attendance at the annual PRPS conference and bi-annual attendance at NRPA's congress helps parks and recreation professionals keep up to date on trends, develop problem solving strategies and position their departments for excellent public service. One good idea from the conference applied back home often offsets the cost of attending the program.

### Planning

Department focus has been on immediate day-to-day operations. Actions and projects tend to be reactive to pressing issues. As a result, limited time is available to look at longer-range community needs. Operations tend to be oriented towards traditional services and facilities. With changing community characteristics such as the aging population, broadening of lifelong leisure interests, and pressing public health issues, medium and long range planning for parks and recreation is required.



**Figure 5**  
**Springfield Township Parks and Recreation**  
**Phased Long-Range Organizational Structure**



**Legend**

Existing Positions and Boards

To be phased in overtime, as warranted & revenues increase

### Information Management

Tracking information about programs, services, and all aspects of management will help to enhance accountability, decision-making and the allocation of resources. Facts and figures at hand will provide a solid basis for making informed decisions, increase customer convenience (such as providing receipts for child care expenditures for customer tax filling purposes) and decrease staff time. Annual reports should be produced. With part-time staff, the production of information tracking and reporting is not possible. These reports are crucial to creating a framework for decision-making. They help to document trends, program life cycles, community needs and interests in order to allocate resources most effectively. This should include all functional areas such as parks, programs, administration, maintenance and financing. Cost centers for parks, types of recreation facilities, problems such as unscheduled repairs and vandalism should be established. This will provide information for setting fees and charges, negotiating partnerships, establishing guidelines for public use of parks and recreation facilities, purchasing equipment, and developing alternatives that might reduce costs or provide better public service.

#### Rule of Thumb:

*If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.*

### Comparisons with Other Municipal Park & Recreation Agencies

Springfield Township has a small part-time department despite the fact that Springfield Township has nearly 20,000 residents and is the ninth largest township in Montgomery County. **Table 16** presents comparisons with similar parks and recreation operations elsewhere. The data shown are from the current statewide budget and salary survey as presented by the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society's Directory 2004. The data are the most current available.

### Case Study: Northampton Township, Bucks County

This example demonstrates how an efficient and effective programming staff with appropriate staffing hours can generate revenues that more than offset township funding.

The Northampton Township Department of Parks & Recreation serves a municipal population of about 40,000. The Township has 293 acres of parkland in six parks. The three largest parks range in size from 61 to 89 acres. An indoor community center is a basic center with a gym, activity and meeting rooms, and is not a state of the art center with an indoor pool and drop-in facilities. It does afford the opportunity for extensive indoor year round recreation programming for people of all ages and wide variety of interests. The department has been growing through expanded recreational opportunities over the past 18 years. The township covers \$500,000 of the parks & recreation budget which supports administration and park maintenance. The department raises an additional \$1.2 million in program fees and charges annually. The department operates with a director, assistant director, program manager, recreation supervisor, senior center manager, special events coordinator and four part time customer service representatives.

### Case Study: Whitemarsh Township

The purpose of this case study is to demonstrate how a department can grow by developing a foundation of targeted programs and seizing opportunities to expand parks and recreation. Whitemarsh Township has a population of 16,702. The township has seven parks with 136 acres. In **1999**, the Department had Director and a part-time administrative assistant and offered about 20 programs. The parks and recreation budget was provided by township taxes. In **2008**, Whitemarsh Township has a full-time parks and recreation director, a grant and sponsorship coordinator, three program coordinators, a full-time administrative assistant and two office assistants along with over 50 seasonal employees. The department offers about 406 program sessions annually that cover about 90 program areas ranging in participation from 12 individuals to community celebrations with about 7,000 attending. The department has won numerous statewide professional parks and recreation awards for its programs and publications in the last five years. The annual operating budget of \$880,000 is supported by the general fund and non-tax revenues of \$378,000 including \$296,000 from fees and charges, \$14,000 in rental income, \$38,000 in sponsorships (cash and non-cash donations) and \$30,000 in grants. The non-tax revenues, grants gifts and donations vary annually.

**Table 16**  
**Budget and Staffing Comparisons for Parks and Recreation Operations**

	2000 Population	Operating Budget	Parks/ acreage	FT Staff	PT & Seasonals	Vols.
<b>Montgomery County Municipalities with 15,000 – 37,000 population</b>						
<b>Springfield Township* 2008</b>	<b>19,533</b>	<b>\$415,109**</b>	<b>9/62</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>varies</b>
Value in 2000 dollars		331,460				
Hatfield Township	16,712	\$272,161	9/132	2	2	0
Plymouth Township	16,045	2,857,151	12/97 & Community Center	34	115	10
Whitpain Township	18,652	488,303	9/325	3	50	0
Pottstown Borough	21,236	700,331	15/150	8	175	10
Cheltenham Township	36,875	1,76,633	25/450	10	120	100
Norristown Township	30,749	166,954	8/113	1	30	12
Upper Dublin Township	25,878	1,253,326	38/540	10	152	100
Upper Merion Township	25,722	1,500,000	24/300	2	154	100
Upper Moreland Township	25,313	1,046,085	18/280	8	120	varies
<b>Bucks County Municipalities with 15,000 – 44,000 population</b>						
Doylestown Township	17,619	\$480,549	5/149	2	16	5
Lower Southampton Township	19,860	300,000	8/170	1	17	0
Newtown Township	18,206	499,195	14/306	1	3	0
Upper Southampton Township	15,764	510,579	4/200	1	7	25
Horsham Township	21,200	562,125	19/810	6	7	0
Falls Township	34,997	1,496,044	13/409	2	25	25
Middletown Township	44,141	740,385	19/220	1	55	0
Northampton Township	39,384	1,359,198	5/219	7	86	0
Warminster Township	32,832	1,046,085	13/410	6	74	5

\* Springfield Township did not participate in this PADCNr- PRPS Survey \*\* 2008 Budget

## Management Analysis

In a time of increasing accountability from all levels of government, decision-makers, staff and citizens alike expect efficient and effective operating systems. In a community the caliber of Springfield Township with nearly 20,000 residents, providing professional year-round full-time parks and recreation management is a foremost consideration.

### Management Strengths

**Accomplishments Relative to Investment** – The Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Department has been able to sustain basic recreation services targeted towards youth, summer and outdoor recreation for several decades. In addition, the Township has provided assistance to community sports organizations who offer league sports to township children and youth.

**School District Support** – The Springfield School District provides extensive support in terms of facility use for community recreation and the offer of future collaborative programming efforts.

**Volunteer Support** – Volunteers provide a range of services from park support to community sports leagues. The volunteers provide thousands of volunteer hours.

**Staffing and Municipal Collaboration** – Springfield Township has dedicated staff and management that maximize the level of investment in community recreation and parks. The inter-municipal relationships among township management, staff and municipal departments are very effective, positive and apparent.

### Management Challenges

**“Brain Trust” information and procedures could be lost** – Operations are mainly carried in the minds and hearts of staff and management. Formalizing operations through written workload cost tracking and other information systems need to be put into place to optimize current operations and provide continuity throughout future changes in township staff and management.

**Volume of Work Involved** – Springfield Township Parks & Recreation Department has an extraordinarily high workload with high visibility and a small staff. The Department is responsible for more than the original parameters of a part time seasonal department targeted at summer youth programs. Park planning, maintenance coordination and oversight, grant management, partnership development, contract management, open space planning assistance and other major responsibilities are now housed in Parks and Recreation.

**Staffing**– Retaining high caliber staff is one of the most important things that Springfield Township can do to serve the community. This is done by paying an attractive salary and providing a professionally rewarding work experience. Growing the staff is the next challenge. Making the case that more program and support staff will generate more non-tax revenue and partnerships is crucial.



**Partnership Development** –Developing a strategic plan to expand partnerships should be considered for implementation over the next three to five years.

**Sense of Park Ownership** – As is the case with traditional municipal parks and recreation systems, community sports organizations preceded municipal services. Consequently, the organizations have a strong sense of ownership of the sports facilities and in fact made improvements with their own time and money. This is true in Springfield to the extent that the township requests permission to use township property. The challenge is to bring balance to park stewardship in which all park user groups are effective park stewards and understand that Springfield’s parks are community public property to be used for the overall health and welfare of the entire citizenry. Policies, procedures, facility design and programming should be formulated to achieve this balance.

**Policy Formulation**–The lack of policies in major parks and recreation areas can cause problems and generate controversy. The formulation of policies could be achieved with full-time staff.

**Maintenance** – Formalizing the maintenance management system should be undertaken. Providing real-time information about workload cost tracking will enhance accountability, improve decision-making, help direct the allocation of resources effectively, and serve as the foundation for fees, charges, partnerships sponsorships and so on.

**Administrative Space** – The physical space that houses parks and recreation management is small.

**Financing** – All of these factors are related to the budget and policies related to municipal tax support, alternative non-tax funding, partnerships, sponsorships and fees and charges. Municipal investment is relatively low and sufficient investment needs to be made in order to deal with the other related issues.

### Management Opportunities

Two major opportunities lie in management: the establishment of the full time recreation department and opportunity to develop a formalized maintenance management system.

- The focus on parks and recreation over the next ten years will be on growing the department in all areas: services, parkland, recreation facilities, public awareness, citizen support, and financial support.
- Institutionalizing the fine work done in park maintenance to insure that it endures through changes in staff, management, and elected and appointed officials.

### Management Recommendations

- Designate the position of parks and recreation director to be focused on planning, directing, controlling and evaluation municipal parks and recreation. Strive to transfer the hands-on daily operational tasks to operational staff. About 60 percent of the director’s time should be spent on planning and out-

reach to build support, partnerships and awareness of parks and recreation, 20 percent should be spent on program and facility projects, and 20 percent on administrative functions.

- Establish a formalized maintenance management system with written/computerized workload cost tracking.
- Purchase software for parks and recreation management functions.
- Plan for expansion of administrative space to accommodate additional staff in the future.
- Use the strategic management approach in **Table 17** as the model for Springfield Township’s Parks and Recreation Department.

<b>Table 17</b>	
<b>Conventional Management vs. Strategic Management for Parks and Recreation</b>	
Conventional Management	Strategic Management
1. Maintaining the status quo	1. Change-oriented, dynamic
2. Rooted in tradition	2. Mission-oriented
3. Follows a blueprint for decision-making	3. Vision of future guides actions
4. Reactive	4. Proactive
5. “Wait and See” in ambiguous situation	5. Action-oriented, even in face of ambiguity
6. Focused on internal operations	6. Focused on customer service
7. Relies on the tried and true	7. Operates with creativity and innovation
8. Lock-step processes	8. Fluid, dynamic processes
9. Quantitative measures and facts are emphasized	9. Emphasis is on options and high quality
10. Focus on efficiency	10. Focus on effectiveness

- Add a part-time program coordinator that would eventually become full-time. Create this part-time position as soon as possible after creating a full-time director. An alternative would be to designate the current part-time administrative position in to a full-time position to handle parks & recreation daily operations.
- Phase in staff over time to reach the recommended organization structure depicted in **Figure 2**. Add staff over the next ten years to increase public service through programs and services that will be offset by non-tax revenues and alternative support such as donations fees and charges, grants, gifts, bequests and fund-raising.
- Develop a series of policies and procedures to guide decisions related to all aspects of parks and recreation. Conduct a focus group with representatives of the Board of Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Board, township management, community organizations and the Parks & Recreation Department to identify the polices and their order of development. Policy development will take years.

- Set up a dialog about collaboration on park and recreation maintenance with other partners such as the School District, sports organizations. Formalize the maintenance management system by creating a written plan including the addition of software for workload cost tracking.
- Work to recruit more partnerships and sponsorships among other public and private partners including surrounding municipalities in trails and open space conservation.
- Operate within a three year planning framework with annual goals and objectives clearly defined and resources allocated based upon the development of cost and staffing projections that would results from all major projects. Include a long-range ten-year plan for parkland, facilities and programs.
- Provide a rewarding professional experience for management and staff through competitive salaries, recognition, and a manageable workload. Establish a five-year employee development program. Budget one to two percent of the operating budget for training. This would be about \$6,000 at about two percent of the current budget. This would be a decent amount for training so crucial in the early years of the full-time department.
- Computerize as many information related functions as possible. Visit other departments to view their software and decide which systems might work best for Springfield Township. Departments to visit in the area include Plymouth, Whitmarsh and Whitpain.
- Update the WEB site to make it the “go-to” 21<sup>st</sup> century place to go for parks and recreation information. This includes getting information to the public about cancellations and changes of venue in real time.

## Financing

Financing public parks and recreation services is an investment in the quality of life in the community. Parks, recreation, trails and street trees increase property values. Municipal support for parks, recreation, sports, the arts and culture often yield large economic returns. Money generated by events, capital improvement projects and programs and services is spent several times over in the community.

The major areas to be considered in financing are capital improvements and operations. A *capital improvement budget* is used for improvements that cost more than \$10,000 and last more than five years. Such improvements include park and recreation facility development, purchase of major equipment such as trucks, or the rehabilitation of existing facilities. It could also include land acquisition. Ways to fund capital improvements include grants and gifts, fundraising, bond issues, partnerships, mandatory dedication of parkland, and loans. An *operations budget* supports the daily operation of parks and recreation. The largest category is personnel salaries, wages, and benefits. An operations budget is funded through taxes, user fees & charges, grants, gifts, donations, and sponsorships.

**Municipal Financial Philosophy**

Springfield Township has a budget philosophy rooted in a high degree of accountability, a deep sense of responsibility to the taxpayers, and a strong commitment to excellent public service. A hallmark of Springfield Township is its commitment to responding to the citizens in a direct and timely fashion. This is evident in the township’s policy in having employees answer citizen phone calls rather than having calls fielded by an automated telephone directory/menu.

The Township passed the Earned Income Tax in 2005 and as a result reduced property taxes in 2005-2008. For a home in Springfield Township with the average assessed value of \$175,400, the homeowner pays \$591.10 in property taxes, \$205.53 in refuse and about \$178.49 in water and sewer depending on usage.

**School District Option**

Pennsylvania’s Local Tax Enabling Act empowers school districts to levy Special Purpose Taxes including a tax for Parks and Playgrounds at two mills (24 P.S. 20232 of the Act).

**Capital Improvement Funds**

The Township made the far-reaching decision to purchase the Flourtown Country Club in the 1950’s for open space preservation. Today capital improvements are funded mainly through the general fund. Some of the organized sports associations have secured grant funding for park improvements such as irrigation of athletic fields. The township has been spending about \$20,000 - \$36,000 annually for park capital improvement. The following is an example of an annual capital improvement budget:

**2006 Parks and Recreation Capital Improvements**

Storage Building Improvements	\$6,000
Pave Walking Path – Cisco Park	\$10,000
Open Space Grant – Local Match	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>

The Township has no debt and no bonds for capital improvements. There are major capital improvement considerations in the Township that are receiving consideration for potential bond funding including storm water improvements and expanded space for the Library, Police and public meeting rooms. It is important to consider the overall needs of the township as a whole when planning for any one service such as parks and recreation.

**Major Grants**

**Montgomery County Open Space Program Allocation**

The Montgomery County Open Space Program is providing Springfield Township with an allocation of \$1.3 million for open space conservation. These funds will be used for:

- Veteran’s Park rehabilitation
- Wyndhill Park rehabilitation
- Cisco Park walking path and other improvements
- Oreland Park new playground and gateway
- Bysher Fields new playground and parking lot improvements
- Sandy Run Park walking trail, boardwalk, fencing, lookouts and native plantings,
- Black Horse Inn pocket park
- Oreland pocket park acquisition for storm water management

**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Grant**

PADCNR Community Partnerships Grant – Springfield Township received a grant to develop this Parks and Recreation Plan.

PADCNR is the major funding source for parks and recreation. Leveraging the township’s open space program allocation with DCNR grant funds is one way to double local parks and recreation capital funds.

**Operating Budget**

**Table 18** presents the revenue sources for the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Department. Included in this table are revenues from program fees, charges and sponsorships as well as the rental from Flourtown Country Club. **Table 19** shows the operating budget.

<b>Table 18</b>					
<b>Springfield Township Parks and Recreation</b>					
<b>Operating Revenue Sources 2003-2007</b>					
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Interest and Rents					
Flourtown Country Club*	\$85,609	84,051	\$87,843	\$77,593	\$75,000
Culture and Recreation					
Program Fees	154,747	131,329	142,567	189,225	195,400
Grants - PADCNR	0	0	0	0	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$240,356</b>	<b>\$215,380</b>	<b>\$206,267</b>	<b>266,818</b>	<b>\$270,400**</b>

\* Flourtown Country Club rental fees go into the General Fund \*\* Does not include grant that is for a one-time purpose, not for operating

**Table 19**  
**Springfield Township Parks and Recreation**  
**Operating Expenditures 2003-2007**

	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Actual
Administration	\$37,094	\$40,104	\$42,928	\$43,109	\$46,123
Maintenance & Repair Wages	26,195	41,823	18,195	17,023	25,256
Programs	113,441	78,589	81,481	113,974	124,398
General Expenses	6,927	6,919	9,752	12,126	15,081
Flourtown Country Club	0	5,455	9,102	5,026	309
Park Land	28,309	17,942	33,819	50,308	25,752
Maintenance & Repair	31,749	49,560	43,601	27,272	34,675
Mowing – contracted service	-	-	-	-	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$272,024</b>	<b>\$258,334</b>	<b>\$272,697</b>	<b>\$268,838</b>	<b>\$296,594</b>

In 2008, Springfield Township evaluated parks and recreation expenditures that were contained in the general fund rather than in the parks and recreation budget. These expenditures were for insurance, pension contributions, adjustments to salaries and wages, and trucks. The total of the parks and recreation related items in the general fund budget was \$118,515.

## Financing Analysis

### Strengths

**Operating Revenues and Expenditures Tables 18 and 19** show the following:

- Program revenues averaged about \$143,000 annually in 2003, 2004, and 2005. For these same years, the average expenditure for programs was \$91,170. These expenditures include the direct expenditures of instructor salaries, facility rental and equipment. They do not include indirect expenditures.
- Programs recover about 52 percent of the parks and recreation budget using the fiscal year of 2005 as an example. This does not include the expenditures for park maintenance that are in the Public Works budget.
- Since 2002, the Township has been increasing its financial support for parks and recreation. The Township investment in operating parks and recreation increased from 1.8 percent of the township operating budget to 1.87 percent in 2007 and 2.14 percent in 2008. This is a very favorable trend. Striving to reach national benchmarks could be a goal over the next ten years. The national average for municipal investment in parks and recreation is 3.14 percent. Nationwide, departments that were rated highly by business and industry as being favorable assets in the community receive five per cent or more of the municipal operating budget.

## Challenges

- The per-capita operating investment in Springfield Township in 2008 is about \$21.26. According to the most recent Budget and Salary Survey developed by PADCNR adjusted for 2008-dollar values, the range for per capita spending by municipal departments with populations of 15,000 to 19,999 is \$3.22 to \$206 with an average of \$33.35. These figures are statewide figures without adjustment for cost of living. For a national perspective, the per capita average is \$65.
- In 2008, \$156,500 in new and carry-over capital reserve funds were budgeted for park and recreation improvements. This does not include Flourtown Country Club capital reserve funds accrued in previous years (\$352,000) or \$77,000 for front entrance improvements appropriated in 2007. Consideration could be given to adopting a five to seven year capital improvement program for township parks, recreation facilities, greenways and trails.
- One of the challenges growing the full-time department will be to develop expense and revenue information for all factors of parks and recreation. This will help to make more informed decisions regarding the allocation of human and financial resources, policy formulation, fees and charges establishment, and in informing the public about the level of municipal investment in parks and recreation. It is typical of part-time departments to have costs spread throughout many budget categories in different departments as part-time functions are often cobbled together through various sources. This is a normal pattern of growth from part-time to full-time professional management.
  - Expenditures for park maintenance shown in **Table 19** are partial expenditures for park maintenance. The Public Works Department has two employees that work on park maintenance. Their labor costs for working in the parks are not broken out separately. The average annual hours for park maintenance by Public Works included 309 regular hours and 119 overtime hours for the years 2002 through 2006 for Parks and Recreation. Mowing is contracted out and not broken out by park site. The annual mowing cost for the parks is \$25,000.
  - Some costs of parks and recreation that are contained within other budget categories include the mowing contract, park maintenance labor, and benefits.

## Opportunities

- The township's favorable trend of increasing support for parks and recreation is an opportunity to use the additional resources to grow public park and recreation opportunities.
- Having a full-time director in place will enable the department to develop a comprehensive financial management system.



- Parks and recreation software on the market today offers the potential to capture, track and manage financial systems.
- Survey results show that the public is in favor of the township increasing its commitment to parks and recreation. Furthermore, the survey respondents were supportive of paying additional funds for parks and recreation.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to increase support for parks and recreation through a mix of township and non-tax resources. Use a four-part revenue strategy including: compulsory resources (taxes), earned income, contractual receipts and financial assistance. Work towards a per capita investment of \$33 and between 3.14 and five percent of the township operating budget.
- Develop a financial management system that tracks all costs in order to create cost centers for programs, parks and designated recreation facilities such as athletic fields, natural resource management and so on. Procure software for financial management. Insure that it is compatible with parks and recreation and township financial tracking and reporting.
- For capital improvements and land acquisition, consider a bond or loan that would provide enough funding for major defined capital improvements. Consider unifying a parks and recreation bond with a larger township bond that would be used to improve major township-wide efforts. A multi-purpose bond may appeal to a wider range of the citizenry and capture more public support. Undertake a financial study to explore how such a bond could be undertaken with respect to community resources. Try to capture grants to match local bond fund monies as a way of leveraging municipal funds.
- Consider partnering with the school district on major projects such as a community recreation center, community indoor pool for education and recreational use, sports facilities and others that may emerge that would serve citizens of all ages with children in the public schools or not, and for education and recreation.
- Undertake a study of the lease with the Flouertown Country Club to insure that the township is maximizing the benefit of its ownership of this property. Consider tying this evaluation in with a feasibility study of the property to determine if this site is the best use of public property.
- Establish a capital improvement program of five to seven years. Adopt a policy that capital improvements are those which cost more than \$10,000 and last more than seven years. Otherwise, consider improvements under that value as regular operating fund projects.



## Capital Improvement Program

The recommendations of this plan will require Springfield Township to make both capital and operating expenditures. Determining capital costs can be somewhat nebulous. Many communities use their own work forces and are able to save considerable costs. Others are very resourceful and are able to secure alternative sources of funding through business contributions, grants, individual donations, or other means. The following table provides costs estimates for proposed capital improvements identified in this plan. These are generalized opinions based on the best available information and are subject to change when each project is further evaluated and designed based on accurate survey information. In addition, master plans are recommended for several parks and cost estimates should be provided as part of the master planning process. The master plan fees assume that more than one park will be master planned at the same time.

Projected costs are based on 2008 costs for contracted labor, and do not consider any particular source of revenue. Design, survey, engineering, contractor bond, insurance, and contingency fees have been included based on typical percent of the projected development costs. These fees should be re-defined after an approach and scope are determined for each project.

Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Facilities Capital Improvement Program					
Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Laurel Beech Park</b>					
Re-visiting the master plan is proposed to determine what additional recreation features should be proposed for the park. Suggested improvements include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a trail that encircles the park site and connects the playground and the parking area.</li> <li>▪ Develop a picnic area with picnic tables and perhaps a pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Enhance the park entry with amenities, restroom building, kiosk, and landscaping.</li> <li>▪ Sub-surface stormwater management and utility extensions are not included in the costs provided.</li> </ul>					
<b>Master Plan Revisions</b>					
Master plan revisions	LS	\$10,000	√		
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site Prep.	LS	\$3,820			
Earthwork and stormwater management	LS	\$11,640			
Erosion control	LS	\$7,500			
Sub-Total		\$22,960			
<b>Trail</b>					
Paved 8' wide bituminous trail	1,535 LF	\$25,700			
Benches (3)	LS	\$3,000			
Sub-Total		\$28,700			
<b>Picnic Area</b>					
Picnic tables (6)	LS	\$5,400			
Picnic pavilion and concrete pad	LS	\$24,000			
Sub-Total		\$29,400			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Park Entry Enhancements</b>					
Restroom building	LS	\$80,000			
Kiosk	LS	\$5,000			
Benches (3), trash receptacle (1), bike rack (1)	LS	\$4,400			
Entry landscaping	LS	\$6,000			
Sub-Total		\$95,400			
<b>Landscaping</b>					
Buffer planting	LS	\$10,000			
Shade tree planting	LS	\$3,000			
Sub-Total		\$13,000			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$28,420			
Bond, mobilization, and layout (12%)	LS	\$26,150			
Design and engineering (10%)	LS	\$24,400			
Sub-Total		\$78,970			
<i>TOTAL Laurel Beech Park</i>		<i>\$268,430</i>	√		
<b>Mermaid Park</b>					
The following improvements are proposed:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop loop trails to encircle the park. Install a pedestrian bridge along the trail below the pond outfall.</li> <li>▪ Provide site amenities to include benches, trash receptacles, dog pick-up dispensers, etc. throughout the site.</li> <li>▪ Introduce picnic opportunities with scattered picnic tables and a pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Improve access to the park by installing a crosswalk Elm Street and a small parking area near Mermaid Lane.</li> <li>▪ Complete enhancements to stabilize the streambank.</li> <li>▪ Consult a professional arborist to assess and provide recommendations regarding trees in the park.</li> <li>▪ Consult an aquatic scientist regarding measures to address the duckweed on the pond.</li> </ul>					
<b>Master Plan</b>					
Master plan	LS	\$15,000	√		
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site preparation	LS	\$5,700			
Earthwork and stormwater	LS	\$37,270			
Erosion control	LS	\$24,000			
Sub-Total		\$67,000			
<b>Trail</b>					
Paved 8" side bituminous trail	1,370 LF	\$22,950			
Pedestrian bridge	LS	\$50,000			
Sub-Total		\$72,950			
<b>Site Amenities</b>					
Benches (8), trash receptacle (1), dog pick-up dispenser (3), bike rack (1)	LS	\$10,000			
Sub-Total		\$10,000			
<b>Picnic Area</b>					
Picnic tables (6)	LS	\$5,400			
Picnic pavilion and concrete pad	LS	\$24,000			
Sub-Total		\$29,400			
<b>Streambank Stabilization</b>					
Streambank stabilization/ Riparian buffer enhancements	LS	\$20,000			
Interpretative signs (3)	LS	\$6,000			
Sub-Total		\$26,000			
<b>Access Improvements</b>					
Parking area (8 cars)	LS	\$13,275			
HC parking spaces	LS	\$300			
Crosswalk	LS	\$1,200			
Sub-Total		\$14,780			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Arborists and Aquatic Scientist Consultation</b>					
Consultation	LS	\$3,000			
Sub-Total		\$3,000			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$33,470			
Bond, mobilization, and layout (12%)	LS	\$30,800			
Survey, design, engineering, and permitting (15%)	LS	\$51,730			
Sub-Total		\$339,130			
<i>TOTAL Mermaid Park</i>		\$		√	
<b>Veterans Park</b>					
Proposed improvements include:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a trail encircling the park.</li> <li>▪ Develop a “hub” area for socializing in the park.</li> <li>▪ Develop a new youth baseball field, multipurpose field, and T-ball infield</li> <li>▪ Develop a pavilion with seat wall and a restroom storage area.</li> <li>▪ Develop two half-court basketball courts</li> <li>▪ Install a playground.</li> <li>▪ Utility extensions are not included in costs provided.</li> </ul>					
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site preparation and demolition	LS	\$15,500			
Earthwork and stormwater	LS	\$52,800			
Erosion control	LS	\$34,200			
Sub-Total		\$102,500			
<b>Entry Plaza/Hub with Amenities</b>					
Bollards (5), bicycle rack (1), benches (5)	LS	\$6,850			
Park sign	LS	\$4,000			
Sub-Total		\$10,850			
<b>Multipurpose Field</b>					
Multipurpose field	LS	\$6,600			
Sub-Total		\$6,600			
<b>Loop Trails</b>					
Paved 8’ side bituminous trail	1,900 LF	\$31,900			
Concrete sidewalk 5’ wide	LS	\$30,600			
Benches (5)	LS	\$5,000			
Sub-Total		\$67,500			
<b>Baseball Fields</b>					
Youth baseball field	LS	\$51,300			
T-ball field	LS	\$11,300			
Existing baseball field	LS	\$28,300			
Sub-Total		\$90,900			
<b>Basketball Half-Courts</b>					
Basketball half-courts	LS	\$26,560			
Sub-Total		\$26,560			
<b>Building and Structures</b>					
Large pavilion with concrete pad	LS	\$40,000			
Seatwall	LS	\$8,200			
Restroom/storage building	LS	\$75,000			
Sub-Total		\$123,200			
<b>Parking</b>					
Parking area paving	LS	\$69,800			
Handicap parking spaces	LS	\$600			
Sub-Total		\$70,400			
<b>Playground</b>					
Playground equipment	LS	\$56,000			
Safety surfacing (mulch)	LS	\$2,600			
Sub-Total		\$58,600			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Landscaping</b>					
Tree and shrub planting	LS	\$22,500			
Lawn seeding	LS	\$12,000			
Sub-Total		\$34,500			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$885,740			
Bond, Mobilization, and Layout (12%)	LS	\$81,640			
Survey, design, and engineering (15%)	LS	\$114,300			
Sub-Total		\$284,680			
<i>TOTAL Veterans Park</i>		\$876,290	√		
<b>Wyndhill Park</b>					
Park improvement projects include:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Landscape enhancements</li> <li>▪ Develop a multipurpose field</li> <li>▪ Resurface the tennis courts and connect to the parking area</li> <li>▪ Develop a loop trail that encircles the playground and picnic areas and extends to the adjacent street sidewalks.</li> <li>▪ Expand the playground to be age-segregated and install a small pavilion near the playground.</li> </ul>					
<b>Master Plan</b>					
Master plan	LS	\$10,000	√		
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site preparation and demolition	LS	\$3,320			
Earthwork and stormwater	LS	\$22,130			
Erosion Control	LS	\$15,000			
Sub-Total		\$40,450			
<b>Landscaping</b>					
Landscaping enhancements	LS	\$3,500			
Landscape pruning	LS	\$1,500			
Sub-Total		\$5,000			
<b>Multipurpose Field</b>					
Multipurpose field	LS	\$6,400			
Seeding	Ls	\$4,000			
Sub-Total		\$10,400			
<b>Tennis Court Resurfacing</b>					
Tennis Court Resurfacing	LS	\$8,000			
Sub-Total		\$8,000			
<b>Loop Trails</b>					
Paved 8' side bituminous trail	1,900 LF	\$31,900			
Sub-Total		\$31,900			
<b>Playground</b>					
Playground equipment	LS	\$30,000			
Safety surfacing (mulch)	LS	\$3,800			
Sub-Total		\$33,800			
<b>Pavilion</b>					
Small pavilion with concrete pad	LS	\$24,000			
Horseshoe pits (2)	LS	\$800			
Sub-Total		\$24,800			
<b>Amenities</b>					
Benches (4), picnic tables (6), trash receptacles (2), bike racks (1)	LS	\$11,000			
Sub-Total		\$11,000			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$24,810			
Bond, mobilization, and layout (12%)	LS	\$22,820			
Survey, design, and engineering (15%)	LS	\$31,950			
Sub-Total		\$79,580			
<i>TOTAL Wyndhill Park</i>		\$244,930			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Cisco Park</b>					
Park improvement projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Upgrade the existing playground with additional age segregated equipment and a small pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Upgrade the ballfield with a new backstop, fencing, accessible viewing areas, and lighting.</li> <li>▪ Add ADA picnic tables.</li> <li>▪ Landscaping along Paper Mill Run.</li> </ul>					
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site preparation and demolition	LS	\$6,000			
Earthwork and stormwater	LS	\$28,700			
Erosion control	LS	\$20,400			
Sub-Total		\$55,100			
<b>Playground Upgrades</b>					
New playground equipment	LS	\$12,500			
Picnic pavilion and concrete pad	LS	\$24,000			
Safety surfacing (rubber)	LS	\$13,500			
Sub-Total		\$50,000			
<b>Ballfield Upgrades</b>					
Backstop	LS	\$6,000			
Sideline fencing	LS	\$7,600			
Lights	LS	\$100,000			
Accessible viewing areas and trail extensions	LS	\$28,000			
Sub-Total		\$141,600			
<b>Amenities</b>					
Picnic tables (5)	LS	\$4,500			
Bleachers (2)	LS	\$8,000			
Sub-Total		\$12,500			
<b>Paper Mill Run Landscaping</b>					
Landscaping	LS	\$3,000			
Sub-Total		\$3,000			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$39,330			
Bond, Mobilization, and Layout (12%)	LS	\$36,190			
Survey, design, and engineering (15%)	LS	\$50,660			
Sub-Total		\$126,180			
<b>TOTAL Cisco Park</b>		<b>\$388,380</b>		√	
Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Bysher Fields</b>					
Park improvements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop trails to provide accessibility to park facilities</li> <li>▪ Develop a small playground</li> <li>▪ Develop a small picnic pavilion</li> <li>▪ Add a small basketball court if space is available.</li> <li>▪ Develop handicap parking spaces in the parking area.</li> <li>▪ The costs below do not assume a reconfiguration of the ballfields which would be defined through the master plan process.</li> </ul>					
<b>Master Plan</b>					
Master plan	LS	\$20,000		√	
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site Preparation and demolition	LS	\$3,600			
Earthwork	LS	\$14,400			
Erosion Control	LS	\$26,000			
Sub-Total		\$44,080			
<b>Trails</b>					
Paved 8' side bituminous trail	1,700 LF	\$28,300			
Sub-Total		\$28,300			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Playground</b>					
Playground equipment	LS	\$21,750			
Safety surfacing (mulch)	LS	\$3,500			
Sub-Total		\$25,250			
<b>Pavilion</b>					
Small pavilion with concrete pad	LS	\$24,000			
Sub-Total		\$24,000			
<b>Basketball Courts</b>					
Basketball court	LS	\$26,500			
Sub-Total		\$26,500			
<b>HC Parking</b>					
Handicap parking spaces (2)	LS	\$2,000			
Sub-Total		\$2,000			
<b>Amenities</b>					
Benches (3), trash receptacles (3), drinking fountain (1), bike rack (1), bleachers (3)	LS	\$24,460			
Sub-Total		24,460			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$26,190			
Bond, Mobilization, and Layout (12%)	LS	\$22,900			
Survey, design, and engineering (15%)	LS	\$32,100			
Sub-Total		\$81,190			
<i>TOTAL Bysher Fields</i>		\$255,780			√
<b>Marlow Fields</b>					
Park improvements include:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop trails to provide accessibility to park facilities</li> <li>▪ Develop handicap parking spaces in the parking area.</li> <li>▪ Complete streambank stabilization</li> <li>▪ The costs below do not assume a reconfiguration of the ballfields which would be defined through the master plan process.</li> </ul>					
<b>Master Plan</b>					
Master plan	LS	\$20,000		√	
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site preparation and demolition	LS	\$3,000			
Earthwork	LS	\$16,000			
Erosion control	LS	\$8,000			
Sub-Total		\$27,000			
<b>Trails</b>					
Paved 8' side bituminous trail	760 LF	\$12,730			
Sub-Total		\$12,730			
<b>Parking Area</b>					
Handicap parking spaces (2)	LS	\$600			
Paint basketball court lines	LS	\$1,800			
Sub-Total		\$2,400			
<b>Streambank Stabilization</b>					
Streambank Stabilization/ Riparian Buffer Enhancements	LS	\$20,000			
Interpretative sign (1)		\$2,000			
Sub-Total		\$22,000			
<b>Amenities</b>					
Benches (2), trash receptacles (1), drinking fountain (1), bike rack (1), bleachers (2)	LS	\$16,000			
Sub-Total		\$16,000			

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$12,020			
Bond, Mobilization, and Layout (12%)	LS	\$11,060			
Survey, design, engineering, and permitting (15%)	LS	\$18,580			
Sub-Total		\$41,660			
<i>TOTAL Marlow Fields</i>		<i>\$121,790</i>			√
<b>Oreland Park</b>					
One project is proposed:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Upgrade the playground</li> <li>▪ Provide updated bleachers and amenities</li> </ul>					
<b>Site Preparation, Earthwork, Erosion Control</b>					
Site Preparation and demolition	LS	\$2,500			
Erosion Control	LS	\$1,800			
Sub-Total		\$4,300			
<b>Playground</b>					
Playground equipment	LS	\$18,000			
Safety surfacing (mulch)	LS	\$2,500			
Trail extension to playground and restroom	150 LF	\$2,500			
Sub-Total		\$22,500			
<b>Amenities</b>					
Benches (3), trash receptacle (1), drinking fountain (1), bike rack (1), bleachers (2)	LS	\$18,000			
Sub-Total		\$18,000			
<b>General Project Costs</b>					
Contingency (15%)	LS	\$6,720			
Bond, Mobilization, and Layout (12%)	LS	\$6,190			
Sub-Total		\$12,910			
<i>TOTAL Oreland Courts</i>		<i>\$57,710</i>	√		
<b>Sandy Run Park</b>					
Develop the park based on the master plan which recommends three phases					
<b>Master Plan</b>					
Master plan	LS	\$20,000	√		
<b>Phase 1 (1-3 years)</b>					
Fencing and entrance gate	LS	\$			
Parking	LS	\$			
Renovate guard tower	LS	\$			
Invasive plant removal/control	LS	\$			
Trail	LS	\$			
Habitat enhancement	LS	\$			
Signage	LS	\$			
Removal of Navy structures	LS	\$			
Clear view for Walnut Street overlook	LS				
SUB-TOTAL		\$	√		
<b>Phase 2 (4-6 years)</b>					
Pedestrian bridge	LS	\$			
Boardwalk at water	LS	\$			
Habitat enhancements	LS	\$			
Interpretative signage	LS	\$			
Utility extensions	LS	\$			
Wall restoration	LS	\$			
Trails	LS	\$			
SUB-TOTAL		\$		√	

Park Improvement	Quantity	Cost Opinion	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2017
<b>Phase 3 (7-10+ years)</b>					
Pavilion with concrete pad	LS	\$			
Restroom	LS	\$			
Hilltop lookout and trail	LS	\$			
SUB-TOTAL		\$			√
<i>TOTAL Sandy Run Park</i>		\$			
<i>GRAND TOTAL</i>		\$2,552,240			



**REPORT: Public Opinion Survey on Parks and Recreation 2007**

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## I. Introduction

Springfield Township conducted a direct mail survey to assess public opinion about the parks and recreation. The Township wanted to determine the opinions, ideas and concerns of the residents to serve as a foundation for developing the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan. By understanding the citizens' needs and interests, the municipality will be able to direct its planning efforts and resources for the benefit of the public, the improvement of parks and recreation facilities and the conservation of natural resources most effectively.

## II. Process

**Organization, Goals and Survey Instrument** – Springfield Township retained Toole Recreation Planning in association with YSM to develop the parks and recreation plan. The Springfield Township Plan Advisory Committee, the Parks and Recreation Department and the consultants worked together collaboratively throughout the survey process. A CPRP (Certified Park and Recreation Professional) developed the survey instrument in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Plan Advisory Committee. The goal was to obtain citizen input regarding:

- Parks and recreation facilities
- Recreation services
- Indoor and outdoor recreation
- Level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation system
- Program preferences
- Attitudes towards township support of parks and recreation
- Public priorities for future directions in parks and recreation

**Random Sample: Return Number Matters** - A random sample of 1,000 households was drawn so that every household in Springfield Township had an equal chance of participating in the survey. The goal was to achieve a return of 366 completed surveys so that the survey findings would have a high level of confidence and a low margin of error. In addition to the 1,000 households township wide, 25 households in the Panhandle section of the Township received surveys, which were not included in the random sample. This area was specifically targeted due to its relatively isolated location in the Township along with its low number of households. The residents have expressed feeling "left out" of the mainstream of the community so a special effort was made to capture information from this portion of Springfield Township.

**Distribution** – Respondents received a pre-survey letter informing them that they would be getting a questionnaire the following week. The pre-survey letter informed the respondents about the project, the importance of their response and the time frame. The survey was mailed out via first class mail along with a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped reply envelope

the next week. After the surveys were mailed out, a follow-up post card was sent as a reminder for people to return their surveys or thanking them if they already had.

### **III. Survey Follow Up**

Follow up included telephone calls are being made to a select sample of the respondents who had not yet returned their surveys. Toole Recreation Planning is licensed by the PUC in accordance with the "Do Not Call" regulations to make telephone calls to survey participants. A report on the findings of these telephone calls will be prepared upon completion of the calling.

### **IV. Return**

Of the 1,000 surveys mailed, 47 were undeliverable due to incorrect addresses, changes of address, refusals and deaths effectively reducing the sample to 953. Completed questionnaires returned totaled 411. In addition six respondents prepared written response letters for a total of 417. This is a return rate of 44 percent. Direct mail surveys typically generate an average return rate in the tow to four percent range. The yield produced exceeded the number required to achieve a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent +/- 5 percent.

#### ***Respondent Characteristics***

Respondents provided demographic information that included their gender, age group, educational level, and household composition.

#### **Respondent Age Group**

About 45 percent of the respondents were in the 25 to 49 year age group. The next largest responding groups consisted of 34 percent in the 50 to 64-age cohort. About 19 percent were 65 or older. The age group of 18 to 24 made up less than one percent of the respondents. The 25 to 49 year age group was over-represented while the other groups were under represented according to the population distribution in the township.

#### **Gender of Respondents**

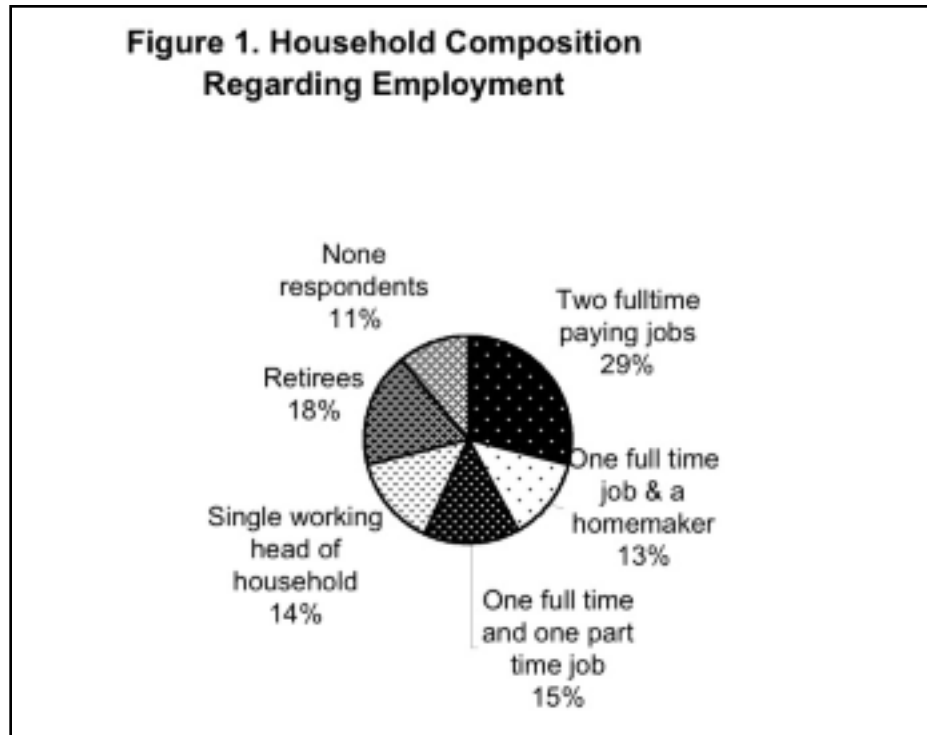
Of those who answered the question about respondent gender, 52 percent reported that they were males and 43 percent females. Males were over-represented in the survey responses in comparison to the population as whole.

#### **Neighborhood of Residence**

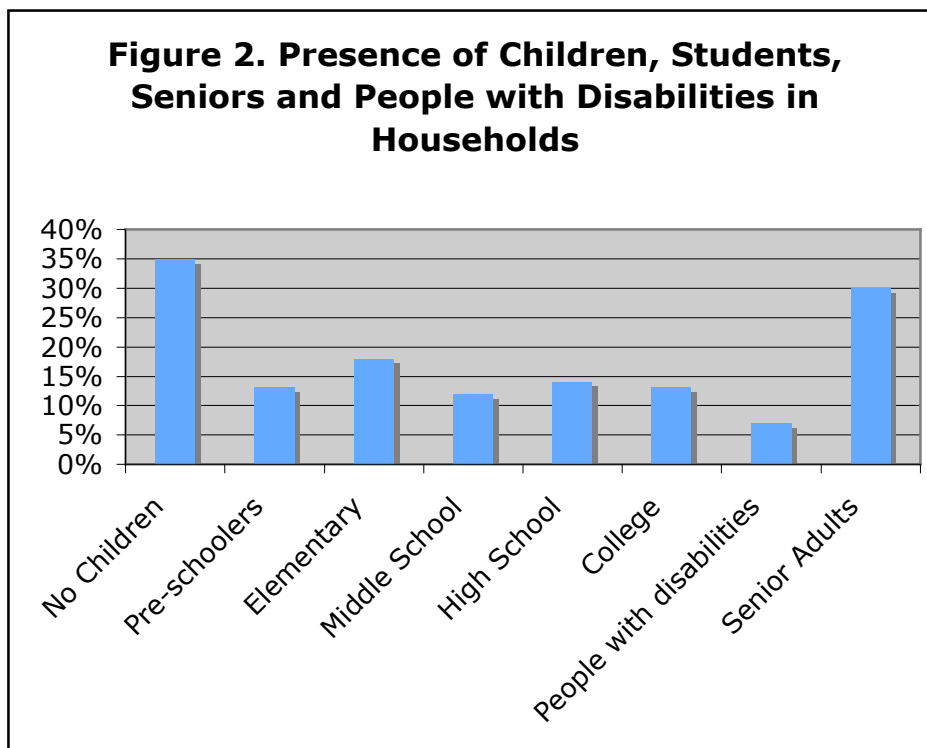
Oreland (31%), Flourtown (28%); Wyndmoor (19%); Erdenheim (17%); and Laverock, Enfield, Edgehill, and the Panhandle combined (5%).

**Figure 1** presents the breakout of survey respondents according to employment characteristics. Households with two fulltime paying jobs were the highest. Households with a single head of household and those with two full time workers have strong service and support related implications for recreation program scheduling and ancillary services such as child care and recreation facilities that serve a broad range of ages at one time to facilitate participation. Nearly one in five households in the survey had retirees, which could translate into over a thousand households in the community requiring targeted services.

**Household Composition**



**Figure 2** presents the household composition of survey respondents according to the presence of children, students, senior adults and people with disabilities. Since 35 percent reported not having children, about 65 percent of the respondents are assumed to have children living in the household. About seven out of ten households have children while three out of ten have senior adults. Nearly one out of ten reported having a person with disabilities.



## V. Summary of Overall Findings

The eight major findings of the survey include the following:

1. Most respondents (55%) would like to see Springfield Township increase its commitment to parks and recreation. Over three out of five respondents are willing to pay another \$6 to \$10 or more annually in public tax-based funds for expanded or improved parks and recreation.
2. Protecting natural resources is the designated highest priority for the future focus of Springfield Township in parks and recreation according to 83 percent of the respondents. Next in importance at 78 percent is achieving a balance of resource protection, programs, parks, recreation facilities and trails. Rounding out the top five priorities were maintaining what we have (74%), enhancing programs and services (69%), and upgrading existing parks and facilities (66%).
3. The outdoor recreation facilities identified as very important or important: ranked as follows
  - Shade trees (80%)
  - Natural areas (78%)
  - Walking trails (77%)
  - Restrooms (71%)
  - Playgrounds (68%)

In terms of very important only, respondents rated the following as very important: shade trees (47%), natural areas (45%), walking trails (44%), and tied at 31%, bike trails and playgrounds.

4. About seven out of ten respondents listed having a dedicated community recreation center as a high priority or a priority. This includes 36 percent who listed it as a high priority, the highest rating of all indoor recreation facility choices listed on the survey. Within the community center the top ranked features were:
  - Fitness and wellness equipment (68%)
  - Teen center (65%)
  - Gym (61%)
  - Activity rooms for recreation programs (61%)
  - Senior citizens center (61%)

5. Cisco Park emerged as the park with the most use with about 64 percent of the respondents reported using the park mostly seasonally and weekly. Less than 30 percent of the respondents reported using any other township park. The highest use of all parks on a regular basis was reported for Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park at about 66 percent. Bike trail use came in next at 50 percent. Private clubs garnered a 49 percent use rating.

An unexpected finding was that most of the respondents knew about all of the parks and recreation facilities. More than seven out of ten respondents knew about each park. Still, many respondents wrote in their open-ended

comments that they were not aware of parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Those with the highest recognition included: Fairmount Park (98%), Fort Washington State Park (98%), Flourtown Country Club and the school facilities at 97%, the Bike Trails (94%), and Cisco Park at 92%.

6. In giving their impression of the township's parks and recreation facilities, cleanliness captured the highest rating of good or excellent at 67 percent closely followed by location (64%), safety (63%), and attractiveness (61%). The excellent rating was rare and given by less than one out of five respondents. Only eight percent rated the parks as excellent while 44 percent rated them as good.

The availability of indoor recreation facilities fared the lowest at a rating of only 15 percent good to excellent. Also low on the list were amount of parkland at 43 percent and types of facilities available at 33 percent. These ratings make sense when compared with what respondents would like to see in the municipal parks: natural areas, trails, restrooms, playgrounds – all things that could be improved and result in more use by the residents.

7. The two recreation activity classifications in which most respondents engage are special events (55%) and exercise and fitness (54%). The following list presents participation rates for all activity types listed in rank order:

- Special events – 55%
- Exercise & fitness – 54%
- Recreational swimming – 32%
- Winter sports – 30%
- Non-league sports – 28%
- Performing arts – 25%
- Township sponsored sports – 25%
- Private community sports leagues – 24%
- Nature study – 23%
- Adult classes – 21%
- Summer recreation camps – 17%
- Arts & crafts – 17%

Top activities they would like to do include:

- Adult classes – 32%
- Nature study – 25%
- Exercise and fitness – 23%
- Performing arts – 23%
- Recreational swimming – 22%

8. Saturdays were the most preferred day for recreation with 60 percent likely or very likely to participate on Saturday while Sunday came in second at 52 percent. About 68 percent would be likely to participate outdoors while 61 percent would be likely to participate indoors. Nearly half of all respondents indicated that they would be likely to participate on weekdays with 37 percent saying they would be likely to participate in the daytime. About 53 percent would participate on weeknights.

9. In terms of rating township recreation programs, the largest portion of the respondents had no impression of them. Of those who rated them, the excellent and good ratings outweighed the fair and poor ratings. The overall rating of township recreation programs was 35 percent good to excellent balanced by a 36 percent response of “no impression”. Appeal to all age groups came in the lowest with a good to excellent rating of 24 percent. These ratings must be considered within the context of a small part-time department with a traditional focus on youth, sports and summer recreation. Written comments revealed that citizens are interested in year round indoor and outdoor recreation for people of all ages and a broad range of interests.

## **VI. Survey Implications**

Survey findings provided an overall sense of direction for Springfield Township in parks and recreation. Survey findings “take the pulse” of the general public. The findings and implications are important because they represent the opinions of the silent majority. While it is important to take into consideration the opinions of citizens that are organized according to special interests, it is equally important to balance those needs with those of the public at large.

### ***Increase the Commitment to Parks and Recreation***

The citizens sent the message of their desire for the township to increase its commitment to parks and recreation. About 55 percent of the survey respondents wanted to increase township support while only one percent wanted to decrease it. This message was supported with 62 percent expressing their willingness to pay from \$6 to 10 or more per person annually for parks and recreation. Only 14 percent said that they would not be willing to pay any more.

### ***Protect Natural Resources and Enhance the Environment***

Conservation was a major priority of the respondents. In addition, they preferred focusing on natural areas, tree planting and gardens. Places for people to walk and enjoy the great outdoors and nature are important. The Dixon property was mentioned in written comments, as was the desire to limit additional commercial and residential development.

### ***Relationship of Township Parks to Regional Parks***

Fairmount Park and Fort Washington State Park are very important parks that serve a high proportion of township residents. The role of these parks needs to figure in the recommendations for the Springfield township parks and recreation system. Written comments about township parks indicated that residents recognize that township parks are small and have limited facilities.

### ***Care for What We Have***

Making the best use of township parks, enhancing them, and keeping them clean and safe are of great importance to the citizens.

***Bicycle Trails***

Bicycle trails are a contentious topic in Springfield Township. While 67 percent of the survey respondents indicated that bicycle trails were very important or important and 62 percent indicated that developing trails and paths should be a high priority or a priority for Springfield Township, two issues underlie concerns about trails: proximity to Philadelphia and privacy.

***Indoor Recreation Facilities***

Indoor recreation emerged as a top interest. This ranged for better use of school facilities to building a community recreation center. The Plymouth Center stands as a reference point as many township residents use it. Opinions range from something simpler to one like Plymouth. The use of the high school pool for swimming was a frequent comment. More information about recreational times at the high school pool would be a valuable service.

***Programs and Services***

Programs and services need to be expanded to serve citizens throughout their lifetime in a broad range of opportunities year round indoors and outdoors. Expanding services can only happen with additional staff, partnerships and a solid plan for phasing in additional services.

***Public Awareness***

One of the most important things the township can do is to increase advertising and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities. It will be important to explore a variety of mechanisms from the printed media to electronic means such as e-mail, RSS, WEB site and emerging mechanisms such as teen oriented electronic methods like text messaging. It is also important to provide information about financing, trails, and how to access recreation opportunities.



## Springfield Township's Related Plans

**SPARC, Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Connections Plan**, incorporates information from previous and ongoing planning efforts related to state, regional, and municipal plans. These include the following:

**Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan 2004-2008** established the following statewide goals for parks and recreation based upon extensive citizen participation and study of recreation needs throughout the Commonwealth:

- Create healthy and livable communities through conservation, parks and recreation.
- Conserve open space, natural, and cultural resources.
- Connect and link community destinations through parks, recreation, and bike paths and increase opportunities for quality outdoor experiences.
- Care for existing facilities for present and future generations through proper maintenance and stewardship.
- Build capacity for parks and recreation through partnerships and innovative ways of doing business to empower stakeholders to help meet recreation needs.
- Institute more cooperation and coordination among all levels of government, schools, and the private sector to ensure the effective and efficient provision of natural, cultural, historic, and recreation resources, facilities and programs.
- Promote the economic, tourism, and societal benefits of parks and recreation and their impact on the quality of life.

**Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania** (2004) was developed by the Brookings Institution and is serving as an action plan for the Commonwealth. The report calls for strategically investing in the state's older communities such as the cities, boroughs, and first ring suburbs. Springfield Borough is cited as a model community in this publication as a vibrant borough in a state where other boroughs are experiencing population decline and empty town centers.

**Horizons, The Year 2025 Regional Land Use Plan for the Delaware Valley** (2003) is the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's plan for preserving farmland, natural resources and open space. It calls for the:

- Protection of natural resources.
- Creation of connections between existing parks, streams, and woodlands to establish an interconnected network of open space.
- Creation of connections between existing and emerging population centers to parks and open space.
- Provision of additional land for recreational activities.
- Conservation of open space for its visual aesthetic, scenic vistas and opportunities for relief from the man-made that connects people to the natural environment

**Montgomery County's Plan Open Space, Natural Features and Cultural resources Plan** (2005) The *Open Space, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources Plan* is an important element of the county's comprehensive plan. It focuses on preserving and interconnecting critical open spaces and natural areas, expanding county trails, increasing farmland preservation, and preserving historic properties.

**Springfield Township Open Space Plan** (2005) inventoried open space and parkland both protected and vulnerable, and cultural and historic resources. The plan identified priorities for the protection of vulnerable land that would be important for parks, park improvements, green infrastructure, enhanced tree planting, gateways, heritage conservation, and trail connections.

**Flourtown Erdenheim Vision Plan** (2004) created a vision to revitalize one of the oldest commercial corridors in the Delaware Valley. The study was a partnership effort among the Flourtown Erdenheim Enhancement Association, Springfield Township and Whitmarsh Township. The study identifies the expansion of recreation opportunities to families especially during evening hours as a major goal. The plan also identifies potential trail connections to the Green Ribbon Trail and to Fairmount Park at Carson Valley School and Mt. St. Joseph's Academy. The plan recommends creating a town green along Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown for community events and casual gathering. The study further recommends coordination with the Carson Valley School to provide a recreation entertainment center.

**Black Horse Inn Restoration Report** (2002). This report provided the township with information regarding existing conditions, treatment recommendations, schematic design and an estimate of costs for the exterior stabilization of the Inn scheduled for completion by January 2005. It also provided preliminary consideration and exploration of re-use possibilities. It was a conceptual review of the building's spatial constraints, its historic integrity and the relationship with the surrounding development as affected by commercial, township and residential uses.



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