



PARKS & RECREATION PLAN 2013 - 2022

2013

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY, PA

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Springfield Township
Parks and Recreation Plan
2013 - 2022

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Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan

Purpose and Process

The purpose of the Springfield Township **Parks and Recreation Plan** is to provide a guide for establishing the community's parks and recreation system. The **Parks and Recreation Plan** complements the **Springfield Township Open Space Plan** that resulted in the preservation of more than 3,500 acres of land. Together, the plans provide a framework for continuing the Township's work in the conservation of the scenic rural character balanced with opportunities for active living through recreation.

Springfield Township worked with a team of specialists in parks and recreation planning and landscape architecture to develop the plan. The process included:

- A public recreation needs assessment,
- Field studies of potential recreation areas,
- Inventory of recreation opportunities,
- Assessment of public and private resources that could support public parks and recreation,
- Development of goals strategies and recommendation, and
- Establishment of a plan implementation schedule.

The planning process included an extensive public participation process. It included a direct mail survey sent to every household; interviews; focus groups; work sessions; a Plan Advisory Committee; and public meetings. Findings of the public participation process included the following:

Importance - Recreation opportunities in the Township are very important to the residents.

Recreation Preferences - The most preferred recreation activities include walking, experiencing nature and bicycling. Residents also described going elsewhere to use community parks, playgrounds and bicycle trails.

Silver Creek Athletic Association - Securing the permanent protection of the Silver Creek Athletic Association for recreational use was an important message of citizens in interviews and the public meeting.

Peppermint Road Park Site - The survey respondents prefer that the park be a nature-based park with trails. Participants in the public meeting and interviews indicated that they would like to see the site open and improved with parking, trails and recreation facilities such as a playground, sledding, and seating areas for being with family and friends.

Future Focus - Residents would like the Township to focus on trails and achieving a balanced parks and recreation system that includes parkland, recreation facilities, and recreation programs that preserves the rural character of the community.

Level of Support for Parks and Recreation - In the survey, 54 percent of respondents stated that they would be willing to pay an additional amount of money annually ranging from \$10 to \$30 per person. Nearly 200 respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer or join a park friends group. Twenty-three percent said that they would not support anything for parks and recreation.

Goals and Recommendations

The goals of the Parks and Recreation Plan are simple and straightforward. It is hoped that these goals will foster experiences for the residents that address the natural and recreational opportunities that great parks can provide.

Goal 1

Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and lead active healthy lifestyles.

- Develop master plan and develop the Peppermint Road Park.
- Secure Silver Creek Athletic Association as a community park.
- Establish the Hickon Road site as a community park upon conveyance of the land from PPL to the Township.
- Work with community based organizations that offer their facilities for public use including Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and Passer Community Center.
- Explore establishment of a community school park through a partnership with the Palisades School District using the 14-acre township-owned parcel connecting the Springfield Elementary School and the Township Complex.

Goal 2

Connect our community through a system of greenways and trails.

- Create pathways for walking and bicycling in the Township's future community parks.
- Work with the Bucks County Bicycle Task Force and other trail planning organizations on trail planning in Springfield Township.
- Develop a trail and bicycle plan for Springfield Township.

Goal 3

Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.

- Serve in the role of facilitating recreation programs and services that other community based organizations will directly provide.

- Make information available about recreation facilities, providers and activities on its website and in township newsletters.
- Continue to sponsor Community Day through the volunteer committee established for this purpose.

Goal 4

Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

- Establish a Parks and Recreation Board as an advisory body making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for action and carrying out actions to advance and support community recreation.
- Build capacity to support parks and recreation through partnerships. Partners could include Silver Creek Athletic Association, Heritage Conservancy, Cook’s Creek Watershed Association, Palisades School District, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Passer Community Center, scouts, and neighborhoods.
- Work with volunteers to support parks and recreation efforts. Recognize that volunteers are not free. They require recruiting, supervision, management, and recognition.
- Provide a baseline of funding for parks and recreation operations that equates to two to four percent of the township budget phased in over time as the Township establishes the community parks and recreation system.
- Pursue alternative funding including grants, gifts, donations, sponsorships, bequests, rentals, fees, charges, leases, and concessions.
- Create and adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance. Use a parkland standard of 28 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. State in the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance that fees-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland should be equal to the average fair market value of the land otherwise required to have been dedicated as determined at the time of the filing of the subdivision of the land development application. Use the fees generated within three years for active recreation purposes.

Timeline and Costs

The Springfield Township **Parks and Recreation Plan** will be implemented over the next ten years and beyond. As opportunities, partners, and funding emerge, the Township will undertake the planning, development, and operation of the parks and recreation system. The cost for each project will be determined through planning that includes a public participation process. While not everything can be accomplished at once, every small step will help to advance township parks and recreation goals.

Continuing the Process

The **Parks and Recreation Plan** is considered to be a “living document” that will be continually shaped through public dialog, community needs, and emerging opportunities. It provides a framework for informed decision-making to ensure that all projects meet the main purpose of the plan: to facilitate active healthy living opportunities through recreation for the residents in an environment that preserves the scenic rural character of Springfield Township and conserves natural resources.

Introduction: About the Plan

The **Parks and Recreation Plan** will guide Springfield Township in establishing the public parks and recreation system over the next ten years. The plan is a guide for establishing parks and providing recreation opportunities.

The plan supports the Township's success in open space preservation by ensuring that the scenic beauty and conservation of natural resources serve as the foundation for the future parks and recreation system. The theme of the parks and recreation plan is to create a parks and recreation system unique to the needs and resources of Springfield Township that enable citizens to enjoy the beauty of the community, experience nature close to home and lead active healthy lives through outdoor recreation. Since Springfield Township is a small rural community, the recommendations of the plan ensure a balance of meeting community needs with the modest municipal budget and staff.

Parks and Recreation...

- ...protects the environment and preserves our natural resources,*
- ...increases property values,*
- ...enhances economic benefits to our community,*
- ...improves health and wellness*
- ...deters crime and substance abuse, and*
- ...establishes strong family bonds, the foundation of our society*

Planning Process

The planning process included four phases: inventory of Springfield Township's assets in terms of parks and recreation; 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 six areas.

- Community Recreation Needs
- Parkland and Recreation Facilities
- Trails
- Programs and Services
- Organization and Management
- Financing

Public Participation

This plan is rooted in community involvement, a process that included four components: the Parks and Recreation Study Committee, key person interviews, a community public opinion survey, and public meetings. This process provided valuable information from those who are involved in the community; various conservation, open space, and parks and recreation related efforts; and the public. Through these components, the needs of both the general citizens and community organizations were considered.



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?

The **Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan** 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 makes about parks, recreation, trails, programs, partnerships, financing, management, and related efforts. This plan serves as a reference document and a framework for overall township and collaborative planning and management. It is essential that all related boards, organizations, and private sector enterprises incorporate this plan into their own planning and operational efforts where it affects Springfield Township including maintenance, spatial improvements, 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 substantial funding from public and private resources including grants. It is important that the plan include this full range of projects so that the Township can be competitive in securing grants and be prepared when opportunities emerge that could make the larger projects possible.

Why is it important to have a public park and recreation system?

The planning process found that parks and recreation are important to the citizens of Springfield Township. Three out of five citizens in the public opinion survey indicated that it is important or very important to have parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Over 200 survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer on parks and recreation efforts in Springfield Township. Even in this economy, over half of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay more in taxes to support parks and recreation even though this plan is not dealing with taxes.

Parks protect our natural resources and provide clean air and water. Parks and recreation increases 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. Recreation helps to build a strong sense of community by connecting citizens through enjoyable hours spent together in the pursuit of happiness and health. Proximity to parks, greenways, and trails helps to increase property values¹.



¹ Bolitzer, B., & Netusil, N.R. (2000). The impact of [open spaces](#) on [property values](#) in Portland, Oregon. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 59, 185-193 and Crompton, J.L. (2001). The impact of parks on property values. *Parks and Recreation*, May, 90-95.

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer², are less in danger from heart disease and stroke³, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer⁴, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and depression⁵. Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. It contributes to personality development and improves psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and stress. Recreation participation increases sense of well-being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others. Recreation plays an important role in promoting a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize, share common interests, and being a major driver of community interaction and pride. Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. They provide a social focus for the community and affect people's perception of their neighborhood. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influences how a community looks, feels, and functions.

Public recreation is considered to be public health. In 2009, the U.S. Center for Disease Control enlisted local communities in the fight against diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension by offering plentiful and convenient places and programs that will help citizens to increase physical activity. This will help to reduce national health care costs, one of our country's most pressing challenges.

² Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. *Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men.* **Journal of the American Medical Association.** 273:1093-1098

³ Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. *How much physical activity is good for health?* **Annual Reviews of Public Health.** 13:99-126

⁴ Slattery ML. 1996. *How much physical activity do we need to maintain health prevent disease? Difference diseases –different mechanisms.* **Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport** 67(2):209-212 Slattery ML, Potter J, Caan B et al.

⁵ United States Department of Health and Human Services; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. **Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.** Atlanta, Georgia. Glasgow RE, Ruggiero L, Eakin EG et al.

Springfield Township

What people love the most about Springfield Township is its rural character. The residents are dedicated to preserving the tranquil way of life, one that is rooted in nature and scenic beauty, and quite distinct from urban and suburban type of living.

Community Profile

Springfield Township is the third largest municipality in land area in Bucks County with 30.78 square miles. About 83% of the Township land area is in rural residential (33.6%) or agricultural (30.7%) use while 18.6% is vacant. Springfield Township is in the Palisades School District.

Location and Access

Located in Upper Bucks County, Springfield Township is five miles from the Allentown/ Bethlehem Metropolitan Area and 40 miles north of Philadelphia. With Northampton and Lehigh Counties to the north, Springfield Township is bordered by Durham, Nockamixon, Haycock, Richland and Milford Townships in Bucks County.

Springfield Township is close to the major highways of I-78, PA Route 309, and the northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Due to its convenient proximity to the highways, Springfield Township has the potential for substantial growth and development as the neighboring communities of Richland, Milford, and Upper and Lower Saucon Townships have experienced.



Springfield Township has 97 miles of roads including 34 miles of state roads and 64 miles of township roads - 50 paved miles and 14 miles of dirt roads. Many municipal roads were established three centuries ago and are an important factor in the community character and heritage. They are narrow, winding corridors with limited sight distances and a lack of shoulders. The nature of the roads affects community connections and planning for bicycling as the nature of roads creates hazardous conditions for bicycling.

Heritage

Incorporated in 1743, Springfield Township was named for its abundance of springs that often inundated the fields. The Township was originally part of the lands belonging to the Lenape Indians. William Penn secured a large area that included the northern portion of the Bucks County, including Springfield Township and present day Northampton and Lehigh Counties through the Walking Purchase of 1737.

With its rich cultural heritage, Springfield Township has historically been an agriculturally based community. Schools, mills, churches and general stores were built to serve the population. In the late 1700's villages developed at crossroads where water was available to support the grist and saw mills. Springtown became the largest of the villages. Springfield Township supplied meat, crops, and dairy products to the region. With the development of manufacturing in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Philadelphia in the late 19th and 20th centuries, the population of Springfield Township declined. The population reached its highest population of 5,177 in the 1990 census. The 2010 census declared the population to be 5,035. With socio-economic changes, advances in technology, the Township's scenic rural character and convenient access to transportation and major metropolitan areas, the Township recognizes its vulnerability to development and potential loss of treasured features. To preserve the way of life here, Springfield Township has worked diligently and successfully in conserving open space.

Open Space Conservation

Springfield Township's landscape consists of critical features that are high priorities for preservation: rolling farmland with prime agricultural soils; Cook's Creek, which is an exceptional value waterway; important natural areas designated by the Bucks County Natural Areas Inventory; critical habitat for threatened and endangered species; and scenic vistas.

In 2005, 74% of the voters approved a \$5,000,000 bond for open space conservation. The bond was secured in 2006 and payment is made using the existing 0.025% tax to the EIT (Earned Income Tax) for open space acquisitions. In 2012, the Township refinanced the remaining \$4.2 million of outstanding debt from the original \$5 million open space bond. The total savings on this refinance was \$861,352. The Open Space Committee voted to recommend that the savings be applied to acquiring more open space. The Board of Supervisors approved this recommendation. As a result, about 20% of Springfield Township's rolling hills, farms, fields, and vistas have been preserved as open space translating into 3,500 acres of land at a price of about \$4,130 an acre. Another 30 properties are identified for conservation for which additional funding would be needed.



Heritage Partnership Award for Land Conservation

In 2011, the Heritage Conservancy recognized Springfield Township and its Open Space Committee for their efforts in permanently protecting over 3,500 acres of land with its Heritage Partnership for Land Conservation Award. In making the award, the Conservancy stated that the Open Space Committee should be recognized for their dedication and passion in preserving their community; their creativity in using township funding to leverage county, state and federal funding; and their knowledge in educating landowners on the tax benefits associated with bargain sales and easement donations.

Vision for Springfield Township's Future

Springfield Township set forth the vision for the future in the Comprehensive Plan. The Township will seek to protect natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources and provide community services to satisfy the residents' demands. The Township intends to nurture sound planning and growth management principles that seek to manage natural, cultural, economic and social systems in a fashion that enhances the quality of life here.

Demographics

The demographic profile builds upon the data presented in the **2002 Township Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Open Space Plan** and information from the 2010 U.S. Census. Population changes and demographic trends will affect planning for parks, recreation facilities and services. Sources of data include the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the American Community Survey, the Pennsylvania State Data Center, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Bucks County Planning Commission.

Population Trends

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the population of Springfield Township in 2010 was 5,035. This was an increase of only 41 since 2000. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Bucks County Planning Commission estimate the population through 2025 as an additional 450 residents for a population of 5,485. By 2040, the population is projected to be 6,055, an increase of 920 from 2010.

Median Age

The median age of Springfield Township rose from 41.8 to 47.3 between 2000 and 2010. This indicates that Springfield Township is an aging community (as are Bucks County and Pennsylvania). The population of Springfield Township is significantly older than that of Bucks County (42) and Pennsylvania (40.1).

Age Trends

Age trends in Springfield Township from 2000 to 2010 show increases across all age groups with the exception of the population aged 25 to 44 year, which experienced a decline of -0.6% (Table 5). This trend is also seen countywide. In Springfield Township, large increases occurred in the population aged 55 to 59 years (41.6%), 60 to 64 years (61.2%), and 85 years and over (32.9%), consistent with the trend of an aging population.

Population Composition by Age

As interests change throughout one’s lifetime, it is important to look at age groupings in order to plan for parks and recreation facilities and services. **Table 1** represents population and age trends by major age groups and their changes between 2000 and 2010 as well as comparisons with Bucks County and Pennsylvania. The population shifts in age groups was significant. The U.S. Bureau of the Census considers a change of 2.5% or more to be a significant change.

- The population in all age groups under the age of 44 decreased in Springfield Township between 2000 and 2010.
- The age group of 45 to 64 increased by nearly 7%.
- The age group of 65 years and older increased by 4.3%.
- In contrast, the age cohorts of 20 to 44 and 5 to 19 decreased by 8.4% and 2.5% respectively.

Table 1 Population and Age Trends Springfield Township 2000 – 2010 with Comparisons with Bucks County and Pennsylvania in 2010						
Age Group	2000 Census Number	2010 Census Number	% of Springfield 2000 Population	% of Springfield 2010 Population	Bucks County 2010 %	PA 2010 %
Under 5	219	213	4.4	4.2	5.5	5.7
5-19	994	880	20.0	17.5	19.8	19.2
20-44	1590	1195	32.1	23.7	29.3	31.5
45-64	1519	1883	30.6	37.4	30.8	28.1
65+	641	864	12.9	17.2	14.6	15.5
Total	4,963	5,035	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median Age	41.8	47.3	41.8	47.3	42.0	40.1

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 & 2010 Census

Race and Ethnicity

Springfield Township's population is homogeneous with 97.6% of the citizens being White, down from 98.6% in 2000. About 1.5% is Latino, 0.8% Asian and 0.4% African American.

Educational Attainment

Because the 2010 Census does not include data on educational attainment, 2009 estimates are provided. The data demonstrate that Springfield Township is a well-educated community with 39% of people older than 25 being high school graduate compared with 31% countywide. About 18% of persons older than 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 22% countywide. Approximately 16% hold an advanced or professional degree, compared to 14% countywide.

Income

The median household income in the Township in 2010 was \$72,6239 compared with \$70,999 in Bucks County. The per capita income in Springfield Township was \$33,586. About 3% of the Township's population lives below the poverty level.

Public Participation

This plan is rooted in public participation. Public involvement included four components: the Parks and Recreation Plan Study Committee, key person interviews, a community public opinion survey, and public meetings. This process provided valuable information from those in the community who are involved in parks and recreation efforts, as well as the general public. Through the public involvement process, the needs of both the general citizens and community organizations that provide recreation services were considered. By combining interviews of key stakeholders that provide valuable support and services for parks and recreation with the opinions and needs of the general public, the process achieved a balanced perspective on special needs and overall community interests.



Plan Study Committee

The Plan Study Committee guided the planning process by serving as the eyes and ears of the community. Members embodied a broad spectrum of community interests including conservation, children and youth, parks, community planning, relative newcomers and long-term residents. Committee members provided ideas, presented concerns, worked on formulating recommendations, suggested interviews, and

reviewed and revised the plan. The Committee expressed the desire to establish a balanced, pragmatic, and achievable plan that would enhance the quality of life in Springfield Township.

Public Meetings

More than 60 people participated in the first of two public meetings about parks and recreation. In the first meeting, the consulting team presented information about the parks and recreation plan, findings from fieldwork in the Township, and the findings from the public opinion survey. The citizens' discussion focused to preserve the scenic rural, character, do small upgrades for existing facilities, make the best use of existing recreational resources in the community, and avoid large expenditures of funds on improvements that would result in additional maintenance costs.

During the public meeting, the participants indicated their liking for various parks and recreation elements in a visual preference survey. The survey respondents preferred natural areas, places to walk and bicycle safely, and year-round recreation. Preferred recreation facilities were located in a highly naturalized setting with rustic design. The participants also completed an exercise to define one thing that they would like to see Springfield Township do through the parks and recreation plan. The top items named were preservation of the rural character, provide places for people to enjoy the outdoors, especially places for children and families to play, continued use of Silver Creek Athletic Association, and safe places to walk and ride bicycles.

A second public meeting will be held in August 2013. The Board of Supervisors public meeting in August 2013 will include consideration of the plan for adoption as an agenda item.

Interviews

The planning team contacted more than 25 individuals regarding parks, recreation, township planning, conservation, trails and partnerships. These contacts included community organizations, citizens with identified interests, people who asked to be interviewed, schools, business people, private non-profit organizations, regional recreation, park and trail groups, township management, elected and appointed officials, and recreation based organizations. Findings of interviews were specific to individual interests and perspectives and mirrored the results of other segments of the public participation process.

Public Opinion Survey

Springfield Township conducted a direct mail public opinion survey about parks and recreation. The purpose of the survey was to determine the opinions, ideas, and concerns of the residents to serve as a foundation for decision-making regarding parks and recreation. With understanding of the citizens' needs, interests, and level of support for parks and recreation, the Township is able to direct planning and resources for the benefit of the community as well as in accordance with related plans such as the Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Plan and major public goals such as open space conservation.

The Township included every household in the Township by sending a questionnaire directly to all 2,119 residences in the community. Completed surveys totaled 547 for a total response of 26%. Typically direct mail surveys result in a 2-4% return rate. The survey was statistically valid and reliable. With a high level of confidence and a low margin of error in the findings, the results are within +/- five percentage points of accuracy.

Findings

Findings and Future Directions

- **Importance of Recreation Opportunities** – About 60% of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important to have parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Only 13% said that it is not important to have parks and recreation opportunities while another 13% said that parks and recreation are not needed.
- **Preferred Recreation Opportunities** - Out of 14 choices for recreation activities ranging from walking to ballfields and gathering places, the top three most preferred recreation opportunities were walking paths (68%) places to enjoy nature (39%), and off-road bicycle paths (22%).
- **Peppermint Road Park Site** – Respondents indicated the following preferences for the future use of the 45-acre park site:
 - Nature-based Park with Trails (47%)
 - Not improved at all (19%)
 - Community park for recreation and fitness (18%)
 - Minimal improvements for public access (11%)

When asked how important it is for the Township to undertake the improvement of the Peppermint Road property, 47% of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important. Only 15% said that they don't want the site improved. Another 14% said that development of the site is not important. About one in four said that are neutral about developing the Peppermint Road site.

- **Future Focus of Parks and Recreation** – Establishing trails is clearly the most preferred focus of the survey respondents. Next in importance is achieving a balance of adding parkland, developing recreation facilities and facilitating programs. Facilitating programs was of the least priority to the survey respondents.
- **Level of Support for Parks and Recreation** – When asked what they would be willing to do to support parks and recreation in Springfield Township, 54% stated that they would be willing to pay an additional amount of money annually ranging from \$10 to \$30 per person. Nearly 200 (37%) respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer or join a park friends group. About 23% said that they would not support anything for parks and recreation.

Trends

Trends represent underlying forces, basic human needs, attitudes, and aspirations. They help people to understand what is happening and why, and prepare for what is yet to come. Trends identify emerging currents or forces gaining momentum in the community. Monitoring the pulse of culture as it shifts will enable Springfield Township to ensure that municipal services and facilities are relevant to citizens now and in the future. Trends include the following:

- The population is aging. People are living longer as healthy, well-educated individuals who are engaged in a variety of active healthy living pursuits.
- A growing number of households with two wage earners working requiring child care and support services.
- Sports leagues play year round requiring additional facilities to accommodate four season sports and eliminate multi-purpose sports fields.
- Opportunities for recreation that people can undertake at their own discretion are becoming more important. Examples include walking, bicycling, exercising, experiencing nature and socializing with family and friends.
- Trails are the most popular type of recreation facility. They receive the most use by broad segments of the population.
- Dog parks are the fastest growing type of recreation facility in the country.
- Recreation is widely recognized in public health as a key player in fostering active healthy living through close to home recreation facilities and services. This is vital in preventing disease.
- The most common programs found in park and recreation systems include: holiday events and other special events; youth sports teams; day camps and summer camps; educational programs; arts and crafts; adult sports teams; fitness programs; sport training such as golf instruction or tennis lessons; programming aimed at active older adults; and festivals and concerts.
- Conservation of open space and natural resources is a public priority.
- People desire a sense of community that they often find in parks, especially in rural communities.
- Municipal government is struggling with the effects of the deep economic recession. Partnerships with school districts, community based organization and other jurisdictions are becoming the norm.



- The widespread recognition that local government cannot provide parks and recreation to the degree desired by the public completely on its own. Partnerships are essential to make the most use of limited resources.

Summary

The population has stabilized with a growth projection of an additional 920 residents through 2040. It is important to plan parks and recreation services based upon the demographic characteristics and interests of the residents.

- Residents prefer that the Township preserve the scenic rural, character, do small upgrades for existing facilities, make the best use of existing recreational resources in the community, and avoid large expenditures of funds on improvements that would result in additional maintenance costs.
- Planning to meet the recreation needs and interests of an older, active population is especially important. The community is aging with dramatic increases among people over the age of 44 and decreases in age groups under the age of 44.
- In terms of parks and recreation, the residents expressed the opinion that having parks and recreation opportunities close to home is important.
- Top recreation preferences of the residents include experiencing nature and safe places to walk and bicycle.
- Residents generally support the development of the Peppermint Road property as a park, mainly devoted to passive recreation including trails.

Parks & Recreation Facilities

Parks, plentiful 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, and 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. Appendix A includes a map of parks, recreation areas, and school locations in Springfield Township.

What do Springfield Township residents want regarding parks and recreation facilities?

- Residents indicated that it is important to have parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Now they are traveling outside of the Township to use recreation facilities in other communities.
- The three most preferred recreation opportunities were walking paths, places to enjoy nature, and off-road bicycle paths.
- Establishing trails is clearly the most important preferred focus of the survey respondents.
- Next in importance was achieving a balance of adding parkland and developing recreation facilities.

Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

Recreation opportunities abound in the scenic region of Upper Bucks County. Residents enjoy easy access to many large parks, including one of only 14 national heritage corridors along the Delaware River. The National Park Service, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Bucks County have long recognized the importance of preserving land in Upper Bucks County for conservation and

recreation. As a result, Springfield Township residents enjoy outstanding federal, state and county parks, forests and game lands close to home for hunting, fishing, swimming, winter sports, hiking, cycling, experiencing nature, and the dark starry skies. The following section provides an inventory of these facilities.

National, State and County Outdoor Recreation Areas

National Heritage Area: Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor

Springfield Township is located 15 minutes from The Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor. Commonly known as the D&L, this is designated as both a National Heritage Area and a state park, Delaware Canal State Park.

Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor – The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is a five-county area designated by Congress as a nationally important landscape. The corridor stretches for about 165 miles from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol, following the historic routes of the Lehigh & Susquehanna Railroad, the Lehigh Navigation, and the Delaware Canal. The natural, cultural, and historic resources of the corridor convey important stories about our national heritage. The corridor offers opportunities for heritage tourism and recreation. It is a major destination for bicycling and forms a continuous corridor of 60 miles the entire eastern border of Bucks County.

State Parks, Game Lands and Fish & Boat Access

Springfield Township is located within minutes of several State Game Land parcels and Nockamixon State Park located in neighboring communities.

State Game Lands – The mission of the State Game Lands is to provide protected lands for hunting and wildlife protection, although recreation activities are permitted on a limited basis. State Game Lands permit hiking and use of designated routes for horses and bicycles during specific periods of the year.

- **State Game Land No. 157** is located in Haycock Township.
- **State Game Land No. 56** is located in several parcels in Nockamixon and Tincum Townships.

State Parks – State Parks offer opportunities for natural resource-based recreation activities.

- **Nockamixon State Park**, a 5,286-acre park, is located in Nockamixon, Bedminster, Haycock, and East Rockhill Townships. The park provides the typical amenities of picnicking, hiking, and enjoying nature as well as fishing, wind surfing, and boating on Lake Nockamixon, a 1,450 acre lake.
- **Delaware Canal State Park** offers a 60-mile trail on the towpath of the Delaware Canal. The park extends from the confluence with the Lehigh River, south to Bristol in southern Bucks County. The Delaware Canal is the only remaining continuously intact canal of the great towpath canal building era of the early and mid-19th century. A walk along the 60-mile towpath is a stroll into American history. Paralleling the Delaware River between Easton and Bristol, this diverse park contains an historic canal and towpath, many miles of river shoreline and eleven river islands. From

riverside to farm fields to historic towns, visitors to Delaware Canal State Park can enjoy the ever-changing scenery along its corridor.

PA Fish & Boat Commission Access – Three Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission access areas are relatively close to Springfield Township. The access areas provide a stabilized ramp for boat launch. They are located in:

- Upper Black Eddy
- Tinicum
- Nockamixon State Park – The park has two boat access areas: at the Main Marina and Tohickon on the northeast side of Lake Nockamixon.

Bucks County Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Bucks County Department of Parks and Recreation includes several parks nearby that township residents report using. The Bucks County Parks and Recreation Department offers programs, events and educational programs in the county parks.

- **Lake Towhee County Park**, this 549-acre park is located in adjacent Haycock Township. The park offers opportunities to enjoy traditional resource-based activities such as fishing, boating, hiking, and enjoying nature.
- **Tinicum County Park** is a 126-acre park in Tinicum Township. Located on River Road in Tinicum, the park features picnic facilities, hiking, ball fields, boating, fishing, camping, restrooms, a playground and disc golf. The historic red barn is available for rental for social events. From May through October, polo matches are held in the park.
- **Ringling Rocks County Park** is located in Bridgeton Township, Bucks County and offers 128 acres of preserved woodlands, the County's largest waterfall, and an open field of unique rocks that ring when struck.

Regional Recreation Opportunities

Located close to the Lehigh Valley, Springfield Township residents use facilities, primarily trails in the Saucon Valley and Hellertown area.

Saucon Valley Rails to Trail is a recreation trail located in Hellertown Borough and Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County and Upper Saucon Township and Coopersburg Borough Lehigh County. Currently approximately 3.4 miles of the trail is developed and when the trail is complete it will stretch eight miles to the Bucks County border at Springfield Township, just south of Coopersburg Borough.

Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary is a 200-acre natural area overlooking the Delaware River in Williams Township, Northampton County. The Natural Lands Trust owns this facility, which is open to the public. The Sanctuary has four miles of hiking trails, wildlife viewing blind, and interpretative signs.

Southern Lehigh Living Memorial Community Park is located in Upper Saucon Township. The grounds include Little League fields, the VFW hall and playground equipment and the Southern Lehigh County Community Pool.

Quakertown Memorial Park contains pavilions, a baseball stadium, basketball courts, tennis courts, jogging path, bicycle path, skating pond, and public swimming pool.

Richland Township Park has a one-mile walking path; baseball, softball, soccer, and multi-purpose fields; basketball and volleyball court; pavilion with picnic tables and grills; sledding hill; and concession & restroom facility.

Palisades School District Facilities

Springfield Township is in the Palisades School District along with Durham, Bridgeton, Nockamixon, and Tincum Townships. The school district has five schools, including Springfield Elementary School that is on Route 212. The High School, Middle School and Durham-Nockamixon Elementary School are located in Nockamixon Township on Route 412. A third elementary school, Tincum Elementary School is located in Tincum Township on Dark Hollow Road. The outdoor athletic facilities and gymnasiums of the school district are available for public use. These facilities are used by youth sports groups and the general community.

- **Springfield Elementary School** – Facilities include playground, paved play/court area, and informal multi-purpose field. The school parcel is adjacent to a Springfield Township owned parcel that includes the municipal building.
- **Tincum Elementary School** – Facilities include playgrounds, paved play/court area, and informal multi-purpose field and ball field.
- **Durham-Nockamixon Elementary School** – Facilities include playground areas, paved play/court area, and multi-purpose field and ball field.
- **Palisades Middle School** – Facilities include one baseball field, an informal ball field, and multi-purpose fields.
- **Palisades High School** – Facilities include a football stadium with a synthetic turf field and surrounding track, a baseball field, a softball field, and multi-purpose flat fields for soccer, field hockey, and other activities.

Private or Quasi-Public Recreation Facilities

The following private and quasi-public recreation sites and facilities are located in Springfield Township.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Size	Estimated at 1-2 acres as part of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church parcel.
Ownership	The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.
Location	The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in the village of Zion Hill is the only recreation site on the west side of the

municipality. Route 309 creates a physical barrier that separates the village from the remainder of the municipality.

Facilities The site offers a small modular playground structure and swings, picnic pavilion, gazebo, lawn volleyball, and multipurpose field with informal backstop. A portable basketball hoop was located on the adjacent parking pavement at the time of the site visit. These facilities are accessory to the church. Parking for the church also serves the recreation area. The gazebo is located in a garden setting.

Characteristics The recreation portion of the site is maintained as lawn. Adjacent land uses include parking for the church and a cemetery.

Issues The facilities have not been located or developed with consideration of accessibility requirements. The facilities are not connected to the parking area with an accessible route and handicap parking spaces are not located with convenient access to the facilities. Access to the site from the surrounding village poses a safety concern due to the lack of sidewalks and traffic on Old Bethlehem Pike.

While the play equipment appears to be relatively new, it is important to maintain and inspect the equipment to maintain compliance with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements and CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) safety guidelines since safety and accessibility standards are continually updated. Safety surfacing should be provided within the fall zones of the modular play equipment and swings.

The backstop is an informal structure built on site and does not provide the full protection for players and spectators.

Opportunities The Church owns the facilities and availability for public use must be confirmed. The facilities provide a prototypical neighborhood park and could meet the local park and recreation needs of the western portion of the municipality if improvements are made to provide a formal ball field/multipurpose field and meet accessibility and safety standards.

Passer Community Center

Size 3.75 acres.

Ownership Passer Community Association.

Location Richlandtown Pike.

Facilities The primary amenity of the site is an 1877 school house. This historic building is used as a community center by the Passer Community Association. The building and grounds are available for rent by the public.

- Characteristics** The schoolhouse dominates the site.
- Issues** There are no developed recreation facilities.
- Opportunities** Recreation opportunities are limited at this site due to the small size of the parcel and area available for recreation.

Silver Creek Athletic Association

- Size** 31.82 acres.
- Ownership** The Silver Creek Athletic Association, a private, membership-based social and recreation club.
- Location** On PA Route 212/412, near the village of Springtown.
- Facilities** The site has the following facilities:
- **Four ball fields** – one 90’ baseline baseball field with grass infield, outfield fence, and dugouts, one 60’ baseline baseball field with grass infield, outfield fence, and dugouts, and two softball fields with skinned infields. A net batting cage is located between the two baseball fields. The larger baseball field has an older fence, backstop, and bleachers that should be replaced.
 - **Two tennis courts** in disrepair with extensive pavement cracks and without net posts.
 - **One basketball court with three basketball standards** is in disrepair with extensive pavement cracks.
 - **Playground equipment** (swings, slide, and merry-go-rounds) is located in a grass area. The equipment is older and does not meet the latest safety and accessibility requirements. No safety surfacing is below the equipment.
 - **Picnic grove** has multiple picnic pavilions located end to end to create a long covered picnic facility with picnic tables. The picnic pavilions have metal roofs and a rustic appearance that provides a vernacular charm to the facility. Additional buildings in the picnic grove area include concession stands, restroom buildings, and a covered stage.
 - **Maintenance building** and adjacent informal area provide outdoor storage for equipment and materials.
 - **Social club building** with associated parking has direct access to Routes 212/412.

Characteristics The site has open lawn in the areas with facilities. A lawn area with mature trees adjacent to the courts provides a shaded setting for additional picnic activities. A tributary to Cooks Creek traverses the site, dividing the recreation area from the wooded portion of the tract. The creek is severely eroded in several locations and invasive species are present along the

woods edge. An overhead electric line traverses the site near the stream, fragmenting the woodland. The tract is configured with a small segment of land with frontage on PA Route 212/412. The frontage contains the social club and a driveway into the recreation area.

Issues

Access is available through a driveway that extends past the social club through the middle of the recreation area. Vehicle penetration into the center of the site creates safety concerns with pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Parking for park activities is accommodated off the sides of the drive in the lawn. The maintenance facilities and storage are located prominently within the public view along the entry drive. The storage of maintenance materials and equipment is not secure and also located in public view. The park does not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There are no handicap parking spaces, accessible routes, or accessible spectator areas. There is a ramp to one restroom building but the interior does not meet ADA requirements. The playground equipment is outdated and does not meet safety and accessibility standards. The paved courts are in disrepair and unusable. Protection of the stream needs to be considered in planning any future improvements to the site.

Opportunities

The site is currently a destination for recreation activities and has well developed ball fields. The picnic grove with the pavilions and concessions appears to get extensive use but should be improved to meet accessibility standards and generally upgrade the structures for public use. The courts and playgrounds do not accommodate public use in their current condition and should be abandoned and replaced. The stream and wooded portion of the site offer opportunities for passive recreation and possibly environmental education. Accessibility accommodations must be added for public use.

Golf and Rod & Gun Clubs

The **Springfield Township Comprehensive Plan** lists the following additional recreation facilities in the Township. These facilities were not viewed or assessed as part of this study as they are private or membership based.

- **Locust Valley Golf Club** – 22.0 acres are in Springfield Township while most of the club is in Coopersburg. 18-hole golf course, privately owned club that is open to the public.
- **Ridge and Valley Rod and Gun Club** – 11.38-acre private archery and shooting range, private club.
- **Springtown Rod and Gun Club** – 30.7 acre private shooting range with picnic area, private club.

Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Facilities

Springfield Township has one public open space for recreation, Peppermint Road Park, acquired in 2002. The Township is in the process of developing a concept plan for the park and seeking grant funding for improving the park with trails, seating, signage, a small pervious parking area, and, possibly, limited play equipment for children. A second site on Hickon Road will be conveyed to Springfield Township by PPL in the near future as the result of a recent court decision and action by the PUC. By agreement, construction of a utility substation and transmission lines will precede recreational improvements on the site and public access.



Peppermint Road Park (Kurteson Farm)

Size	45.39 acres.
Ownership	Springfield Township.
Location	Peppermint Road, west of PA Route 212 and east of Parkland Road. This location is relatively central to the municipality.
Facilities	The site is in process for development as a passive recreation facility.
Characteristics	The majority of the site is open field with hedgerows and tree lines along the property boundary. A small wooded area occupies the northwest corner of the tract. A barn, formerly part of this site, is located on an adjacent tract. The western half of the site is somewhat steeply sloped (estimated to exceed 10 percent) with the slope becoming gentler on the eastern side of the site. Currently there is no defined access point or parking area.
Issues	Steepness of grade of portions of the site.
Opportunities	The size of the site is appropriate for a community park. The slope of the site is not readily compatible with development of active recreation fields without significant grading. Passive park amenities such as trails, sledding area, picnic facilities, playground, etc. are possible recreation uses for the site. A sledding hill will require an earthen berm at the bottom of the slope for safe stopping and separation from the road.

Hickon Road Property

Size	77.5 acres when adjusted for the PPL substation.
Ownership	Currently in PPL ownership. As a result of a recent PUC (Public Utility Commission) decision, PPL will turn over 77.5 acres to Springfield Township in the near future.

Location	On Hickon Road, between Kellers Road and Crowthers Road.
Facilities	The park portion of the site is undeveloped.
Characteristics	The site contains agricultural fields, woodlands, hedgerows, a small pond, and a short segment of Tohickon Creek. No buildings are on the tract. Several private home are surrounded by the tract on the western portion of the tract. Major overhead utility lines are located along the northern edge of the tract and additional overhead utility lines can be expected to be erected for the planned utility sub-station.
Issues	The site lacks public facilities. The physical and visual presence of the utility sub-station and overhead utility lines will interrupt the rural character and openness of the tract. The configuration of the tract with the private residential lots separate and isolate portions of the park.
Opportunities	The size of the site is appropriate for community park development but the configuration of the boundary and the utility infrastructure may limit recreation development. The wooded area provides a setting for passive activities like walking and hiking.

Creating a Parks and Recreation System

The National Recreation and Park Association, the national leader and standard bearer for the public parks and recreation industry, recommends that municipalities *work within their own unique social, economic, and institutional structure to provide the park, recreation and open space system that is best for their community and is within their economic and financial capacity.*⁶ In following this standard, Springfield Township carried out a formal process of assessing community parks and recreation needs and translated the findings into a framework to meet the physical, spatial, and facility requirements to satisfy the identified needs in the development of this Parks and Recreation Plan.

Community Recreation Needs

With no public parks or recreation facilities in place, citizens report going out of the Township to use parks and recreation facilities in other municipalities. Through the public participation process for this plan, three major community parks and recreation needs emerged:

1. Need for public parks close to home and making best use of community facilities, including schools and quasi-public recreation facilities.
2. Need for recreation facilities to provide places for people to lead active healthy lives through recreation including activities such as playing, exercising, league sports, hiking, walking cycling, socializing with family and friends.

⁶ Mertes, James D. and Hall, James R. Park. **Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines.** National Recreation and park Association: Ashburn, VA. 1996 p 1.

3. Need for public space for residents to experience nature close-to-home for wildlife watching, nature enjoyment, environmental education and stewardship, appreciation of the environment and the Township's scenic beauty in harmony with Springfield Township's open space conservation goals.

Municipal Government Capacity

As a small rural municipality, Springfield Township has a modest budget and a small staff. The community desires to maintain this level of operation and service although the majority of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay an additional funds ranging from \$10 to \$30 per person annually for parks and recreation. The capacity of the Township to take on a parks and recreation system emerged as a prime concern throughout the planning process. Every consideration needs to be given to both meeting community recreation needs and working within township resources along with alternative management strategies such as partnerships, volunteerism, fund-raising, fees and charges, grants and gifts. Recreation facilities must meet public need and be oriented toward a combination of self-directed recreational pursuits and organized activities provided by community-based organizations and managed through public private partnerships. No doubt, maintenance of future parks will require a combination of public private partnerships, volunteers and township support.

Park Classification: Types of Parks Meeting Springfield Township Needs

Parks and recreation facilities need to be of sufficient size, location, and configuration to meet identified parks and recreation needs. In Springfield Township, the three major park functions that were identified by the public include recreation, conservation, and pathways. The future park system in Springfield Township should be planned to accommodate these three major functions.

Park Types

Parks and recreation systems typically include a range of park types from mini parks to large natural resource reserves, sports complexes and special use facilities. Springfield Township has a unique situation. Due to the rural nature and type of development and housing in the community, most people have properties that preclude the necessity for smaller neighborhood and mini parks. Lacking are community parks of sufficient size to provide facilities for active play and nature based recreation experiences close to home. The school campuses of the Palisades School District serve as community hubs and take the place of smaller close to home mini and neighborhood parks. Based upon the needs and desires of citizens and community-based organizations for parks and recreation facilities that they would like to see in their community, three parks types emerged:

- **Community Parks** – Community parks have from 25 to 50 acres and larger in size. They offer a mix of active recreation facilities and places that preserve unique landscapes and natural features. Citizens expressed a desire to have nature based recreation facilities in which to walk, hike, work out, socialize, enjoy the outdoors and experience nature. Organized

sports groups expressed the need for athletic facilities and recognize that the Silver Creek Athletic Association is the *de facto* provider of public recreation facilities in Springfield Township.

- **School Parks** – Combining parks with school sites offers a way to make the most use of community facilities for people of all ages year round both during school hours and when school is not in session. Using the high school/middle school campus as well as the Springfield Elementary School offers potential ways of getting active recreation facilities year round through a partnership with the school district and the other four member townships.
- **Trails** – Trails can include pathways in parks, connector trails that could be on roads to help citizens get between community destinations via bicycle, on-road bikeways, mountain biking trails, equestrian trails and cross country ski trails. The public participation process found that trails are very important to township residents. However, due to the narrow and winding roads without shoulders, planning for trails within parks and off road may be the most important place to begin the trail system.



Park Locations

The conservation of open space and natural resources is crucial to the quality of life and scenic rural character in Springfield Township. Recreation facilities are needed to serve people throughout their lifetime. Therefore both the character of the land and its location in the Township provide the basis for targeting the locations of community parks. The quality of the natural resources as well as the topography of the site should play a major role in the location of the park. A community park should also be within a service radius of a half-mile to three miles. It should be near major arterial and collector streets and preferably accessible by connecting trails. Community parks should be strategically located throughout the jurisdiction. Given the Township's nearly 31 square miles, its configuration, and road network, the three sites for community parks that would provide the appropriate level of service are parks on Peppermint Road, Hickon Road and the Silver Creek Athletic Association. It is important to note that the Silver Creek Athletic Association is privately owned yet contributes in a significant way to the public parks and recreation system and, in fact, serves as the current Springfield Township parks and recreation system.

School park locations would be at the High School and Middle School Campus and the Springfield Elementary School. Springfield Township owns 14 acres of land between the municipal complex and the Springfield Elementary School. This land would be an ideal connection linking the school and the township building providing a potential community school park. Trails would initially be in parks and then expanded from there to off-road and on-road pathways where possible through the development of a township wide trail plan.

Park Size and Acreage

Peppermint Road Park includes 45.4 acres of land. In accordance with the PUC decision, PPL will convey 77.5 acres of land on the Hickon Road site to Springfield Township for use as a public park in the near future. The 14-acre

township-owned property between the township building and the school is for public parkland and community school recreation. Combined, the land available to the citizens of Springfield Township in 2013/14 will be 137 acres. This translates into 27 acres per 1,000 residents, which the Township is establishing as the level of service for parkland. This should remain the prevailing standard to meet the needs of the community for the short, medium and long term. Due to the configuration and characteristics of the park sites, as well as the recreation preferences of citizens, the parks would include both recreation facilities and a portion of open land and conservation areas available for nature based recreation. Master plans should be undertaken to evaluate the type and extent of facility development with a goal of maintaining at least one-third of each park site for nature-based recreation and conservation.

Greenways, Trails, and Bikeways

Greenways

The Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership publication, **Creating Connections, The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How-To Manual** defines greenways as a corridor of open space. Greenways 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.

Several named and un-named streams that provide the natural infrastructure for greenways flow through Springfield Township. Portions of Cooks Creek, Tohickon Creek and Haycock Creek flow through the municipality as well as many small streams.

Cooks Creek and its watershed are important natural resource. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection designated the watershed as an Exceptional Value Cold Water Fishery. It is the only wild brown trout and native brook trout fishery in Bucks County. The watershed is classified as a Priority 1 in the Natural Areas Inventory of Buck County, which identified and prioritized 115 significant natural areas in Bucks County. The Cooks Creek Watershed Association has promoted the protection of the watershed for over 30 years through education and outreach, water quality and stream improvements, and other conservation activities.

Cooks Creek Watershed is designated as a Critical Treasure of the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway, a 1.9 million acre greenway that encompasses portions of 13 counties. A Critical Treasure is a recognized priority area for additional land

conservation efforts in the Highlands that has significant value for open space preservation, watershed protection, habitats for plants or wildlife, or outdoor recreation.

Trails and Bikeways

Throughout this planning process, citizens have described the need for safe places to walk and ride bikes. In addition, previous Springfield Township planning documents have identified the public's interest in a system of linking trails in the municipality.

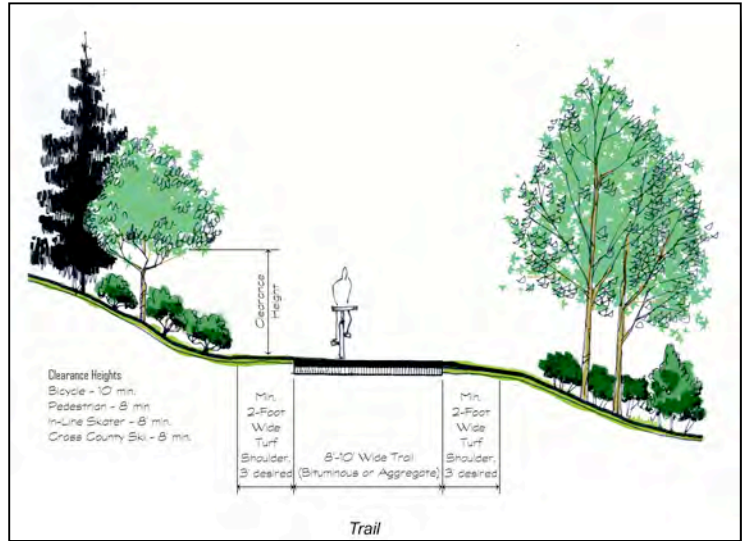
Citizens who bicycle on the local roads describe the challenges and safety risks associated with Springfield's rural roadway network.

Springfield Township's rural road system reflects the Township's historical development, topography, and agricultural heritage. The majority of the roads are narrow with little or no shoulder. In many locations the roads make sharp turns, following the property lines of adjacent parcels. No formally designated trails are located in the community.

The rural setting of the Township should not be viewed as an overwhelming obstacle to developing a system of trails in the community. A recent publication of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy titled *Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers – Walking and Bicycling in Small Towns and Rural America* provides statistics and information about the importance and potential of trails in rural settings. Consider the common refrain that our communities are too spread out for any transportation except automobiles. This perception is countered by the finding that half of all trips made by Americans today are

within 20 minutes or less by bicycle, and 28 percent are within 20 minutes by foot. For rural residents, the picture is very similar: nearly 40 percent of trips are shorter than three miles, and of those, half are shorter than one mile.⁷ People don't walk or bike in rural areas primarily because the infrastructure is not in place to promote safe travel. Providing sidewalks and trails will promote lifestyles that include walking and biking. Making it safe and convenient for residents to bike and walk will translate into improved health and fitness and economic savings through lower energy costs and cleaner environment.

Building trails in smaller communities, where lighter traffic and less dense development, means that space is more readily available for active transportation improvements.⁸ While it is usually still necessary to deal with private landowners



⁷ League of American Bicyclists. Highlights From the National Household Travel Survey. [Online] January 2009. [Cited August 1, 2012.] www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdf/nhts09.pdf.

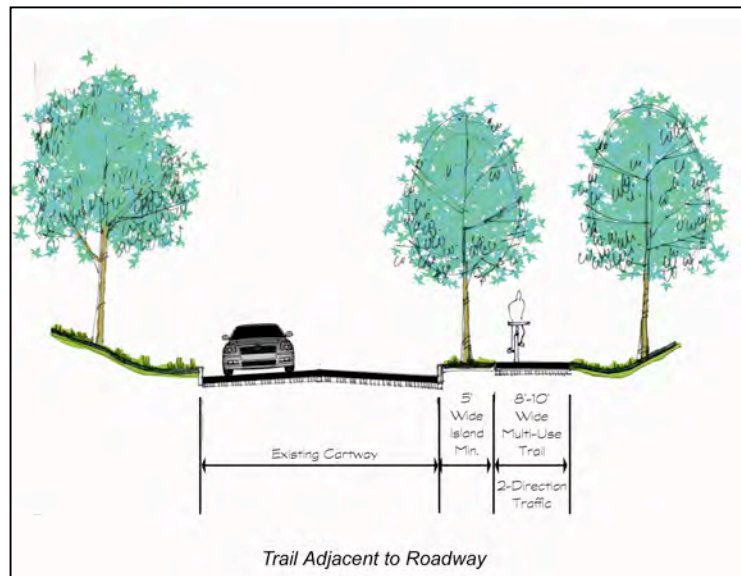
⁸ Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers – Walking and Bicycling in Small Towns. [Online] [Cited August 1, 2012.] <http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/ourWork/reports/BeyondUrbanCentersReport.pdf>

to secure easements for multi-use trail development, the larger parcel size and fewer numbers of individual parcels makes it relatively easier to secure trail alignments in rural areas.

The importance of walking and biking for rural Americans is underscored by a recent study by the U.S. Department of Transportation which found that sidewalks ranked the most important of eight transportation-related facilities for rural Americans, ahead of major roads, long-distance transportation and parking. Almost nine in 10 also cited the importance of pedestrian-friendly communities, and nearly three out of four reported that bike lanes are important.⁹ Rural residents want to bike and walk in their communities. Springfield Township residents echo this message. The challenge is devising a strategy for developing pedestrian and bicycle friendly facilities that is realistic and achievable.

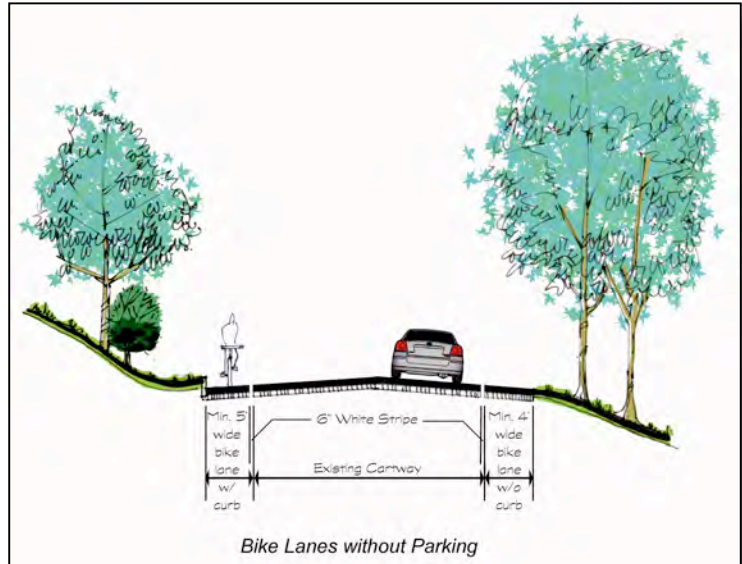
Because of the character of the community and roadway system, a single strategy for developing trails will not achieve the goals of introducing safe, local walking and biking opportunities and connecting to popular destination in the community and region. A variety of on-road and off-road solutions will be needed to maximize trail and bicycle opportunities and may include one or more of the following:

- **Multi-Use Trails** – Multi-use trails are pedestrian and bicycle paths separate from roadways. Multi-use trails may follow a stream corridor or a utility right-of-way or run cross-country following no physical feature at all. Multi-use trails are typically outside of public rights-of-ways and access easement will be required where trails are not on public land.
- **Trails Adjacent to Roadway** – Trails adjacent to roadways may be located within the road right-of-way where the width is sufficient. Where the right-of-way width is insufficient, access easements are required where trails cross private land. A grass strip should separate the trail from the roadway.



⁹ U.S. Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Public Perceptions on Transportation Characteristics of Livable Communities: The 2009 Omnibus Household Survey. [Online] July 2011. [Cited August 1, 2012] http://www.bts.gov/publications/special_reports_and_issue_briefs/special_report/2011_07_12/pdf/entire.pdf

- Bike Lanes**—Bike lanes are typically a minimum of four (4) feet wide on roadways without gutters. Bike lanes are developed for single direction travel and located on each side of the roadway and carry bike traffic in the same direction as the adjacent vehicular traffic. The *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* should be referenced when designing on-road bicycle facilities. Bike lanes provide a travel route for bicycles but do not provide accommodations for pedestrians. Bike lanes effectively narrow a street and provide a traffic calming effect as motorists typically drive slower on narrower cartways.



The narrowness of most of the roadways throughout Springfield Township does not readily permit the development of bike lanes. The major roadways (Route 309, Route 212, and Route 412) should be investigated for the potential, compatibility, and appropriateness of developing bike lanes.

Local and Regional Trail Opportunities

Springfield Township residents don't have to travel far to enjoy trails. Recreation trails in the Springfield area include:

- Jere Knight Nature Trail** – Jere Knight Nature Trail traverses a 65-acre property owned by the Heritage Conservancy. The property is located along Slifer Valley Road and parking is currently limited to a small pull off along the road that will only accommodate a single vehicle. The trail loops through the property, traversing steep slopes to reach an open field plateau where the Heritage Conservancy planted a test plot of hybrid chestnut trees, which are thriving. The main branch of Cooks Creek flows through the property. The trail is open for public use but use is limited by the lack of parking and trail improvements. The Heritage Conservancy is working to improve the trail, add interpretative signs and tree identification signs, and explore options for expanding access.
- D & L Trail** - Portions of the D & L Trail in the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor are located just east of Springfield Township in Williams, Durham, and Bridgeton Townships. The D & L Trail follows the towpath of the Delaware Canal. The D & L Trail is a 165-mile regional long-distance trail that will allow Springfield Township residents to travel off-road to as far north as Wilkes-Barre and south to Bristol.

- **Nockamixon State Park Trails** – Nockamixon State Park is located approximately two and one-half miles south of Springfield Township, and offers 35 miles of hiking trails and numerous trails for traditional and mountain biking.

These nearby recreation destination have heightened residents desire to have local walking and biking opportunities. Ideally, local trails would connect to the D & L Trail and the trails in Nockamixon State Park through the cooperation with adjacent municipalities. Coordination with the Appalachian Mountain Club regarding regional trail planning on projects such as the Highlands Trail and the Quakertown Area Trail Master Plan may help to establish trails in the Springfield Township area.

The Bucks County Bicycle Plan, completed in 2012 identifies the potential for one off-road trail and one on-road trail connection that traverse Springfield Township. These trail corridors are regional opportunities and will require the cooperation of adjacent municipalities to realize their full potential and regional linkages.

- **Quakertown Line Trail** – The proposed off-road Quakertown Line Trail follows an existing SEPTA rail corridor 5.15 miles, from Quakertown to the Lehigh County border. In Springfield Township the trail corridor is east of Bethlehem Pike and extends north to the Lehigh County border where it will meet the southern segment of the Saucon Valley Trail.
- **Mountain View Drive / Bethlehem Road Connection** – This on-road route in Springfield Township follows Old Bethlehem Road, crossing north/south through the center of the municipality. Two points of interest are located along this route: the Walking Purchase Monument North and Springfield 1892 Church School.

Conclusions

Springfield Township owns one park property that is currently undeveloped for public recreation. The Township is in the process of seeking grant funding to improve this site for passive recreational use. The Township is also in the process of obtaining another 77 acres of open space on Hickon Road from PPL. The 14 acres of land behind the Township building connects to Springfield Elementary School and can be used as a community school park. Residents currently routinely travel outside the community for recreation opportunities or visit quasi-public recreation facilities in the area. The schools of the Palisades School District also offer their facilities for recreation and most of these facilities are on the campus in Kintnersville.

The citizens and community organizations indicated that it is important to have parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Springfield Township's initiatives to purchase the Peppermint Road open space for a park and negotiate for the Hickon Road parcel for use as future parkland are supported by this finding.

The survey provided additional information about the recreation opportunities that citizens would like to see in these parks and elsewhere in the community.

Citizens ranked walking paths, places to enjoy nature, and off-road bicycle paths as their most preferred recreation opportunities. These activities fall within the broad category of passive, self-directed recreation and are compatible with the Township's rural setting and budget considerations. Citizens also identified the need for additional active recreation opportunities. In the public meeting and key person interviews citizens have noted that playgrounds and athletic fields are needed to serve the community's youth and people regularly travel to other communities to use them.

The Peppermint Road property should be improved in the near future to meet community recreation needs. The best near-term opportunity to create walking and biking opportunities in Springfield Township is to develop trails in Peppermint Road Park. The recreation benefits provided by the Palisades School District and the Silver Creek Athletic Association are critical to residents and should be supported and strengthened by the municipality. The long-standing desire for trails and walking and bicycling opportunities in the community is limited by the narrow roadways and private property.

Park, Recreation Facility, and Trail Recommendations

1. **Adopt a standard for the parks and recreation system.** The standard for Springfield Township's park system would include:
 - A total community parkland acreage ratio of 26 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
 - Three community parks located with a service radius a half-mile to three mile radius providing service to all areas of Springfield Township,
 - 25 to 50 acres or more per park,
 - A combination of land for nature based recreation and active recreation, and
2. **Undertake master plans for the two existing parks on Peppermint Road and Hickon Road to respond to the needs and interests of the citizens.** The master planning process should include multiple opportunities for public input and review to align the park designs with the needs and interests of the community. The master plans should include a phased cost estimate that outlines the anticipated development costs. Master plans should include projections for operations and maintenance along with sources of support from both the township and through public private partnerships. The master plan for Peppermint Road Park should be developed in the near-term and the Hickon Road Park master plan completed following development of electrical infrastructure that will impact the parcel to include the sub-station and electrical transmission lines and towers. Initial design considerations for each park site include:

- **Peppermint Road Park**
 - Continue the development of a concept plan to improve the Peppermint Road open space as a park for passive recreational use. The majority of respondents in the public opinion survey indicated that the park should provide nature-based recreation opportunities and be developed with trails.
 - Make improvements needed for public access. Create a driveway and small parking area with accommodation for handicap parking.
 - Consider other facilities of interest to citizens as identified in interviews and the public meeting: a playground, pavilion, and sledding hill. Establish trails in the park and have distance markers so that users can measure how far they walk.
 - Protect natural features of the site to include the wooded hedgerows.
 - Minimize lights in the park to facilitate viewing the dark sky.
 - Plant deciduous trees for shade.
 - The idea of maintaining a portion of the park in agricultural fields was suggested.
- **Hickon Road Open Space upon conveyance to Springfield Township**
 - Explore opportunities for shared infrastructure (access drive and parking area) with the electric substation to be developed on the property.
 - Protect natural areas of the site.
 - Develop trails throughout the site.
 - Develop recreation amenities as defined by public outreach.

3. Explore opportunities for developing active recreation opportunities through partnerships.

- Springfield Elementary School provides traditional playground areas and facilities associated with an elementary school. The playground at the school is the only public playground in the Township. It is only available during non-school hours. Springfield Township should work with the school district to upgrade and expand the playground and other recreation facilities. Explore opportunities to include:
 - Expand and update the playground equipment. Verify that the playground equipment meets the latest safety and accessibility requirements. Reference the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines for Public Playground Safety and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Expand the playground to include age-segregated equipment for ages 2-5 years old and 6-12 years old.
 - Explore the school/park concept by incorporating the adjacent 14 acres of land owned by Springfield Township. This land lies between the school multi-purpose field and the parcel with the Township

municipal building. Develop a master plan for the combined landholdings of the school and Township to explore school/park development opportunities. Facility should serve both recreation and education objectives and target recreation needs of residents and students. Explore opportunities to develop athletic fields to meet active recreation needs of the school and community.

- Explore opportunities to expand public use of Silver Creek Athletic Association through partnership, long-term lease, or acquisition. The Silver Creek Athletic Association site includes well developed ball fields that currently serve the youth of Springfield Township participating in Silver Creek Athletic Association baseball and softball leagues. The 31.82-acre site also includes paved courts, playground, and other traditional recreation and support facilities that are outdated and unusable. Public use of the park site will require updating to meet safety standards, functional and use requirements, and accessibility (ADA) requirements. If expanded public use is feasible, a master plan should be completed for the site to create a vision for the improved park. The master plan should also consider the site's natural areas and opportunities to develop trails and incorporate passive recreation and environmental education opportunities into the park. Any improvements should include the recommendations of this plan regarding designing with nature, planning for maintenance and best management practices.
 - Explore opportunities to partner with Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church to provide expanded access and improvements to their recreation facilities.
4. **Design with nature.** Develop Peppermint Road Park and Hickon Road Park to protect and enhance natural resources and incorporate “green” strategies, technology, and products that promote sustainability. Work with the Cooks Creek Watershed Association to include water quality enhancements in parks.
- Provide buffer areas around sensitive natural resources that should have limited or no public access.
 - Enhance riparian buffers along Cooks Creek, Tohickon Creek, Haycock Creek, and their tributaries. Restore and stabilize eroded stream banks and establish riparian buffer planting along streams.
 - Limit disturbance of natural areas and consider natural functions when incorporating site improvements.
 - Locate facilities with consideration of prevailing wind and solar orientation.
 - Use native plant material to enhance wildlife habitats, buffer water resources, and minimize maintenance.
 - Prioritize the use of native plant material throughout the parks.
 - Identify and remove non-native invasive species in the parks. Monitor the parks to make sure invasive species do not get a foothold.

- 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 e.g. wetlands and rock outcrops into park designs.
- Develop parks using Best Management Practices for erosion control and storm water management.
- Provide interpretative signs and develop demonstration projects in the parks to communicate with citizens and landowners about the importance of protecting the environment and enhancing natural systems.
- Consider life-cycle costs and use of post-consumption materials when designing improvements.
- Consider development options that reduce energy consumption such as ground source geothermal heating and cooling and solar powered amenities/features.

5. Promote greenway, trail, and bicycle initiatives in Springfield Township.

- Cooperate and assist Heritage Conservancy, Cooks Creek Watershed Association, and the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway on greenway and trail initiatives in the municipality. Include natural resource enhancements and protections in public parks.
- Prioritize the development of trails in Peppermint Road Park, Hickon Road open space, and the property between the township building and Springfield Elementary School.
- Incorporate a provision for trail development and corridor dedication in mandatory dedication provisions for Springfield Township.
- Promote bicycle and pedestrian safety and roadway awareness. Work with area bike shops, the School District, and others to provide bicycle safety education programs. Refer to the materials and educational opportunities of existing programs like Safe Kids Pennsylvania, Just Drive PA, and the Pennsylvania Safe Routes to School Program.
- Coordinate trail planning with adjacent municipalities, the Bucks County Bicycle Task Force, the Appalachian Mountain Club and other groups interested in trails that might emerge.
- Share information with landowners about the benefits of trails and greenways and the purpose and mechanics of access and conservation easements for trails and greenways.

Recreation Opportunities

Recreation in Springfield Township is oriented to enjoyment of the great outdoors. The outdoor recreation resources afford plentiful opportunities for fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, hiking and other nature based experiences. Organized programs and services are available primarily through community sports leagues and the Palisades School District.

Recreation Program Inventory

Springfield Township is fortunate in having a host of community-based organizations that provide recreation programs, activities and events. They include the following:

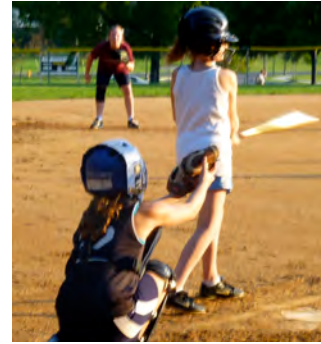
- Springfield Township – Sponsors Annual Community Day, Tire Recycling.
- Palisades School District – Activities include sports, sport camps, extra-curricular activities and adult education programs.
- Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts – Memberships and activities for youth. Scouts provide volunteers services in the community. Eagle Scout and service projects can help improve parks.
- 4H Club – Memberships and activities for youth.
- Faith based organizations – Youth groups & Vacation Bible School.
- Springtown Fire Department – Memberships and activities (Pancake Breakfasts, Chicken Dinners, Halloween Parade).
- Springtown Rod & Gun Club – Memberships and various activities.
- Silver Creek Social Club – Memberships and various activities.
- Springfield Lions Club - Memberships and various activities.
- Springfield Historical Society - Offers memberships and various activities (guest speakers).
- Passer Senior Center - Memberships and various activities for seniors.
- Minsi Trail Flower Club - Memberships and activities (Annual Christmas Open House).
- Cooks Creek Watershed - Clean-up Day.



Organized Sports

Springfield Township has five sports organizations. Due to the rural nature of the area, the leagues serve people regionally without regard to geographic boundaries. Springfield Township residents enjoy the benefits of playing in the Township at the Sliver Creek Athletic Association and on Palisades School District facilities as well as on sports facilities in other communities. In addition to the players, many volunteers are involved in operating the leagues and enjoying the games as spectators.

- Palisades Youth Soccer Association
- Palisades Youth Football Association
- Silver Creek Athletic Association (baseball and softball for youth and adults)
- Palisades Youth Basketball Association
- Penn Jersey Athletic Association serves players in independent high schools
- Lehigh Valley Softball League
- Quakertown Soccer Club



Senior Centers

Two senior centers serve Springfield Township residents:

- Upper Bucks Senior Citizens Center
P.O. Box 46
Milford Square Fire Co. Social Hall
2183 Milford Square Pike
Milford, PA 18337
Monday to Friday 8:30 – 3:00
- Eastern Upper Bucks Senior Center
8040 Easton Road,
Ottsville, PA 18942
Monday through Thursday from 10:00 - 2:00

The trend in services for future generations of active aging adults is toward multi-generational community centers that people use throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis once they retire. The Palisades School District stated that there might be interest in a field house if it could be supported through regional partnerships. Consideration of future services for the active aging citizenry could be a part of this discussion.

Recreation Values

Community recreation values were determined through input through the public involvement process. There is no expectation that Springfield Township should

directly provide recreation programs and services other than Community Day. They include the following:

- Service for citizens of all ages,
- Opportunities for citizens that are mainly self-directed,
- Partnerships with other public and private entities in community recreation service, and
- Information about recreation opportunities that is timely and accessible.

Palisades School District

The Palisades School District is committed to community involvement and use of school district facilities for the public good. School district facilities are important to the community for both education and recreation. Community organizations use school district facilities for community sports, summer camps and recreation programs and special events. With a new superintendent on board in 2011, the School District is undertaking outreach efforts to each of the five townships in its service area. The goal is build strong lines of communication in the district with all municipalities.

Programs and Services Analysis

Recreation opportunities in Springfield Township are primarily oriented to nature based outdoor recreation, sports leagues, and programs offered by community based recreation providers. What citizens want most is to be able to go to parks that are close to home to play, socialize, experience nature and engage in fitness activities such as walking and safe place to bicycle.

Residents are not seeking urbanized types of full-service organized scheduled programs. Supporting community recreation providers is important and a fitting role for the Township.

One area for more attention is in conjunction with the Palisades School District. Interviews for this plan found one major area of gaps in services: programs for youth not involved in sports and for teens. Working to address these concerns in collaboration with the school district and the other municipalities in the Palisades School District service area may bring about practical and achievable steps for addressing the important issue of after school programs and services for youth.



According to the U.S. Department of Education, children and youth who regularly attend high-quality afterschool programs have:

- Better grades and conduct in school
- More academic and enrichment opportunities
- Improved peer relations and emotional adjustment
- Fewer incidents of drug use, violence and pregnancy
- Reduction in stress levels in family environments with working parents.

Recreation Opportunity Recommendations

1. **Serve as point of contact for the public regarding information about parks and recreation.** This can be one of the most important yet least costly ways to serve the public. Planning and carrying out ways to increase public awareness can be a function of the future Parks and Recreation Board. Add a link on the website for parks and recreation. Include information about township parks, recreation facilities and programs available through other organizations.
- 
2. **Continue in the role of facilitator of recreation opportunities, not as a direct provider of services.** Foster relationships with community organizations that can plan, direct, and implement public recreation programs. Supporting important organizations such as sports leagues is crucial.
 3. **Ensure that all agreements for public use of facilities by community organizations comply with standard operating procedures.** This would include proper background checks, insurance liability requirements, and philosophies that strive to create healthy social environments for all involved.
 4. **Continue Community Day as the one exception to the role of providing recreation programs directly.** This would remain as a function of the Community Day Committee with the support of the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager.
 5. **Focus recreation opportunities in nature based experiences in the great outdoors.** These opportunities are plentiful in Upper Bucks County. Focus on creating opportunities for self-directed recreation rather than on organized, scheduled programs. This would be through the provision of facilities where people can enjoy nature, safely, walk and bicycle, and socialize with family and friends.
 6. **Consider establishing a relationship with the Palisades School District in recreation opportunities.** This can include joint efforts in programs, services, facilities and public awareness. The school district may be able to provide facilities such as indoor recreation facilities that the Township cannot afford to provide on its own. This would be especially important for indoor year round recreation opportunities. Consider working with other townships in the school district along with the school district on regional recreation programs that no one entity could undertake on its own.

Organization, Management, and Funding

The public opinion survey found that the citizens of Springfield Township rate the township government services as good to very good. Having this level of appreciation is notable and an excellent foundation to move ahead in establishing the community parks and recreation system. Springfield Township operates with professional management and a small staff commensurate with its modest budget.

Springfield Township Organizational Structure and Management

As a Township of the First Class, Springfield Township operates with a five member Board of Supervisors. As the elected officials, they are responsible for setting policy. The Supervisors appoint the Township Manager who is responsible for implementing the policy set forth by the Supervisors and managing the operation of the Springfield Township municipal services.

The Township has eight advisory committees. Five of these are related to parks and recreation including:

- Planning Commission
- Open Space Committee
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Historic Commission
- Community Day Committee

Parks and Recreation Management

Springfield Township does not have a parks and recreation system. Peppermint Road is the only designated park property and it is undeveloped. The Roads Department is responsible for the maintenance of all municipal property and facilities. The Township Manager is responsible for the management of all township services.

Organizations Supporting Parks and Recreation

Several organizations support parks and recreation efforts in Springfield Township.

Palisades School District

The Palisades School District serves Springfield, Bridgeton, Nockamixon, Durham, and Tincum Townships. As a rural area with no cities or town centers, the School District serves as the hub of community life. The facilities, programs and services are a vital part of community life in the area. The public participation process for this plan found that citizens view the school facilities as essential component of the public parks and recreation system.

Silver Creek Athletic Association

Silver Creek Athletic Association serves as the de facto home for community recreation in Springfield Township. The athletic fields, play equipment, pavilions, game courts and amenities support organized sports, community special events and other programs that citizens enjoy close to home.

Upper Tohickon Watershed Association

The Upper Tohickon watershed covers approximately 74 miles in Upper Bucks County, Pennsylvania - making it the second largest watershed in the county. The watershed includes portions of 12 municipalities including Richland, Springfield, Haycock, Milford, East Rockhill, Nockamixon, Bedminster and West Rockhill Townships along with Quakertown, Richlandtown and Trumbauersville Boroughs. The purpose of the Upper Tohickon Watershed Association is to preserve, protect and improve the Tohickon Creek, its stream corridors and tributaries. The Association seeks to benefit the health of the watershed ecosystem and the surrounding community through environmental education, conservation efforts and promotion of sound land use.

Appalachian Mountain Club

The Appalachian Mountain Club is working on the Highlands Trail. This trail will cross from New Jersey across Pennsylvania to Adams County and south. A portion of this trail could go through Springfield if the planning process would prove this to be feasible.

Heritage Conservancy

Based in Doylestown, Heritage Conservancy is an accredited not-for-profit conservation organization that specializes in open space preservation, planning for sustainable communities, natural resource protection, property stewardship, historic preservation, adaptive reuse of existing structures, wildlife habitat restoration and biodiversity.

Bucks County Bicycle Taskforce

In July of 2008, Bucks County created a Bicycle Task Force (BCBTF) comprised of ten interested members of the community committed to advocating and advancing bicycling and bicycle related issues and to advise the Bucks County Commissioners on recommendations that would advance bicycling opportunities

throughout the County. BCBTF oversaw the development of the Bucks County Bicycle Plan that serves as a guide for the development of a countywide bicycle network.

Funding

Generally, funding for public parks and recreation systems falls into two major categories: capital funding and operational funding. Capital funding is generally regarded as expenditures more than \$10,000 for improvements that last more than five to seven years. Operational funding is for the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the public parks and recreation system. This includes park maintenance, programs and services, advertising, staffing, utilities, equipment, supplies, and materials.

Capital Funding

Springfield Township has three sources of capital funding:

- General Fund through which the Township Board of Supervisors can appropriate funds for capital improvement projects,
- Earned Income Tax includes a ¼ of 1% tax to be used for the purchase of conservation easements, and
- Bucks County Open Space Program under which Springfield Township's allocation from the \$87 million program was \$636,351 that currently remains available. This program is a county initiative to protect the unique landscapes and resources of Bucks County through funding for farmland preservation, municipal open space, the Delaware Riverfront, natural areas and county parkland.

Operating Funds

Consideration of future financial support for parks and recreation is important now that the Township owns its first park property. Operating budgets include items like wages and salaries, utility costs, postage, supplies and other regularly recurring expenses. The operational budget would be phased in over a period of years as the parks and recreation system develops and other sources of support are generated. The Township has expressed its desire to operate through a mix of public and private partnerships to support parks and recreation. The idea is to use the township budget to leverage other support for parks and recreation. The Township cannot provide all community parks and recreation on its own. Tools for budget planning include the following:

1. **Management Impact Statement.** A Management Impact Statement is a tool for planning, decision-making and resource allocation. This method would provide the most accurate budgeting figures that would be attached to specific goals and objectives. The recommendations chapter presents a Management Impact Statement outline for Springfield Township to use as a tool in park planning.
2. **Use the township budget as a benchmark.** Use the Township's operating budget as a guideline. Typically, municipalities allocate two to three percent of their operating budget for parks and recreation. The Township's budget in 2012 is \$1,467,756. This translates into \$29,355 to \$44,032. Research by the National Park Service found that parks and recreation systems that are viewed as important community assets by the private sector have five percent or more allocated from the municipal operating budget.
3. **Use state comparisons regarding municipal funding for parks and recreation.** The average per capita municipal investment for operating parks and recreation is \$27.36. To gauge public opinion about supporting parks and recreation, the Township asked the survey respondents to indicate their willingness to pay additional funds annually for this purpose. About 54% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay an additional amount of money ranging from \$10 to \$30 annually for parks and recreation. Nearly 200 respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer or join a park friends group. Approximately 23% said that they would not support anything for parks and recreation.

Enabling Legislation for Parks and Recreation

Although Springfield Township does not yet have a parks and recreation system, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides enabling legislation for public parks and recreation in townships of the second class. The Second Class Township Code provides for the establishment of the parks, recreation centers, and forests system¹⁰ in Townships of the Second Class that includes Springfield Township. The Second Class Township Code enables Springfield Township to:

- Acquire land and buildings for parks, playgrounds, playfields, gymnasiums, indoor recreation centers and other facilities for public recreation,
- Supervise, maintain, and regulate parks,
- Equip, operate and maintain the parks, recreation areas and facilities,

¹⁰ Second Class Township Code. (1933 amended in 1991). Harrisburg, PA. Article XXII. Parks, Recreation Centers, and Forests.

- Acquire and maintain forest areas,
- Create a Recreation Board,
- Work in agreement with other municipalities, the county, and the school district on joint ownership and operation of park and recreation areas,
- Employ play leaders, recreation directors, supervisors, superintendents, or other officers or employees, and
- Pay the expenses of operating parks and recreation.

Second Class Township Code & Parks and Recreation Boards¹¹

The Board of Supervisors may by ordinance create a recreation board to supervise, regulate, equip and maintain township funded recreation programs and facilities. The recreation board has only those powers and duties that the Board of Supervisors delegates to it.

Composition, Organization and Duties

Parks and Recreation Boards shall consist of five, seven, or nine members. Members serve a five-year term. The members elect their own chairperson, secretary, and all other officers for a one-year term. The recreation board shall submit an annual report documenting the adequacy and effectiveness of the recreation facilities, services, and leadership.

Typical Parks and Recreation Board Responsibilities

Cooperate with the School District and community organizations. Supervise & regulate parks and recreation programs. Expend funds. Interpret parks and recreation operations to the public. Represent the Township at official occasions. Make full and complete reports to the Township Supervisors as requested. Serve as advisors in development of the annual operating and capital budgets for parks and recreation.

Management Analysis

In this time of economic crisis and increasing accountability from all levels of government, decision-makers, staff and citizens alike expect efficient and effective operating systems. The following analysis includes the strengths challenges and opportunities regarding parks and recreation management.

Management and Funding Strengths

- **Township Commitment to Organizational Capacity** – Springfield Township operates within a framework of creating maximum organizational effectiveness with a small staff.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Section 2204.

- **Commitment to Professionalism** – The Township’s professional positions are based upon qualifications, expertise and experience.
- **Support** – The Board of Supervisors supports the establishment of a parks and recreation system with respect to its capacity and financial resources. The Township is committed to identifying and securing public and private partnerships for parks and recreation. While the majority of citizens appear to be willing to support parks and recreation paying additional funds, they also expressed desire to avoid large expenditures and maintenance costs.

Management and Funding Challenges

- **Establishing the parks and recreation system** – The workload in planning and developing the Springfield Township parks and recreation system will be significant. As a small municipality, it is important to recognize that not everything can be accomplished at once; the system must be phased in over time. Securing the Peppermint Road park property is a major accomplishment. Every success, no matter how small, will advance parks and recreation in the community. Engaging partners, volunteers and project champions will enable the Township to leverage public resources with private support.
- **New parks and recreation facilities will require some level of public investment and support of volunteers** – Parks and recreation facilities require maintenance to ensure that they are safe, clean and ready to use. The Township will be using partnerships and volunteers for park maintenance but ultimately the responsibility for park maintenance is the Township’s.
- **Need to develop a park maintenance management system** – Parks and recreation facilities require unique skills and expertise such as natural resource management, turf management, ballfield maintenance, playground safety, risk management and so on. Creative management strategies with formalized partnerships with community organizations such as the Silver Creek Athletic Association can generate maintenance support including specialized maintenance support with expertise such as sport field maintenance the Association regularly performs. The Heritage Conservancy have expertise in natural resource management that potentially could be tapped for technical assistance in developing community based natural resource conservation projects.
- **Establishing a baseline-operating budget for parks and recreation** – Public parks and recreation is typically funded through a mix of public and private resources. Four classifications of revenue for parks and recreation include the following:



- **Compulsory Resources** – taxes, dedication ordinances, and fines
- **Earned income** – Fees, charges, and interest on investment
- **Contractual Receipts** – Facility rentals, land leases, and concessions
- **Financial Assistance** – Grants, gifts, donations, bequests, sponsorships, fund-raising and volunteerism.

Management and Funding Opportunities

The support of elected and appointed officials and the general citizenry will be an important factor in establishing Springfield Township’s parks and recreation system. Several opportunities emerged during the planning process that could help to advance public parks and recreation. The following strategies could increase organizational effectiveness, make the best use of township resources, and help to control costs:

- **The Silver Creek Athletic Association complex has the potential to serve as a community park if the Township and the Association could work together in developing a mutually beneficial scenario for the future.** Pooling limited resources could result in providing public recreation facilities in perpetuity as well as in supporting the Association’s goals.
- **The Palisades School District is a community hub.** The School District offers facilities and programs for public recreation. However, the School District operates independently in terms of recreation, as do all five municipalities within the district. If the Township could work collaboratively and strategically with the School District and eventually the other municipal partners in the district, the pooling of the expertise, facilities, services and funding could result in greater public recreation opportunities at less cost than any one of the six entities alone could provide.
- **Palisades Community Foundation.** The Palisades Community Foundation is dedicated to the wellness, education and cultural enrichment of the youth and community of the five-township Palisades area. The Foundation has completed an impressive list of community-focused projects:
 - Stadium Lights for Walter T. Rohrer Stadium
 - Four new Tennis Courts, enabling Palisades to re-instate the sport
 - Renovation of outdoor Basketball Courts
 - Visitors Bleachers
 - Ticket Booth at stadium entrance
 - All-Weather Track that was installed in August 2006. The Foundation is satisfying their pledge of \$250,000 toward the costs of the new track with \$210,000 returned to the School District so far.
- **Sports Leagues.** Community sports leagues have the potential to be good partners in developing the parks and recreation system.

- **Bucks County Area Office on Aging.** This county agency provides a host of services for senior citizens. This includes the support of 13 senior centers. The two closest to Springfield Township are located in the Milford Square Fire Company’s social hall and the Upper Bucks Senior Center in Ottsville.
- **PACT.** PACT (Partners Acting for Community Togetherness) is an organization allied with the Palisades School District with a mission of deterring drug and alcohol use by teens. The group is interested in a community center.
- **Trail planning organizations.** The Appalachian Mountain Club and the Bucks County Planning Commission are working on bicycle trails including the Springfield Township area. The Bucks County Bicycle Task Force could potentially become a trail-planning partner.
- **Insurance carrier.** The Township’s insurance carrier could help with the development of a risk management program for parks and recreation facilities.



Regional Parks and Recreation

Springfield Township had tried to establish regional partnerships and grants for this parks and recreation plan for three years to no avail. This was due to varying levels of parks and recreation planning in area jurisdictions and their ability and desire to participate in regional parks and recreation initiatives. However, in the current funding and economic climate, regional recreation and parks is more important than ever and should be considered here in the future. Grant funders in government and the private sector favor applicants operating in partnership rather than independently; this is especially true in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in which regional grant applications are more competitive for state grants.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247)

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968 as amended (MPC), establishes the authority for municipalities to exercise land use controls through comprehensive planning, subdivision ordinances and zoning ordinances. Act 68 of 2000 amended the MPC to specifically authorize municipalities to engage in cooperative planning activities and to enter into joint cooperation agreements in accordance with Act 177. The MPC strongly advocates coordination of the planning function between and among adjacent municipalities. Municipalities can approach matters on a regional basis in two different ways – informally or formally. Informal arrangements can be made at any time on an ad hoc basis on any issue. Formal cooperative arrangements are more binding and require the adoption of an intergovernmental cooperation agreement.

Working in partnership with the Palisades School District and the municipalities in the district would be especially helpful in creating community school parks and programs for the community, including youth and families. In rural

communities, the schools are the hubs of community life. As such they can serve residents of all ages whether they have students in the schools or not by orchestrating community partnerships. This makes the best use of public facilities funded by the taxpayers. Interviews for this plan found that the Palisades School District is working on outreach with its municipal partners and desirous of discussions on all parties can work together for the public good with respect to community resources. Citizens expressed the desire to make the best use of school district facilities working to avoid duplication of facilities and services and maximizing use of facilities already supported through public funding. Several good examples of school/municipal partnerships in parks and recreation have been in Place in Pennsylvania for decades. Their range of collaboration varies in terms of facilities, services and funding. Such examples include, but are not limited to, the Council Rock School District and Northampton Township; the Blue Mountain Regional Parks and Recreation Commission; Mechanicsburg Area Recreation Commission; Centre Region Parks & Recreation; and Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority

Benefits of Regional Parks and Recreation

Cooperation among municipalities makes sense for a variety of reasons and for a variety of purposes. Three major benefits of intergovernmental cooperation include:

- **Interdependence or mutual interests** – A variety of issues and needs transcend municipal boundaries, impacting a region as a whole, whether they are economic, social, environmental or physical in nature.
- **Cost Savings** - The ability of municipalities to combine their buying power and their administrative capabilities and resources to obtain a better return of services and goods for each municipality results in increased efficiency or economy of scale and thus cost savings.
- **Enhanced Public Service** - Municipal services can be more effective when municipalities work together in sharing services resulting in more and better service to the public that would not be possible if each municipality were working alone.

Organization, Management, and Funding Recommendations

1. **Establish the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Board.** Consider transitioning the advisory committee for this plan into the Parks and Recreation Board. Join the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society. Consider applying for a \$2500 no match RecTAP grant for the purpose of retaining a parks and recreation professional to help set the board up and get it going. Consider designating sub-committees for special projects or initiatives such as trails.

2. **Consider exploring regional parks and recreation partnerships with the Palisades School District and the municipalities in the school district.**

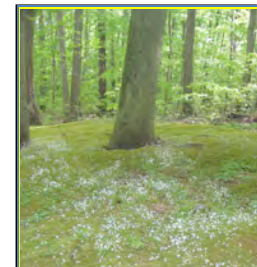
Regionalizing recreation, parks and conservation services is challenging but worthwhile producing enhanced public service at lower cost.

3. **Engage the Silver Creek Athletic Association in discussions about the permanent protection of the recreation area for public recreation and conservation.** Discuss the recreation facilities, how to permanently protect them and how to maintain them. Also consider the Cooks Creek area of the Silver Creek Athletic Association property for conservation, environmental education, and linkage purposes.



4. **Create a management plan for the development of the park on Peppermint Road.** Develop an impact statement on the operational costs of this park and its facilities. Identify the sources of support to maintain the facilities. This would include potential partners.
5. **Begin to identify and develop policies to help manage the parks and recreation facilities.** Establish a policy on the naming of parks and recreation facilities. Establish park rules and regulations and adopt them by ordinance. Post them when a park is open to the public. Establish a gifts and donations policy.

6. **Plan for budgetary support for parks and recreation.** While the intent is to avoid major costs, some level of investment will be required. Use the benchmarks presented in this plan for budgeting. Incorporate a revenue strategy with a mix of township funds, grants, gifts, bequests, fundraising, partnerships, sponsorships, fees, charges, lease, sales, permits, and rentals. Revenue generation from non-tax sources requires time, a concerted effort, and expertise.



7. **Create an employee development program for park maintenance.** Enable maintenance staff to secure training for park maintenance that is available through source such as the Conservation District, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society and others.

Recommendations

Parks, recreation, greenways, trails, and open space help to define a highly desirable community in which to live, work, play, raise a family, and retire. They are essential components of the quality of life and are vital to the conservation of Springfield Township's natural resources and scenic beauty. Recreation is essential to public health, human development, building strong family bonds and deterring anti-social behavior. Plentiful recreation opportunities enable our citizens to lead active healthy lifestyles.

The following recommendations for establishing the Township's parks and recreation system emerged from the planning process that considered public engagement, the reality of the current economic conditions and fiscal challenges. By having a plan in place, citizens, community organizations, township management and staff, and elected and appointed officials will have one common set of goals and recommendations to work toward.

Organizing for Excellence

The characteristics of award-winning parks and recreation systems provide a framework for Springfield Township to use in establishing and growing the community's parks and recreation system. Research conducted by the Trust for Public Land found that there are seven factors that define excellence in public park systems¹². They include the following as applied to Springfield Township:

1. **A clear expression of purpose.** The defined purpose of the Springfield Township parks and recreation system will serve as the foundation for all decision-making in planning, developing, operating and evaluating parks, recreation facilities, services, management, maintenance, and funding.
2. **Ongoing planning and community involvement.** Springfield Township is committed to community involvement as evident in the survey and notices about public meetings that the Township sent to every household, public notices about meetings, the official appointment of the plan advisory committee and the desire of township committees to request participation in the planning process. To be successful, a parks and recreation system needs a thoughtful orchestrated planning process for all major improvements and ongoing operations. A plan is

¹² Harnik, Peter. **The Excellent City Park System: What Makes It Great and How to Get There.** Washington, D.C.: Trust for Public Land. 2003.

more than an intention. It is a document that is built upon a process, demonstrating specific actions, professional expertise, research, and a clear final outcome. It should be rooted in public participation. Good planning builds public support and ensures the likelihood that the Township can successfully afford to operate the project in the future.

3. **Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the community's goals.** A community park and recreation system must have enough parkland and recreation facilities to meet community need. Adequate resources in terms of staff, budget, and equipment and a mix of public and private support must be in place to ensure that facilities are safe, clean, and ready to use.
4. **Equitable Access.** The Springfield Township park and recreation system should be accessible to all residents regardless of place of residence, physical ability, or financial circumstances. Increasing architectural accessibility in parks and recreation facilities will be an important challenge in meeting ADA guidelines, especially in public recreation use of existing facilities such as at the Silver Creek Athletic Association where facilities are old and outdated.
5. **User satisfaction.** By definition, an excellent park system is well used. Monitoring public satisfaction with the future parks and recreation system can be a function of the future Parks and Recreation Board. Methods for this include tracking citizen phone calls to the township offices, feedback in township meetings, outreach to citizens using parks, random telephone surveys, direct mail surveys every three years, internet surveys on an ongoing basis on the Township's website, and evaluations conducted at township recreation programs and events.
6. **Safety from Physical Hazards and Crime.** Parks and recreation facilities must be safe, clean and ready to use. In addition the public must perceive them as safe as well. The more that parks are used in positive ways the safer they are.
7. **Benefits for the Municipality Beyond the Borders of the Parks.** The value of Springfield Township's park and recreation system will extend well beyond the park boundaries. Good parks have been shown to increase property values, clean the air and water, reduce health care costs, attract and retains businesses and residents, reduce the isolation of the elderly, and improve learning opportunities for people of all ages through experience in the great outdoors.

Core Values, Vision, Mission and Goals

The following core values, vision, mission, goals and recommendation's upon implementation will advance Springfield Township's work in establishing an excellent public park system thereby further enhancing the quality of life here for present and future generations of citizens.

Core Values

As the qualities valued by the community of Springfield Township, the core values are embodied in the mission, vision, and recommendations for parks, recreation, greenways and trails. All policies and actions should be rooted in the core values.

- **Community Character and Scenic Beauty** – Springfield Township’s agrarian roots, scenic rural character are the essence of this community.
- **Natural Resource Conservation** – Forests, streams, wildlife, and clean water and air must be conserved.
- **Quality of Life** – The distinctive way of life here needs to be preserved and protected to ensure that it remains a tranquil rural community rooted in the principles of smart growth.
- **Sustainability** – Making the best use of all resources in ways that steward the environment, respect human and financial capacity, and provide a legacy for future generations is vital.
- **Health** – The health and wellness of citizens of all ages is paramount. Recreation fosters active healthy lifestyles through facilities, programs, and services that benefit individuals and the community.

Vision Statement

Springfield Township’s parks and recreation system enriches the community through the conservation of natural resources, recreation opportunities that support active healthy lifestyles, and the preservation of our rural scenic character.

Mission Statement

To acquire, develop, operate, and maintain a park and recreation system that enriches the quality of life for our residents and preserves it for future generations.

Goals

The goals are based upon the community values, vision, mission and four themes that emerged in the planning process.

- **Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and lead active healthy lifestyles.**
- **Goal 2: Connect our community through a system of trails.**
- **Goal 3: Facilitate recreation opportunities to help the citizens engage in active healthy living.**
- **Goal 4: Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.**

Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and exercise in harmony with nature and environmental conservation.

Overview

Springfield Township residents have indicated that parks and recreation opportunities in the community are important to them. Now residents are traveling to nearby communities to use parks, recreation facilities, and trails. Springfield Township owns one park on Peppermint Road that is currently underdeveloped. The Township is also working with PPL on the Hickon Road property to be conveyed to the Township in the near future as a result of a recent decision by the PUC. PPL may secure easements over the land acquired through the PUC process that will have an impact on potential park plans. Silver Creek Athletic Association serves as the de facto public park albeit its private ownership. The Palisades School District facilities are the home to community-based recreation with more use of the main Campus on Route 412 than on the Springfield Elementary School grounds.

Significant Issues

Springfield Township does not have any developed parks at this time. The site characteristics of Peppermint Road Park and the utility infrastructure of Hickon Road Park may limit development of traditional active park amenities. A potential partnership with the Silver Creek Athletic Association could address the need for traditional community park facilities while providing needed improvements to a treasured community asset. The parks and recreation system cannot be developed at once and needs to be phased in over time.

Objective 1

Provide adequate parkland for present and future residents.

Recommendations

1. Adopt standards for the parks and recreation system. The standards for Springfield Township's park system will include:
 - A total community parkland acreage ratio of 27 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
 - Three community parks located with a service radius a half-mile to three mile radius providing service to all areas of Springfield Township,
 - 25 to 50 acres or more per park, and
 - A combination of land for nature based recreation and active recreation.

Objective 2

Continue the work on developing the concept plan for Peppermint Road Park.

Recommendations

1. Use the information from the public participation process in the Parks and Recreation Plan to guide the development of the concept plan.
2. Create formal public access. Add a drive and small parking area with accommodation for handicap parking.
3. Address the opinion of the majority of survey respondents in the public opinion survey that indicated that the park should provide nature-based recreation opportunities and be developed with trails. Plan trails to traverse the site with interesting views, features varying lengths, and distance markers so that users can measure how far they walk.
4. Consider other park features that emerged in the public participation process for this plan that were of interest to residents such as a playground, pavilion, and sledding hill.
5. Protect natural features of the site including the wooded hedgerows.
6. Minimize lights in the park to protect the dark starry skies of Springfield Township.
7. Plant deciduous trees for shade.
8. Consider retaining the agricultural fields and working in partnership with local farmers to interpret the site and farming to the park users.
9. Provide a phasing and development plan, phasing over time, methods of funding and an operations and maintenance plan.
10. Name the park as part of the planning process for the concept plan or set forth a timeline for establishing the official name of the park.
11. Develop a naming policy for Springfield Township's parks and recreation facilities. In the short term, develop a policy and guidelines on naming township parks.
12. Strive to establish a Friends of Peppermint Road Park (or other official name of the park).

Objective 3

Explore a partnership with the Silver Creek Athletic Association (SCAA) in the establishment of the organization's site and facilities as an official public park.

Recommendations

1. Initiate discussions with the SCAA regarding the establishment of the site as a public park.

- Identify the goals and desires of the Township and SCAA regarding the site.
 - Identify issues, opportunities and concerns.
 - Brainstorm the potential solutions that could advance Township and SCAA goals.
 - Achieve consensus on how to move forward collaboratively.
 - Develop a written agreement.
2. Conduct an assessment of SCAA facilities to determine current conditions, the improvements needed, options for future additions, costs, financing sources and a phasing plan. Obtain professionals with expertise in park planning to undertake the assessment.
 3. Strive to retain the character and charm of SCAA that is beloved by the community as exemplified by the rustic, unique pavilions. Consider this park as the location for a significant well-designed playground as this is has been identified as a major public interest and residents are currently traveling to Quakertown to use the playground there.
 4. Coordinate with the Bucks County Open Space Coordinator regarding the use of the Township's allocation of the county Open Space Program for this park.
 5. Determine a future operating strategy that would be rooted in a continued partnership between the Township and SCAA with future roles, responsibilities and funding determined.
 6. Establish a formal written partnership agreement regarding the planning, design, improvement and operation of the SCAA as a public park.

Objective 4

Finalize the agreement with PPL regarding the configuration for the future park on Hickon Road.

Recommendations

1. Strive to negotiate for the most desirable and useful features of the site for park use.
2. Include public participation in the planning and design process using as transparent a process as possible to ensure residents that the Township is continuing to work on their behalf. This will help to build stewardship and support for the future park.

Objective 5**Develop a master plan for the future park on Hickon Road.**

Recommendations

1. Name the park.
2. Plan for public access within a timeframe that works for the Township in terms of operating and maintaining the site.
3. Using a public participation process, provide the community with a consistent, transparent and open process to develop a master plan for the park with a balance of resource conservation and recreation.
4. Ensure that best management practices in park and recreation planning and operations are addressed in the planning process.
5. Ensure that the park master plan is created within the context of the entire township park system, the needs of the community and the Township's overall planning and operations.
6. Establish a strategic long-range vision for future park improvements at Hickon Road, a sound basis for future capital improvement funding, development, operation and maintenance.
7. Strive to create a Friends of Hickon Road Park.

Objective 6**Explore the establishment of community school parks with the Palisades School District.**

Recommendations

1. Work closely with the Palisades School District in their current outreach effort to the municipalities in their service area.
2. Identify areas of common concern and opportunity for the enhancement of school facilities for community recreational use during non-school hours year round.
3. Consider how the Springfield Elementary School could become a community school park. Include consideration of the township owned property that adjoins the school as an expanded public park space.
4. Look to the main campus of the Palisades School District for the potential for special use facilities that could include year round indoor recreation facilities, aquatics, a sports complex, fitness facilities, and facilities for the arts. If municipalities and the School District join forces, more and better facilities might be possible for these small rural communities including Springfield Township.

Objective 7

Design, develop, and maintain the parks as public spaces that are safe, clean, ready to use and beautiful.

Recommendations

1. Strive to achieve a high quality consistent design for the parks that prioritize protection of natural resources, targeted facilities that address community needs, and artful design that lays gently on the landscape. Work with professional park planners and landscape architects versed in park design and include public outreach as part of the park master planning process.
2. Create opportunities in park sites for the enjoyment of activities that promote healthy lifestyles.
3. Capitalize on the scenic beauty of the park sites and community. Enhance the parks with landscaping for beauty, color and interest and trees for shade.
4. Employ CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principals to create safe public spaces. Involve municipal police and community organizations in the design process to understand and address security concerns.
5. Manage parkland for natural resource conservation not just for public use.
6. Work with other organizations in the community that offer quasi-public recreation facilities such as Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Passer Community Center. These organizations could be partners in community parks and recreation. Outreach to these organizations could be a function of the future Parks and Recreation Board or with support of others when time and resources allow.

Objective 8

Design parks to be sustainable both environmentally and financially.

Recommendations

1. Design parks with nature. Protect and enhance natural resources of park sites.
2. Protect water resources and enhance water quality. Establish riparian buffers, and stabilize damaged stream banks.
3. Provide buffer areas around sensitive natural resources and limit access as appropriate.
4. Consider wind, solar orientation, soils, geology, depth of ground water and other natural features when locating facilities.

5. Prioritize the use of native plants and identify and remove non-native, invasive species.
6. Use low impact development techniques and Best Management Practices for erosion control and storm water management to develop park sites.
7. Provide interpretative signs and demonstration projects to communicate important environmental messages.
8. Plan for the capital and operating funding as part of the master planning process.
9. Identify partners, fees and charges and other public and private methods of supporting the parks.

Objective 9

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

Recommendations

1. Develop trails within all parks to provide accessible routes from parking areas to recreation and support facilities. Provide stabilized handicapped parking spaces in each parking area.
2. Provide accessible viewing areas adjacent to activity areas that are connected to an accessible route. Ball fields must have accessible viewing areas.
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. Accessible features and accommodations facilitate use by seniors, parents with strollers, and others, not just persons with disabilities.
4. Develop playgrounds with play equipment that offers play options for children who are physically challenged.
5. Offer site amenities that accommodate persons with disabilities. Provide picnic tables that are ADA compliant. Develop benches along trails with a stabilized space for wheelchair adjacent to the bench. Offer ADA compliant drinking fountains.

Goal 2: Connect our community through a system of trails.

Overview

The most preferred recreation opportunities in Springfield Township are walking paths, places to enjoy nature, and off-road bicycle paths. Trails are popular in the region. Springfield Township is a destination for road cyclists despite the concerns about road safety and visibility here for cyclists. Springfield Township residents cycle on trails that nationally recognized on the D & L Trail in the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, nearby in Nockamixon State Park, and in the Lehigh Valley through connections via Quakertown and Hellertown. Important trail planning initiatives are underway in which Springfield Township will be included such as the Bucks County Bicycle Plan and the Highlands Trail that will connect from New Jersey southwest to Maryland and beyond. The many streams of the community provide the infrastructure for greenways and corridors of green space that can enhance water quality and wildlife habitats.

Significant Issues

Springfield Township's heritage is evident in the narrow winding roads that were planned and developed centuries ago. Citizens are most concerned about the safety of their roads for people who cycle on them. The rural roads are narrow, winding, without shoulders and have limited sight distances. Many of the most popular roads for bicycling are also among the most dangerous due to the volume and speed of car and truck traffic on thoroughfares such as Routes 412 and 212. Developing trails will require patience to commit to a long-term strategy of seizing trail development opportunities and the cooperation of private landowners.

Objective 1

Plan a network of trails throughout Springfield Township to link residential areas, schools, parks, recreation facilities and other community destinations.

Recommendations

1. Prioritize development of walking and biking pathways in Peppermint Road Park, Hickon Road Park, and the Silver Creek Athletic Association in the near-term.
2. Coordinate and cooperate with various entities involved in trail and greenway planning and development to include the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway, Bucks County Bicycle Taskforce, Appalachian Mountain Club, Lehigh County, and adjacent municipalities.
3. Share information with landowners about the benefits of trails and the purpose and mechanics of access and conservation easements.
4. Strive to appoint citizens to be involved in regional trail planning efforts such as the Bucks County Bicycle Plan and the Highlands Trail Plan. Working with

neighboring communities on bicycle pathway planning is both essential and a challenge in Upper Bucks County.

5. Include bicycle education for both cyclists and motorists to ensure safety and harmony in planning to make Springfield Township a bicycle friendly place. Coordinate this effort with the Palisades School District and the Bucks County Bicycle Task Force.
6. Involve the Police Department in planning and developing the township bicycle network. Consider sending police officers for training in bicycle safety, education and most importantly enforcement. The enforcement of traffic laws regarding bicycling is crucial to the success of bicycling in communities.

Objective 2

Develop the trail network.

Recommendations

1. Prioritize development of trails in the Springfield Township parks.
2. Complete a trail master plan that recommends a system of trails to connect parks, schools, villages, and other community and regional destinations. Identify viable trail pilot projects that excite residents about close to home trails and create momentum for expanding trails township-wide.
3. Strive to enable township residents to connect with regional trails with the D&L Trail, Nockamixon State park and the Saucon Valley Trails as main destinations.
4. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into local and state roadway and bridge improvements.
5. Incorporate provisions for trail development and corridor dedication in mandatory dedication provisions for Springfield Township.
6. Coordinate road projects undertaken by PennDOT and the Township to address ways to include improvements for bicyclists.
7. For roads that are chip sealed, use a formula that provides a better bicycling surface. Penn State University is addressing the development of formulas that work for townships, cars and bicycles. The Bucks County Bicycle Task Force could be a source of information on this topic so that the Township can consider this for future chip sealing. It would be important to consider this for the low volume roads that citizens in Springfield Township use for close to home bicycling. Chip sealed roads tear up tires and frames and improved formulas could lessen this impact. Costs need to be considered in making decisions on township maintenance tasks. Monitoring advances in road re-surfacing materials will be important in the future to take advantage of materials that are affordable and make conditions safer and more pleasant for cycling.

Goal 3: Facilitate recreation opportunities for the citizens to engage in active healthy living.

Overview

Public parks and recreation systems introduce citizens to a variety of lifelong recreation interests that add years to your life and life to your years. Springfield Township has followed the tradition of small rural communities throughout Pennsylvania: the provision of recreation programs and services through community volunteers and organizations. The Township does not provide any recreation programs and services directly except for Community Day, the annual fall celebration held at Silver Creek Athletic Association. Community organizations such as sports leagues, the Fire Company, and faith-based institutions offer important public recreation activities and events. The strategy for recreation is for Springfield Township to continue in the role of facilitating other community based recreation providers in providing their services and to make self-directed opportunities possible in the future parks and recreation facilities. Self-directed opportunities include walking, hiking, bicycling, playing, socializing, nature enjoyment and other things people can do on their own whenever they want. The Township will also help citizens engage in active healthy lifestyles by informing them of the parks, recreation facilities and opportunities available in the community.

Significant Issues

- Parks and recreation will be a new public service in Springfield Township.
- Finding ways for various recreation service providers to work together to increase public recreation opportunities is important. A Parks and Recreation Board can help to facilitate collaboration among providers.
- Effective coordination of maintenance will be required to ensure that facilities are ready to use when recreation providers want to hold their programs, leagues, and events. Finding ways of involving these providers in maintenance is important as well as some tasks that could be performed by volunteers.
- Collaboration with the Palisades School District will continue to be important to this community in terms of lifelong recreation services and facilities.
- Increasing public awareness about recreation opportunities through use of the township website and newsletter will become an important public service in an affordable way.

Objective 1

Collect and provide information to the citizens about recreation opportunities in the community.

Recommendations

1. Maintain and publish on the website and in newsletters a current list of contacts for community recreation providers so that citizens can go to them for information and participation in their programs.
2. Maintain and publish a calendar of events and programs.
3. Use a township map and develop a listing of recreation facilities to post on the website so that citizens know where to go for recreation. This will be an evolutionary process as the system develops. In the meantime consider providing information on regional facilities, as this would be a useful public service.
4. Make the collection of information a function of future Parks & Recreation Board.

Objective 2

Coordinate programs offered by community based providers with township operations and ensure that the programs comply with operating procedures that are in the best interest of the community.

Recommendations

1. Develop a communication system to ensure that township staff knows well in advance when programs and events will be underway to schedule maintenance in a timely manner.
2. Provide a Springfield Township contact for recreation organizations.
3. Evaluate programs, services, and facilities on an on-going basis to determine public preferences and the level of services provided. Ask for testimonials and permission to use the testimonials in advertising.
4. Ensure that all agreements for public use of facilities by community organizations comply with standard operating procedures. This would include proper background checks, insurance liability requirements, and philosophies that strive to create healthy social environments for all involved.

Objective 3

Build upon community nature based recreation opportunities with the Environmental Advisory Commission.

Recommendations

1. Focus on creating self-directed nature based recreation experiences in the future township parks.
2. Advertise these areas and opportunities to the public. Promote recreational experiences that people can enjoy at their own discretion for relaxation, nature study, photography, bird and wildlife watching year round.
3. 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-based organizations to conduct their own self-directed programs and experiences.
4. Advertise these opportunities in the newsletter and on the website.

Objective 4

Provide and promote recreation opportunities aimed at improving lifelong fitness and wellness.

Recommendations

1. Promote and advertise facilities such as pathways, year-round recreation, and scenic natural areas to entice people to participate in activities outdoors.
2. Promote the need for an active lifestyle, its role in disease prevention, and how Parks and Recreation can help citizens to lead healthy lifestyles. Try to use articles from others sources that can be re-produced in the township newsletter.

Objective 5

Develop and implement an advertising program to enhance and increase community awareness about parks and recreation.

Recommendations

1. Use the township newsletter to promote parks and recreation. Include an article about parks and recreation in every issue.
2. Provide a parks and recreation link on the township website.
3. Provide links to other recreation organizations websites on the township website.
4. Take photos to use in the newsletter and post on the website.
5. Have a booth for parks and recreation at the annual Community Day. Get volunteers to staff the booth. Make the booth fun with some games. Provide maps and brochures of parks, recreation programs and locations.

Goal 4: Provide operational excellence and financial stability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

Overview

Effective management is the key to a successful parks and recreation system. It is relatively easier to obtain funding for capital improvement projects than to get the resources needed to support ongoing operations and maintenance. Over the lifetime of a park, three out of every four dollars goes to maintenance and operations. The goal of Springfield Township is to provide a basic level of operation for safe, clean, and ready to use parks and to generate support and volunteers through public/private partnerships.

Significant Issues

- Springfield Township has a constrained budget and limited staff.
- The Township does not have a parks and recreation system in place so developing an effective operations and management system will take time and effort.
- While volunteers will play an important role in future operations, they are not free. They require recruiting, training, supervision and recognition. Volunteers will require management time from township staff.
- The introduction of parks and recreation facilities in the community will generate an additional workload.
- There is no parks and recreation board at present. Several boards and committees support related environmental and recreational efforts in Springfield Township such as open space, trails, and the Community Day annual event.

Objective 1

Establish the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Board.

Recommendations

1. Develop and adopt an ordinance creating the Parks and Recreation Board. The duties of the Board, as specified by Pennsylvania's Second Class Township Code, would be "to supervise, regulate, equip and maintain township funded recreation programs and facilities" in advisory capacity. The Board would have only those powers specifically delegated to it by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Appoint five, seven or nine persons as specified in the Second Class Township code. They should represent a broad range of community interests reflective of Springfield Township's citizenry. This would include age, place of residency, interest in parks and recreation including active and passive, and special expertise that could help advance parks and recreation in the community. Such expertise could include advertising, fund-raising, trails, partnerships and volunteerism, nature, fitness, and other traits to be determined.
3. Establish a term of office of five years or until their successors are appointed, except that the members first appointment shall be appointed so that the terms of not more than two members expire annually. Members will serve without pay but may be reimbursed by the township for all expenses incurred in performing their duties.
4. Direct the Parks and Recreation Board members to elect a chairman and secretary and select all other necessary officers to serve for a period of one year.
5. Develop and adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of all business within Springfield Township and exercise powers and functions concerning parks and recreation facilities as may be delegated to it by the Board of Supervisors.
6. Submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, including an analysis of the adequacy and effectiveness of community recreation areas, facilities and leadership
7. Join the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society to get ongoing information about parks and recreation, funding, grants, training and other support information.
8. If the Township joins PRPS, consider applying for a RecTAP grant through PRPS to provide support for the establishment of the Parks and Recreation Board and training of the members and township staff. A RecTAP grant is a \$2500 grant to retain an outside professional to work with a municipality on a parks and recreation issue or opportunity. It does not require a match.

Objective 2

Develop a partnership programs for parks and recreation.

Recommendations

1. Work with community based organizations in the development and operation of the parks and recreation system.

2. Main partners should include the Silver Creek Athletic Association, the Palisades School District, Cook's Creek Watershed Association, Heritage Conservancy, the Bucks County Bicycle Task Force, and sports leagues.
3. Strive to establish a park friends group for every township park.
4. Identify facilities and tasks in which partnerships could be mutually beneficial. Establish a plan for how the partnership will work.
5. Develop the partnership program over time building upon small successes along the way.
6. Long term consider working in collaboration with the Palisades School District and its member municipalities to form a regional parks and recreation board.

Objective 3

Develop a written maintenance management system.

Recommendations

1. Develop quality standards for the parks and recreation facilities.
2. Develop a formal, written maintenance plan. Include planning, directing, controlling, and evaluating park and recreation system maintenance.
3. Use the information generated from the maintenance system to make decisions about facility improvements or changes, resource allocation, fees and charges, staffing and other important functions.
4. Incorporate maintenance planning in all major capital improvement projects. Use the Management Impact Statement Tool shown in Figure 1 on page 66 for this purpose.
5. Implement an effective communication and scheduling system to ensure that facilities are ready to use for scheduled recreation programs, activities, and events.

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?

Objective 4

Produce an annual report for parks and recreation.

Recommendations

1. Produce an annual report for Parks, Recreation, Greenways and Open Space in accordance with the requirements of the Second Class Township Code. Include information about the benefits and outcomes of investment in parks and recreation.
2. Ensure that reporting emphasizes outcomes, benefits, and quality standards as well as the facts and figures about township parks and recreation efforts, partnerships and volunteerism.
3. Distribute this report widely. Use it strategically to make the case for how important parks and recreation is to Springfield Township including the benefits to this community.

Objective 5

Establish an employee development program.

Currently the Roads Department provides maintenance of all township property. Parks introduce a new component to ongoing maintenance that includes functions such as natural resources management, safety inspections for playgrounds, athletic field maintenance, customer service, and coordination with other providers in recreation programs and others.

Recommendations

1. Undertake an assessment to determine the skills and expertise the parks and recreation system will need in the future. Include development of skills such as natural resource management, sustainability, sports field maintenance, Consumer Product Safety Commission Standards for playground safety inspections, and other functions to be identified in the assessment. Involve staff in the assessment to include their interests and professional development as part of this program.
2. Develop a five-year employee development program. Include a mix of strategies and methods such as conferences, seminars, training programs, school classes, web-based programs, networking and visiting other departments, brown bag lunches, and others.
3. Target one to two percent of the parks and recreation-operating budget for the Parks and Recreation Employee Development Program.

4. Consider working with other organizations such as the Palisades School District, the Heritage Conservancy, and the Township’s Environmental Advisory Commission on the development of natural resource management plans, ballfield maintenance, coordination with community recreation groups, volunteer efforts, and staff training on natural resource management.

Objective 6**Support parks and recreation through a mix of public and private funding.**

Recommendations

1. Support parks and recreation through a mix of public and private resources at a level commensurate with the Township’s resources and capacity.
2. Strive to invest in parks and recreation at a budget ratio of two to three percent of the Springfield Township operating budget.
3. Determine how to use the \$636,351 allocation from the Bucks County Open Space Program to advance the development of the Springfield Township parks and recreation system.
4. Use the Bucks County Open Space funding as the foundation for developing a five to seven year capital improvement program.
5. Use this information in the plan to support grant applications for facility development.
6. Develop a gifts and donations policy. This will support responsibilities regarding the long-term nature of gifts and donations. Develop a gifts catalog for parks and recreation to generate help for park facility development.

Objective 7**Adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance for parks and recreation in accordance with Section 503(11) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code.**

Recommendations

1. In order to establish a Mandatory Dedication of Land Ordinance, Springfield Township must adopt a Parks and Recreation Plan. In addition, the Township must include a section providing for public land dedication in its Subdivision and

Land Use Ordinance (SALDO). Figure 2 presents excerpts from Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code related to the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland.

2. Use 26 acres of land per 1,000 residents as the parkland standard for parks and recreation. To calculate the amount of parkland needed for each household proposed for development using the following formula:

- Use the average household size of 2.5 people in Springfield Township based upon the 2010 United States Census.
- Divide the targeted 26 acres of parkland by 1,000 residents to derive the amount of parkland equivalent per person:

$$26 \text{ acres of parkland} / 1,000 \text{ persons} = .026 \text{ acres of parkland}$$

- Multiply the number of acres of parkland required per person by the number of people per household to get the amount of parkland needed per household:

$$.026 \text{ acres of parkland per person} \times 2.5 \text{ number of persons per household} = .065 \text{ acres of parkland required per household.}$$

- For a development of 20 households, multiply 20 households \times .065 acres of parkland required per household resulting in 1.3 acres for this particular example. However, 1.3 acres of parkland is not sufficient to create a public park based upon the Springfield Township standards. Therefore, the Township may *request* a fee-in-lieu of dedication. The developer *may consent* to provide a fee-in-lieu of dedication. The value of the fee would be calculated using the information described in #4 below.

3. Set forth criteria for the type of land that Springfield Township desires for parkland as follows. Community parks should be 10 to 50 acres in size and serve the residents township wide within a desirable service radius of two miles. Land for community parks should be relatively flat and well drained to accommodate the development of recreation facilities. Due to the rural spread-out nature of the community, it is anticipated that most park users would drive to the parks. Parkland should be well located with convenient and safe road access and not cause adverse impacts on adjoining properties.

While Springfield Township may *mandate* the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland, it can only *request* fees-in-lieu and the developer may consent as shown in Figure 2 Section 503 (11). Set the fees-in-lieu of dedication of parkland in accordance with the market value of land. The value of the fee-in-lieu should bear a direct relationship to the value of the type of land that would otherwise be dedicated. Springfield Township can simply state in its mandatory dedication ordinance that the fee-in-lieu should be equal to the average fair market value of the land otherwise required to have been dedicated as determined at the time of the filing of the subdivision of the land development application. The responsibility for determining the value of the land may be placed on the developer with Springfield Township able to verify or dispute the value. If Springfield Township should dispute the applicant's fair market value, the Township may obtain a certified appraiser at the applicant's cost to verify or adjust the applicant's fair market value to the appraiser's value.

4. When fees in lieu of dedication are generated, deposit the fees in an interest-bearing account with the interest being made part of this account. The account must specify the recreation purposes for which the fees will be used. Use the fees within the three-year period required by the Municipalities Planning Code or the developer can request that the fees be returned with interest.
5. Use the fees for the following purposes to serve the needs of future residents by:
 - Purchasing targeted parkland,
 - Developing infrastructure for recreation,
 - Buying recreational equipment for new parks,
 - Making improvements to existing parks, or
 - Providing a combination of the above.
6. Consider the inclusion of commercial and industrial property in the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance. Municipalities such as Newtown Township in Bucks County have established Mandatory Dedication of Parkland ordinances that include residential, commercial and industrial development. Newtown Township requires 750 square feet of parkland per 1,000 square feet of building area. It would be important to document the recreational needs of the non-resident employees of these future businesses to support such an ordinance.
7. When Springfield Township develops a trail plan, consider including trails in the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance as a recreation facility. The trail plan should be similar to the Parks and Recreation Plan in including inventory, analysis, and the development of standards, goals, and recommendations. The standards would include acreage standards just as for parkland. The trail plan would identify trail corridors and these could be located on an Official Map of Springfield Township. Developers would be required to dedicate the land for the trail within the development. If a trail corridor lies beyond the development, the Township could request that the developer provide a fee-in-lieu of dedication of the land for the trail.
8. Work cooperatively with developers in anticipation of land development plans and during the process. Outreach and working together often results in advances for both the developers and the township in terms of providing parkland and recreation facilities and meeting municipal regulations. Involve the Planning Commission, EAC and the future Parks and Recreation Board to in review and provide comments on proposed land development to the township management and elected officials.
9. Seek guidance from the Springfield Township Solicitor regarding the development and adoption of the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance.

Figure 2
Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code:
Excerpt from Section 503 related to the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland.

Section 503: Contents of Subdivisions and Land Development Ordinance. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance may include but need not be limited to:

(11) Provisions requiring the public dedication of land suitable for the use intended; and, upon the agreement of the applicant or developer, the construction of recreational facilities, the payment of fees-in-lieu thereof, the private reservation of the land, or a combination, for park or recreation purposes as a condition precedent to the final plan approval, provided that:

- (i) Provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any plan application, whether preliminary or final, pending at the time of enactment of such provisions.
- (ii) The ordinance provides definite standards for determining the proportion of a development to be dedicated or the fee to be paid in lieu thereof.
- (iii) The land or fees, or combination thereof, are to be used only for the purpose of providing park or recreational facilities accessible to the development.
- (iv) The governing body has formally developed a recreation plan, and that the park and recreational facilities are in accordance with definite principles and standards contained in the subdivision and land development ordinance.
- (v) The amount and location of land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid shall bear a reasonable relationship to the use of park and recreation facilities by future inhabitants of the development or subdivision.
- (vi) A fee authorized under this subsection shall, upon its receipt by a municipality, be deposited in an interest bearing account, clearly identifying the specific recreational facilities for which the fee was received. Interest earned on such accounts shall become funds of that account. Funds from such accounts shall be expended only in properly allocable portions of the costs incurred to construct the specific recreation facilities for which the funds were collected.
- (vii) Upon request of any person who paid any fee under this subsection, the municipalities shall refund fee, plus interest accumulated thereon from the date of payment, if the municipality had failed to utilize the fee paid for the purposes set forth in this section within three years from the date such fee was paid.

Implementation Strategy

The **Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Plan** sets forth a vision that complements the Township’s success in open space preservation. It provides the framework for establishing the public parks and recreation system. Parks and recreation in Springfield Township will be rooted in providing opportunities for citizens to engage in active healthy living pursuits and experiencing nature in township parks. The public engagement process for this plan found that the majority of citizens in the Township think that parks and recreation is important to the community. Recreation and conservation efforts that integrate Springfield Township’s values for community, health, natural beauty, and sustainability are the hallmark of this plan.

The Implementation Strategy featured in this chapter is grounded in developing the parks and recreation system over time, using a mix of public and private funding to develop the parks and recreation facilities, and generating support for operations and maintenance through partnerships, volunteerism and township support.

Every incremental success, no matter how small, will advance Springfield Township’s vision for the future. The intent of this implementation strategy is to chart a course of action that is pragmatic and achievable and that also allows for larger scale projects should the opportunities emerge. Priorities, a suggested timeframe, and resources, which include cost estimate ranges are outlined for each recommendation.

Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where citizens can have fun, experience nature, socialize, and exercise in harmony with nature and environmental conservation.

Priority/ Timeframe	Action	Strategy Description	Resources/Costs
High 2013	Adopt parkland standards for the parks and recreation system	Set standard as 26 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Use this standard in establishing a Mandatory dedication of parkland Ordinance.	Administrative time and Board of Supervisors action.
High 2013	Continue plan for Peppermint Road Park.	Complete conceptual plan for Peppermint Road Park using a professional with expertise in park planning. Plan for trails and support facilities.	\$1,600.
High 2014-15 continuing through 2022	Improve Peppermint Road Park for public recreational use.	Seek grant funding to undertake park improvements. Continue to involve the public in park planning and implementation. Continue to use professionals with park planning expertise.	\$250,000 grant to be matched with township funds and in-kind services.
High 2013-14	Finalize agreement with PUC on Hickon Road property	Work with PUC in completing the work required to complete the transfer of the property to Springfield Township.	Administrative time and potential legal fees.
High 2014	Establish a plan for using the Hickon Road property as a passive park.	Complete conceptual plan for the Hickon Road property using a professional with expertise in park planning. Plan for trails and support facilities.	\$2,000 - \$10,000.
High 2014-15 continuing through 2022	Improve the Hickon Road property as a passive park	Seek grant funding to undertake park improvements. Continue to involve the public in park planning and implementation. Continue to use professionals with park planning expertise.	\$250,000 grant to be matched with township funds and in-kind services.
High 2014-15 continuing through 2022	Explore partnership with Silver Creek Athletic Association for the permanent public use of the site for active recreation and conservation.	The Board of Supervisors and Township Manager would engage in discussions with SCAA about dedication of property for public recreation.	The costs and benefits to SCAA and Springfield Township need to be determined through the discussions. Potential to seek grant funding.
Low 2018-20	Explore establishment of a community school park with Palisades School District.	Use the township property connecting Springfield Elementary School with the Township complex as a community school park.	Administrative time. Fee for park planning to be determined. Potential to seek grant funding.

Goal 2: Connect Springfield Township through a system of greenways and trails.

Priority/ Timeframe	Action	Strategy Description	Resources/Costs
High 2013-2022	Use the land development process to identify and secure trail connections.	Planning Commission would review land development plans and seek trail connections as part of the planning process.	Planning Commission members' time and Administrative time. Discussions with land developers helps to facilitate trail linkage establishment.
Medium 2015-16 with trail improvements through 2022	Plan a network of greenways and trails throughout the Township linking residential areas, schools, parks and other community destinations.	Establish a trail planning advisory committee to undertake the plan. Coordinate with other organizations such as the Appalachian Mountain Club, Bucks County Bicycle Task Force and neighboring municipalities.	Volunteers' time. Administrative time for coordination.
Medium 2016-2017	Develop a Mandatory Dedication of Trails Ordinance.	Identify a pilot project for a trail. Undertake a trail feasibility study and a trail master plan. Seek grant funding.	Sources for grant funding for trails include PADCNr and PennDOT, which is responsible for federal transportation funding that includes non-motorized transportation. It is important to monitor trail funding as it varies with appropriations and legislation.
Low 2020+	Develop the Springfield Township trail system.	Identify a pilot project for a trail. Undertake a trail feasibility study and a trail master plan. Seek grant funding.	Sources for grant funding for trails include PADCNr and PennDOT, which is responsible for federal transportation funding that includes non-motorized transportation. It is important to monitor trail funding as it varies with appropriations and legislation.
Low 2018-20 with improvements 2020- 2022	Explore establishment of a community school park with Palisades School District.	Use the township property connecting Springfield Elementary School with the Township complex as a community school park.	Administrative time. Fee for park planning to be determined. Potential to seek grant funding.

Goal 3: Facilitate recreation opportunities for the citizens to engage in active healthy living.

Priority/ Timeframe	Action	Strategy Description	Resources/Costs
High 2013- forward	Collect and provide information about recreation opportunities in the community.	Use the Township's website and newsletters as the means to distribute information about recreation to the community. Post information about parks and recreation facilities in the area. The extent of information presented can increase over time in line with the support available for collecting and posting needs.	Volunteer time and administrative support.
High 2013 - forward	Coordinate programs offered by community based organizations.	Transfer the role of coordinating recreation programs from the Township Manager to the Future Parks and Recreation Board.	Volunteer time. Administrative time for coordination.
Medium 2015- 2017 forward	Provide and promote opportunities for citizens to use parks and recreation facilities for lifelong fitness and wellness.	Promote the parks and trails as enjoyable and free destination for citizens to work out, walk, run, bicycle and other outdoor recreation pursuits as facilities are established.	Volunteer time and administrative support in developing and posting materials for the website and newsletters.
Medium 2015- 2017 forward	Build upon community nature based recreation opportunities with Cook's Creek Watershed Association.	Expanded partnership opportunity between future Parks & Recreation Board and Cook's Creek Watershed.	Volunteer time and support from Cooks Creek Watershed Association.
Low 2018-20 forward	Develop and implement an advertising program to enhance community awareness about the important and benefits of parks and recreation.	Seek volunteer assistance from a community organization, business or individual to develop a community outreach program. This will help to generate park stewards as well as future generations of parks and recreation advocates.	Volunteer time. Partnership with organization or individual with expertise in advertising. Administrative time. Potential seed funding for materials.

Goal 4: Provide operational excellence and financial stability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

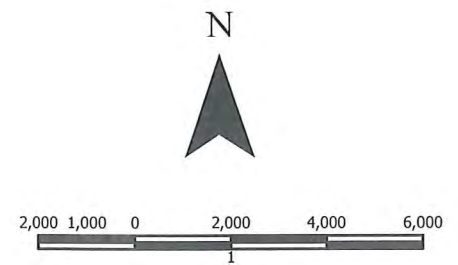
Priority/ Timeframe	Action	Strategy Description	Resources/Costs
Operations and Management			
High 2014 - forward	Develop an operations and management plan for the parks and recreation system.	Undertake management and maintenance planning in conjunction with park planning. Use the Management Impact Statement as a tool in this process. Include a mix of public and private support in operations and maintenance.	Administrative, staff and volunteer time. Planning for management will result in effective and efficient use of public and private resources.
High 2014 - forward	Develop and implement a written park maintenance management plan	Establish park quality standards through the future Parks & Recreation Board. Use staff to project tasks and costs to achieve those standards. Incorporate sustainability and low maintenance into park planning process. Seek volunteers for defined functions. Consider contracting out maintenance functions such as mowing.	Administrative, staff and volunteer time.
High 2014 -2015 - forward	Develop a formalized partnerships program for parks and recreation.	Establish the Parks & Recreation Board. Build upon existing partnerships including: Silver Creek Athletic Association, Palisades School District, Cook's Creek watershed Association, Heritage Conservancy, Bucks County Bicycle Task Force, and Appalachian Mountain Club. Establish a park friends group for each park established.	Volunteer time and administrative support.
High 2014- forward	Produce an annual report on parks and recreation.	Second Class Township Code requires the Parks & Recreation Board to produce an annual report documenting adequacy and effectiveness of the recreation facilities, services, and leadership.	Volunteer time and support from Cook's Creek watershed Association.
Low 2018-20 - forward	Develop and implement an employee development program for parks and recreation.	Assess skills and expertise needed to operate and maintain the developing public park and recreation system including natural resource management. Work with existing parks, recreation, and conservation organizations as training sources.	Allocate 1-2% of the parks and recreation operating budget for employee development.
Financing			
High 2014 - forward	Support parks and recreation through a mix of public and private resources.	Strive to invest 2-3% of the Township's operating budget in parks and recreation. Seek grants for capital improvements.	Develop plan for securing financial support through grants, gifts, donations fundraising, bequests, leases, sales, concessions, sponsorships and partnerships.

Appendix A Parks and Recreation Map

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION MAP



- Legend**
- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
 - STREAMS
 - TOWNSHIP ROAD
 - STATE ROAD
 - EXISTING TOWNSHIP PARK
 - POTENTIAL TOWNSHIP PARK
 - PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITY
 - SCHOOL
 - JERE KNIGHT TRAIL PROPERTY



SILVER CREEK
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

PEPPERMINT ROAD PARK

PASSER COMMUNITY CENTER

HICKON ROAD SITE

JERE KNIGHT
TRAIL PROPERTY

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY

SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION MAP
Created SEPTEMBER 2013
Springfield Township
Data Sources:
PARCELS - Bucks County Planning Commission
STREAMS - Bucks County Palnning Commission
ROADS - Bucks County Planning Commission

Appendix B

Public Opinion Survey Summary

Springfield Township
2320 Township Road
Quakertown, PA 18951
Phone: (610) 346-6700
www.springfieldbucks.org

**Springfield Township
Parks and Recreation
Public Opinion Survey Summary**

2012

Toole Recreation Planning
6081 Honey Hollow Road
Doylestown, PA 18902
267-261-7989
anntoole@comcast.net

Springfield Township

Public Opinion Survey on Parks and Recreation Summary

Springfield Township conducted a public opinion survey in 2011. The Township included every household in the Township by sending a questionnaire directly to all 2,119 in the community. Completed surveys totaled 547 for a total response of 26 percent. Typically direct mail surveys result in a two to four percent return. The survey was statistically valid and reliable. With a high level of confidence and a low margin of error in the findings, the results are within +/- five percentage points of accuracy.

Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to determine the opinions, ideas and concerns of the residents about parks and recreation to serve as a foundation for decision-making regarding parks and recreation. By understanding the citizens' needs and interests, the Township will be able to direct planning and resources for the benefit of the community.

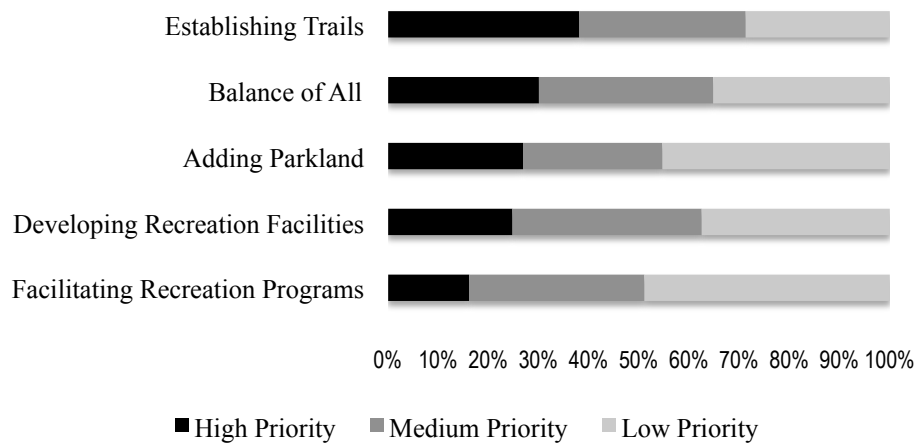
Findings and Future Directions

- **Importance of Recreation Opportunities** – 60% of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important to have parks and recreation opportunities in the community. Only 13% said that it is not important to have parks and recreation opportunities while another 13% said they are not needed. Those indicating that parks and recreation are important to this community outnumbered those who do not by a margin of more than two to one.
- **Preferred Recreation Opportunities** - Out of 14 choices for recreation activities ranging from walking to ballfields and gathering places, the top three most preferred recreation opportunities were walking paths (68%), places to enjoy nature (39%), and off-road bicycle paths (22%).
- **Peppermint Road Park Site** – Respondents indicated the following preferences for the future use of the 45-acre park site:
 - Nature-based Park with Trails (47%)
 - Not improved at all (19%)
 - Community park for recreation and fitness (18%)
 - Minimal improvements for public access (11%)

When asked how important it is for the Township to undertake the improvement of the Peppermint Road property, 47 percent of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important. Only 15 percent said that they don't want the site improved. Another 14 percent said that development of the site is not important. About one in four said that are neutral about developing the Peppermint Road site.

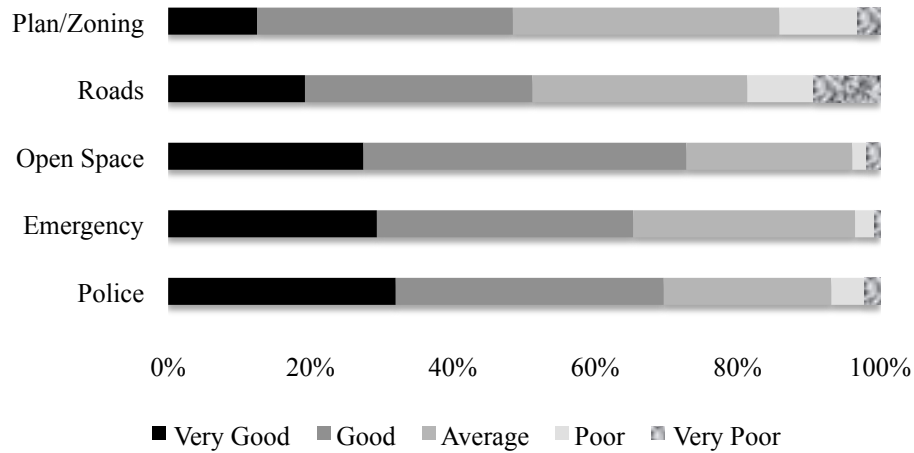
- **Future Focus of Parks and Recreation** –As shown in Figure 1, establishing trails is clearly the most important preferred focus of the survey respondents. Next in importance is achieving a balance of adding parkland, developing recreation facilities and facilitating programs. Facilitating programs was of the least priority to the survey respondents.
- **Level of Support for Parks and Recreation** – When asked what they would be willing to do to support parks and recreation in Springfield Township, 54 percent stated that they would be willing to pay an additional amount of money annually ranging from \$10 to \$30 per person. Nearly 200 respondents indicated that they would be willing to volunteer or join a park friends group. Twenty-three percent (23%) said that they would not support anything for parks and recreation.

Figure 1. Future Focus of Springfield Township for Parks and Recreation



- **Springfield Township Service Ratings** – As shown in Figure 2, respondents rated township services mainly as good to excellent with very few poor or very poor ratings. This is an unusual and very positive finding.

Figure 2. Township Service Ratings



x

Conclusions

Springfield Township’s public opinion survey achieved a significant response rate with finding that can guide planning the Township’s parks and recreation system. Overall the respondents rated township services as very good to excellent. They clearly value the Township’s open space and scenic beauty and want to keep it that way. They also desire recreation opportunities for active healthy living through safe places to walk and bicycle. There is support for the development of the Peppermint Road site, primarily as a nature based park with trails. Even in a tough economy 54 percent of the respondents indicated that they’d be willing to pay more for parks and recreation annually. Strong support for volunteerism emerged with 70 percent of respondents indicating that they would be willing to volunteer for township parks and recreation initiatives.



SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY, PA