

Warrington Township
852 Easton Rd.
Warrington, PA 18976
215-343-9350
www.warringtontownship.org

Warrington Township
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan:
PATHWAYS TO OUR FUTURE
2018 - 2027

Prepared by:
Toole Recreation Planning
Natural Lands

Intentionally Blank

Acknowledgements

Warrington Township Board of Supervisors

Shirley Yannich, Chair
Fred Gaines, Vice-Chair
Carol T. Baker, Member
Eileen Albillar, Member
Ruth Schemm, Member

Township Administration

Barry Luber, Township Manager
Barbara Livrone, Secretary
Cassandra Williams, Treasurer
Roy Reider, P.E., Director of Planning (Project Coordinator)

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Advisory Committee

Carol Baker
James Bruce
Vince Evans
Sharon Kaszan
Mike Kelly
Kathy Newcomb
Roy Reider
Ken Rose
Ivy Ross
Ruth Schemm
Shirley Yannich

Intentionally Blank

Table of Contents

Plan Summary.....	i
Introduction.....	1
Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment.....	4
Principles, Vision and Strategy.....	8
Strategy 1	11
Protect our natural areas and resources that shape our community character and scenic beauty.	
Strategy 2	26
Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle	
Strategy 3.....	35
Provide lively parks that foster a sense of community	
Strategy 4.....	41
Advance recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, sense of community, connections to nature, celebration and personal growth.	
Strategy 5.....	57
Operate with excellence and financial sustainability to garner widespread public support	
Implementation Plan.....	68
Moving from Planning into Action.....	68
Implementation Strategy.....	68
Priority 1 Actions.....	70
Priority 2 Actions.....	76
Priority 3 Actions.....	81

Maps

Landscape Context Map.....	6a
Open Space Opportunities Map.....	14a
Trail Plan Map	28a
Park Service Area Map.....	38a

Tables

1. Warrington Township Parks and Open Space Acreage.....	36
2. Outdoor Recreation Activities of Most Interest by Age Group.....	43
3. Recreation Program Outcomes and Benefits for Our Community.....	46

Figures

1. Management Impact Statement.....	65
2. Annual Work Program Chart Format.....	67

Appendices

Financing and Organization.....	A
Funding Sources.....	B
Warrington Township Ordinance Assessment.....	C
Park Assessment.....	D

Plan Summary

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan: Pathways to Our Future provides the framework for Warrington Township to enhance the quality of life in the community. The conservation of community character, safe places to walk and bicycle, and beautiful parks where people can have fun, get fit, enjoy nature, and socialize with friends, family, and neighbors all make Warrington Township a great place in which to live, work, raise a family and retire. The Plan identifies priorities, recommendations and action items that delineate a course of action for the next ten years. The Plan is not a law. It is a guide that elected and appointed officials in Warrington Township will use to make informed decisions, set policy, and allocate resources for parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Warrington Township believes that:

- Our natural resources and scenic beauty are important to our sense of community.
- Every community needs to have a great parks and recreation system – including ours!
- People of all ages should have access to recreation opportunities to have fun, stay healthy, get fit, connect with nature, and enjoy being with family, friends, and neighbors.
- Safe places to walk and bicycle will make our community easier to get around in, especially for children and seniors.
- We're willing to invest in making our community all that it can be through parks, recreation, and open space – but we can't do it alone. We must work collaboratively with a network of partners to achieve our goal of having a premier parks, recreation, and open space system.

Our Plan

In order to fulfill these beliefs, Warrington Township undertook the development of this **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** to chart out a course of action on how to get there. The plan is practical, achievable and builds upon Warrington Township's success in parks, recreation, and work in protecting our natural areas and resources. The vision in **Pathways to Our Future** provides a clear framework for how our parks, facilities and programs can be more effective.

We have a lot to do. We can't do it alone. In the 21st Century, great parks and recreation system are created through partnerships among citizens, community based organizations, and the public and private sectors. Partnerships are already the lifeblood of our public parks, recreation and natural areas system that we will work hard at advancing through this plan.

When fully implemented, **Pathways to Our Future** will realize the goals of top-notch parks in a green and connected community with a plethora of recreation opportunities close to home.

About Our Community

More than 24,000 people live in our 14-square mile township. We are welcoming, growing, younger, diversifying, and family oriented, and include an increasing core of retirees. Residents live and locate here because of our desirable quality of life, safety, excellent health care, top-rated schools, responsive municipal services, and location.

Our heritage as the “Gateway to Bucks County” dates back to 1734. It is evident today in our historic buildings.

About 375 businesses are located here. Residents have convenient access to services, shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. Businesses have been important supporters of township initiatives.

Community based organizations and volunteers are thriving. In contrast to other communities that struggle to get volunteers, we have 11 boards, committees, councils, and task forces that help to support parks, recreation and open space in many ways. Some of our major partners helping to provide programs and improve our parks include organized sports, the Lions Club, Cornerstone Clubs, and the Central Bucks School District. Our school district is consistently named as one of the best in Pennsylvania.

Places to Play

With 700 acres within 23 parks and open spaces, our parks range in size from .07 acres to 250 acres. Led by the Park & Recreation Board, our park system features nature reserves, an outdoor swimming and tennis complex, neighborhood parks, outstanding ballfields with lighting, game courts, fishing areas, and playgrounds.

A new state-of-the-art play area will revitalize our former day camp with innovative park elements that our children helped to design. The Lions Club spurred this project with their idea to build a great family-centered play area along with their commitment to raise money for it. The Township joined them in partnership by securing several grants for both construction and additional fundraising as well as continuing to pursue additional grants. The Township retained a national award-winning design firm to work with the Lions Club, our children, and township officials on this project.

Places to Connect with Nature

Our 250 acre Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area is our nature preserve. Park visitors can get away from it all here, enjoy wildlife watching, fish, hike, relax, and refresh. Other parks include natural features. Other undeveloped open spaces, such as Mill Creek Preservation Area, may provide public access to nature in the future. The Township recently secured a million grant to purchase another natural area in the Mill Creek watershed.

Places to Walk and Bicycle

Led by the Bike & Hike Committee, the Township has also been planning our township-wide trail system. The Township has secured grant funding to both plan and construct trails. Our goal is to create a township wide trail system that will also connect to the larger regional bicycle system and beyond, southeastern Pennsylvania’s “Circuit,” a 750-mile connected bicycle path.

Celebrating Warrington

Warrington Community Day is our annual celebration that attracts thousands of people of all ages interests for a day of fun in a park. Great food and great events, often with great weather, brings all of us together in building our sense of community in the place we call home.

The People Spoke. We listened.

This plan is rooted in public opinion and support. The planning process included a Plan Advisory Committee; focus groups with children, sports, and other interests; interviews with individuals and organizations; public meetings; and a public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the development of **Warrington Township's Comprehensive Plan**. All Township boards related to parks, recreation and open space provided their recommendations. The public identified their priorities as:

- Preserve open space and natural features.
- Establish safe places to walk and bicycle.
- Fix up our existing parks and make them parks that we want to visit and will be proud of. Other communities have nicer parks than we do right now.
- Make sure that the parks are safe, clean and beautiful.
- Upgrade the parks to be true community parks rather than just ballfields. Make them places where families can play together.
- Add facilities that we don't have: disc golf, cricket, nature play areas, pickle ball, skate park, amphitheater, splash pad, all of which would require further input.
- Offer more programs, especially for children, with a focus on nature, fitness and special events. Include the arts and music for those with interest beyond sports.

...and most important, implement the plan!

Our Vision

Our vision is simple but ambitious:

By 2027, Warrington Township will have a top-notch system of parks, recreation, and natural areas connected by safe places to walk and bicycle.

Our Goals

To break our vision down into more manageable pieces, we are focusing on five strategies:

Strategy 1

Protect our natural areas and the resources that shape our community character and scenic beauty.

Strategy 2

Provide lively parks that make our community proud.

Strategy 3

Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle.

Strategy 4

Build a sense of community through recreation.

Strategy 5

Maintain excellence in management and financing that will generate good will and public support.

Moving from Planning to Implementation

Pathways to our Future is more than just a plan. It is Warrington Township's commitment to a high quality of life for all of our residents. It will bring about important environmental, economic, social, and health benefits to our community.

The implementation of the plan will lead to beautifully designed parks; a variety of recreation opportunities for people of all ages and interests; and the conservation of our water, air, woodlands, and scenic beauty.

We must continue to invest in parks, recreation and natural areas to ensure that they are well maintained, safe, beautiful and welcoming to people who live, work, and visit here.

We will:

- Raise the bar on park design and re-invent our playgrounds through professional planning and development of great public spaces where our residents want to spend their time.
- Take good care of what we have and develop an enhanced maintenance management system.
- Protect and provide more natural areas with opportunities for our residents to experience them.
- Establish a township-wide trail system that connects community destinations.
- Build the framework for expanding recreation programs and services by developing a program plan

that collects and analyzes our demographics, participation, and recreation trends focusing on children, families and seniors in the areas of health, nature and building a strong sense of community.

- Continue to create, sustain and enhance our community partnerships.
- Provide an organizational and management system to advance our vision for parks, recreation, and natural areas.
- Continue to invest in parks, recreation and natural areas through a mix of public and private resources including township support, grants, gifts, donations, fees, charges, rentals, leases, sales, sponsorships, bequests, endowments, and private fund-raising.

Every proposed project, no matter how big or how small, is another step toward achieving our vision. Warrington Township is committed to this vision. Please join us in making it a reality.

Introduction

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Pathways to Our Future

Warrington Township is an exciting place to be! As the Gateway to Bucks County since 1734, Warrington Township teems with the energy of a rich cultural heritage, diverse neighborhoods, excellent schools, a thriving economy with ongoing construction and business development, beautiful scenic areas, and the enjoyment of 23 parks and open spaces with nearly 700 acres for recreation and connecting with nature.

With a renewed focus on improving the quality of life for all township residents and ensuring a bright and sustainable future, the Township has also turned its attention to a foundation of what makes our community a great place in which to live, work, raise a family and retire: our parks, recreation, and open space system. Warrington Township is a leading steward of the legacy of conservation and parks in Bucks County. As a major provider of recreation opportunities, Warrington Township believes that everyday should be filled with residents of all ages and abilities enjoying activities that are fun and healthy, reaping the many benefits of a robust park system.

Pathways to Our Future is our ten-year action program that celebrates what our community has already achieved and defines the path for preserving our scenic beauty and natural resources, improving parks and recreation facilities, providing programs and services, and connecting our community with safe places to walk and bicycle.

Planning Process

The planning process conducted by a team of certified parks, recreation, and community planners; landscape architects; and cartographers included four phases: assessment of the Warrington Township parks, recreation, open space, and trail system; establishment of a vision for the future and a strategic way to achieve it; development of the action steps necessary to carry out the strategy; and creation of an action plan with a time frame for implementation. The planning process addressed six areas.

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

Public Engagement

Community involvement is the foundation of the plan. It included five components: a Plan Advisory Committee, key person interviews, focus groups, public meetings with questionnaires, and the findings from the public opinion survey conducted for Warrington Township's **Comprehensive Plan** that was undertaken at the same time as the **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan**. This process provided valuable information from those in the community who are involved in various parks and recreation and township-related efforts as well as the general public. Through our community outreach, 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 Warrington Township will use the plan to make informed decisions and set policy relative to parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

What will the plan do?

The **Warrington Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan: Pathways to Our Future** will focus planning on community opportunities and issues that can be addressed through parks, recreation, and open space. It provides a common framework for decision-making and sets forth a strategy with recommended actions to improve the quality of life in our 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, recreation, and open space.

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, fundraising, partnerships, and other means.

How will the plan be used?

The plan is intended to be a living document that will play a role in the decisions the municipality makes about parks, recreation, open space, trails, programs, financing, management, and related efforts. This plan serves as a reference document and a framework for overall municipal and collaborative planning and management. It is essential that all related township departments, boards and committees, and commissions incorporate this plan into their own planning and operational efforts in related areas including maintenance, facility improvements, land development, open space conservation, trail planning, capital improvement planning, and municipal financing.

Why is it important to have a good public parks, recreation, and open space system?

50 Benefits of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Fosters community pride. Protects scenic beauty. Makes our communities special places in which to live. Conserves natural resources. Creative play. Improves physical, cognitive, social and emotional functioning of people with special needs. Reduces the isolation of the elderly. Facilitates active healthy lifestyles. Enhances property values. Reduces stormwater management costs. Fortifies economic development. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Creates lively public spaces. Prevents drug abuse. Deters crime. Builds strong families. Keeps kids safe. Reduces pollution and carbon footprint. Promotes healthy food production and choices. Connects people to nature. Builds a sense of community. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Buffers extremes of draught and flooding. Workforce preparation. Teen mentoring. Improves student performance. Administers nutrition programs. Increases community safety. Improves air quality. Enhances access to socio-cultural goods. Promotes diversity. Generates \$140 billion in economic activity in our country annually. Serves as civic repository of social capital and community wellbeing. Protects trees and beautiful landscapes. Interprets our cultural heritage. Celebrates our history. Reduces health care costs. Creates multi-modal transportation. Provides a forum for the arts. Fosters team building and leadership. Creates memories. Protects wildlife. Adds life to your years and years to your life.

Source: Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation Society 2017

Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment

Warrington Township: Our Home

Warrington Township, long-ago designated as “The Gateway to Historic Bucks County,” is home to more than 24,000 residents and 375+ businesses. It is a dynamic residential area as well as a bustling commercial center. Across its 13.8 square miles, the Warrington community is nestled amidst both agricultural and preserved lands, including 700 acres of open space and parks. Diverse in terms of its land-use, communities, and commerce, residents enjoy a thriving quality of life with convenient access to countless Bucks County historic, cultural, and artistic gems. Warrington is proud of its tradition of responsible growth and development and is dedicated to the same steadfast approach to the administration of municipal government our forefathers exemplified over 200 years ago!¹

What is Most Important to Our Citizens?

Open space conservation, safe places to walk and bicycle, and great places for people of all ages, especially kids and families, to play and programs for all.

Our Parks and Recreation System

Warrington Township has made the acquisition of parkland, preserving remaining open space, and establishing trails a priority to benefit citizens today and for many generations to come. The Township has 700 acres of parks and open space land ranging in size from our .07 acre Warrington Village mini-park up to the 250 acre Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area leased from Bucks County. Our athletic fields are renowned throughout the region as excellent sports facilities. Mary Barnes Tennis and Swim Club is one of the few public aquatics centers in the area. Large swaths of open space have been acquired by the Township, particularly in the Mill Creek watershed. Multi-purpose trails are in progress, namely the connector between Route 202 and Bradford Dam, which will connect residents with the regional trail system. The **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** builds upon this strong foundation. It boldly envisions a sustainable parks and recreation system connected by a network of trails that is integral to the well-being of Warrington Township and our residents. The Landscape Context Map of our township shows the locations of parks, schools and publicly owned lands.

¹ Warrington Township. <http://www.warringtontownship.org/about-us/history/township-history/> 2017.

What makes us happiest about the place we live?

Based upon significant research, the top characteristics that create feelings of attachment among residents for their community are:

- **Social Offerings** – places where people can gather, programs, events where people feel relationships and that there are things to do.
- **Openness** – How welcoming people are in the community and opportunities to get involved with the community through activities, civic service, and volunteerism.
- **Aesthetics** – How green and beautiful the community is, high quality parks, closeness to nature and open space.
- **Availability of arts and culture** – Performing and studio arts for participants and spectators.

While great schools and public safety help to create strong communities, it is the factors above that have been found to draw people to live in a community and make them happy about living there.

Soul of the Community Study, (2010) Gallup and John L. Knight Foundation. <https://knightfoundation.org/sotc/about-knight-soul->

Most of the improvements have been made at a pace consistent with pressing needs and emerging opportunities but mainly without benefit of an organized formal plan to guide improvements in a holistic manner. The bones of a good park and recreation system are in place. This plan will help make that system great through the addition of safe places to walk and bicycle, connections to nature, landscape

improvements, programs and activities, and continued maintenance to ensure that our parks remain safe, clean, functional, and beautiful. The parks, recreation, and system has been created on a foundation of partnerships with community based organizations such as sports leagues, service clubs, and township volunteers organized as advisory committees. Partnerships are the lifeblood of parks and recreation. They must continue far into the future.

Our People

Warrington Township, one of the fastest growing municipalities in Bucks County, had a population of 23,942 in 2015 according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the American Community Survey. Largely a Caucasian, native born community (88%), the community is younger, more well-off, and well-educated than elsewhere in the county. Minorities increased from 5.8 percent to 11.8 percent from 2000 to 2010, mainly with Asian Indians accounting for the increase. While most housing is owner-occupied, about 17 percent of housing is renter occupied, among the highest in the area. Though land remaining for development is limited, the Bucks County Planning Commission projects the population to increase to 28,392 by 2045.

Profile

Demographic information provides numbers useful in planning. However, understanding lifestyles, purchasing, and how the residents spend their free time gives us insight on how to serve them best. ESRI Tapestry provides such insight in a current analysis classified according to 67 different segments. For Warrington Township, the population falls into three groups²:

² Esri. Tapestry. <http://www.esri.com/landing-pages/tapestry>. 2017.

- **Savvy Suburbanites (43%)** – Well-educated, well-read located in older neighborhoods. Their suburban lifestyle includes gardening, active pursuit of sports and exercise, good food and wine, and enjoyment of cultural events. They are physically fit and actively pursue a number of sports from skiing to golf and invest heavily in sports gear and exercise equipment. They mostly have grown children.
- **Professional Pride (22%)** – Well-educated career professionals who prospered through the Great Recession. They commute and work long hours but fine-tune their schedules to meet the needs of their school age children. Routine is very important to them. They are goal-oriented and strive for life-long learning. They are avid readers and work out regularly. They have disposable income.
- **In-Style (15%)** – Mainly professional couples or households without children living an urbane lifestyle that includes the arts, travel, and reading. They prefer eating organic food and growing their own. They actively support the arts, music, theater, concerts, and museums.

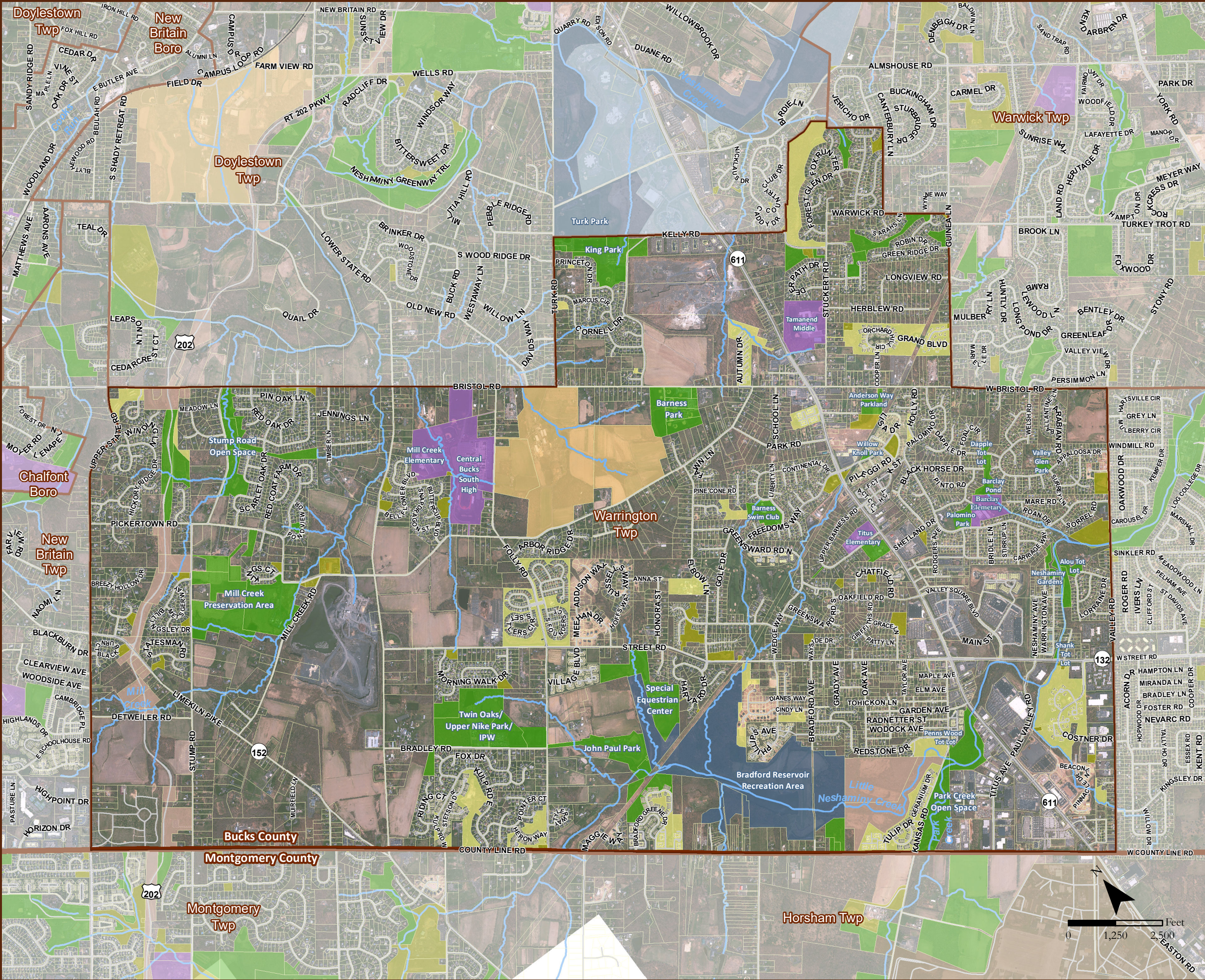
Public Opinion about Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Pathways to Our Future was largely informed by public opinion about parks, recreation, and open space. What the residents, community based organizations, and elected appointed citizens had to say mattered and formed the basis for the recommendations for this plan. The public participation process included:

- **Plan Advisory Committee** included residents, organized sports, conservation and open space, representatives of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission,

Environmental Advisory Council, and Park and Recreation Board. They served as the voice of the community offering their knowledge and guidance in the planning process and development of recommendations and the action plan.

- **Key Person Interviews** – Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the community including the Central Bucks School District; Bucks County Planning Commission; Bucks County Parks & Recreation Department; Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, EAC, Park and Recreation Board; Township Manager, Recreation Coordinator, local business people, organized sports, general citizens, the Lions Club, and intercept surveys in the parks with general park visitors.
- **Citizens' Survey** – The Bucks County Planning Commission conducted a resident survey that found strong support for the Township prioritizing parks, recreation, and open space. Survey findings indicated that residents agreed that Warrington Township should:
 - 93% - Preserve existing wooded areas.
 - 87% - Protect natural resources
 - 84% - Protect historic sites.
 - 83% - Continue to maximize open space.
 - 65% - Prioritize expanding trails and bike paths
 - 64% - Expand parks, facilities and ballfields.
- **Focus Groups** – Focus groups included students in Titus Elementary School, Community Sports, Park and Recreation Board, Planning Commission, and EAC. Several presentations were also made to the Board of Supervisors. Landscape Context Map Rear



Map 1
Landscape Context

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Warrington Township, Bucks County, PA

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Waterways
- Roadways
- Railways
- Agricultural Easement
- County Open Space
- County - other lands
- Federal lands
- Homeowners Association
- Municipal Open Space
- Municipal - other lands
- School District
- State lands

Natural Lands
1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587 | natlands.org

1. Aerial photography (2015) from DVRPC.
2. Parcel boundaries, roads, and streams from Bucks Co.
3. Public/Protected lands from DVRPC and Warrington Township.
4. Trails from PAMAP and Warrington Twp.

Compiled By: REW 04/30/18

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance hereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

- **Public Meetings** – Three public meetings were held for this plan. The first public meeting secured input on the ideas, concerns, and suggestions of the citizens for parks, recreation and open space. The second meeting was in conjunction with the Bucks County Planning Commission on the status of a proposed playground and the coordination of the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. A third meeting will be held for review of the full plan. The public meetings included questionnaires for the participants to add opinions and comments individually.

Findings of the Public Participation Process

Overall the findings of the public participation process were consistent among all platforms: Advisory Committee, interviews, focus groups, public meetings and questionnaires, and **Comprehensive Plan** public opinion survey.

Concerns identified by the community related to parks, recreation and open space:

- Development is causing the loss of open space and community character.
- Traffic is dangerous for walking and bicycling.
- Focus in parks is too much on sports. Need balance with other kinds of uses for broader range of park visitors.
- The Township does not have plans for each park nor a cohesive plan for parks, recreation and open space.
- Financial support to make parks and recreation improvement and maintain them.
- !

Top 10 priorities of the Community

- Conservation of open space, protection of natural resources, and retaining the scenic character.
- Safe places to walk and bicycle was a top priority. Being able to get around the Township and the regional trail system beyond is important.
- Preservation of historic resources.
- Improving parks to make them more park-like rather than sports complexes so that people of all ages and abilities will use them year-round, spending lots of time in them. Remove barriers and obstacles for pedestrian safety and convenience.
- Better places for children to play including a great playground(s). Places to climb and slide, trees, tables and benches for family time.
- More shade and trees in the parks with more places to sit and socialize.
- Programs for children and families.
- Add facilities not in parks now such as community gathering areas, pickle ball, disc golf, a cricket pitch, an amphitheater, and a splash pad.
- Increase public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities in a convenient and timely way.
- Implement the Plan!

Principles, Vision, and Strategy

Our Guiding Principles

Our principles serve as the foundation of the vision, goals, and strategies of the **Warrington Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan**. These principles will frame our township decisions and actions to enhance the quality of life in Warrington Township. Through our parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, programs, and services, we encourage our community to:

- ***Be Active*** – Provide our citizens with safe, clean, and beautiful parks, recreation facilities, open spaces and trails to enable them to lead active healthy lifestyles and feel connected to our community.
- ***Be Green*** – Promote the conservation of our natural resources, open space, and community character as well as practices that protect our environment.
- ***Be Connected*** – Spur connections to nature, to recreation partners, and to each other to build a sense of community and support for making our community a special place
- ***Be Fiscally Sound*** – Ensure that our support for developing, improving, and maintaining our parks, recreation, and open space system is a productive mix of public and private resources that garner widespread public support.

Best Management Practices

Warrington Township is committed to managing parks, recreation, and open space as a community asset. The Township collaborates with community organizations with related interests in parks, recreation, conservation, and stewardship to advance community goals with respect to maximizing limited financial and human resources. We are adopting the following best management practices:

- All parks, recreation facilities and trails will be developed and improved with professional design support from experienced parks and recreation planners, landscape architects, and engineers experienced in designing public spaces that people enjoy.
- Any park or recreation facility development or improvement will include a plan for protecting the investment through sound maintenance practices and appropriate funding, labor and/or partnerships or innovative techniques and programming.

- Warrington Township's park and open space system will be a model of stewardship. The Township will continue to advance efforts of the Environmental Advisory Council and will develop stewardship plans for all natural areas.
- Sufficient funding will be generated through Township investment, grants, gifts, donations and other revenue sources for capital development and operations. The philosophy of township funding will be based upon the Township's mandate to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the public and the concept that funding parks and recreation is an investment, not a cost.
- Partnerships will be the foundation of the Township's parks, recreation, open space and trail system. Maximizing budget resources is essential. Warrington Township will continue to participate in regional planning and opportunities such as with Bucks County, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and private non-profit land conservation organizations.
- Communication about parks, recreation, open space and trails must be ongoing among key stakeholders to support township efforts to improve parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Our Vision

Our vision is simple but ambitious. It will guide future planning, development, operation, maintenance, and funding of parks, recreation, and open space.

Vision

By 2027, Warrington Township will have a top-notch system of parks, recreation and natural areas connected by safe places to walk and bicycle.

Strategic Approach to Implementation

Our approach to improving parks, recreation, and open space is strategic. It sets priorities to focus energy and resources. It strives to strengthen operations, ensure that stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust our changing needs and opportunities. Carrying out these strategies will require a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what Warrington Township is, whom we serve, what we do, and why we do it, with a focus on the future.

Strategy 1

Protect our open space and natural resources that shape our community character and scenic beauty.

Strategy 2

Provide lively parks that make our community proud.

Strategy 3

Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle.

Strategy 4

Build a sense of community through recreation.

Strategy 5

Maintain excellence in management and financing that will generate good will and public support.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan at the end of this plan includes detailed actions for each strategy. Carrying out these recommendations will require time, labor, and funding over the next ten years and beyond. Not everything can be accomplished at once. Some projects can be accomplished at little cost while others will require great investment. Every success, no matter how small, will propel the Township forward. Circumstances change and different funding sources and partners emerge over time. Therefore, readiness to pursue projects is important and will in fact be supported by this plan. While some projects will be more important than others, there are often limited windows of opportunity available that may require acting on one recommendation before another, thereby pushing other recommendations further down on implementation. For example, development pressures hasten the need to act to prevent the loss of open space.

Strategy 1

Protect our natural areas and the resources that shape our community character and scenic beauty.

Our Vision

Existing open space and remnants of rural, agricultural character is highly important to community residents. At the same time, development and associated amenities is necessary for a growing population. Our vision is to maintain and permanently conserve the existing open space corridor in the western portion of the Township, while protecting additional properties of interest, such as large parcels with high natural resources value. This vision is based on protection of clean air and water through conservation of woodlands, stream and river corridors, and habitat for wildlife. This vision is also based upon a desire to maintain scenic open space that contributes to quality of life in the Township through opportunities for recreation and social gathering. This draws residents to the community, and in turn business opportunities, benefiting the local economy. Through ongoing prioritization of open space conservation and protection of natural resources, the Township will retain open space features that are important to our community.

Why We Care

Part of what makes Warrington Township the “Gateway to Bucks County” is scenic character. While Warrington is a developed and growing community, substantial open space remains. Remaining open space and the rural character it exudes are important to many residents whether they have lived in the community for decades or recently located to Warrington. One of the primary reasons for new residents to move to the community is open space.

Open space and natural resource protections are critical to quality of life in a community, allow residents to connect with nature, and serve to relieve stress among other health benefits. Natural resources such as forests and grasslands, keep water and air clean and provide many services that cannot be replicated through man made efforts. For instance, woodlands buffer streams, keeping the water cool and clean while providing habitat for local fauna. Wooded stream valleys also add contrast, and another layer of beauty, to the township’s landscape.

A recent study completed by Keystone Conservation, and commissioned by Warrington Township, further details the economic and environmental benefits of open spaces and natural resources protection.

3

Conservation: A \$10 Million in Annual Benefit to Warrington Township

According to the report, land conservation provided over \$10 million dollars each year in benefits, such as providing safe, clean water resources and improving our air quality.

Infiltration of rainwater helps prevent flooding and provides clean water to streams at a consistent temperature of 55 degrees Fahrenheit – the temperature most suitable for aquatic life. Streams that travel through woodlands provide spawning habitats for fish, and trees and woody debris provides valuable cover for fish and other aquatic organisms along the water's edge. Degradation of any portion of our streams can have profound effects on living resources downstream. The current green infrastructure along streams in Warrington Township reduces tax burdens by avoiding annual expenditures for:

- **Clean Water** - Providing Safe and Clean Water Storm water and Flood Protection \$ 4,492,883, Water Supply \$ 500,615, Water Quality \$ 841,108, Aquatic Resources \$ 306,300 for a total \$ 5,711,261.
- **Clean Air** - Warrington Township faces substantial air quality challenges, which can lead to a variety of human health problems including asthma and other respiratory ailments. Air

pollution damages buildings and plants, disrupts natural system services, and causes smog and reduced visibility. Because trees remove significant amounts of air pollution (in particular, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter), protected open spaces, forests and woodlands can improve environmental quality and overall human health. In Warrington Township, the estimated avoided healthcare costs for air pollution by conserving land annually are as follows: Carbon Dioxide \$160,467 Air Pollutants \$478,115 for a total of \$638,582

The study found that protecting, restoring, and connecting habitat is the best approach to a sustainable environment and local economy. Annual Return on Environment for this is: Habitat \$ 3,529,095 Pollination \$509,282 Regeneration \$18,832 Biological Control \$ 25,935 for a total of \$4,083,143.

Additionally, open space is highly important unto itself. Open space often consists of forest lands and stream corridors, but also includes agricultural working lands, parks, and trails. Therefore, open space conservation protects natural resources, provides recreational opportunities where appropriate, and protects a way of life by retaining working agricultural lands, forests and undeveloped areas. Greenway corridors are imperative to linking wildlife habitat.

Finally, open space and natural resources protection maintain character of the community and historic resources. Cemeteries, small farms, and open fields, located primarily within the western portion of the Township, are pleasant reminders of Warrington Township's history.

Warrington Township currently retains a corridor of open space as shown in the Open Space Opportunities Map, though only a portion of open space is protected permanently. Nearly all existing open space is located within the central and western portions of the

³ Rogers, John. 2017. **Return on Environment: Environmental, Social and Economic Benefits Provided by Nature**, Warrington Township: Warrington, PA

Township, though a handful of moderately sized properties remain elsewhere. As the community becomes more desirable and continues to grow then so do the chances of development impacting existing open space and natural resources. Given the relatively small amount of existing open space remaining in Warrington Township, it is imperative that efforts are made to permanently conserve what remains. Through a comprehensive effort to retain and conserve open space and natural resources, the community can successfully maintain scenic character while meeting demand for new residents and economic expansion. We will ensure a balanced land use planning approach.

Ordinances: A Tool for Conservation

Appendix C provides an analysis of Warrington Township's ordinances. The purpose of this Assessment is to outline how Warrington Township currently conserves natural areas and provides community open space, through the two primary land use regulations - the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance. Land can be conserved as development occurs so that Township open space goals can be partially met at relatively low cost, while still providing a landowner an equitable financial return on their land.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

For a developed community, Warrington Township retains a significant amount of open space. It is located primarily in a corridor angling from the north central portion of the Township to the west and southwest. This area, more or less, includes the Mill Creek watershed. Mill Creek is a tributary to the Neshaminy Creek. This

corridor retains some elements of a working agricultural landscape, while also contributing scenic beauty through wooded streams and wetlands. Many township residents have a strong connection with open space and a desire to maintain the landscape that brings new residents to Warrington.

Warrington Township officials and staff have led efforts to protect open space and natural resources. Over 900 acres of land are publically owned or privately protected within Warrington Township, which includes significant tracts of purchased open space, particularly Mill Creek. In addition, about 241 acres is protected under agricultural conservation easement in the northern portion of Warrington Township.

Community support for open space conservation is strong. Many residents have acted as conservationists by protecting their land through agricultural easement, donated/sold trail corridors through their property, or helped lead outreach for conservation. In addition, Warrington is in the advantageous position of holding an open space bond. In 2012, Township residents voted to establish an open space bond totaling over \$3 million for use to purchase land for open space, parks, and trails. This fund continues to be available for use.

The Township's Open Space and Land Preservation Committee (OSLPC) is now permanent and it serves to prioritize conservation efforts and recommend uses of the bond funding to the Township Board of Supervisors. The OSLPC has prioritized open space properties based upon size, natural resource value, and other properties that it uses as a tool to inform preservation strategies. Warrington also has an active Environmental Advisory Council. In short, the Township is in a good financial position to protect open space, along with support from Township governance, administration, and residents.

Challenges

Despite impressive efforts by township officials, staff, and residents to protect open space, landscapes, and land for public use, much of Warrington Township open space remains vulnerable to development. Population projections suggest that the Township is expected to grow by 18 percent through 2045. This signals a significant challenge for Township planning officials as new residents will require housing either through re-development with increased density or greenfield development.

Therefore, the single largest challenge facing the Township in regard to open space is time. With a growing community and minimal remaining open space then the Township should look forward to capitalizing on assets and moving ahead in protecting the most important properties on the basis of natural resources values, parcel size, etc. or vulnerability. The Township will need to act quickly to approach willing landowners who will hopefully agree to conservation of property.

Many of the most highly developable properties are located within the Residential Agricultural Zoning District. There are 80 parcels over 10 acres in size within this district, totaling about 2,700 acres. This district comprises much of the Mill Creek watershed. Of that acreage, most is not in areas, such as steep slopes, that are constrained for development by the zoning code – though about 10% is comprised of a large quarry. If it is conservatively assumed that at least 2,000 acres are developable then that equates to at least 1,200 homes by-right. Another challenging aspect is that a significant portion of this land is held by a single owner. Currently, the Township has a good relationship with this landowner, but it is important that the Township maintain open dialogue and interests in this regard.

Historic Resources: Important to Warrington Township

Finally, historic resources are being rapidly lost. Several remaining historic buildings are now threatened by roadway widening and unrestrained residential development. It is difficult for the owners of some of our remaining historic properties to compete with well-funded developers. Resources are needed to address historic preservation, lest the history of the Township be lost forever.

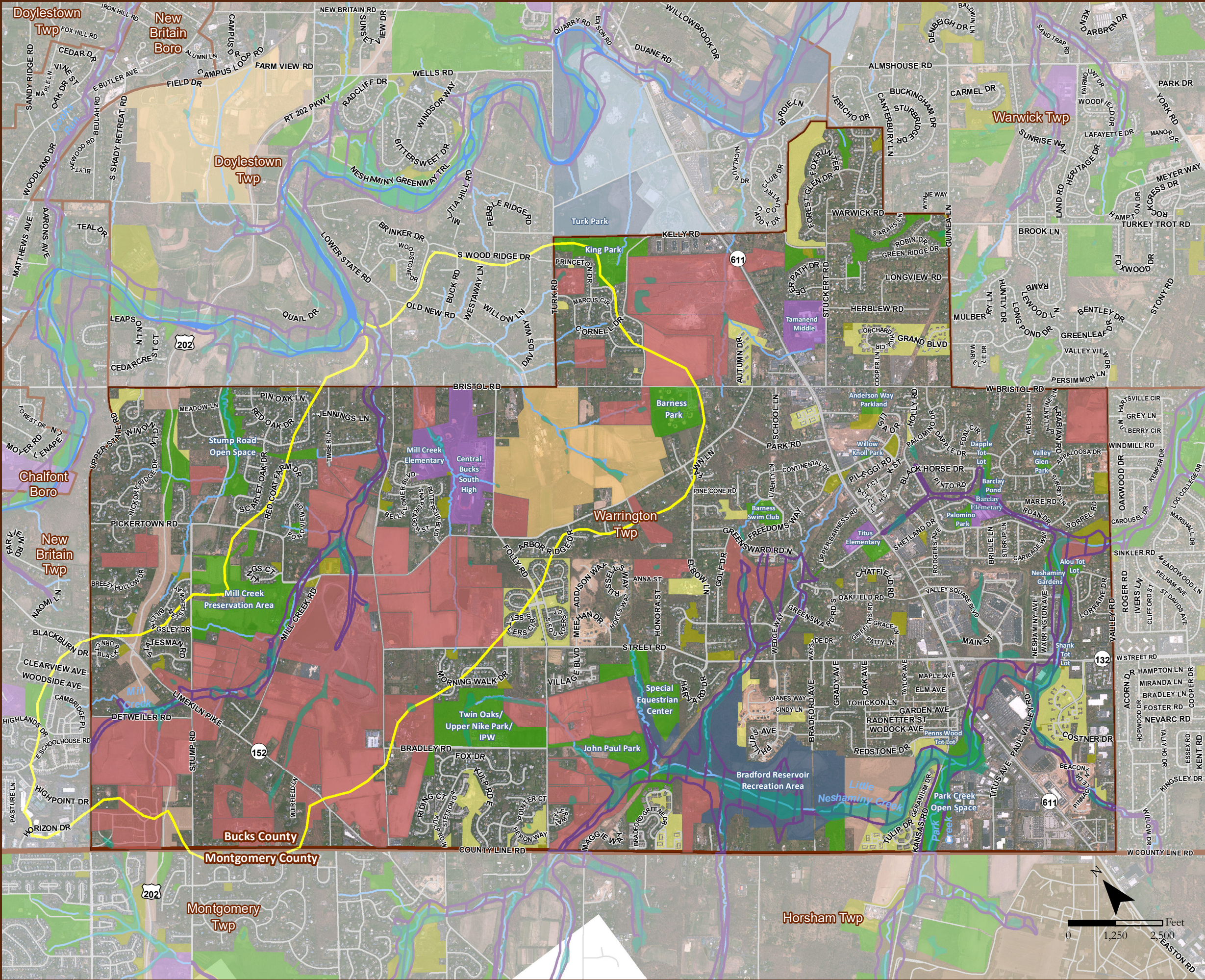
Opportunities

Township-wide Conservation

While much of the remaining undeveloped land is in the western portion of the Township, it is important that conservation opportunities are met with interest township-wide. Whether for protection of natural resources, scenic views, trail connections, or as buffers for existing open space, there are many legitimate reasons to consider conservation on a property. For instance, a relatively small property outside of the Mill Creek watershed may hold minimal natural resource value, but adjoin a Township park and be valuable to place under conservation easement. Properties should be considered on their merit utilizing criteria established by the Open Space and Land Preservation Committee (an example is cited in the theme recommendations).

Leverage Financing

Capital for open space acquisition does not have to be provided solely by Warrington Township. With the establishment of this plan and determination of open space and greenway priorities, the Township is in a much better position to acquire grant funding to supplement their investment in acquisition activities. Partnerships with agencies such as PA Departments of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Department of Community and Economic



Map 2
Open Space Opportunities

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Warrington Township, Bucks County, PA

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Waterways
- Roadways
- Agricultural Easement
- County Open Space
- County - other lands
- Federal lands
- Homeowners Association
- Municipal Open Space
- Municipal - other lands
- School District
- State lands
- Wetlands
- Floodplain (100-year)
- Mill Creek Watershed
- Undeveloped & Unprotected Parcels (Over 10 Acres)



1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587 | natlands.org

1. Aerial photography (2015) from DVRPC.
2. Parcel boundaries, roads, and streams from Bucks Co.
3. Public/Protected lands from DVRPC and Warrington Township.
4. Trails from PAMAP and Warrington Twp.

Compiled By: REW 04/30/18

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance hereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

Development (DCED), Bucks County, and others support open space and greenway development through their grant programs.

Use Conservation Easements

In addition to leveraging grant funds, the Township also has an opportunity to expand its use of conservation easements as a protection tool to reduce acquisition cost. The Township has primarily purchased property in fee. However, conservation easements remain in private ownership and can typically be acquired at a reduced cost compared to acquisition in fee that is held by the Township. Not only is the upfront cost reduced, but the Township does not have to maintain the property as they would in a fee purchase scenario.

Conservation easements can deliver a larger bang for the buck and may make more sense as a tool in some situations. In particular, priority properties that buffer parks, contain working lands, or are difficult to acquire and high in natural resources value (owner not amenable, cost prohibitive, etc.) are usually strong candidates for conservation easements as opposed to fee acquisition. Easements can also be a viable tool to protect historic resources. Some public access may be integrated with a conservation easement as well. The Township should expand its use of conservation easements to more feasibly achieve its open space goals.

Ordinance Amendments

No municipality can buy or ease all of the land they would like to acquire and protect. Therefore, land use planning is vital to any land protection strategy. In Warrington Township, ordinances strive to protect forest cover and other natural resources, however they could do more to enhance subdivision

design to protect natural resources and readily encourage interconnected open space. The Township has the opportunity to renew its Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances regarding conservation subdivisions to require that natural resources be protected during the development process and that useable open space be established and connected between developments to ultimately create greenway corridors. While conservation subdivision provisions should be ideally incorporated in all residential zoning districts, it is most pertinent for the Residential Ag District. See Appendix B: Warrington Township Ordinance Assessment.

Priorities for Open Space Conservation

When choosing parcels to preserve, it is likely that most properties will feature some important characteristics for conservation. Therefore, additional criteria may be considered in prioritization, including landowner willingness, parcel size, connectivity to trails and greenways, proximity to the waterways, or financial feasibility.

In 2014, a Priority Parcel Ranking System was developed and endorsed by the Environmental Advisory Council, Park and Recreation, and Bike and Hike committees and presented to the Board of Supervisors. The process was summarized in the report titled *A Green Infrastructure Approach to Leveraging Local Priorities in Warrington Township, Pennsylvania* prepared by the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland September 2014. The conservation opportunities and priorities identified by **Pathways for Our Future** are representative of that effort.

Natural Resources Protection

When prioritizing properties for conservation, there should be strong consideration of protecting natural resources. Warrington Township has small but concentrated areas of wetlands and other sensitive habitat. Bradford Reservoir and areas to the south contain sensitive habitat as designated by Pennsylvania's Natural Heritage Program. Areas adjoining Upper State Road and in New Britain Township also contain sensitive habitat. Mill Creek, a tributary of Neshaminy Creek, near the northern Township boundary and Stump Road, contains extensive wetlands, nearly all of which is now owned by the Township. Areas along other reaches of Mill Creek as well as Little Neshaminy Creek contain extensive woodlands and wetlands.

Properties with extensive forest cover should receive particular attention. While tree cover across Warrington is relatively extensive given minimal working lands remaining, much of the forest habitat is fragmented. Very few properties contain large blocks of forest. Those properties over 10 acres in size should be noted. Properties that are along stream corridors may serve dual function as greenways for natural habitat and providing recreation opportunities, including trails.

Large Parcels

Few large, undeveloped parcels remain. 129 parcels containing ten acres or more exist in the Township, of which 43 are protected or Township-owned. Of the 86-parcel selection remaining, 26 are considered fully developed. Furthermore, some of these include golf courses, quarries, schools, etc. Of these parcels, eight are greater than 50 acres and two of those parcels are greater than 100 acres. There are 60 parcels that are unprotected and undeveloped. These properties total 1,752 acres. Of those, 37 intersect the Mill Creek watershed and 13 are held by the same landowner (along with nearly 50% of the acreage). Hence, the Township should be focused on the Mill

Creek watershed, though it should also be noted that several large undeveloped parcels in the vicinity of Bradford Reservoir remain. When large parcels become available, their preservation should become a priority, as they will offer the greatest return for the preservation dollar and are critical to reducing natural resources fragmentation.

Historic Resources

Properties with historic resources should be considered strongly for conservation. In many cases, properties with historic buildings or landscapes also have natural resource value or possibly connectivity potential. It is important that the Historic Commission to be part of the discussion regarding priority properties and to be engaged when properties are brought forth for funding, either through the Township Open Space Bond or through external grants.

Connectivity to Trails, Greenways, Parks, and Preserved Open Space

Preservation of contiguous lands will benefit the township's residents, flora, fauna, and water. By preserving properties adjacent to one another, trail systems can be expanded, greater recreation areas can be protected, and streams can be buffered more effectively. Connectivity should be considered when identifying parcels for conservation.

Warrington values safe places to walk and bicycle as development progresses and roads become busier with traffic, and no longer safe for non-motorized travel. Preservation of open space will go hand in hand with expansion of the trail system. Properties adjacent to the existing or planned multi-use trails, or providing opportunities for additional trails, especially connecting to the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector, should be considered as conservation priorities. In most cases, trail

easements should be provided alongside conservation easements.

Our open space creates a green infrastructure which provides habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. The central component of green infrastructure are hubs and corridors. Hubs are typically large, unfragmented areas that anchor open space and are critical for providing habitat to plants and wildlife and protecting critical ecosystem functions. Corridors are typically linear features in the network that serve to connect hubs and help connect otherwise isolated plant and animal populations, thus assuring the long-term viability of these populations and the larger ecosystem. Many corridors follow streams, rivers, and floodplains, helping to keep pollution out of waterways and protecting people's homes and property from flood damage.

When contiguous parcels are preserved, greater opportunities arise for protecting or rehabilitating natural areas on a grander scale and creating green infrastructure hubs and corridors. Fragmented forests and small patches of meadows do not serve the local birds and other animals as well as larger patches. Some birds require vast acreages of contiguous meadow in order to nest. By preserving adjacent parcels, opportunities may arise for creating larger meadows. Where forest is fragmented into many smaller patches, more forest edge exists, which is often the least healthy in terms of biodiversity and native species. Adjacent parcels may offer opportunities to preserve or create larger forest patches, better equipped to serve the local fauna. Connectivity should be a high priority when identifying parcels for conservation, whether their ultimate use will be parks, trails, open space, natural areas, or agriculture.

Mill Creek Watershed

The Mill Creek watershed provides the most promise for an extensive open space corridor. A large protected corridor has been established along the Little Neshaminy Creek, including Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and surrounding Township land. In the north central portion of the Township, an extensive block of land is protected through agricultural easement. Enhanced protection in the Mill Creek watershed would build upon these corridors to the west. See Map 2: Open Space Opportunities.

Building a Land Ethic

The most important criterion for conservation is availability. The Township should focus on properties whose owners are willing to discuss conservation. Eminent domain is a tool available to the Township. However, it is not recommended for use. Warrington Township, and most communities, would be better served in building a community land ethic. This movement evolves as residents become more aware of their land resources and help to put into place the planning, programmatic, and regulatory mechanisms needed to protect these resources. Building this community land ethic may require the Township to offer more opportunities to learn about their own community and talk about the importance of preserving it. The EAC offers excellent programs to build upon.

Funding opportunities are nearly as important as availability, because no municipality can afford to purchase all the land they would like to conserve. Properties that meet many of the priorities of Warrington Township are also likely high priority for funders. Properties that have unique opportunities to draw from many funding sources should be capitalized upon, allowing the Township to further leverage their funds.

Methods for Conserving Open Space

Warrington Township primarily uses fee simple acquisition as a means to preserve open space. Continued use of fee simple purchase, as well as, use of conservation easements, agricultural easements, and land protection through development, will ensure that the open space system continues grows and meets future needs.

Conservation Easements

In addition to purchasing land outright, townships purchase conservation easements to meet local open space goals. A conservation easement limits certain uses on a property (such as development) in order to advance conservation purposes while keeping the land under private ownership and control. Conservation easements relieve the municipality of the burden of managing the land and the cost of maintaining it. Conservation easements are often used to preserve farmland, prohibiting future subdivision and enabling the farmer to live on and farm the property. Another use of the conservation easement technique would be to purchase a trail easement, thereby allowing public access in an interconnected trail network. The Township should ensure that the easement permits the Township (or group responsible for the trail) to maintain the trail. Because the land remains in private ownership, the cost of purchasing the conservation easement is lower than the cost of purchasing the property in total.

Agricultural Easements

Though Warrington Township contains relatively few working farms, agricultural easements may be a viable means of

preservation in limited cases. About 241 acres are preserved under agricultural easement in Warrington. The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) administers Pennsylvania's Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. Their mission is to assure the preservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy and resources of the county. This body may present funding for preservation of farmland, which may not be available from other sources. However, agricultural easements do not allow trails through a property. Where an agricultural easement may be appropriate for a property, but a trail corridor is needed, a trail easement can be established alongside an agricultural easement. This creates an additional layer of work and can complicate the transaction and funding.

Fee-Simple Acquisition

The most common means for a municipality to fully control land is through fee simple acquisition. This means the Township owns the property and manages it as they see fit. Acquisition may be the best solution for Warrington Township to provide parkland and recreation facilities that require maintenance. Acquisition should be considered for parcels suitable as parks and recreation uses or when a parcel can augment an existing facility. Acquisition should also be considered when an adjacent parcel contains a sensitive use, such as a school, a natural area with important features, or a historic site, which would benefit from buffering.

In some cases, fee simple acquisition may be followed by establishment of a conservation easement. The Township may find itself with the opportunity to acquire a parcel that it does not wish to manage, but may be well suited for preservation due to the presence of agriculture. In this case, the Township may wish to acquire the land, place trail and conservation

easements on the property, ensuring its protection and contribution to the trails network, and then sell the property to a private owner, or lease the farmable land to a local farmer. If the land can be leased for farming, it would also generate income for the Township and reduce maintenance costs.

The Township may wish to consider placing conservation easements on parks and open spaces, such as these, to prevent their sale for profit during a period of robust development or times of financial struggle for the Township. Easements should only be established after master planning and public input determine the best uses and layout for each park.

Leasing

Leasing a property can be a useful option for the Township if a more permanent solution is not possible. In this case, the Township would sign an agreement to use the property, typically for a specific purpose or for accessibility. A lease can be budget friendly and in some instances, may cost the township nothing. The lease may be indefinite or may have a specified term. In either scenario, their permanent utility may be limited as lease agreements may be terminated or a landowner may change causing the lease to terminate. Nonetheless, leases can be useful in certain situations where it is difficult for the Township to acquire an interest in the land.

Warrington Township uses this strategy. Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area is maintained by Warrington Township through a lease agreement with Bucks County.

Cluster and Open Space Development Options

“Buy the best, zone the rest”. Zoning ordinances play an important role in preserving open space. Ideally, a conservation

subdivision or cluster option will be mandated or available. This option requires some percentage (usually 50%+) of the development site to be preserved as open space. Under this option, developers are still permitted to build as many homes as under the conventional development options. The open spaces preserved within these subdivisions will typically be managed by Home Owners Associations (HOA). Trails and trail easements can also be established through the open spaces, allowing the new development to connect to the expanding township wide trail network while also providing an amenity for its new residents. These development options are not mandatory, but if use of these options continues, they can ensure that open space is preserved, even where properties are developed.

The Warrington Township zoning code currently has performance standards that intend to protect natural resources and sensitive lands, but it does not ensure that open space is interconnected and yield is not calculated based on buildable area. With some revisions, the township’s Zoning Ordinance could provide additional open space conservation opportunities. See Appendix C: Warrington Township Ordinance Assessment.

Manage Conserved Open Space

Once open space is acquired, Warrington Township should be prepared to manage it. In addition to operations and maintenance recommendations highlighted further in this plan, there are specific opportunities for management and restoration that should be considered.

To maximize the ecological and community benefits of natural lands, landowners and land managers must establish an

effective long-term land stewardship program. Stewardship is an active process of engagement with your land to direct it toward (or keep it at) a desired state. Because natural processes in the region have been and continue to be significantly altered by human activity, natural areas left to themselves will—in most cases—become degraded and dysfunctional. It is not good enough to let natural areas go. Defining stewardship goals for individual properties and understanding the existing resources and various issues and opportunities associated with each site are critical to sustaining healthy ecosystems beneficial to wildlife and safe and enjoyable recreational areas for human visitors.

A township-wide stewardship plan should consider the following major issues for land managers. Individual properties may also have plans that also address public access or individual plans may be part of the Township-wide document. Based on the issues, an annual work plan and budget can be developed.

- a. Invasive plants
 - Identification of invasive plants
 - How/ when to apply best management practices for various species
 - Monitoring of known populations
 - Staff with pesticide application license, training and personal protective equipment
 - Budgeted annual training
- b. Deer Management
 - Fencing and deterrents
 - Hunting program with population reduction as goal
 - Deer cull
- c. Meadow and Basin management/ restoration
 - Site prep

- Seed mixes
- Planting times
 - o Equipment
 - o List of qualified contractors
- Monitoring and maintenance during establishment period
- Monitoring and maintenance once established
- d. Riparian buffers, Afforestation & Reforestation
 - What is a riparian buffer, afforestation and reforestation project
 - Planning
 - o Tree species
 - o Deer protection
 - o Fencing
 - o Tree tubes
 - o Installation
 - o List of qualified contractors
 - o Staff
 - o Volunteers
 - Maintenance

Undeveloped Properties

While some open space properties are not accessible or intended to be accessible to the public that does not mean that management should be absent. Stewardship of resources, such as forests and riparian zones, can be important for ensuring that these properties are performing ecosystem functions and to a high level. Management of such properties should be in accordance with a Township-wide stewardship plan to be developed. Also, refer to the undeveloped properties snapshot located in Appendix D.

Other Township Lands

Township properties that are not part of the parks and open space system can also be managed to meet Township natural resources goals. These properties include the Township building, pump stations, and stormwater basins.

Of particular interest are stormwater basins. These detention facilities are generally not naturalized and could provide better water infiltration services than they currently do. Stormwater basins should be mowed in a reduced fashion and planted with native vegetation to help infiltrate water as well as reduce usage by geese. A mowed apron of path can be put in place to quell concerns over wildlife and provide a neat look.

MS4 Stormwater Requirements: Parks as Solutions

Portions of the Township are subject to compliance with the U.S. EPA's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4) which requires both special permits for projects within designated areas as well as a permit and approved stormwater management program document (SWMP) that has a written description of the various control measures the permittee will undertake to implement the stormwater management program.

A central tenet for approaching stormwater management, especially in the context of the Township is the decentralization of the stormwater management system through a diverse palette of Best Management Practice (BMP) stormwater elements that can capture and treat runoff at different scales. Rather than rely solely on the upsizing of conveyance pipes to deal with additional flow, the goal is to remove as much stormwater as possible from the system before it reaches the conveyance lines. This includes the use of bio-retention, permeable pavements, and other pre-treatment strategies which can be tailored to fit a wide range of areas and

scales. Also, tied into this particular strategy of decentralization is maximizing open space and reducing impervious surface coverage wherever possible. Particularly in the context of parks and greenways, the Township has an opportunity to decrease the amount of runoff being generated and conveyed into local streams during storm events through facilities that can also serve as attractive park amenities. In addition to the stormwater management implications, many of the options within a potential palette of BMPs provide opportunities to create aesthetically pleasing open spaces as well as potentially valuable public amenities. Stormwater is often considered a liability that must be “mitigated” but it also can be viewed as a vital asset. The creative storage and reuse of stormwater runoff from buildings and paved surfaces to irrigate civic landscapes, streetscape and park beautification plantings and community gardens should be encouraged. Such stormwater implements can be seamlessly integrated into a park's fabric so that park users view them as an asset, barely aware that they are there, and doing their important job.

An important consideration through the implementation of stormwater BMPs is that development projects must satisfy the requirements of state and federal laws as authorized by the Clean Water Act, MS4 SWMP as well as any adopted regional watershed management plans, known as PA Act 167 plans. As site specific master plans are developed for existing or new parks, the plans should consider ways to utilize techniques described in Chapter 7 of PADEP's *Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual*. Techniques could include playing fields graded to provide increased storage capacity during major storm events, flow through planters, green roofs, bio-retention swales, and micro-pool/terraced wet meadows can be used to intercept and treat water before it enters conveyance systems. Engineered soils can be utilized to filter out pollutants and proper plantings can help remove excess nutrients produced by runoff flowing over impervious surfaces. During storm events, even a small pre-treatment area can help to reduce peak flows by temporarily storing water and reducing overall volume.

Characteristics of Highly Effective Conservation Communities

Communities that are successful in meeting their conservation goals seldom rely on one tool, such as land acquisition, to achieve those goals. Conservation requires applying a sophisticated set of conservation tools, adapted to local circumstances ranging from ecological resource value and financial capacity to public will. The “characteristics” below bring a municipality along a conservation continuum, from understanding what’s important to conserve to implementation. Warrington’s success has relied upon the successful application of many of the tools below. That success could multiply with further attention to several of the characteristics noted below.

1. **Documented Community Resources.** A thorough understanding of natural, cultural and historic resources with inventoried and mapped information in a manner that displays suitability for conservation and development is important. *The Open Space and Land Preservation Committee has documented properties high in natural resources. Maps from planning documents assist further.*
2. **A Realistic Understanding of the Future.** Information guides forming and adjusting community goals for conservation and development.
3. **Reasonable Goals for Conservation and Development.** Goals reflecting special resources, land use patterns and anticipated growth are derived through public engagement. *Priorities set through this plan and the comprehensive plan, both of which engage the public, set goals to balance conservation and development.*
4. **A Sound Zoning Framework.** Legally defensible, well-written zoning regulations help meet the “fair share” of future growth and balance community goals and private landowner interests. Resource suitability, flexibility, and incentives in zoning regulations encourage (and sometimes require) including permanent conservation lands into new subdivisions. *Warrington includes conservation requirements in their zoning regulations; however, standards for open space should be enhanced to establish interconnected and useable open space.*
5. **A Process for Designing “Conservation Subdivisions.”** Design standards and the design process are integral to conserving community resources. Working closely and expeditiously with subdivision applicants to develop mutually acceptable sketch plans, rather than using delaying tactics and relying solely upon the formal review of engineered plans, helps to advance community goals. *Warrington should consider fully adopting tools such as this in their codes.*
6. **Good Working Relationships between Municipal Official and Landowners.** Maintaining good working relationships between municipal officials and the owners of undeveloped lands is essential. Open and ongoing communications enable municipal officials to introduce landowners to community concerns before they make irrevocable decisions regarding the future of their properties.
7. **Mechanisms for Acquiring Important Conservation Lands.** Important conservation lands (which might not be protected by federal or local environmental regulations) can be obtained through gift or purchase. Being able to identify and have access to public and private financing as well as to qualified individuals and non-profit entities that are able to undertake necessary transactions is key. *The Open Space and Land Preservation Committee is critical in this regard*
8. **Management of Dedicated Conservation Lands.** Skills to properly maintain permanent conservation lands and to provide for trails and other appropriate recreational uses are necessary. Such lands are often in mixed public, non-profit, and private ownership.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of how Warrington Township envisions moving forward with open space protection.

1. **Through the Open Space and Land Preservation Committee, establish criteria for evaluating open space properties to determine how worthy they are of conservation. Such criteria may be as follows:**
 - Contains significant agricultural soils (Prime or of State Importance);
 - In agricultural production, more than 50% of the land;
 - Protects water quality;
 - Is adjacent to a Township water body;
 - Contains significant woodlands;
 - Is adjacent to, will connect to, or link other protected parcels, including the parks;
 - Contributes to a scenic view shed;
 - Conserves a documented biodiversity sites
 - Expands recreational uses;
 - Implements Township Comprehensive Plan goals;
 - Consistent with County and State plans;
 - Is of documented historic or cultural significance;
 - Is of adequate size, at least ten acres.
2. **Using criteria to guide, focus preservation efforts on the following:**
 - a. Aim to permanently conserve and/or acquire privately undeveloped land in the Mill Creek Watershed.
 - b. Protect properties adjoining existing Township-owned land or along trail corridors.
 - c. Expand the Little Neshaminy greenway by protecting or acquiring land adjoining Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and John Paul Park.
 - d. Protect historic resources when opportunities arise
3. **Update Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to reflect open space dedication, natural resources protection, and trail connectivity through the development process. Details can be found in Appendix B. Recommendations include:**
 - a. Streamline and better inform decision-makers in the subdivision process through context mapping, existing resources/site analysis mapping, a landscape architect prepared sketch plan and a site visit.
 - b. Institute the four-step design process for subdivisions.
 - c. Consider enhanced cluster provisions, or ideally conservation subdivision ordinances, particularly in districts where open space protection is of greatest interest, such as RA.
 - d. Enhance open space dedication to be based upon gross buildable area.
 - e. Limit stormwater facilities that qualify towards open space dedication requirements.
 - f. Consider enhancing commercial corridor standards for the Route 611 corridor to anticipate redevelopment as the community grows and encourage mixed-use.
4. **Use conservation easements as a more prominent land protection tool in Warrington Township.**
 - a. Use conservation easements to preserve working lands, buffer park lands, and protect properties with natural resources that the Township cannot acquire.

5. **Strengthen land management and stewardship of all open space properties**
 - a. Develop a stewardship plan for the Warrington Township parks, recreation, and open space system
 - b. As determined by the Stewardship Plan and available maintenance resources and training, create a work plan to manage properties – including undeveloped lands.
 - c. Consider innovative infiltration opportunities in the development or redevelopment of parks or open spaces to manage stormwater more effectively and meet MS4 requirements.
 - d. Manage other Township owned lands to meet natural resource management goals, including stormwater basins.
6. **Leverage open space funds through grant funding opportunities with federal, state, and county partners.**

Strategy 2

Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle

Our Vision

Our vision is for all Warrington Township residents and visitors to enjoy safe places to walk and bicycle for recreation, fitness, and transportation via an interconnected township-wide trail network. Our goal is to establish trails within ten minutes of every household, making your doorstep and driveway your trailhead. At stake is the well-being and happiness of our citizens—which we now know depends upon regular outdoor physical activity. Walking and bicycling are the chief forms of exercise and recreation in the United States, and it is important to Warrington’s residents to have safe and easily accessible places to enjoy these activities.

Our interconnected network of trails is designed for a variety of non-motorized uses and will be located within parks, on dedicated road right-of-ways, and on easements where appropriate. The system will build upon existing and planned regional multi-purpose trails and neighborhood connectors. A distinctive feature of our trail system is creating a linked multi-purpose trails that stretch across the Township. Trails and paths will connect to parks, school campuses, neighborhoods, commercial centers, waterways, and other community hubs and destinations. Our trails and paths will allow residents and employees in Warrington to utilize non-motorized transportation options or access mass transit.

Why We Care

Trails and other community connections, such as sidewalks or bike lanes, support the full recreation system and are vital to unifying parks, recreation, and open space. Trails provide recreation opportunities for walkers, runners, cyclists, and others means of non-recreation travel, while offering safe access to parks and other recreation centers. In addition, these facilities can connect different areas of the Township, potentially easing road congestion, while providing opportunities for citizens to improve their health and fitness. Finally, trails give access to residents to connect with nature and explore areas that they would not be able to via motorized travel. For example, stream corridors and other greenways as part of the open space system are vital for wildlife movement, but also allow for human exploration if trails are installed in a manner that is sensitive to natural resources. Trails are an attractive amenity, often drawing new residents to a community, while increasing property values for existing residents near trails.

Existing Trails and Paths

Several trails currently exist within Warrington Township, though at this point a connected system is not established. That will quickly change if planned projects are completed.

Multi-purpose trails include the Route 202 Parkway Trail, PECO Powerline Trail, & in-design Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector. The Route 202 Parkway Trail is nestled along Route 202 in the western portion of Warrington. It is highly used and nine miles in

total length, of which over two miles are located in Warrington. The trail connects users to the north, towards Doylestown, and to the south into Montgomery County. While Route 202 is a limited-access roadway, the 202 Parkway Trail is not as there are access points from all roads that cross the trail, even if vehicular traffic cannot access, such as the case with Pickertown Road and Detweiler Road. Two parking lots to access the 202 Parkway Trail are located in Warrington at Bristol Road and County Line Road.

The recently constructed PECO Powerline Trail runs from County Line Road to Street Road. The trail connects with other trails within Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area.

Planning and design is currently underway for the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector portion between Route 202, south of Pickertown Road, and Twin Oaks Park. This trail will utilize township open space in the Mill Creek Conservation Area as well as fee owned rights-of-way. Existing trails within Twin Oaks Park and Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area will be upgraded and utilized within the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector.

Warrington Township has other walking paths within Barness Park as well as Palomino Park. There are also some established connections to the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector, schools, and other amenities from adjoining subdivisions, many of which also feature sidewalks. In particular, Mill Creek Elementary and John Barclay Elementary contain existing connections to adjoining neighborhoods. The Township is forward thinking in requiring gaps between lots for future connections to parks and/or trails. Additionally, nearly all residential subdivisions, and the Valley Square commercial center, contain sidewalks for pedestrian use.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Support for trails is uniquely strong in Warrington Township. The Township has primary multi-use trail links existing and in development. When complete they will serve much of the Township. Township staff and officials have worked to provide connections to the Route 202 Parkway Trail and PECO Powerline Trail from adjoining neighborhoods and nearby parks. The Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector will successfully link these two existing trails when complete. The Township has the building blocks for an inclusive system of trails and connections.

Through extensive open space and parkland acquisition Warrington is well set up to establish multi-purpose routes, particularly from Route 202 to Bradford Dam. Much of that corridor is owned by the Township. When it is not, there is only a handful of landowners to negotiate with. In other areas, the Township has received open space along riparian corridors and continued adding pieces to form a corridor that may now or in the future be used for trails. For instance, the corridor along Stump Road between Pickertown Road and Bristol Road. The PECO Powerline also presents a wonderful opportunity, stretching north/south across Warrington.

Several planning efforts are underway and/or being implemented converging focus and support of the trail system in Warrington. The **Warrington Township-Wide Trail System Master Plan** was developed in 2006 with the trail map updated in 2013. The Trail System Master Plan includes goals to provide safe alternative transportation and recreation modes and encourage trail linkages broadly. Warrington Township has worked hard to implement the plan. This **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** will build

upon the current **Trail System Master Plan**. Other planning efforts include the **Warrington Township Comprehensive Plan**, **Bucks County Bicycle Master Plan**, and **Bucks County Open Space and Greenways Plan**. The more that Warrington Township efforts are named in plans, the more competitive the Township will be in securing funding for trails and related projects. Additionally, Warrington Township has an active Bike & Hike Committee that informs Township Supervisors, conducts outreach, and pursues trail options and grant opportunities. The Bike & Hike Committee should continue in this role.

Warrington Township is fortunate in having significant federal, state, and county agencies interested in helping advance its trail infrastructure. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Bucks County, and Natural Lands are all interested and involved in helping Warrington Township with its trail connections, multi-modal transportation, and cultural heritage efforts. In fact, DCNR has granted Warrington Township awards for planning and construction of the PECO Powerline Trail. It has also awarded funds for a feasibility study of a multi-purpose path trail along Pickertown Road east of Lower State Road. This trail is a proposed link to Barness Park from the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector.

Challenges

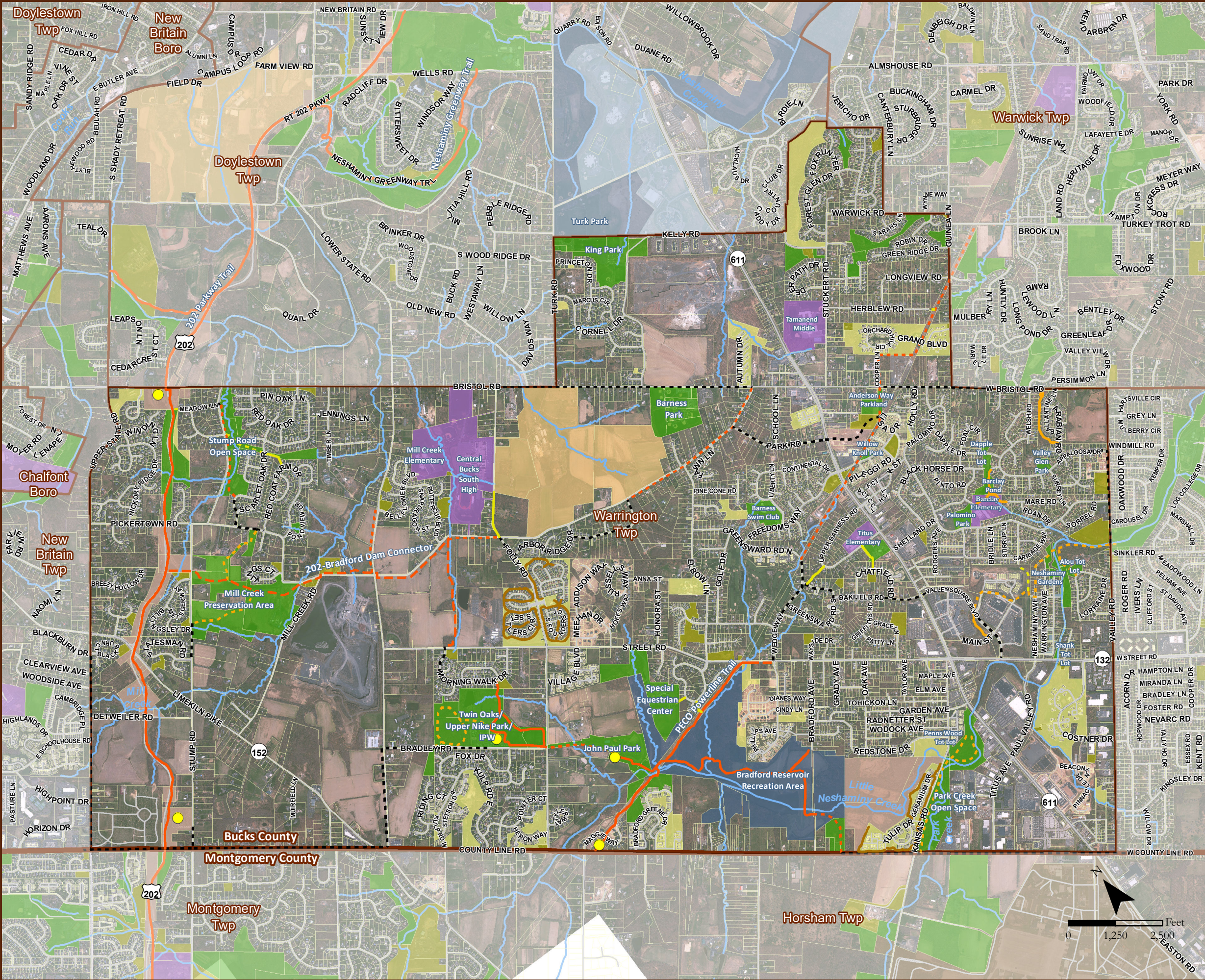
While pedestrian movement is generally well established within residential developments, connectivity between residential areas and commercial amenities is limited. There are extensive cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets. Without a cohesive neighborhood pattern, this often forces pedestrians or cyclists onto busy thoroughfares. This is particularly the case west of Route 611. In many cases, residents will not walk or bike beyond their neighborhood because of safety concerns.

For users of the regional bus system, Route 611 is particularly troublesome because most bus stops in Warrington do not have adequate separation from the cartway, are not lit, and some are not located near a crosswalk. During the winter snow banks may prevent their access all together. Sidewalks and paths do not adequately serve many bus stops.

Many primary arterials that connect to commercial centers, such as Street Road, Pickertown Road, and Bristol Road, and connecting routes, such as Park Road, contain many residential lots close to the road where it may be difficult to use rights-of-way to establish trail corridors. It is a challenge to develop sidewalks or multi-use trails along road rights-of-way outside of the development process. However, this leaves much of the central and northern portion of Warrington Township without established corridors for trail use.

The trail planning process is limited in Warrington because of staff capacity. The Planning Director, in association with the Township Manager and Supervisors, negotiate developments and establish connections through that process. It is a tedious process and they do a wonderful job; however, it is difficult to also negotiate open space acquisitions and trail corridors outside of the development process. High levels of development pressure add to the challenges of limited staff time.

Back of Trails Plan Map



Map 3
Trail Plan

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Warrington Township, Bucks County, PA

- Municipal Boundaries

County Boundaries

Parcel Boundaries

Waterways

Roadways

Agricultural Easement

County Open Space

County - other lands

Federal lands

Homeowners Association

Municipal Open Space

Municipal - other lands

School District

State lands

Existing Trailhead Parking
- Existing Trails

Multi-Use

Pedestrian

Connector

Private

Planned Trails

Multi-Use

Pedestrian

Connector

Road Improvement

**Natural
Lands**
1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587 | natlands.org

1. Aerial photography (2015) from DVRPC.
2. Parcel boundaries, roads, and streams from Bucks Co.
3. Public/Protected lands from DVRPC and Warrington Township.
4. Trails from PAMAP and Warrington Twp.

Compiled By: REW 04/30/18

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance hereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

Opportunities

Complete Planned Projects

The Township is currently in the process of final design for the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector. The trail should be constructed as it is a critical link and a base for the entire trail system. A multi-use trail link should be established between Twin Oaks/Upper Nike Park and the existing trailhead in John Paul Park. Particular attention should be paid to creating a safe crossing at the intersection of Folly Road and Bradley Road. Trails in Twin Oaks/Upper Nike Park should also be upgraded. The Township also has a grant to conduct a feasibility study for a multi-purpose trail along Pickertown Road from Lower State Road to Barness Park. This feasibility study should be conducted to determine what route is possible for this important link along the north-central portion of the Township. A portion of the PECO Powerline Trail remains to be completed from the bridge over a tributary to the Little Neshaminy Creek to Phillips Avenue. This is a critical link that will provide access to numerous residents in the Fairways community and others in central Warrington to Bradford Reservoir and connecting trails.

Use Township Resources & Partners

The Township has many strengths to build upon. The Bike & Hike Committee should continue to be a voice for trails and advise the Supervisors. Maintaining good relationships with DCNR and other funders is critical. This goes for PECO, as well, who is a strategic partner for Warrington given the powerline corridor that crosses the center of the Township. The Township has an existing open space fund to use for purchase of trail corridors. This fund should be thoughtfully used given input of Township governance and residents.

Road Corridors

It is difficult to establish multi-use trails along road corridors outside of the development process, as landowners have to agree to an easement on a portion of their property or sell a portion of land to the Township. PennDOT is also involved in some cases. Therefore, it is critically important that all transportation improvement projects, including intersections, are thoroughly reviewed during the preliminary and final design phases to ensure that all required pedestrian and bicycle facilities are included into the designs.

This process also provides a mechanism, through the ultimate right-of-way, to support the funding of critical connections that may otherwise be difficult to achieve. Some roads in the Township would provide the simplest and most logical connections to destinations. As opposed to crossing the middle of properties, landowners do not have full use of their property's curtilage along roadways in many cases as it is part of the ultimate right-of-way.

Arterial and secondary roadways, such as Bristol Road, County Line Road, and Upper State Road, should be considered for road improvements that include multi-use trail connections. This is particularly true where road corridors would fill a critical gap allowing residents to travel to an amenity or create a loop trail. In most cases, a sidewalk should be accompanied by a designated bike lane or even a separated bikeway along high-traffic connections. Landowners along important road corridors with more substantial ultimate rights-of-way, including most PennDOT roads, should be approached. Any time development is proposed, the Township should gain dedicated right-of-way substantial enough for a multi-use trail

in the future. These tools are used successfully along a small stretch of the PECO Powerline Trail adjacent to Street Road.

Commercial Corridor Connections

As the Township grows, there will be a call from residents who do not want to drive and fight traffic with every trip to the grocery store or ice cream shop. There will also likely be redevelopment along commercial corridors that involves mixed-use strategies. This is already occurring at Valley Square. Other new developments along Route 611 are primarily residential in nature. Therefore, riding a bike or walking to and across Route 611 should be simplified. Trail routes, along with wayfinding, should connect to commercial centers.

Intersections should be improved to create safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists. This can be achieved through plan design and well as general road improvements. In addition, more extensive crossing mechanisms are recommended at the busiest intersections. At minimum, substantial median improvements, timed walk signals, visible and well-lit crosswalks, and dedicated bike lanes and boxes should be implemented. If funding can be procured, a pedestrian bridge is ultimately recommended across Route 611 at the PECO Powerline Corridor.

Cross-Township Multi-Use Trail System

The Township has an opportunity to develop a community wide trail system, with facilities in close proximity to nearly all residents as shown on Map 3: Trail Plan. This system of multi-use trails will serve as the recreation and non-motorized transportation link across the Township. By utilizing the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector, PECO Powerline Trail, and road improvements, Warrington Township may establish a

continuous trail. Ultimately, the trail would connect between the 202 Parkway Trail and the northern boundary with Warwick Township, perhaps eventually reaching the proposed Neshaminy Creek greenway in Doylestown Township providing for an extensive bike loop.

The Township should also continue exploring options for utilizing the state-owned mitigation site adjoining Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area to the east. If it were to ever become available for at least a trail connection then access from Bradford Dam to Route 611 would be simplified.

Establish On-Road cycling infrastructure

Roads should have arrows, signage, and designated bike lanes when serving as a continuation of multi-use trails. Sidewalks should not serve as multi-use paths.

Expand Secondary Trails

Establish secondary trails within Township open space, including Mill Creek Preservation Area and parcels along Kansas Road/Park Creek, and existing developed parkland, such as Twin Oaks Park. These trails are not intended to be multi-purpose in all cases and may instead be natural surface or other material that encourages residents to get outside and connect with nature.

Loop Opportunities

Loop trails are increasingly important for and desired by residents. Larger loops are advantageous to bikers and smaller loops encourage walking. Warrington Township should look to create loops within its trail system whenever possible. Smaller loops may be installed within the Mill Creek Preservation Area,

for instance, or simply within parks, such as those present in Upper Nike Park already. Larger loops are more difficult to implement. One option is utilizing the 202 Parkway Trail, Township open space along Stump Road, and Mill Creek Preservation Area. To the south, County Line Road, Lower State Road, and Bradley Road could be utilized to form a similar loop interacting with the 202 Parkway Trail to the south. Also, once the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector and the multi-use trail along Pickertown Road is created then strategic corridors through the Fairways community or near Elbow Lane will create a larger loop in the center of the Township.

Circuit Standards

The Circuit is a regional system of existing and planned trails in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. Primary

multi-purpose trails should adapt to standards of the Circuit whenever possible. Particularly, the Circuit recommends trail widths to be 10-12 feet. The Township should integrate trail signage and way-finding into the same design standards as parks. As with park facilities, a Request for Proposal should be developed for a design firm to create a signage standards package to be used for all new and replacement signage within the trail system that specifies materials, colors, sizes, installation methods, and wayfinding.

In addition, the Circuit adds trails to its system periodically and there is a chance Warrington could be part of that system at some point; however, trails have to be up to the Circuit standards. This can open the doors to new funding opportunities.

Methods for Acquiring Trail Corridors

Warrington Township primarily uses fee simple acquisition to acquire open space. Trails can be developed upon these properties. However, there are methods to acquire trail and greenway corridors without acquiring the entire property.

Trail Easements

Trail easements will allow the Township to establish trails without acquiring entire properties and eliminates future maintenance costs. Trail easements can be established alongside conservation easements or they can stand on their own. Trail easements can be sold or donated by landowners, but require a willing landowner with which to partner.

Acquisition or Public Use of Trails within New Developments

The Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances require sidewalks to be installed in new developments. Interconnected pedestrian paths should also be required to be developed within dedicated open space on adjoining properties. Where developers are required to install trails and sidewalks, they provide key pieces of the trail network while also providing amenities for the new residents.

Use of Utility Rights-of-Way

Rights of way and easements, which house utilities, are used as trail corridors in many communities. They provide long stretches of unobstructed land. PECO owns rights of way crossing the Township from north to south. An existing partnership should remain established to permit trails, to be developed and maintained by the Township, within rights of way.

Use of Road Rights-of-Way

The existing development pattern, with many homes and driveways fronting directly on the main roads, makes it difficult to establish multi-use trails in these areas. Instead, the installation of sidewalks within Township or PennDOT rights of way may be more appropriate.

Leasing Options

When permanent trail acquisition is not feasible then leasing may be an option for the Township. Leasing provides access to a property or trail for a certain period.

Trail Classifications

The following trail classifications are reflected on Map 3: Trail Plan.

Multi-Use Trails

Trails proposed along utility rights-of-way or through large, undeveloped parcels, should be made to accommodate many user groups. These trails are planned to have relatively few intersections with roads, making them suitable for uses beyond walking. Long stretches of these trails may be installed at the same time, potentially establishing them as destinations in themselves, rather than just as connections within the trail system.

These trails should be built to accommodate walkers, runners, dog walkers, and recreational bicyclists. Asphalt, or possibly crushed, compacted stone, at a width of 8'-12'+ will adequately serve these users. Should the Township also wish to accommodate skateboards and roller bladers, the trails will need to be paved. Depending on topography and width of the trail, sports cyclists, who typically ride at high speeds and often in large groups, may still prefer to use roads.

Pedestrian Paths

These trails are to be used for foot traffic only and may be used for recreation or transportation, or likely both. Sidewalks are also considered pedestrian paths. However, the Trail Plan only identifies paths outside of rights-of-way for simplicity sake. These trails are most often in township open space, parks or within homeowners' association land. Concrete, typical of sidewalks, macadam, or compacted crushed stone may serve as

acceptable materials, at a width of 4' for paths within rights-of-way. For trails outside of neighborhood rights-of-way, including most shown on the trail plan, natural surfaces may be recommended.

A note on sidewalks: The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO) mandates that sidewalks must be constructed within any new major subdivision, which has provided for an extensive sidewalk network with easy and safe non-motorized travel *within* residential developments.

Connectors

These trails do not serve as a destination themselves, but serve to connect residents to or between multi-use trails or pedestrian paths. The connectors may serve multiple uses or foot traffic only depending on the trail or amenity that they are connecting to.

Road Improvement

Routes designated for road improvement may need a variety of upgrades, from very simple to more extensive. On the Trail Plan, routes are classified in this manner that are to be designated trail routes serving to extend multi-use paths. The goal is that the Township system contains a continuous multi-use trail as well as loop opportunities for multiple user groups. In order to accomplish these goals then roadways will need to be used and classified as such routes, with improvements made to reflect that goal. Such improvements may be anything from on-road signage, such as sharrows and wayfinding that direct bikers (such as on a neighborhood road that already has a sidewalk) to bike lanes (also along a road with sidewalks) to fully separated multi-use paths that remain on or near the edge of the cartway.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of how Warrington Township envisions moving forward with trail and community connections.

1. **Leverage open space funds through grant funding opportunities with federal, state, and county partners.**
2. **Identify landowners that may be willing to grant trail easements, even if longer connections are not feasible now.**
3. **Institute trail easements on conservation lands acquired in fee or easement.**
4. **Complete funded and planned trail projects**
 - a. Finalize the remainder of the PECO Powerline Trail along Street Road to Phillips Avenue.
 - b. Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector, including improvements to trails in Twin Oaks/Upper Nike Park and connecting to John Paul Park.
 - c. Feasibility study for multi-use trail along Pickertown Road.
5. **Expand the PECO Powerline Trail to the northern portion of the Township**
 - a. Consider installation of a pedestrian bridge over Route 611.
6. **Establish secondary trails within Township open space, including Mill Creek Preservation Area and parcels along Kansas Road/Park Creek, and existing developed parkland, such as Twin Oaks Park.**
7. **Conduct feasibility studies to determine opportunities along arterial roads that do not contain off-road trails nearby, such as Bristol Road, County Line Road, and Upper State Road.**
8. **Develop a continuous trail system across the Township by utilizing bike lanes, sharrows, and signage to establish bicycle routes on-road to connect multi-use trails.**
9. **Connect trails to commercial centers and places of employment, including Valley Square and the 611-commercial corridor.**
10. **Explore opportunities to utilize the state-owned mitigation area adjoining Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area for a trail corridor between Bradford Dam and Kansas Road.**
11. **Continue to connect neighborhoods to parks or multi-use trails as opportunities arise or through the development process.**
12. **Evaluate intersections, particularly at trail crossings or near commercial centers, and reconstruct them to provide pedestrian and cyclist crossings by installing medians, traffic calming elements, or other measures.**
13. **Establish trail signage that is consistent across the Township and with park signage to provide a uniform branding for the system.**

Strategy 3

Provide lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Our Vision

Parks are a visual and tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community, and an important factor in maintaining pride and creating community identity and a sense of belonging. Whether enjoyed for active uses, organized events or simply as open space, residents who have access to high-quality, conveniently located parks and open spaces perceive their communities as more vibrant and enjoyable. Warrington Township is a great place to live, raise a family, work, retire, and operate a business, and the parks and open space system should clearly reflect this high quality of life. The park system should help create a strong sense of community, encourage residents of all ages to feel engaged and welcome, be perceived as safe, clean, beautiful and functional, and foster a connection and appreciation for natural resources, healthy living, and community. Warrington Township currently has 17 parks with 514 acres, a satisfactory quantity of parks and open space acreage, but they are lacking in quality, cohesiveness, and a sense that they are part of an overall township-wide system. Through well-managed and thoughtful master planning and design, the existing system can be made more cohesive, identifiable, enjoyable and accessible by a greater number of residents and visitors, and the acquisition and incorporation of future park and open space parcels can be made as seamless as possible.

When evaluating Warrington's parks and open spaces, it is important to look at them both individually as well as part of the overall system. Within each park, diversification of potential activities, provision of appropriate amenities, creation of

connections with adjacent neighborhoods and parks, and inclusion of clear signage and identification will boost use by more citizens. In the overall park system, increasing the variety of activities, incorporating clear identification and place-making through signage and design standards, and creating connections with trails and access points, will make the system become more available and identifiable. In terms of parks and recreation, this does not mean that every type of activity is provided outside each resident's front door, but it does imply that they will understand that their neighborhood park is part of a greater system that may contain other types of activities and amenities that they may seek out and enjoy.

Why We Care

Warrington Township is growing in population, but has a limited potential for parks and open space expansion. Any current and future parks need to be designed thoughtfully and efficiently, in order to appeal to and be utilized by as many of the residents as possible, as well as attract outside visitors. The Township can shape the design and quality of their park and open space network, making sure that it appeals to residents and satisfies their recreational needs, and connects with adjacent neighborhoods. By deliberately planning an interrelated system, and providing a variety of easily accessible amenities to each resident through an overall framework of transportation and public space (civic) infrastructure, physical and social interaction will occur. The connection of residents and neighborhoods will help to foster a sense of community within Warrington, providing a more satisfying residential experience.

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

The desire for a strong park system is evident, and interest has been expressed by both elected and non-elected officials to make this vision a reality. There is already good structure in place, with over 190 acres of township-owned, developed parkland. The Special Equestrian Center adds 65 acres and the county-owned, but township maintained Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area adds another 250 acres. In total, the Township has 700 acres of available parkland, which equates to about 29.2 acres/1,000 residents. The goal for a superior system is to have 30 acres/1,000 residents. Another 20 acres would achieve that goal in Warrington given the current population.

Within that open space network, 17 established parks include a major nature based park, highly programmed active recreational hubs, a seasonal membership-based tennis and swim club and small neighborhood tot lots. Organized recreational usage requirements are being fulfilled by the current inventory of various sports fields, which means that focus can now be directed at extending other uses, creating new ones, and providing necessary amenities that are not currently in place. Parks, recreation, and open space are a township priority as evident in the acquisition (and interest in master-planning) of the Mill Creek Preservation Area, the interest in transforming Twin Oaks Park into the Kid's Mountain destination playground, and the investment in the installation of native species, wildlife habitat and interpretive signage in the Bradford Reservoir open space area.

Table 1. Warrington Township Parks and Open Spaces	
Park	Acres (Calculated from GIS)
Community Parks	
Igoe Porter Wellings/Upper Nike	23.84
John Paul	24.23
King	36.17
Twin Oaks	47.31
Neighborhood Parks	
Anderson Way OS	6.00
Alou	3.08
Palomino	5.68
Valley Glen	2.91
Mini Parks	
Dapple	.88
Penns Wood	.19
Shank	.48
Warrington Village	.07
Willow Knoll	.90
Special Use Parks	
Barness	34.65
Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club	11.30
Special Equestrian Center	65.34
Nature Reserve (Leased from Bucks County)	
Bradford Reservoir Rec Area (County)	250.85
TOTAL PARKS	513.88
Other Properties/Undeveloped Open Space	
Barclay Pond	6.66
Bradford Dam (Muni)	9.33
Mill Creek Preservation Area	75.00
Neshaminy Gardens	10.44
Park Creek OS	48.87
Stump Road OS	35.56
TOTAL (Township open space excluding land primarily for stormwater purposes)	699.74

Challenges

Warrington Township needs to strategically acquire additional parcels as well as design, develop, and connect current open space parcels before the opportunity to create ample parks and recreation spaces within the Township is permanently lost due to commercial and residential development. While the Township is currently at a satisfactory level regarding total acreage of available parkland, with projected population increases over the next 20-25 years there will need to be significant increase of parkland to keep current acreage ratios. Of a more urgent nature, portions of the Township are not served by a neighborhood park facility in close proximity – characterized as a ten-minute walk or approximately ½ mile. See Map 4 – Parks Area of Service. The Township has many large athletic facilities that serve the community as a whole along with tot lots that serve a small vicinity. However, neighborhood facilities, on the order of three to ten acres, with multiple uses, are not plentiful. The western and northern portions of the Township are particularly devoid of neighborhood park facilities. It should be noted that larger parks can contain neighborhood facilities within a portion of the park

The current park system is lacking in design quality and continuity, resulting in very little “sense of place” - it is difficult to perceive that one is within a Warrington Township park. Signage is limited, creating a lack of “sense of arrival”, and general lack of orientation within individual parks. Connections between parks need improvement, and overall accessibility and circulation within parks is inconsistent. The overall park system is heavily focused on organized sports, but lacking in basic site comforts and amenities such as seating and signage, and other uses such as passive recreation, social gathering spaces, and landscaping/shade. The park system is missing key elements for some users, particularly seniors and young adults. It is also lacking a comfortable central civic gathering space, or community hub. John Paul Park is currently used for community gatherings, but is not fully equipped to do so, lacking in certain utilities as well as ADA accessibility. In terms of maintenance, environmental stewardship is not a focus, which is currently and will continue increasing maintenance costs unnecessarily.

Mandatory Dedication of Park Land

Warrington Township’s SALDO (Sub-Division and Land Development Ordinance) § 322 Community Facilities (Ord. 77-1, 3/1/1977, § 322) provides for the dedication of land for parks and recreation as adopted in 1977. In the late 1980’s the MPC (Pennsylvania Municipalities Code) established provisions for the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland. This is a powerful planning tool that enables municipalities to acquire and/or develop recreation facilities at no cost through the land development process. The MPC also provides developers with an option to offer a fee-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland which is generally set at the market value of land.

Warrington Township’s ordinance for the dedication of parkland is outdated. A new Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance needs to be developed, adopted and implemented. Given development pressure, this action is urgent. The new ordinance would be based upon this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and its recommended standard of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Opportunities

Warrington Township has the opportunity to plan for the future, addressing current and potential future needs through thoughtfully considering the system as a whole, as well as master planning key individual parks and new acquisitions. Warrington could focus its resources and efforts to create a first quality park system, with the following efforts:

- Establish clear directionality and vision for the future of the park system, and both long-term and short-term goals for upgrades and improvements.
- Foster a sense of continuity and branding within the park system.

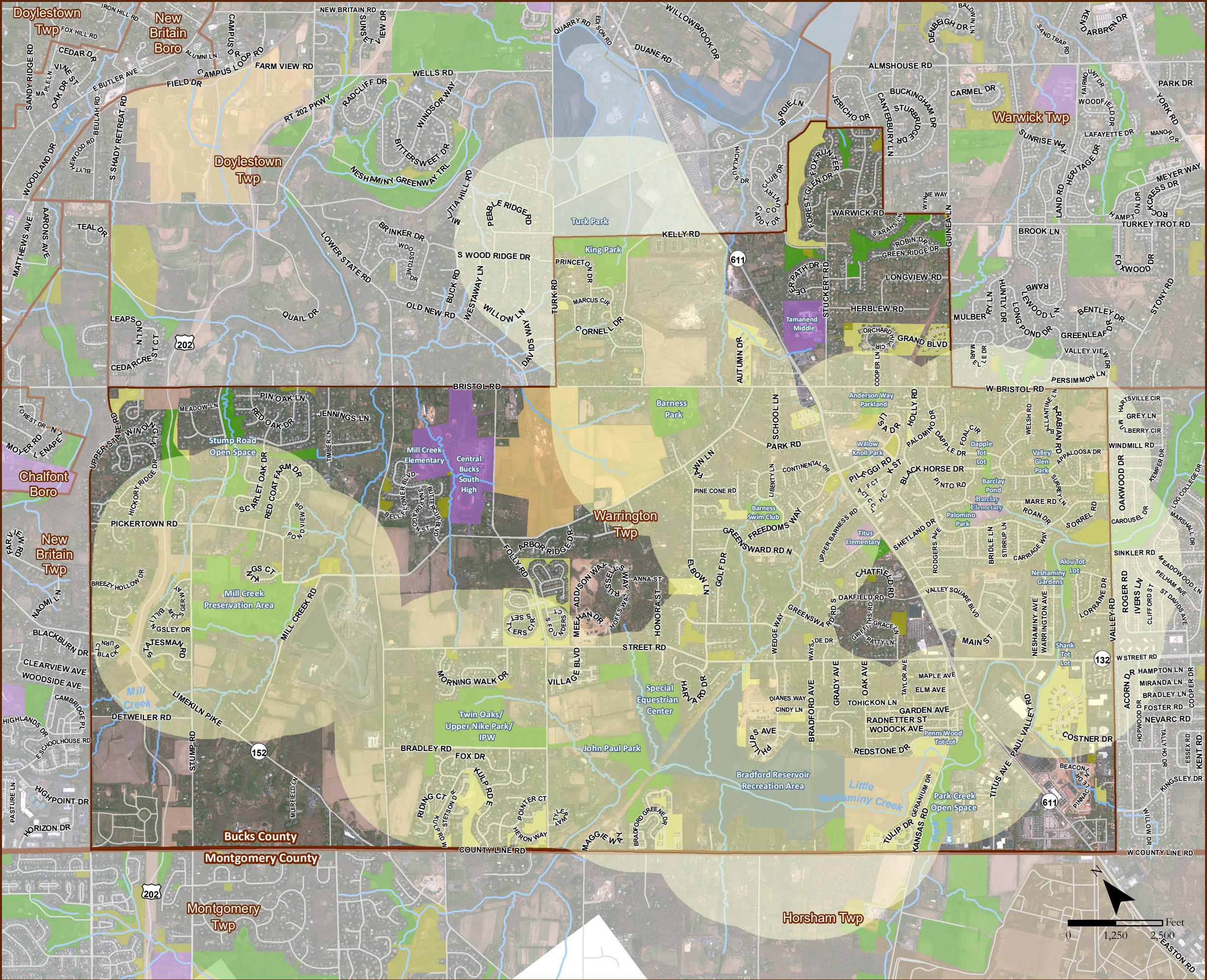
- Make the park system more diverse, accessible, cohesive, and understandable.
- Establish more neighborhood scale park facilities either within existing parkland, additional acquisitions, or the development process.
- Create a community hub that the Township can be proud of and use as their central gathering space for a variety of activities.
- Identify areas of potential environmental stewardship.

Recommendations

1. **Establish a parkland standard of 30 acre per 1,000 residents. Add a minimum of another 20 acres for neighborhood parks.**
2. **Create, adopt and implement a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance.**
3. **Establish a park within a ten-minute walk of every household. This will require the addition of another four to six small neighborhood parks in underserved areas.**
4. **Create a set of design standards for parks, recreation facilities and open space.**
 - a. Establish and adhere to design standards including, but not limited to, signage, site furniture, fencing, landscaping, trail and other site materials, and lighting.

Warrington Township's Standards for Parks and Open Space

- Warrington Township currently has 29.2 acres of land per 1,000 residents. 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents should be the parkland standards for Warrington Township. That means for every 1,000 residents moving into the Township, another 20 acres of parkland at a minimum should be added.
- This overall park master plan identifies key needs and connections, with consideration for incorporating activities and experiences currently missing from the system, and making the existing network more cohesive. Individual parks and open spaces will be professionally designed as scenic beautiful places that the residents will use for recreation, relaxation, fitness, socialization, and connecting to nature.
- Design standards will be developed and adhered to with respect to current parks and open space, as well as future expansion. These design standards will include but not be limited to signage, furniture, trail materials, fencing, and lighting. The township park and open space signage system will be developed to brand the Township as a community with a top-notch parks and recreation system. The professionally designed system will include a logo, a color palette, quality materials with maintenance considerations, and signs for park names, rules and regulations, interpretation, facility names, and wayfinding.
- Parks will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Consumer Product Safety Commission standards for playgrounds.
- Connections to parks, open space, and other community destinations will be provided via safe places to walk and bicycle. Each neighborhood will have easy access to at least one park or open space area.



Map 4
Parks Area Of Service

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Warrington Township, Bucks County, PA

- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Waterways
- Roadways
- Agricultural Easement
- County Open Space
- County - other lands
- Federal lands
- Homeowners Association
- Municipal Open Space
- Municipal - other lands
- School District
- State lands
- Park Area of Service (1/2 mile radius)

**Natural
Lands**
1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587 | natlands.org

1. Aerial photography (2015) from DVRPC.
2. Parcel boundaries, roads, and streams from Bucks Co.
3. Public/Protected lands from DVRPC and Warrington Township.
4. Trails from PAMAP and Warrington Twp.

Compiled By: REW 04/30/18

Disclaimer: This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., describe the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using G.P.S., and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc., makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance hereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

This will create a branding opportunity that will identify these parks as part of the Township and part of the resident and taxpayer experience. It will create an easier process when it is time to redesign or update an existing park or design a new one. It will help to eventually increase the comfort level of users or visitors, encouraging them to stay longer and return more often.

Each park was viewed during the tour of facilities and subsequent fieldwork. Generally, the parks appear clean, but disjointed. The parks have evolved over time, as needs arose and were not formally master planned, resulting in a lack of consistency of site design and amenities. Fixtures, furniture, signage and materials vary from park to park, eroding the sense of the overall “township brand” for the parks system. The findings of the facility inventory for each site have similarities that relate to lack of accessibility and the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the safety guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and recommendations to diversify activities and uses, and enhance the users experience through the addition of amenities and comfort facilities such as lighting, landscaping, shade structures, pavilions, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, water fountains signage, etc.

5. Complete Phase 1 of Kids’ Mountain.

- a. Continue to work with the Lions Club on this project and support their fundraising efforts.
- b. Apply for grants to advance Phase 2 and subsequent phases.
- c. Have a grant community celebration when Phase 1 is complete.

6. Develop a master plan for Mill Creek Preservation Area.

- a. The concept plan for this park was developed and included in a report titled *A Green Infrastructure Approach to Leveraging Local Priorities in Warrington Township, Pennsylvania* prepared by the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland September 2014 and was endorsed by the Environmental Advisory Council, Park and Recreation, and Bike and Hike committees and presented to the Board of Supervisors.

7. Make the park system more diverse, accessible, cohesive, and understandable.

- a. Combine Twin Oaks, Upper Nike, and Igoe Porter Wellings into one community-scale park.
- b. Diversify activities and opportunities for recreation within the overall park system as well as within individual parks. Identify missing pieces, or activities/uses that are not currently offered, and identify where they could be logically added to the system. These include but are not limited to pickle ball, disc golf, cricket, a splash pad, skate park, amphitheater and nature based play areas.
- c. Create and maintain connections to parks via safe pathways to walk and bicycle in addition to cars.

8. Identify areas of potential environmental stewardship

- a. Establish a pilot project for potential environmental stewardship and how it is maintained and managed. Trails staff to move in that direction in order to cut down on maintenance costs
- b. Incorporate a sustainably-designed indoor/outdoor community hub to provide opportunities such as swimming, continuing education, or other indoor fitness

that are otherwise not provided within the current park system. This indoor/outdoor space could serve as a much-needed gathering spot offering organized events as well as passive and active recreational activities. It would potentially be designed to have public outdoor gathering space for festivals, outdoor movie nights, etc. The hub may also include services such as a library or even a new municipal administration building. By considering a sustainably designed facility, the Township could maximize its ability to pursue potential outside funding, as well as celebrate the opportunity to proclaim the Township's dedication towards environmental stewardship and sustainable values. Recommended locations for such a community hub may include the currently undeveloped portion of Valley Square or the property across Bristol Road from Barness Park.(unnecessary mowing, etc.) as well as increase the park system's overall environmental safety and health.

- Identify potential areas to address MS4 requirement compliance.

Immediate Recommendations for Warrington Township Parks and Open Space

- Remove unnecessary fencing, particularly along the Doylestown edge of King Park.
- Install bridge over stream in Barness Park.
- Prepare and issue a Request for Proposal for a design firm to create a signage standards package to be used for all new and replacement signage within the park system, as well as trails, specifying materials, colors, sizes, installation methods, and potential vendors, including but not limited to entry, rules and regulations, wayfinding, and interpretive signage.
- Identify key areas for potential environmental stewardship maintenance practices.
- Master plan and consolidate Igoe Porter Wellings, Upper Nike and Twin Oaks into one park.
- Master Plan the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area.
- Use the park assessments in the Appendix of this plan to carry out recommendations for relatively smaller scale park improvements with township workers or volunteers such as Eagle Scouts or community organizations.

Strategy 4

Advance recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, sense of community, connections to nature, celebration, and personal growth.

Our Vision

Warrington Township will be a place where people who live, work, and visit have plentiful recreation opportunities year-round. The more we expose people to fun and enriching experiences, the more opportunities we create for people to learn, connect, and share. Whether it's taking in the scenery of our beautiful riverfront, feeling the warm sun while on a hike, enjoying the thrill of the game, or immersing oneself in our rich history, we view the creation of these opportunities for personal growth, community building, and connections with nature as a core responsibility.

Why We Care

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles⁴ live longer⁵, are less in

danger from heart disease and stroke⁶, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer⁷, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma and depression⁸. 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.

prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men. Journal of the American Medical Association. 273:1093-1098

⁶ Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. *How much physical activity is good for health? Annual Reviews of Public Health.* 13:99-126

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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, Ruggerio L, Eakin EG et al.

⁴ Moore SC, et al. Leisure Time Physical Activity of Moderate to Vigorous Intensity and Mortality: A Large Pooled Cohort Analysis. PLoS Medicine. November 6, 2012. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001335.

⁵ Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. *Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a*

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 public health. The U.S. Center for Disease Control enlisted local communities in the fight against diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension by offering easier, 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. Less than three percent of Americans live a healthy lifestyle according to the Mayo Clinic.⁹ Public recreation can be a catalyst in spurring more physical activity among adults.

Table 2¹⁰ presents a snapshot of preferred outdoor recreation activities by age group. This can help the Township to plan township recreation facilities and programs. About half of all Americans participate in at least one outdoor recreation activity. In addition, a significant number of Americans indicate their aspirations of participating in outdoor recreation including sports, running and trail hiking.

Trends and Outcomes of Recreation Programs

Tracking the interests, needs and participation in public recreation programs will enable the Township to allocate its resources for the most benefit to the community in parks and recreation. The Township has experienced major shifts in recreation interest and/or participation such as pickle ball, the emergence of new leagues like lacrosse; requests for cricket pitches and disc golf; and the decrease in summer camp participation that resulted in the closure of Twin Oaks Day Camp.

⁹ Loprinzi, Paul, PhD; Brascum, Adam, PhD; Hanks, June, PhD DpT PT; Smit, Ellen PhD., "Healthy lifestyle characteristics and their Joint Association with Cardiovascular Disease Biomarkers in U.S. Adults," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, Volume 91 Issue 4 (2016): pages 432-442.

¹⁰ Outdoor Foundation. "2016 Outdoor Participation". *Topline Report*. 2017. https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Topline-Report_

Table 2. Outdoor Activities of Most Interest by Age Group

Ages 6 -12	Ages 13 - 17	Ages 18 - 24	Ages 25 - 34
Swimming	Camping	Camping	Swimming for Fitness
Camping	Swimming for Fitness	Swimming for Fitness	Bicycling
Bicycling	Bicycling	Bicycling	Camping
Running/Jogging	Working Out with Weights	Hiking	Hiking
Basketball	Working Out Using Machines	Working Out with Weights	Working Out with Weights
Fishing	Hiking	Running/Jogging	Running/Jogging
Hiking	Running/Jogging	Backpacking	Working Out with Weights
Soccer	Shooting	Working Out Using Machines	Backpacking
Swimming on a Team	Trail Running	Climbing	Canoeing
Working Out with Weights	Fishing	Trail Running	Trail Running

Table 2. Outdoor Activities of Most Interest by Age Group Continued

Ages 34-44	Ages 45-54	Ages 55-64	Ages 65+
Hiking	Swim for Fitness	Bicycling	Swimming for Fitness
Swimming for Fitness	Camping	Swimming for Fitness	Birdwatching/Wildlife Viewing
Camping	Bicycling	Camping	Working Out Using Machines
Bicycling	Hiking	Hiking	Hiking
Working Out with Weights	Working Out Using Machines	Working Out with Weights	Fishing
Working Out Using Machines	Birdwatching/Wildlife Viewing	Fishing	Bicycling
Running/Jogging	Working Out with Weights	Working Out Using Machines	Working Out with Weights
Canoeing	Canoeing	Birdwatching/Wildlife Viewing	Fitness Classes
Backpacking	Fishing	Canoeing	Camping
Rafting	Backpacking	Fitness Classes	Golf

Another a major trend in public recreation programming is the change away from a cafeteria style approach with a variety of recreation programs and seeing who shows up to using recreation to meet community needs, make the lives of citizens better, and solve major community issues. Examples of this is engaging middle schoolers in activities they like in order to prevent their use of drugs and alcohol; nature based programs to build the next generation of land stewards to care for Warrington's environmental resources and open space; fitness programs to spur people to lead active healthy lives reducing health care costs; and activities for active aging seniors to reduce their isolation which has been named "a potent killer", the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.¹¹

Focusing on the needs and interests of specific groups in the Township will enable the staff and the Park and Recreation Board, the EAC, and the Trails Committee to direct their efforts for maximum benefit. Table 3 presents the desired outcomes and benefits of recreation programs and opportunities for the residents. By focusing on the outcomes of the recreation opportunities offered, the Township's efforts will result in maximum public service and direct benefits to the participants.

¹¹ Holt-Lunstad, Julia; Smith, Timothy B; Baker, Mark; Harris, Tyler; and Stephenson, David. "Loneliness and Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality". *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. 2015. Volume 10(2) pages 227 – 237.

Table 3. Warrington Township Recreation Outcomes & Benefits for Our Community

Youth Program Outcomes		Family and Community Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and/or improve health, motor and social skills • Provide opportunities to be successful • Improve self-esteem and self-worth • Encourage creativity through art and performance • Provide opportunities to learn about the environment and heritage of Warrington Township as the Gateway to Bucks County • Encourage situations to enhance decision making skills • Create an environment that reduces loneliness and isolation • Provide safe after-school developmental opportunities • Provide or facilitate assistance that improves grades • Offer productive alternatives that reduce self-destructive / anti-social behavior • Create opportunities to improve leadership qualities • Foster stewardship through opportunities to engage our unique environment • Create opportunities that promote volunteerism 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for neighbors to interact, communicate, and bond • Create opportunities to connect families • Offer alternatives to less productive activities • Promote neighborhood and community involvement • Create a sense of place for Warrington Township • Promote cultural and ethnic understanding and harmony • Provide opportunities that promote community pride • Foster opportunities for community integration

Table 3. Warrington Township Recreation Outcomes & Benefits for Our Community Continued

Adult Program Outcomes		Senior Adult Program Outcomes
<p>Provide opportunities to improve health, wellness, and fitness</p> <p>Create an atmosphere that reduces stress</p> <p>Provide opportunities to be successful and to deliver a sense of accomplishment</p> <p>Create situations that deliver satisfaction and improve one's feeling of worth</p> <p>Foster stewardship through opportunities to engage our unique environment</p> <p>Provide opportunities for self-exploration</p> <p>Promote ethnic and cultural understanding</p> <p>Provide programs that promote social interaction</p> <p>Create opportunities that promotes volunteerism</p>		<p>Enhance and/or improve health and wellbeing</p> <p>Improve fitness and mobility</p> <p>Build confidence in one's abilities, promote independence, reduce dependence</p> <p>Promote social interaction and help to reduce loneliness and isolation</p> <p>Provide opportunities to be successful and improve self-esteem</p> <p>Create opportunities that enhance life satisfaction</p> <p>Foster an atmosphere that helps to reduce stress</p> <p>Promote ethnic and cultural understanding</p> <p>Improve one's feeling of self-worth through volunteerism</p> <p>Engage our unique culture, heritage and environment through exploration and education</p>

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Warrington Township's enviable location provides the residents with convenient access to a plethora of recreation opportunities. In addition to the township's 17 parks, residents can easily reach magnificent state national and state parks such as the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, Washington Crossing State Park, Tyler State Park, Nockamixon State Park, and the Bucks County Parks of Peace Valley, Core Creek, Churchville Nature Center, Playwicki, Tinicum, Tohickon, and Ringing Rock. The Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Fish & Boat Commission offer opportunities for hunting and fishing in nearby locations in Bucks County. With the **Bucks County Bicycle** Plan adopted, the County is working on creating bicycle pathways that will connect Warrington with many of these federal, state and county parks such as a bike route to the Delaware & Lehigh Canal. In the public engagement process for this plan, residents indicated that they use parks throughout the region including Doylestown Township, Doylestown Borough, Buckingham Township, and Horsham Township in Montgomery County.

Township Roles in Recreation

Warrington Township provides recreation opportunities in four ways:

- **Facility Provision** - Providing facilities for residents to undertake recreation on their own, which is how most recreation occurs in the Township.
- **Recreation Facilitation and Partnerships** - Facilitating recreation provided by other organizations such as community sports organizations, in partnership with private enterprise such as Cornerstone Health & Fitness Club, and the sale of discount tickets to commercial recreation venues such as movie theaters, ski areas, zoos, aquariums and so on.
- **Increasing Public Awareness.** Increasing public awareness about recreation opportunities through the township website, the staff's responsive and dedicated customer service when residents call for information, and The Link, Warrington Township's newsletter. The Township features parks and recreation in a video prominently featured on its Welcome to Warrington home page.
- **Organized Scheduled Programs.** Directly planning, organizing, and implementing organized scheduled programs with township staff, the Environmental Advisory Board, and volunteers. The Township provides an easy, convenient online registration program for citizens to sign up from the convenience of their own location.
- **Connecting Residents to Nature.** Create evening or weekend nature based and environmental education programs. The EAC provides the main source of environmental programs in Warrington Township.

Facility Provision

The Township's 17 parks with 514 acres of parkland throughout the community offer a wide range of facilities including places to walk and get fit, play areas for children and families, a swim and tennis club, picnic facilities, spectator areas, game courts, ball fields and nature areas to fish, relax, bond with family and friends, exercise, watch wildlife, and get away from it all. The Central Bucks School District offers the use of school facilities for public recreation.

The Township has been proactive in both creating parks through ownership and leasing as well as in securing the shared use of recreational space in collaboration with generous partners. This is particularly true of indoor recreation facilities. The Cornerstone Health & Fitness Club offers community fitness programs at the Wellness Center on Routh 611. This is a first class, top notch facility that is voted the Best of Bucks year after year. No doubt that these community programs have been the catalyst for participants joining Cornerstone thus becoming more engaged in active healthy living. Other sites used for public recreation programs include Homewood Suites for Lunch with Santa and the Warrington Fire Company #1 for the Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Scout projects. The most extensive work on the trail has been through the volunteer efforts of Comcast families on Comcast Cares Day.

In 2016, the center provided more than 4,300 lessons for 372 different riders. Volunteers served more than 12,000 hours serving more than 130 children and adults, ages 3-70. About 14-part time staff and 100 volunteers support the center's administration.

Warrington Township provides the facilities and support at no charge.

Special Equestrians

In 1999, Special Equestrians was generously offered a 30-year lease for a special purpose facility situated on 40+ acres of Warrington Township preserved open-space acres. The state-of-the-art facility features 28 stalls, the Chapman Outdoor Ring, an indoor arena, the Village Improvement Association Round Pen, observation and volunteer lounges, conference space, the Widener Therapy room, and administrative offices. The innovative Sensory Trail offers 24 interactive experiences for horse and rider, many created through Eagle

Recreation Facilitation and Partnerships

Warrington Township works collaboratively with community organizations in providing facilities used by these organizations for public recreation. The most instrumental partnership is with community sports organizations who provide leagues primarily for children and youth in baseball, softball, field hockey, soccer, football, lacrosse, and basketball. The Public Works Department provides ongoing maintenance for township sports facilities that the community sports organizations contribute to as well. The Township and the sports organizations work closely toward common goals of providing excellent facilities responsibly with township and league resources.

Interviews with sports organizations and the sports forum generated significant findings about community sports and their importance:

- Sports groups are grateful to Warrington Township for the support of the Board of Supervisors, the Park and Recreation Board, township management, and the maintenance staff.
- About 4,000 players are in youth sports based upon available numbers provided by the organizations and estimates. This translates into a multiplier of about 12,000 involved in sports in playing, spectating, and volunteering. This is a significant number in a community of more than 24,000. Residents.
- Sports organizations believe that the sports facilities in Warrington Township are about the best around and that the Township is working on improvements continuously. Existing problematic field conditions can be resolved through continued input and collaboration with township officials. This includes

conditions such as handicapped access, field hockey field improvements, design features such as the football calling tower, and the addition of shade.

- Sports organizations have supported capital improvements such as lighting and irrigation and provide up to \$100,000 annually in their own field maintenance efforts in addition to volunteer service. The organizations would like to explore pooling their resources for liability insurance to try to save costs. Some organizations such as lacrosse cannot practice in the evening due to lack of lighting but the football organization is willing to share field time with lacrosse.

Organized Sports

Volunteer sports leagues operating in Warrington Township include the following:

- Warrington American Legion Baseball serves baseball players ages 13 through 18.
- Warrington Youth Baseball is Cal Ripken based baseball for players ages four through 12 for instructional, recreational, and travel play.
- Warrington Warwick Boys Basketball Association is a league for boys in grades three through eight that operates with a winter and a summer program.
- Warrington Soccer Club is a youth soccer club with both intramural and travel soccer programs for boys and girls between the ages of four – 19 years. The club currently has approximately 2,475 children in spring and fall programs drawing predominantly from the Central Bucks communities of Warrington, Doylestown, Jamison, Warwick, Chalfont, and New Britain.
- Warrington-Warwick Girls Basketball provides league play, clinics, tournaments, summer camps, intermural

- and travel play for girls in grades three through eight. The league provides a winter and a summer program.
- Warrington Warwick Field Hockey (WWAA) serves girls in grades one through nine. The league, with 200 participants, emphasizes the importance of good sportsmanship, fair play, skill development and hard work. This is a developmental league with a focus on the NFHCA recommended fundamental skills.
 - Warrington Warriors Football and Cheerleading offer league play and cheerleading for players in grades four through eight. About 150 girls participate in cheerleading and 250 boys in football. The trend has been decreases in football and cheerleading.
 - Warriors Lacrosse is a relatively new and growing league serving about 200 youth from kindergarten through grade eight.
 - Warrington Warwick Softball Organization (WWSO) offers opportunities for girls ages five to 17 with about 540 participating. The Organization is Little League affiliated and consists of five divisions.

How the Partnerships Work

Warrington Township has formed partnerships with commercial recreation, fitness, arts and sports organizations to provide organized programs for township residents. Warrington Township advertises these opportunities in **The Link** and conducts online registration for some programs and facilities for others.

Cornerstone Clubs

Cornerstone Clubs provides community recreation programs in the Wellness Center on Route 611. Programs include:

- Workshops – Weight loss, T'ai Chi, Meditation
- Small Group Training – Arthritis Aquatic Exercise, Small Group Training for Seniors. TRX, Yoga, Pilates Mat, Chair Fit, Zumba, Spinning
- Aquatics – Aqua Toning, Ai Chi, Hydro Fusion
- Virtual Cycling

Buckaroos Square Dancing Club of Warrington

The Buckaroos provide square dancing classes. The Central Bucks School District offers Titus Elementary School as the site for the classes.

Zen Fitness

Zen Fitness is a private organization that is offers a boot camp in Warrington at Action Karate.

Romp n' Roll

Warrington Township partners with Romp n' Roll in Willow Grove to provide discounted class passes for gym, art, and music programs for parents and children.

Pop/Broadway Camp

Absolute Music School in Hatboro offers a musical camp for children and youth ages seven to 17.

Smart Soccer Camp

This four-day camp is offered to children and youth ages four through 14 in Upper Nike Park in the summer.

Increasing Public Awareness

The importance of increasing public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities cannot be overstated. The lack of knowledge about parks, recreation programs, services and events is cited by the public as a major deterrent to people participating in recreation programs or using public recreation facilities. The Township uses **The Link**, the township website and customer service to promote recreation programs and the public parks and recreation facilities.

Organized Scheduled Programs

The Township provides organized scheduled programs through two means: part time staff with support from the administrative and management staff (everybody pitches in!) and the EAC with its volunteers. There is no full-time recreation programming staff. Township recreation programs include the following:

Recreation Programs and Events

Aquatics

Mary Barness Tennis and Swim Club is the site of a full range of summer activities. These include swim lessons, fitness programs, and special events. The pool is the home to a competitive swim team and swim meets throughout the summer.

Special Events

- **Warrington Community Day** is Warrington's showcase event. Entertainment, food, music and fun in a park are the hallmarks of the day. Twenty-six local businesses sponsored the event in 2017. Volunteers included scout troops, the high school honor society, CB Cares, many citizens, the Board of Supervisors, and township boards, committees, and employees.
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Fishing Derby
- Family Walk
- Warrington Cares Triathlon/Duathlon
- National Trails Day
- Memorial Day Ceremony

Environmental Advisory Council

The Warrington Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is an active, engaged, and committed organization. The EAC "walks the talk" with a full-slate of nature-based programs that build stewardship, protect the environment, and provides volunteer services that save Warrington Township government tens of thousands of dollars every year. The EAC has built strong community partnerships with the Central Bucks School District and several dozen local businesses who support the EAC's important work.

Community Service Day

The EAC plans, organizes, and implements Community Service Day to celebrate Earth Day with nearly 200 volunteers tasked with a variety of activities. These include naturalization of retention basins; weeding and mulching in township parks; butterfly garden plantings; rain garden making; litter pick-up and trash removal in public open spaces and parks; and construction of bat and owl houses and rain barrels.

The EAC has worked on the enhancement of trails in partnership with a private non-profit organization *Woods of Plenty* and student volunteers to plant nut and berry plantings to create an edible forest. The EAC also coordinated Eagle Scout projects. These are significant projects that include environmental improvements such as removal of invasive species, tree plantings, removal of harmful elements in parks such as tree fencing. The EAC regularly writes informative articles on what citizens can do to reduce pollution and provides consultations with citizens when they have questions related to environment and stewardship.

Return on Environment 2017

The EAC commissioned Keystone Conservation to undertake the study, **Return on Environment**. This is a landmark study for the township to guide future actions, decision-making, and the allocation of resources in support of the conservation of the environment in Warrington. Return on Environment makes ten recommendations for putting the study to work in Warrington with actions such as calculating the financial return on environmental practices, protecting more open space, education and outreach to create the next generations of land stewards, and technical assistance for businesses and citizens.

A Green Infrastructure Approach to Leveraging Local Priorities in Warrington Township

The University of Maryland performed this study on Warrington Township's open spaces to determine how

approaching it as green infrastructure could benefit the Township both environmentally and economically. The study identified three opportunities for Warrington: leveraging additional funding opportunities, developing strategic partnerships, and coordinating open space decision-making with other community priorities through the integration of green infrastructure practices

Warrington Cares Employee Charity (WCEC)

This purpose of the Warrington Cares Employee Charity is to raise funds for families in need, provide scholarships to local students, and contribute to employee involved charities. The Charity engages the public in fundraising through community recreational events such as the Warrington Cares Sprint Triathlon and Warrington Community Day.

Central Bucks School District

The Central Bucks School District permits the public recreational use of its facilities during non-school hours. The principals of each school coordinate public use of school facilities for their own school. The School District has a policy that covers fees and charges for facility use. The District offers a Gold Card Club Membership for seniors residing in the school district. Gold Card members can attend CB home athletic events, musical concerts, and theater performances free of charge.

Other Community Recreation Providers

- Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops
- Central Bucks School programs, sports, and events
- Fairways Golf Club
- Regal Warrington Crossing Theater
- Martial Arts
- Dance Studios
- Faith based programs such as the Catholic Youth Organization at St. Robert's.

Challenges

When asked why people do not participate in recreation programs and opportunities, they said that they do not know about programs, that there are not enough programs, and that they go elsewhere to other communities that provide programs. The major issue was the lack of programs for children except for organized sports and the programs in Mary Barness Swim Club.

Staffing

Although Warrington Township has a population of more than 24,000, 17 parks, and 700 acres of open space and park land, there is no parks and recreation department to undertake program planning, management and implementation. One dedicated individual who performs multiple job functions is responsible for programs, services and customer service. Township management and administrative staff also provide

support for programs especially for the pool at Mary Barness Park, Warrington Community Day.

Program Planning, Management, Evaluation and Reporting

There is no formal process in place to plan, direct, coordinate and evaluate public recreation services. It's not possible to assess the level of service in terms of meeting community needs or gaps in service.

Services for Children, Youth, and Families

While community sports serve a significant number of children and youth and a number of special event type program serve children and youth, the Township has no organized programs for children and youth. The Township has 7,505 residents under the age of 18. Four out of five households are family households and nearly half of them have children under the age of 18. Warrington is clearly a strong family based community with 78 percent of households being family households compared with 65 percent in Pennsylvania. About 41 percent have children under 18 living in the household compared with only 26 percent statewide.

“Over 55” Communities

The Township has several communities for people over the age of 55. While services abound in these communities for the residents, the residents are interested in using township parks for special events, connecting with nature and for walking. The Township provides extensive opportunities for the residents of these communities to engage in fitness activities year-round through its partnership with the Cornerstone Clubs.

Revenue Generation

Recreation programs and services help to generate revenue. Fees, charges, sponsorships, and partnerships help to offset township tax support. Typically, generating 35 percent of the budget from program fees and charges is easily accomplished with quality programs. This can go up as high as 85 percent with the right combination of programs, services, and facilities.

Opportunities

Decision-Point

Warrington Township is at a critical decision-point in parks and recreation in determining its future direction in recreation programming. The Township can continue as is with part-time staff focusing on facilitating activities provided by others, limited special events, and the provision of recreation facilities for citizens to use as they wish. If the Township wishes to provide a full-slate of parks and recreation services, then the establishment of a parks and recreation department with program specialists would be in order.

Continuing Support

Continuing the support of community and township based organizations is important. This includes particularly the community sports, the EAC, and the partnership with Cornerstone Clubs

The Arts: Tapping Local Residents

Interviews found that people in the community have unique skills and interests that the Township could tap to enhance community parks and recreation opportunities. Bucks County is known as an art center. Tapping into this cultural resource would enable the Township to partner with the arts community to undertake public art based projects including public art in the parks, one more way to create a sense of community here.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a supportive match for the current and future aspirations of Warrington Township's vision for a premier parks and recreation system.

1. Use the following guidelines in program planning based upon the opportunities and strengths of existing township services:

- a. Establish *creating, sustaining and enhancing partnerships with other community recreation providers* as the key guiding principle for whatever decisions are made about the future of recreation programming.

To advance program partnerships for youth in response to public interest, consider adding a youth advisory council that could include middle and high school students. Place this council under the Park and Recreation Board designating a board member as the liaison. This could be coordinated with the EAC but function on the three core areas recommended below.

- b. Adopt three core program areas for serving children and youth, families, adults and active aging seniors:
 - Nature
 - Health and Fitness, and
 - Building a Sense of Community. This would include special events such as Warrington Community Days, movies in the parks, holiday events like tree lighting and egg hunts. Building a Sense of Community must include programs for children as the children are the

future of the community and they have important youth development needs that can be met through public recreation.

Since the Township cannot provide an unlimited range of services and programs to everyone, focusing on recreational categories of importance to the community is critical.

- c. Continue to operate in full recognition that recreation programs are more than organized schedule programs. Retain the key areas of township programming to include the provision of facilities for people to use on their own; facilitating recreation offered by other community based recreation providers; advertising and promoting recreation opportunities to increase public awareness about them; and the direct provisions of organized scheduled programs.

2. Build upon the township's informative and easy-to-use website for parks and recreation.

- a. Use photos and testimonials demonstrating excellent recreation opportunities and satisfaction of park visitors.
- b. Provide contacts for organized sports or links to their websites.

3. Create a brand and an identify for Warrington Township's parks and recreation programs and services.

- a. Consider building upon the township's tag line of "Gateway to Bucks County" by using the term "Gateway to...". Example could be "Gateway to Family Fun"; "Gateway to Your Health and Fitness" and so on.
- b. Brand Warrington Township's signature seasonal special events such as Community Day and the Tree Lighting making giving them high visibility in the community.

4. In conjunction with the discussion about establishing a full-service parks and recreation department, determine the township's future direction in programming with the following options:

- a. Continue to recreation programming as largely a facilitated process with programs provided by community based organizations and major special events coordinated and lead by the Township.
- b. Build upon the existing programs and recreation coordinator staffing to establish a full-service recreation program that serves children, families, adults, active aging adults, and special needs.

Strategy 5

Operate with excellence and financial sustainability to garner widespread public support for parks, recreation, and open space

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a premier parks and recreation system with opportunities for people who live, work, and visit here to connect with nature, be healthy, enjoy our community, and experience our remarkable history, culture, and heritage as the Gateway to Bucks County. To ensure that we continue to manage and finance our parks, recreation, and open space system efficiently and effectively, we will integrate professional planning and design, acquisition, facility development, maintenance, and programming fully in a systematic and considered manner. By optimizing design, maintenance, and investment, we will ensure that our parks and recreation facilities are safe, clean, and beautiful and that our natural resources and open space are conserved. Our parks will be places where people of all ages and abilities will want to spend many hours of time. Our residents will point to Warrington Township's parks, recreation and open space with pride and joy.

Why We Care

With 700 acres of municipal parkland and open spaces in 17 parks including a 250-acre nature reserve, state of the art ballfields, a destination playground being developed, a tennis and swim club, neighborhood parks that are close-to-home, beautiful places to connect with nature, and many future miles of trails and additional recreation facilities, we have an important legacy to protect and build upon. Our citizens have told us that they highly value our parks, recreation facilities, and open space. Our community partnerships with sports leagues, conservationists, service organizations, local businesses, the fitness industry, and our schools enable our residents to participate in recreation programs that keep them active, healthy, and enjoying time together. We need to ensure that we are proud and skilled stewards of managing this public trust. Every community deserves great parks – and ours will be the best!

Analysis and Findings

Strengths

Municipal Support

Warrington Township's elected and appointed officials have been managing parks, recreation, and open space in an effective, efficient and dedicated manner. The management team and staff pull together with volunteers from township boards, commissions, and committees to advance conservation goals, build stewardship of natural areas, create a sense of community through special events, and support the efforts of other recreation providers for important recreation opportunities for the public.

Significant Volunteerism

While other municipalities struggle to get a minimum number of people to serve on their Park and Recreation Board, Warrington Township has six such groups serving parks and recreation related interests: Bike & Hike Committee, Park and Recreation Board, Environmental Advisory Council, Planning Commission, Historic Commission, and the Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force.

Parks: Safe, Clean and Ready to Use

The Park Maintenance division of Public Works keeps parks safe, clean, and functional. This is a challenge with aging and outdated facilities, park improvements happening largely in response to emerging opportunities and pressing needs, and increasing demands for their services. Usually these improvements do not consider maintenance impacts. The staff is certified in pesticides and playground safety inspections. The

Township has maintenance agreements with sports organizations on the care of ballfields specifying roles and responsibilities of the groups and the Township. Progressive maintenance strategies include these agreements and the contracting out of routine maintenance tasks such as mowing. The Township is supportive of getting the maintenance crews the equipment they need to take care of the parks.

The Township has created an innovative program of park attendants to provide a presence in the parks. The two seasonal part-time people undertake tasks to keep the parks as the Township want them to be. Their presence helps to enhance public perception that the Township cares about the parks and that the parks are safe and clean because they are being cared for in a highly visible way.

Financing: Solid and Creative

The parks and recreation budget is about six percent of the township's operating budget which is higher than the PA DCNR recommendation of a minimum of five percent. The per capita investment of \$32.51 is lower than the statewide average and the national average of \$76. This disparity in benchmarks shows that the Township operates with an austere budget and a high degree of accountability.

Service Delivery on a Shoestring

With one part-time Recreation Coordinator, the Township provides recreation programs and services that generate \$265,275 in revenues helping to offset 34 percent of the operating cost of parks and recreation. By focusing on facilitating recreation with community based organizations, promoting these activities and providing organizational support through

on line registrations and customer service, the Recreation Coordinator notably leverages her time and effort greatly.

Challenges

Staffing

There is no parks and recreation department to focus on planning, directing, organizing and evaluating parks, recreation and open space functions. A director spends about 50 percent or more of his/her time doing community outreach to build partnerships, sponsorships, grant seeking and writing, and providing programs and services. Marshalling forces to support grants is an area where the Township lacks capacity at present.

With limited staff, there is no central organization/department for professional park planning, trail planning, policy development and implementation, negotiating requests for public services and park improvements, program development, and generating outside support for parks and recreation.

Park maintenance is largely focused on mowing, trimming, and litter pick up and removal. The crews undertake special projects for park improvements when possible.

Due to limited staff, there are no programs for children other than organized sports and the summer swimming program at Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club. The Township has more than 7,000 children and youth. Township residents seek such programs in other communities including Doylestown, Warwick, and Horsham. With facilities such as Kids Mountain coming up, program staff will be important.

Budget

While the Township commits significant funding for parks and recreation, additional funds will be needed to maintain facilities like Kids Mountain and improvements in other parks resulting from master park planning. The management of natural resources and stewardship of natural resources is outside of the capacity of the current staffing levels. Having a parks and recreation department in place enables a municipality to build support for such initiatives through planning, partnership building, programming and grants.

Township residents are supportive of parks, recreation preservation of open space, scenic beauty and natural resources. They voted for an open space bond in 2013. The Township could consider subsequent bond issues to raise money to leverage grants.

The budget has undergone major improvements under the watchful eye of the Chief Financial Officer. In continuing the transparency and cost generation in formation, costs centers should be set up for the parks, facilities and tasks. Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club should be set up as an enterprise account.

Maintenance

A formal maintenance management plan is needed in order to provide the Township with information on the real costs of taking care of parks, recreation facilities, trails, open space, natural resources, and support of recreation events and programs. Record keeping regarding costs and tasks performed is essential for optimal allocation of resources and limiting exposure to liability. The best way to avoid exposure to liability and law suits is having a formal written maintenance management plan in place.

Policies and Ordinances

The Township operates parks and recreation facilities with limited policies that cover the basic operations such as field scheduling and reservations of township facilities. Certain policies would be important to consider including naming of parks and recreation facilities and a policy on donations and gifts, including the development of township public recreation facilities by community based organizations.

Warrington Township should create and adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance. This ordinance would include provisions for a developer to offer a fee-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland. The ordinance would provide recommendations for this fee which should be based upon market value of the land. The adoption of this **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** conforms with the Municipalities Planning Code that requires the establishment of parkland standards. In Warrington Township, that standard is 24 acres per 1,000 residents based upon the current amount of parkland of .

Opportunities

Much research has been conducted on the operation of excellent parks and recreation systems nationwide. Since Warrington Township has been evolving its parks and recreation management system in recent years, this research provides a good model for Warrington Township to emulate in organizing, managing, and supporting the public parks, recreation and open space system.

Factors in Excellent Park Systems

There is a great deal of interest in moving Warrington Township's promising parks, recreation, and open space system from good to excellent. Building upon the innovation and commitment that the elected and appointed officials have already demonstrated in parks, recreation and conservation, the Township can follow the path to achieving the characteristics that define an excellent park system. Research conducted by the Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Park Association found that there are nine factors that define excellence in public park systems¹². They include the following:

1. **The park must rank high on the political agenda to get funded.** Elected officials set policy and invest resources that are vital in establishing public parks and recreation as an essential public service.
2. **A clear expression of purpose.** The municipality must clearly set forth in writing the purpose of the parks, recreation, and open space system. It will serve as a mandate for the Township in defining its parks, recreation, and

The Warrington Township Board of Supervisors is strongly committed to parks, recreation and open space..

This plan defines the purpose of Warrington Township's parks, recreation and open space system.

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.

open space mission and core services. Having a strong concept of mission and core services can stave off pressures to pick up inappropriate tasks or to drop projects or activities and instead work toward common goals that will enable Warrington Township to achieve its vision.

3. **Ongoing planning and community involvement.**

Community involvement is the foundation of public parks, recreation, and open space.

To be successful, a park system needs a thoughtful orchestrated planning process for all major improvements and ongoing operations. A plan is more than an intention. It is a document that is built upon a process,

Public engagement was the foundation of this plan and will continue through plan implementation.

demonstrating specific actions, professional expertise, research, and a clear final outcome with specific factors defined. It should be rooted in public participation. Every plan should spell out the implications for the long-term management, maintenance and operation of the improvement including staff and financial support including alternative methods of support to traditional township resources. Good planning builds public support and ensures the likelihood that the Township can successfully afford to sustain projects that are undertaken in the future.

4. **Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the systems' goals.**

While the Warrington

This plan recommends an additional 11 - 100 acres of parkland, the development of a formal maintenance system, and creating a management impact statement for all major park projects in order to plan for the resources to sustain

Township park and recreation system is still developing and major accomplishments are in place, additional land and facilities connected by a network of safe places to walk and bicycle are needed to serve present and future generations. Every park and recreation system should have a formalized plan to manage all of its resources sustainably for proper staffing and equipment levels. This requires the tracking of data about workload, costs of tasks and facilities, program participation and trends, and so forth. This information should be written and published in an annual report so that elected and appointed officials, the Township Manager, and staff can make informed decisions and allocate resources and help citizens to understand the limits and allocation of public funding and staffing. Numbers, documentation and information on a timely basis are essential for effective and efficient management. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

5. **Equitable Access.** An excellent park and recreation system is accessible to all residents regardless of place of residence, physical ability or financial circumstances.

Increasing barrier-free accessibility in the parks will be an important challenge in meeting ADA requirements.

Assuring opportunities for all residents will be important when considering any programs or activities.

Planning for barrier free park design will be a part of all park improvements in the future.

6. **User satisfaction.** By definition, an excellent park system is well used. High park and recreation facility use validates that the system is meeting people's needs. While it is not possible to have exact counts of all park visitation, selective counts of specific facilities over time can provide Warrington Township with some meaningful data about facility use. This will help Warrington Township management to know their customers and understand and anticipate their needs to plan for effective public service.

7. **Safety from Physical Hazards and Crime.** The Township works toward eliminating and preventing hazardous conditions in township parks.

Warrington Township is safe. The Township has created a park attendants program to enhance park safety. The more parks are used, the safer they are.

8. **Benefits for the Municipality Beyond the Borders of the Parks.** The value of Warrington Township's parks and recreation system extends 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 retain businesses and residents, reduce the isolation of the elderly, and improve learning opportunities for

Real estate advertisements promote proximity to parks and trails.

people of all ages through experience in the great outdoors. Documenting and collecting information about the benefits of the Warrington Township park and recreation system would strengthen the importance of parks and recreation as an essential public service in which financial support is an investment rather than a cost.

9. **Collaboration.** Since Warrington Township government operates with a lean budget and small staff, partnerships with other public, community-based, and private sector organizations are vital to the successful establishment and operation of the parks, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Collaboration with community based organizations have led to the development and improvement of township parks and recreation facilities and programs that would have not been possible with township resources alone.

Recommendations

1. **Undertake a discussion and make a decision about establishing a full-service parks and recreation.**
 - a. Use this plan as a springboard for the discussion.
 - b. Delegate the responsibility for leading this discussion with a core committee of representatives of the Park and Recreation Board, EAC, Trails Committee, Open

Space Committee, the Township Manager, and a liaison from the Board of Supervisors.

- c. Expand into the use of social media. Consider getting a student intern for this purpose.
 - d. Include a discussion on adding park planning as an official township function that is the designated responsibility of a professional with expertise and experience in park planning for the establishment of great public spaces. This could be within a full-service department or contracted out on a project basis or as an ongoing consultant.
 - e. Consider the goals and outcomes expected in the provision of recreation programs and services for the designated age groups. Include in this discussion consideration of coordinating the diverse interests of the community based organizations and municipal boards and committees in working toward the common vision of this adopted parks and recreation plan.
 - f. Base the discussions in conjunction with considering a revenue policy that would include continued free general use of parks, and fees and charges for programs, services and special use facilities in township parks. The concept would be to use fees and charges to support programs that benefit participants directly and the community in some way while directing township tax dollars toward parks and facilities that benefit the community at large.
 - g. Develop a work plan, schedule, roles, responsibilities, and ground rules for decision-making for this pivotal discussion.
- 2. Continue to inform and engage the Board of Supervisors in making parks, recreation and open space a township priority.**
- a. Report to the Board of Supervisors on a regular basis and engage them in the policy and decision-making aspects of parks, recreation, and open space.
 - b. Provide the Board with testimonials from the public on the benefits of parks, recreation and open space.
 - c. Schedule an annual parks, recreation, and open space tour of Warrington Township by the Board of Supervisors and appointed boards including the Park and Recreation Board, EAC, Open Space and Land Preservation Committee, and the Bike & Hike Committee.
 - d. Provide an annual report on the accomplishments opportunities, and challenges. This could be a responsibility of the Park & Recreation Board with support from the Recreation Coordinator until a Director is hired.
- 3. Continue to undertake professional planning of the parks, recreation and open space system.**
- a. Include public participation in all major parks, recreation, and open space projects with a value of more than \$10,000.

- b. Retain professional landscape architects, parks and recreation planners, and engineers with expertise in the creation of great public spaces, historic preservation and environmental conservation for respective park and trail master plans.
- c. Include management, maintenance, financing, programing, and partnership planning for all projects more than \$10,000.
- d. Use planning projections and workload cost tracking to determine when additional staff would be needed, whether full time, part time, or seasonal, and how to support their cost.
- e. For any new project or program, use the Management Impact Statement shown on the following page as the township's planning tool to assess moving forward with new projects and programs that have a value of more than \$10,000. Consideration should be given to delaying the project until resources are available and not abandoning it if it is a worthy project or program.

- 4. **Use the Factors of Excellent Park Systems as Warrington Township's model for management and operations.**
- 5. **Develop a formal park maintenance management plan.**
 - a. Start with workload cost tracking of major tasks such as mowing and litter pickup/trash removal.
 - b. Explore park maintenance software to track work in real time through the use of electronic tablets.
 - c. Analyze this information and provide it to elected and appointed officials for their use in decision-making, staffing, policy and the allocation of resources.
- 6. **Involve the maintenance staff in planning and designing new parks and major park improvements.**
- 7. **For any major park improvement, development or acquisition, use the Maintenance Impact Statement shown in Figure 1 to plan for maintaining and supporting the facility including staffing, budget, and alternative means of support.**

The single most important thing that a township can do to prevent or win lawsuits is to have an effective maintenance management system in place.

FIGURE 1. MANAGEMENT IMPACT STATEMENT**PURPOSE**

1. To assess the impact of a proposed project or program in terms of capital and operating costs, including capital cost, human resources required for operations, maintenance costs including labor, equipment, materials, supplies and cyclic repair, and the effect of on other parks and recreation facilities and services.
2. To use this information to make an informed decision about moving ahead with the proposed project.

METHOD**Determine:**

1. Capital cost of proposed project.
2. Operating costs for proposed project or program. Include:
 - a. Number of staff hours required
 - b. Cost of staff hours in salary, wages, benefits and payroll taxes.
 - c. Cost of materials and supplies.
 - d. Utility costs.
 - e. Miscellaneous costs.
3. Impact on other facilities and programs should the proposed project be undertaken.
 - a. Will the project/program require funds needed for other facilities or services?

- b. Will the project/program require staff time needed for other facilities or services?
- c. How will the project impact the quality of services that Warrington Township has set as a goal?

4. Revenue sources from Township and other means of support
 - a. Township funds – additional appropriation
 - b. Township funds – within current budget
 - c. Grants
 - d. Gifts or donations
 - e. Non-tax funds to be generated for the project/program through fees, charges, sponsorships, partnerships, and/or other means.
 - f. Will the partner(s) make a commitment to support the project or program for a defined time period? Will they support the project over its life expectancy?

DECISION-MAKING

Based upon the above information, does Warrington Township have the resources from any source (public, private or combination of sources) to move ahead with this project or program?

8. Provide sufficient financial resources for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of the parks, recreation and open space system. labor, materials, supplies, utilities, and cyclic repairs to ensure that parks, recreation and open space are mainlined in a safe, clean and ready to use condition.

- a. For capital funding, address the need for another bond issue for parks, recreation, and open space.
- b. For the operating budget, use a mix of public and private resources to support parks, recreation and open space. This includes taxes, fees-in-lieu of parkland dedication, grants, gifts, donations, fees and charges, rentals, partnerships and sponsorships
 - i. Phase in additional municipal support of parks and recreation over time as additional parks and recreation facilities are developed and improved.
 - ii. Establish cost centers for parks, tasks and recreation facilities. use this information for planning, budgeting staffing, and policy formulation.
 - iii. Establish Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club as an Enterprise Fund.

9. Develop policies to support management and operations as well as to advance good will with the community and partners.

- a. Establish a policy on the naming of parks, recreation facilities, trails, and any other public property.
- b. Establish a policy on gifts and donations.
- c. Develop an annual work program as shown in Figure 2. Schedule a few important items to undertake within the framework of carrying our daily responsibilities. It is better to do fewer things of high quality. Make this a collaborative effort of township management nd staff along with the Park and Recreation Board. Involve the Bike & Hike Committee, the EAC and the Open Space & Land Preservation Committee to assure a holistic approach to an annual work program for parks, recreation, and open space every year. Do this before budget discussions.

**Figure 2. Warrington Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space
2018 ANNUAL Work Program**

Key Action Objectives	Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed	Deliverable /Metric

Implementation Plan

Pragmatic steps to turn vision into reality.

Moving from Planning Into Action

Warrington Township is nearly fully developed. Time is of the essence to secure the vision that the citizens want: a parks, recreation, open space, and trail system that help to shape the character of our community. Fortunately, Warrington Township has a successful track record of seeking out opportunities and securing them with a bias toward action.

Given the pressure for development and limited time left to achieve the vision of a green and connected community, the implementation plan needs to be strategic and focused with an emphasis on what can be accomplished in the near term. The implementation plan must:

1. Recognize that while there are many important needs, some actions, such as land conservation, are time sensitive given development pressure. Some tasks are urgent and important. Some are important and not urgent, such as park upgrades, because the Township has already secured their protection and further work or improvements can be deferred.

Some projects are easily undertaken while others are broad and sweeping requiring a major investment of time, expertise, funding, and partnerships.

2. Be based upon an organizational framework to propel the implementation of high priority actions. Focusing on a limited number of high priority actions with a , and trails in a structure that could help the Township harness the many ongoing efforts to shepherd them toward a common vision, taking parks and recreation from good to great.

Implementation Strategy

Our implementation strategies are consistent protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our residents as well as:

- Enhancing Warrington Township's overall community character and our built environment,
- Protecting natural and historic features,
- Providing recreation opportunities for active healthy living, connecting people to nature, and creating a sense of community here; and
- Improving the quality of life that we all enjoy.

Priorities

The Action Plan is divided into three priorities as follows:

High Priority 1: Projects that are of the highest priority due to urgency, time sensitivity, and potential to lose opportunities due to development pressure that would change the character of the community forever and have a high likelihood of successful accomplishment. They are also focused on building capacity and organizing for plan implementation to achieve the vision established in this **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**.

Medium Priority 2: Projects that are important to do but not urgent. They could be successfully undertaken when resources are available later and their delay would not impact Warrington Township negatively over the long term. If circumstances change and funds become available, they could move to High Priority.

Low Priority 3: Projects that would be beneficial and useful to Warrington Township but are not urgent and do not rise to the importance of projects identified as high and medium priorities.

Organizing Strategies

The priorities are organized around the themes of this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan as follows:

Strategy 1

Protect our natural areas and resources that shape our community character.

Strategy 2

Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle.

Strategy 3

Create lively parks that foster a sense of community.

Strategy 4

Advance recreation opportunities for fun, fitness, sense of community, connections to nature, celebration, and personal growth.

Strategy 5

Continue to operate with excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.

The implementation matrix with actions that follows is organized by priorities and includes responsible parties, completion date, and estimated costs and funding sources.

Warrington Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 1

Projects that are of the highest priority due to urgency, time sensitivity, and potential to lose opportunities due to development pressure that would change the character of the community forever and have a high likelihood of successful accomplishment. They are also focused on building capacity and organizing for plan implementation to achieve the vision established in this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Action	Strategy	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
Open Space Protection Complete the Mill Creek Preservation Area addition acquisition	1 – Natural Areas and Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Negotiation with legal team and township management.	PA DCNR Grant of \$1,011,650 matched with county open space grant and township funds.
Establish criteria for evaluating properties worthy of preservation and their priority.	1 – Natural Areas and Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	EAC	Work sessions with task force and council volunteers. Recommendations to Board of Supervisors.	Volunteer and support from township staff.
Update Zoning, Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances for land protection.	1 – Natural Areas and Resources	2018 – 2019	Planning Commission	Township Manager	Retain specialists in land conservation ordinance writing. Recommendations to Board of Supervisors.	Legal fees. Consulting fees for conservation specialists. Negotiate with township's planning consultant contract.
Identify areas in the parks that could help the Township to meet its MS4 requirements for stormwater management	1 – Natural Areas and Resources 5 - Operational Excellence	2018 – 2019	EAC	Park & Recreation Board	Task the EAC with this as a work item in 2018.	Potential environmental engineering fees for consulting services.

Open Space Protection Convert the pond at Twin Oaks to a wetland	1 – Natural Areas and Resources	2018-2019	Environmental Advisory Council	Township Manager	Maintain public access to the area. Consultants.	DCNR funds - \$300K
Develop a comprehensive management plan for all Township owned and managed open space parcels	1 – Natural Areas and Resources & 3 – Provide Lively Parks	2019 -	Environmental Advisory Council	OSLPTF	Retain consultants specializing in stewardship. Management should be consistent with objectives highlighted in this plan.	Township funds, DCNR?
Trails Priority 1 Set forth a goal to create a connected township-wide system of safe places to walk and bicycle.	2 – Connect Our Community with Safe Places to Walk and Bicycle	2018 on	Bike & Hike Committee	Park & Recreation Board Planning Commission Zoning Officer	Use land development process to get linkages	Costs to be determined by trail or sidewalk costs.
Use land development process to get linkages for trail connections	2 – Connect Our Community with Safe Places to Walk and Bicycle	2018 on	Planning Commission	Bike & Hike Committee Zoning Officer	Negotiation process	Trail easements should be part of development. Trails should be constructed by develop prior to the sale of homes.
Finalize PECO Powerline Trail along Street Road to Phillips Avenue	2 – Connect Our Community with Safe Places to Walk and Bicycle	2018	Bike & Hike Committee	Zoning Officer	Negotiation with legal team and township management.	PA DCNR Grant of \$1 million matched with county open space grant and township funds.
Complete work on Route 202 Bradford Dam Connector and trail improvements in John Paul/Twin Oaks/Upper Nike.	2 – Connect Our Community with Safe Places to Walk and Bicycle	2018	Bike & Hike Committee	Zoning Officer	Follow plan recommendations and adjust accordingly.	Volunteer and support from township staff. Eagle scout projects where possible.

Trails Priority 1 Continued						
Conduct feasibility study for multi-use trail along Pickertown Road	2 – Connect Our Community with Safe Places to Walk & Bicycle and 5 Operational Excellence	2018 - 2019	Bike & Hike Committee	Zoning Officer	Retain consultant with expertise in trail planning and safety in road crossings.	\$12,500 PA DCNR grant matched by Warrington Township.
Parks Priority 1						
Carry out Phase 1 of Kids Mountain	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Board of Supervisors Lions Club involvement	Contract with PA DCNR for the grant. Secure and assist the Lions Club with their fundraising grant. Contract with Viridian Studios to develop plans & specs for construction.	\$250,000 DCNR Grant. \$150,000 Lions Club \$75,000 Warrington Township plus in-kind services \$25,000+ and donation of fill.
Work toward funding and development for Phase 2 of Kids Mountain	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 – grant application 2019 – undertake Phase 2 pending funding	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager	Grant writer for DCED application. Orchestrate support and advocate.	\$250,000 DCED grant maximum. 15% match hopefully with Lions Club
Adopt a parkland standard of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Board of Supervisors	Park & Recreation Board	Adopt in conjunction with the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan	No cost for adopting this standard.
Develop and adopt a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	20018 - 2019	Board of Supervisors	Park & Recreation Board Planning Commission Twp Mngr.	Retain a registered planning consultant to develop the ordinance. Coordinate with township solicitor.	\$10,000 - \$12,000 estimate for ordinance and legal fees
Establish Pickle Ball Courts at Mary Barness Swim Club	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2019	Park & Recreation Board	Park Maintenance Staff	Stripe some tennis courts for use as pickle ball. Partner with citizens who have been advocating for pickle ball to organize pickle ball leagues, instruction and play.	Labor and materials. Use pickle ball court stencil. May be possible to borrow one or cost share with adjoining municipality.

Parks Priority 1						
General park improvements	3 – Provide Lively Parks & 5 – Operational Excellence	2019	Park Maintenance Staff	Park & Recreation Board EAC Township Manager	Develop an annual work plan for park improvements. Costs would largely be staff time. .	Volunteer and staff time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove unnecessary fencing, especially at King Park 			"Staff	Staff	Staff Time	Staff time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key areas for environmental stewardship and naturalization 			EAC	Park & Recreation Board		Staff time and budget for materials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add shade, especially in areas for spectators and general visitors 			Park & Recreation Board & EAC		Develop a shade tree planting program	Seek grant funding and use trees from land development process.
PRIORITY 1 Recreation Opportunities						
Continue to facilitate recreation programs offered by community based organizations	4 – Advance recreation opportunities & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Park & Recreation Board	Recreation Coordinator	Facilitate programs, support registration and promote opportunities on website and the Link.	For Community Day, \$30,000 in expenditures and \$36,000 in revenues.
Continue to provide Warrington Community Day and other civic celebrations.	4 – Advance recreation opportunities & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Recreation Coordinator	This is a major undertaking that involves staff and volunteers as well as partners.	Volunteer and staff time
Operations						
Undertake a discussion and decision-making process about establishing a full-service parks and recreation department.	5 – Operational Excellence with impacts on all other strategies and plan implementation.	2018 - 2019	Appoint a Blue-Ribbon Commission composed of elected and appointed officials from township boards related to parks, recreation, open space, trails, land conservation, planning an historic. Set forth a committee purpose with roles, responsibilities, timeline and decision-making process in place. Since whatever decisions are made will have financial impacts, set the time line to coordinate with planning the budget for what is available in the current fiscal year with major recommendations to be discussed in conjunction with the budget process for the following fiscal year.			

OPERATIONS PRIORITY 1 Use professional parks and recreation planning for the design and improvement of public parks and recreation facilities. Delegate the responsibility for shepherding PROS Plan Implementation to the Township Parks and Recreation Director Use the Management Impact Statement for planning major park improvements Develop an annual report for Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Develop and adopt a naming policy for parks, recreation facilities, trails and open spaces.	5 – Operational Excellence and 3 – Lively Parks	2018 – 2019 on	Board of Supervisors	Park & Recreation Board	Ensure that the design team has experience and expertise in place making and the design of great public spaces. For projects that visitors would see, cost more than \$10,000 and last more than seven years.	Rule of thumb is up to 15% of capital costs go to design fees. Every park should have a master plan. The Township should have design guidelines to ensure high quality facilities.
	1 – Natural Areas and Resources & 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 - 2027	Park & Rec Director	Board of Supervisors All other Boards and Committees	In conjunction with Township committee's and Board of supervisors. Annual work plan. If a director is not put in place then responsibility should go to an ad-hoc committee with one representative from each organization.	Volunteer and staff time. Funding for projects to be implemented.
	5 – Operational Excellence and 3 – Lively Parks	2018 on	Park & Recreation Board	Township maintenance staff	Use this to plan for future maintenance requirements, sources of support and budget.	Staff time. Would ensure that park improvements would be adequately maintained and programmed.
	All strategies	Begin in 2018 and carry this forward	Park & Recreation Board	Zoning Officer, Township Manager and Recreation Coordinator	The reports of various related board should be consolidated into one holistic report on parks, recreation and open space.	Volunteer time with assistance from staff. If a full-service parks and recreation department is established, this would be an important function of that department.
	5 – Operational Excellence	2018 - 2019	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager, Parks and Rec. Dir.	Staff and Volunteer Time	Potential legal cost for review of policy.

PRIORITY 1 Operations Continued						
Develop and adopt a policy on gifts and donations.	5 – Operational Excellence	2018 - 2019	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Potential Parks and Recreation Department Director.	Staff and Volunteer Time	Potential legal cost for review of policy.
Provide a training program for natural resource management.	5 – Operational Excellence	2020	EAC	Park & Recreation Board	Priority would be maintenance staff with expansion to volunteers	\$8,000 – 10,000 conservation organization consultant.
FINANCING						
Continue to support parks and recreation with at least five percent of the operating budget.	5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	Work toward investing at least the statewide average of \$35 per capita.	\$20,000 – 30,000
For every project or program with a value of \$10,000 or more, develop a maintenance or management impact statement for the initiative.	5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Park & Recreation Board	Township management and staff	Staff time: maintenance, township manager, finance officer, partners and others as appropriate,	Varies by project and would include mix of township and private sources of support.
Work with the Lions Club on their fundraising project and use this as a model for all future parks and recreation projects that need outside support.	5 – Operational Excellence	2018	Township Manager	To be determined	Township Manager would assign staff to work with Lions on this project with instructions to incorporate the techniques into other future projects.	\$2500 no-match RecTAP grant was secured from PRPS.
Apply for DCNR , PennDOT, DCED grants for designated parks, recreation, trail, land conservation and natural resource projects.	5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Township Manager or future Parks & Recreation	Potential partners e.g. the Lions Club.		Up to \$250,000 DCNR grants require equal match. DCED grants require a 15% match. PennDOT varies.

Warrington Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 2		Medium Priority 2: Projects that are important to do but not urgent. They could be successfully undertaken later successfully and their delay would not impact Warrington Township negatively over the long term.				
Action	Strategy	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
OPEN SPACE PROTECTION						
Using the criteria developed for open space conservation, develop an action plan for preserving properties according to priority determined by the criteria.	1 – Open Space Protection and 5 – Operational Excellence	2019- 2020	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Board of Supervisors Township Manager Zoning Officer	Work sessions of Land Reservation & Open Space Committee and related boards	Volunteer time with staff support
Meet with owners of highest priority properties to discuss conservation	1 – Natural Areas and Resources	2019 – 2020 on	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Partner with residents with a positive relationship with potential property owners,	Organize a strategic outreach and education program with willing landowners.	Consider using the township's planning consultant for key outreach where additional influence of education is required.
For willing landowners, submit grant applications for easements or acquisition.	1 – Natural Areas and Resources	2020 on	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Zoning Officer or potential parks and recreation director	Use a conservancy to complete applications as necessary. Work with PA DCNR, PA DCED, Bucks Co., others	Staff time, consulting from conservancy \$1,000-\$4,000 per application
Develop an action plan for preserving properties according to priority determined by the criteria.	1 – Open Space Protection and 5 – Operational Excellence	2019- 2020	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Board of Supervisors Township Manager Zoning Officer	Work sessions of Land Reservation & Open Space Committee and related boards. Set a schedule for addressing properties.	Volunteer time with staff support

PRIORITY 2 TRAILS						
Establish secondary trails in township open space such as Mill Creek Preservation Area and parcels along Kansas Road/Park Creek	2 – Connect Our Community	2020 on	Bike & Hike Committee Park & Recreation Board	Include park trails in all park master plans	Cost to be determined based upon length, design and construction materials.	
Establish a trail signage system in conjunction with the development of a parks and recreation signage system.	2 – Connect Our Community and 5 – Operational Excellence	2020 on	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force Planning Commission	Board of Supervisors Township Manager Zoning Officer	Adopt a Conservation by Design approach in conjunction with township planning consultant along with a strategic negotiation process with developers well ahead of plan submission.	Staff and volunteer time with fees for planning consultant.
Ensure that trails are safe, clean, attractive, and seamless in appearance throughout the Township.	2 – Connect Our Community and 5 – Operational Excellence	2018 on	Bike & Hike Committee	Volunteers Township maintenance staff	Hold an annual field tour of all township trails. Establish a trail maintenance plan.	Use volunteers for most trail maintenance. Budget as a rule of thumb \$1500 – 2,000 per mile for trails. Add to this for trails with more features such as retaining walls, trail heads.
PARKS						
Develop design guidelines and standards to ensure that parks and recreation facilities are of high quality and evoke Warrington Township.	3 – Lively Parks and 5 – Operational Excellence	2020 on	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Potential parks and recreation department director	in conjunction with master planning of a major project. Likely to be cost effective.	\$20,000 – 30,000

PRIORITY 2 PARKS Continued						
Combine Twin Oaks, Upper Nike, and IPW into one community park.	3 – Lively Parks and 5 – Operational Excellence	2020	Park & Recreation Board	Board of Supervisors	This could be Warrington Township's one true community park by size location, facilities and quality. showcasing this park as the community's "Central Park".	No cost. Board and staff time. Park master planning for the site as a whole would be \$40,000 - \$60,000 that could be funded with a grant.
Work with community groups to establish desired facilities that are not yet in place including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disc Golf • Cricket • Pickle ball • Splash Pad 	2.Lively Parks and 5 Operational Excellence	2019 on	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Zoning Officer & Recreation Coordinator Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area should be mastered planned before any improvements go in.	Disc golf can often be done as a partnership project. Consider same approach with cricket players and pickle ball players. The SP{lash pad costs would vary by size and scope and be designed with a park master plan.
Develop a township signage system for parks, recreation facilities and trails.	2. Lively Parks and 3. Operational Excellence	2021-2022	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager, Zoning Officer & Recreation Coordinator, Potential Parks & Recreation Director	Retain a design professional to create signage system for park entrances, directional, interpretive, regulatory, and facility naming signage.	\$40,000 – 50,000 Cost of signs to be determined and phased in over time. Seek grant(s) from Bucks County Visitors Bureau.

PRIORITY 2 PARKS Continued						
Master Plan Bradford Dam Recreation Area. Retain this park as a nature based park with very limited facilities such as pathways, seating, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, and nature based play areas.	2.Lively Parks and 5 Operational Excellence	2018 on as nature based park. 2020 – 2022 for master plan	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Zoning Officer & Recreation Coordinator Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Retain professional park designed with expertise in the design of natural areas and nature based parks.	Master plan \$50,000 – \$60,000
Develop a Public Use and Stewardship Master Plan for the Mill Creek Preservation Area	1 – Natural Areas and Resources & 3 – Provide Lively Parks	2019-2020	Environmental Advisory Council	Park & Recreation Board Bike & Hike Committee	Consultant specializing in stewardship, access, and trail planning. The plan should have an associated public process.	Master plan. DCNR funding?
Identify areas for stewardship and naturalization in the parks.	2 Lively Parks and 1 Natural Areas and Resources	2020 or sooner as a function of EAC and Park & Recreation Board	Park & Recreation Board and EAC	Zoning Officer and Park Maintenance	Park field visits and work sessions to map out areas on site plans that will be designated as natural and managed accordingly.	Start-up funding for naturalization. Over time maintenance costs will decrease due to reduced mowing.
Evaluate the lease, agreement and terms for the Special Equestrians use of township park and facilities.	3 – Lively Parks 5 – Natural Areas and Resources	2019	Park & Recreation Board with the Township Manager	Township Manager as lead working with Park & Recreation Board	The lease expires in 2029. Major costs are anticipated for cyclic facility repairs. The lease agreement and operations needs evaluation.	Staff time

PRIORITY 2 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES						
Adopt three core areas of recreation programs and services: fitness, nature and building a sense of community.	4 Advance recreation opportunities and 5 Operational Excellence	2019 -2020 on	Park and Recreation Board	Recreation Coordinator, Potential Parks and Recreation Department Director.	Organize programs, events and services into these categories. This will provide a focus in program planning	Staff time After the Township establishes its future direction in recreation programs and services, the Township can move into more detailed program management.
Establish a formal program planning, management, and evaluation system.	4 Advance recreation opportunities and 5 Operational Excellence	2019 -2020 on	Park and Recreation Board	Recreation Coordinator Potential Parks and Recreation Department Director.	A program planning system with program promotion, targeted advertising and evaluation will enable the Township to maximize public service, deliver high quality experiences, and revenues.	Staff time. Programs should generate revenue
PRIORITY 2 OPERATIONS						
Continue outside fundraising efforts. Focus on Kids Mountain.	5 – Operational Excellence	2020 on.	Park and Recreation Board	Partners such as the Lions Club	Select projects that would produce a complete useable component of the park such as the musical area or game grove.	Volunteer time with staff support from Township Manager or Potential Parks and Recreation Department Director.
Develop a formal park maintenance management plan.	5 – Operational Excellence	2020 -2021	Park Maintenance Supervisors	Township Manager	Consider seeking a Peer grant from PA DCNR to undertake the study in partnership with the maintenance staff.	\$11,000 including a \$10,000 grant with a \$1,000 match.
Evaluate swim club operation.	5 – Operational Excellence	2020	Township Manager	Park and Recreation Board	Weigh. in-house operation vs. contracting out.	Staff and volunteer time

Warrington Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

PRIORITY 3	Low Priority 3: Projects that would be beneficial and useful to Warrington Township but are not urgent, for which staff time is limited given the scale of the project, and/or do not rise to the importance of projects identified as high and medium priorities.					
Action	Theme	Completion	Responsibility Primary/Support		Method	Cost/Funding Sources
OPEN SPACE						
Continue to protect properties in Mill Creek Watershed, near parks and publicly owned property, and as trail linkages	1- Natural Areas and Resources	Ongoing through 2017+	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Planning Commission Zoning Officer	Establish an annual work program to monitor opportunities.	Volunteer time. Seek grants to secure properties or easement.
Continue to monitor land planning process and ordinances to ensure that the ordinances are effective.	1- Natural Areas and Resources	Ongoing through 2017+	Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force	Township Manager and maintenance staff	Coordinate with township land development process. Look for opportunities to negotiate for open space protection as part of planning process.	Volunteer time. Coordination with township staff.
Continue to ensure that township open spaces are managed effectively.	1- Natural Areas and Resources	Ongoing through 2017+			Conduct annual field tour of township open spaces with township management and staff. Identify maintenance needs and develop maintenance strategy for that.	Volunteer time. Develop a maintenance impact statement to address open space maintenance needs. Seek support from volunteers like Eagle Scouts, Clean-Up Days etc. to support township efforts.

PRIORITY 3 TRAILS						
Organize the Warrington Township Trail Ambassadors Program	2 – Connect Our Community 5-Operational excellence	2022	Bike & Hike Committee	Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Seek models from trail ambassador programs in place elsewhere.	Volunteer and staff time. \$5,000 seed money for trail ambassador shirts, repair gear, and trail events.
Continue to explore feasibility of utilizing the state-owned mitigation property east of Bradford Dam for trail use	2 – Connect Our Community	2019 on	Bike & Hike Committee	Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Discuss with state contacts	Grants, township funds
Hold trail events.	2 – Connect Our Community 4 – Provide Recreation Opportunities	2018 on	Bike & Hike Committee	Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Establish one signature event for Warrington's trails supplemented by other activities designed to promote trail use.	Volunteer time with sponsorships.
PARKS						
Master Plan John Paul Park	2-Lively Parks 1- Natural Areas and Resources 5-Operational excellence	2025 - 2027	Park & Recreation Board	Zoning Officer Township Manager Potential Parks & Recreation Department	Organize Master Plan Advisory Committee	\$40,000 – 60,000
Special Equestrian Park	2-Lively Parks 1-Natural Areas and Resources 4 – Recreation Opportunities 5-Operational excellence	2027	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager Potential Parks & Recreation Department Director	Prepare for expiration of lease in 2029	Staff time. Potential legal fees related to negotiation of lease.

PRIORITY 3 PARKS CONTINUED						
Organize and implement a Park Friends Program	2-Lively Parks 5-Operational excellence	2025 - 2027	Park & Recreation Board	Potential Parks & Recreation Department	Use Park Friends models from other municipalities	Volunteer time. These work better if township staff manage friends groups, typically parks and recreation department staff.
PRIORITY 3 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES						
Expand programming to include more year-round scheduled programs for people of all ages.	3-Recreation Opportunities	Ongoing but only Priority 3.	Park & Recreation Board	Recreation Coordinator	Emphasis should be on facilitation of recreation opportunities not organized programs. This would change with a parks and recreation department	Programs should generate revenue.
PRIORITY 3 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE						
Use Factors of Excellent Park Systems as the Township's management model for parks & recreation.	5. Operational Excellence	2018 on	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager, Park & Recreation Board	Phase in application of these elements.	Investment with payback expected in benefits to community.
Develop and implement a Revenue Policy	5. Operational Excellence	2022	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager, Potential Parks & Recreation Department	Develop a revenue policy that guides fees, charges, rentals, leases, grants, gifts donations, partnerships and sponsorships.	Volunteer and staff time. Use sample policies from other communities as basis for discussion.
Explore the potential to establish an endowment for maintenance.	5. Operational Excellence	Look for an opportunity of when to do this. Kids' Mountain could present this opportunity.	Park & Recreation Board	Township Manager, Potential Parks & Recreation Department	Work with a donor to establish an endowment to maintain the donated facility.	Revenue producer. Cost would be in staff time in establishing and managing the endowment.

PRIORITY 3 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE CONTINUED						
Explore the idea of establishing a community hub in Warrington Township to serve as a community complex for township, community and recreational services. It would include township administration and safety, indoor recreation, and potentially a library.	All strategies	To be determined and evaluated in conjunction with other significant township support planning projects such as expansion of township building.	Board of Supervisors	Township Manager	To be determined.	To be determined.

Appendix A – Financing, Organization and Management Report

Warrington Township has a budget philosophy rooted in a deep sense of responsibility to the taxpayers and a strong commitment to excellent public service. The Township supports parks, recreation, and open space in accordance with the residents' desire for multi-faceted recreation opportunities, access to nature, and a sense of community.

Warrington Township's economic climate is very strong as evident in the significant commercial and residential development in recent years. In fact, development has been so intense that residents list it as a concern about their community in the public opinion survey for the township's **Comprehensive Plan**.

The purpose of the financing and management assessment is to review how the operational aspects of parks, recreation, and open space are supported, managed, and directed toward meeting community goals and with respect to the township's resources.

Warrington Township by the Numbers

Population: 23,942 in 2015

Population Projection: 28,392 by 2045

Size: 13.8 square miles

Township 2018 Operating Budget: \$13,114,526. Total budget with all Funds and capital projects: \$38, 548, 577.

Parks and Recreation 2018 Operating Budget: \$778,356 in operating funds .

Open Space Capital 2018 Budget: \$2.2 million for Mill Creek Preservation Area addition acquisition.

Parks & Recreation Revenue from Non-Tax Sources: \$265,275 equaling 34% in cost recovery for Parks and Recreation.

P&R ratio of township budget: 5.9%

P&R municipal per capita investment: \$32.51

Financing: Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program

The two major areas to be considered in financing are operations and capital improvements.

Capital Improvement Budget

The *capital improvement budget* is used for improvements that cost more than \$10,000 and last more than five years. Since 2015, the Township invested \$1,291,647 in capital construction in the parks for master planning, Bristol Road demolition, PECO Power Line, trail improvements, and land acquisition. In 2018, the Township has budgeted \$2.2 million to acquire the Mill Creek Preservation Area addition property with \$1 million of this acquisition fee being funded by PA DCNR. This 66-Acre property is at the corner of Pickertown and Lower State Roads.

In 2012, Warrington Township voters approved a \$3 million Open Space Referendum. In 2013, the Township issued \$2.2 million in bonds and the remaining \$800,000 in 2014. In 2016, two projects, the construction of the “PECO Power Line” walking trail and the acquisition of 6.7 acres on Stump Road were completed. Included in the 2017 projections was \$71,000 for the Route 202/Bradford Dam Feasibility Study, \$18,000 for park land acquisition, and a \$13,000 contribution to the Lions Club as a 50 percent match for the Conceptual Master Plan for Twin Oaks Park.

According to the referendum, the Board is authorized to use these funds “...for the purpose of financing the acquisition and/or improvement of interest in real property and to protect and preserve open space including farm land, water resources and watershed, forests, new and existing parks, recreation or conservation sites, natural or

scenic resources, sites of historic, geologic or botanic interests, and open space between communities...” The fund can be used to improve current open space and parks. It can also be used to lease or acquire historic buildings and preserve historic integrity on parcels of land identified that meet the Township’s open space priorities.

Warrington Township identified four priorities for these funds:

1. Finance, acquire, and improve open space by purchasing undeveloped land and farmland;
2. Improve the trail system by acquiring trail linkages and expanding the trail system;
3. Improve infrastructure in existing parks; and
4. Acquire and preserve historic lands.

Real Estate Transfer Tax

The Township invests the proceeds from the Real Estate Transfer Tax in parks recreation, and open space. In 2016 several major commercial properties were sold generating about \$1.4 million. This is a one-time revenue source that helps the Township to make parks, recreation and open space improvements without borrowing money.

Bucks County Open Space Funding

At the heart of the language of the referendum was open space financing and acquisition, which has many forms in Warrington Township. The Township’s open space network includes trails and parks that provide active

recreational opportunities, as well as natural areas and nature preserves that enable residents to appreciate local ecological and historical resources. In addition to the Township's open space commitment through the referendum, it has the Bucks County Municipal **Open Space Program** allocated about **\$350,000** to Warrington Township for open space conservation.

2018 – 2022 Capital Improvement Program

The projected Capital Improvement Program for Parks and Recreation includes the following:

- John Paul Park – resurface the basketball court. \$100,000
 - Replacement of deteriorated or damaged benches and tables in township parks. \$20,000
 - King Park 1 – repair of fencing and resurfacing of basketball and tennis courts. \$50,000
 - Barness Park – Netting and poles installed at Jack Toy Field. \$20,000. Completed.
 - Twin Oaks Day Camp
 - Demolish existing structure, level ground for Kids Mountain Playground. \$240,000.
 - Dredge pond and repair and expand docks. \$900,000.
 - Twin Oaks Tennis Court – Replace court surface. \$150,000.
 - Swim Club
 - Install liquid chlorine feeder equipment and floc meters. \$15,000.
 - Replace filtration system. \$25,000.
 - Construct pavilion/bandstand for rentals. \$75,000.
- Replace plastic water gutter around perimeter of main pool. \$200,000.

In 2017, the Warrington Lions Club and Warrington Township formed a partnership to construct a new children's play area on the site of the former Twin Oaks Day Camp. The Lions Club has raised \$175,000 to date for the project. The Township secured a \$2500 no match grant from the Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation Society for the Lions Club to undertake a study of how to successfully fundraise for additional improvements to the Playground known as Kids Mountain. Also in 2017, Warrington Township secured a \$250,000 grant from PA DCNR to construct Kids' Mountain. The Township will provide in-kind services for the match along with some funding and the \$150,000 donation from the Lions Club. The Township will contribute to seek grant funding and the Lions will continue to raise money for Kids Mountain to complete the play area.

Revenue Sources for Open Space

In addition to the bond issue of \$3 million, PA DCNR grants and fundraising by the Lions Club other sources of funding since 2015 include:

- PECO Green Region Grant - \$10,000
- Bucks County Open Space Grants - \$635,000
- Open Space Contributions - \$276,200
- Open Space Tree Contributions - \$837,975

Operating Budget

The *operating budget* supports the daily operation of parks and recreation. In addition to the operating budget, the Township provides additional support in the form of staff time and expertise from the Township Manager, Township secretary, EAC staff, the Zoning Officer, and the township's boards, commissions, and committees.

Warrington Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2015 - 2018				
Item	2105 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Projected	2018 Budget
EXPENDITURES				
Summer Camp	60,308	0	0	0
Recreation & Civic Celebrations	102,061	90,764	70,605	66,400
Parks & Recreation - Active	0	0	265,676	307,502
Parks & Recreation - Active	5,563	0	393,732	404,454
TOTAL	167,932	90,764	730,013	778,356
REVENUES				
Discount & Movie Ticket Sales	21,347	20,292	16,000	17,500
Equestrian Rental Fee	3,000	2,400	2,400	2,400
Park Rental Fees	5,158	6,855	10,000	7,500
Summer Camp Registration	84,972	0	0	0
Program Fees	13,181	20,251	14,750	17,750
Volunteer Appreciation	0	0	750	750
Warrington Day	33,730	26,217	33,700	36,000
Recreation Roster Fee	19,998	21,640	17,500	19,000
Swim Club	159,244	159,963	167,020	164,375
TOTAL	340,630	257,618	262,120	265,275

Organization and Staffing

Warrington Township is a Township of the Second Class. The five-member Board of Supervisors is elected to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. They set policy.

The Township re-organized parks and recreation functions several years ago by eliminating the parks and recreation department, placing responsibility for maintenance formally in Public Works and creating a Recreation Program Coordinator as part of a multi-function position. The Township also related positions for two park attendants as part-time seasonal workers to establish a regular presence in the parks. This is important for public perception about park safety and township responsiveness. Along with these changes, the Township instituted budget changes that include park maintenance within the parks and recreation line item budget. This is valuable in helping the Township to ascertain the true cost of parks and recreation for use in deciding how to allocate resources, staffing and for setting policy on things like fees and charges.

Township Management

The Township Manager is a professional who carries out policy, advises the Board of Supervisors, manages daily operations, and focuses on planning. The Township Manager is very supportive and creative in advancing public parks and recreation in Warrington and is actively engaged in planning, facility design and management, events, securing outside funding, and partnership building.

Parks and Recreation Staffing

There is no official parks and recreation department. These functions are carried out by personnel in several township departments.

Park Maintenance

The Public Works Director manages park maintenance with two maintenance workers. The workers are certified in pesticides. One worker is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. The Department contracts out mowing and secures the services of other Public Works employees when needed. While there is no formal maintenance plan in place, the park maintenance team operates based upon historical practices that work to keep the parks, safe, clean and attractive. They are working with the EAC to reduce mowing and naturalize areas. The challenge is that areas that appear to be candidates for reduced mowing are actually used as practice areas for sports and therefore require mowing.

Two Park Attendants work seasonally. They regularly inspect the parks, identify needs for repairs, respond to citizen requests, and perform maintenance tasks and minor repairs.

Recreation Programs

The Recreation Coordinator manages programs and services. Her responsibilities are largely to coordinate programs offered by other providers such as the sports leagues and Cornerstone Clubs. She facilitates recreation programs and services and supports park users with excellent customer service.

Parks and Recreation Management

The Township Manager is responsible for the management of parks and recreation. This includes the operation of the Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club. He coordinates staff, departments and volunteers,

township boards, financial management and grants, commissions and committees and works on building partnerships and sponsorships.

In 2018, the Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club will be managed by the Township instead of a private contractor. The Township Manager will be in charge of managing the facility.

Parks and Recreation Planning

Parks and recreation planning is undertaken on a case by case basis as needs emerge and opportunities arise. Without planning being an official function and with township policies being limited in things like donations, partnerships and gifts, the Township is at the mercy of people requesting to undertake park projects and give gifts to the parks. With plans and policies in place, elected and appointed officials are in a more informed and powerful position to direct efforts toward established community goals.

The EAC has undertaken several important studies that are related to parks and recreation. They include a study by the University of Maryland on the environmental design of parks and a 2017 study of the economic value of Warrington Township's environmental resources.

Township Boards, Commissions and Committees

Where other municipalities struggle in getting volunteers, Warrington Township is blessed with a host of citizens who are ready, willing and able to step up in helping the support community operations and projects. The Boards related to parks, recreation and open space include:

- Bike & Hike Committee - The Bike & Hike Committee has been active in planning the township trail system and securing funding to plan and develop trails and pathways
- Environmental Advisory Council - The EAC is especially active in working on nature based programs and building stewardship for public lands.
- Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force - The Open Space & Land Preservation Task Force has been literally been the force in preserving township open space and natural resources. Building upon decades of land preservation efforts, the next important accomplishment is securing a grant to purchase Mill Creek for which negotiations are underway.
- Park and Recreation Board - The Park and Recreation Board operates in the capacity of advising the Township Board of Supervisors on parks and recreation, serving as the liaison to the community organizations and citizens with interests in parks and recreation, and participating in township wide projects such as this plan.
- Planning Commission – The Planning Commission is the central body charged with coordinating all township planning

to ensure that the community visions for Warrington Township is achieved. In 2017, the Commission undertook the development of Warrington Township's Comprehensive Plan which will include this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

- Historic Commission – The Historic Commission works to preserve the important historic properties and educate people about the heritage of Warrington Township.

Analysis

Budget

Warrington Township's commitment to parks and recreation is evident in its operating and capital budgets. This commitment is supported by the citizens that believe that parks and recreation is a vital and should be expanded and that the preservation of open space, natural resources, open space, and historic sites should be a township priority.

The Township allocates 5.9 percent of its operating budget to parks and recreation. This is slightly above the PA DCNR recommendation of five percent. In terms of per capita investment, the Township invests \$32.51 annually in parks and recreation; this is under the statewide average of \$36.

About 34 percent of the budget is derived from fees, charges, sales, rentals, sponsorships, partnerships and donations. The potential exists to generate more revenue but that is limited by the recreation staff available.

The Township has been successful in generating funding for open space through the successful voter referendum and subsequent grants to leverage the bond money.

The Township has been working toward budget transparency for parks and recreation. This includes moving maintenance costs into the parks and recreation budget rather than buried in the Public Works budget.

What would help more in the future is establishing cost centers for parks and maintenance functions. For example, establishing the Mary Barnes Tennis & Swim Club as an enterprise fund will enable the Township to track expenses and revenues in a way to show clearly how this special use/revenue generating facility is operating. Other cost centers to be considered include ballfields, pavilions, and individual parks. This would also require the development of a workload cost tracking system for maintenance tasks. While time sheets are kept, Warrington's system is too complex for paper and pencil; establishing an automated tracking system using software such as TRIMS will enable the Township to track costs, determine where efficiencies could be made and allocate resources accordingly. "You can't manage what you can't count" goes the old saying.

Organization and Staffing

Warrington Township's management and staff are impressive in terms of expertise, commitment to the township and know-how in getting things done. The parks and recreation facilities consistently appear clean and well-maintained. The Township operates parks and recreation at a basic level without system in place for recreation program management, management of natural resources, facility planning and design, and so on.

With a population approaching 25,000, a park system of 700 acres with 23 parks and open spaces, trails and a destination playground underway, and the constant demands of the community for parks and recreation consideration, the Township is of sufficient size to have a parks and recreation department. This would enable expanded

programming, partnership development, revenue generation, grants, ongoing professional planning, and the management of the Mary Barnes Tennis & Swim Club while easing up the demands on the Township Manager and staff in other departments. A potential parks and recreation department could include the present Recreation Coordinator and continue maintenance via Public Works.

Future Directions

Taking Warrington Township's parks and recreation from good to great will require adjustment of staffing, management methods, and financing over time. While citizens report being happy with the quality of the ballfields, they are less content with the parks for uses other than sports, the lack of programs for children and families, and the quality of the overall facilities. They would like their parks to look and function better for a broader range of ages and uses making them places where people want to spend more time. People reference parks in other communities that they like; the goal of this plan is to establish Warrington Township's parks and recreation system as the regional model for others to emulate. The Township is on the brink of doing that with Kids' Mountain underway with its professional design, partnership, and outside funding.

- Evaluate the potential to establish a full-service parks and recreation department.
- Formalize the park maintenance management system. Start with a workload cost tracking system. Begin with the most demanding tasks such as mowing and trimming, litter pick up and trash removal. Investigate the use of grounds maintenance software such as TRIMS and speak with maintenance staff in other systems to get their opinions of what works and what doesn't in various software programs.

- Use the information from workload cost tracking and cost centers to set policy on things like fees, charges, rentals, partnerships and so on.
- Develop a plan for maintaining and programming, where appropriate, facilities that are being improved or developed and for land that is being acquired. This plan should include staff, budget, revenue and support sources, and potential partners.
- Maintain the current level of investment and work toward increasing the per capita investment as new facilities come on line and expand revenue generation through programs, services, rentals, sponsorships, sales, grants, gifts and bequests.

Appendix B – Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Funding Sources

Funding sources change frequently in terms of type, grant amount and the priorities of the funding organization. The following list is presented as links to the current online resources.

State and Federal Funding

Recreation, Parks, Trails, and Conservation

- [Finding the Green: A Guide to State Funding Opportunities for Conservation, Recreation & Preservation Projects](#)
- [Growing Greener Environmental Stewardship Fund: Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants \(PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources\), Watershed and Environmental Education Grants \(PA Department of Agriculture\), Drinking Water/Sewer Infrastructure Grants \(PA Infrastructure Investment Authority\)](#)
- [Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund: Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants \(PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources\), Historic Preservation Grants \(PA Historical and Museum Commission\), Library Grants \(PA Department of Education\)](#)
- [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#): LWCF funding is intended to protect national parks, areas around rivers and lakes, national forests and national wildlife refuges from development, and to provide matching grants for state and local parks and recreation projects. [LWCF Success in Pennsylvania](#)
- [PA Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program](#)
- [PA Council on the Arts: Arts and Culture Grants](#)
- [PA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#)
- [PA Department of Community and Economic Development](#)
Variety of technical assistance programs and funding opportunities including: Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program and Watershed Restoration and Protection Program, Multimodal Transportation Fund, Flood Mitigation Program (FMP), H2O PA (Flood Control Projects, Unsafe Dam Project and Storm Water Projects), Sewage Facilities Program (SFP)
- [PA Department of Transportation: Transportation Grants](#)

- [PA Fish and Boat Commission: Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Resource Conservation Grants](#)
- [PA Land Trust Association: Conservation Easement Assistance Program](#)
- [The Center for Rural Pennsylvania: Research Grants](#)

Athletic Grants and Foundations

- [Finish Line Youth Foundation: Program Development, Facility Improvement and Emergency Assistance Grants](#)
- [National Football League Grassroots Program: Capital Field Improvement Grants](#)
- [Target: Youth Soccer Program Development Grants](#)
- [Tony Hawk Foundation: Skatepark Grants](#)
- [United States Golf Association: Junior Program Development Grants](#)
- [US Soccer Foundation: Program Development and Field Improvement Grants](#)
- [National Gardening Association: School and Youth Garden Program Development Grants](#)

Other Grant Funders and Foundations

- [Council on Foundations](#)
- [Foundation Center](#)
- [GovSpot](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Grantsmanship Center](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [PA Community Foundations](#)

Accessibility – Sources of Information

- [PRPS Inclusion Task Force](#)
- [Model Aquatic Health Code \(MAHC\): An All-inclusive Model Public Swimming Pool and Spa Code](#)
- [National Center on Accessibility](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association: Embracing Access & Inclusion to Succeed](#)
- [Temple University Collaborative: Community Inclusion Resources](#)

Appendix c: Warrington Township Ordinance Assessment

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

I. PURPOSE

In Section 104 (which neglects to mention the Township's goals of preserving farmland, rural character, and woodland habitat) we would suggest adding a reference to the natural resource inventory maps in your new *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Master Plan Update*.

Because many ordinances, including yours, speak in their purposes section of the need for "mitigating significant negative impacts", it would be refreshing if this part of the code were reworded to state that developments should produce positive environmental outcomes. Your ordinance, Section 104. I. notes that "land should be... protected and used in a manner... not detrimental to the environment." As typically worded, success could be defined as "getting down to zero", which is an odd way for a community to define the future it wishes to create. For instance, habitat areas that have been degraded by forest clearance and/or agricultural drainage could be restored or at least enhanced thorough management practices within open space preserved in new conservation subdivisions. Commercial corridors could be redeveloped with trail linkages and public plazas.

II. SUBDIVISION PROCEDURES

The recommendations in this section are based on the model subdivision ordinance provisions described in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of the *Growing Greener* book (Arendt, Island Press, 1999) a copy of which has been presented to the Township. This resource book should be quite helpful to the Township, and its model ordinance language is also available from Natural Lands in electronic form, to make your revisions easier. Key elements of those workbook chapters describe a fuller set of procedures and plan content requirements pertaining to more detailed *Context Maps*, *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Maps*, a *Site Visit* by local officials with that detailed site analysis map in hand, *Sketch Plans* as overlay sheets on top of the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Maps*, and a *four-step design process* in which open space is identified from the outset (in relation to a *Township-wide Map of Potential Conservation Lands*).

- A. Context Map.** We recommend a *Context Map* added to Section 504. *Context Maps* show natural features on both the proposed development site and on adjacent properties, in order to show reviewing officials the location of natural features and development patterns on adjacent properties and also within one-half mile of the development site (just five inches at the 400-foot scale).

To make this information easy to provide, and to minimize the cost involved, such data can easily be

taken from existing published sources such as aerial photographs (from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly Soil Conservation Service) for patterns of vegetation and development, USGS topo sheets, FEMA floodplain maps, and USFWS wetlands maps. (If wetlands maps are not available, a good substitute is the USDA soil maps -- which show locations of "very poorly drained" soils that are virtually wetlands.) These maps and photos should then be reproduced by the applicant's engineer to the same scale (1" = 400 feet).

The value of such an enhanced (and re-named) *Context Map* would be to help reviewers understand the relationship of resources on the subject property to natural and cultural features, to greenway and trail systems and to possible development patterns on adjacent and nearby lands. This kind of understanding is critical to planning for improved open space and trail connections.

- B. Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map.** The kind of drawing which we suggest the Township should require from the outset of the process would (compared with current existing features section in Section 504 C.) provide a greater amount of essential information and would reflect a rather thorough approach to documenting the location of a large variety of site features, ranging from those deemed to be critical to those considered to be noteworthy. It would typically be prepared by a landscape architect or physical planner for the developer, and would sometimes be based on recommendations from historic preservation specialists and/or conservation

biologists. It would tell reviewers virtually everything they need to know about the property in terms of its noteworthy natural and cultural features.

Drawn to a scale of one inch equals 100 or 200 feet, it would reflect a thorough understanding of the site by those who have walked it extensively, so that even the location of noteworthy individual trees or tree groups, unusual geological formations (such as sinkholes and fault lines), vernal pools, prime farmland, or the depth of the public viewshed, could be identified.

An increasing number of developers are beginning to understand that preserving trees -- whether they be notable individual specimens, hedgerows, or woodlands, enhances the value of their projects, because buyers appreciate such amenities. We feel that the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map* is the most important document in the subdivision design process, as it provides the factual foundation upon which all design decisions are based. If we can agree that this information is necessary to enable the township to render a fully-informed decision, and that it should therefore be submitted at some time during the review process, we should also agree that it should be submitted very early on, before any design work is conducted, so that the design process itself may be informed by this data.

- C. Site Visit.** Because it is impossible to completely understand a site only by examining a two-dimensional paper document inside a municipal building, it is essential that Township officials and appropriate staff walk the property with the *Existing Resources/Site*

Analysis Maps in hand, to take the full measure of the proposed development site. With the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map* in hand, Township consulting staff and officials would walk the property with a view toward offering suggestions about the recommended location of Secondary Conservation Areas. Without the benefit of experiencing the property in a three-dimensional manner (as opposed to reading a two-dimensional plan in a meeting room), it is extremely difficult to evaluate the proposed layouts. A requirement that a Planning Commissioner or Supervisor must visit the property to be subdivided and see it first-hand, before discussing the issues or voting on any motion was not noted. In our judgment this is a very serious -- but easily remedied -- deficiency.

Such visits really help provide a much better understanding of the best locations for potential conservation areas on the subject parcel, and their potential linkages to natural or cultural features on adjacent properties that might be developed sometime in the future. *Site Visits* must be publicly advertised meetings, but can be structured as informal “outdoor work sessions” at which no decisions are reached. They should be scheduled either soon before or soon after the *Sketch Plan* is submitted. Once the expensive *Preliminary Plan* has been drawn up, the layout hardens and is extremely difficult to change in any meaningful way. We recommend inviting abutters to obtain their input at a stage where such information can be very easily factored into the design process. Typically, abutters are invited only at the Public Hearing stage, after the highly-detailed “*Preliminary*” *Plan* has been

produced, at enormous cost, which is far beyond the point when further input can be utilized. Experience has shown that the process runs much more smoothly when the legitimate concerns of abutters are discovered from the get-go, and when they are treated as if their comments really matter (which is definitely not the message they receive when they are invited in only after the issues have pretty much been already been settled between the Township and the applicant).

- D. Feasibility Sketch Plan.** Sections 503 contains excellent standards for informal review, prior to submitting expensive, and fully-engineered plans.

The *Sketch Plan* should be prepared as a very useful “overlay sheet”, lain on top of the *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Map*. This format enables reviewing officials and staff to see clearly how well (or how poorly) the proposed layout avoids impacting the underlying resources, and what opportunities have been taken (or missed) to actually improve site conditions (such as by helping to restore habitats degraded by prior agricultural practices).

It is quite impossible to judge the quality of a *Sketch Plan* layout without knowing exactly where all of the potentially significant or noteworthy existing features are located. Since all that information must be submitted sooner or later, it only makes sense to have it in hand from the beginning --- in fact from the outset, even before the *Sketch Plan* is submitted, at the very beginning of the process when the *Site Visit* occurs. As mentioned elsewhere in this appendix, further details are also needed, such as the location of large trees by

species and size, and even ephemeral but critical features such as vernal pools. Trying to evaluate how well a *Sketch Plan* has been laid out, without this kind of very basic site data, is like trying to play a game of cards with an incomplete deck. Put another way, relying on an incomplete data-set, having only part of the information that is needed to render a truly informed decision, the only kind of decision which can be made is a poorly informed one.

This plan (and other more detailed plans submitted later in the process) should be required to be prepared by either a landscape architect or by a physical site planner experienced in applying landscape architecture principles to development design. Some communities regularly hire a landscape architect or planner of its choice, to walk the site with the developer, to understand the developer's building program (in terms of house widths, etc.), and to prepare a *Sketch Plan* for the developer, so that the planning process gets off to a positive start. It should be noted that, under the MPC, municipalities are legally entitled to recoup their costs from applicants as a legitimate pass-through expense. This is a terrific idea and we recommend it to you most highly. A site designer with a working knowledge of ecological planning principles would probably be the best choice.

The combined influence of the *Context Map*, *Existing Resources/Site Analysis Maps*, the *Site Visit* (by the entire Planning Commission and relevant staff), the *Sketch Plan* overlay sheet (drawn on tracing paper), the *four-step design approach*, the professional design assistance from a landscape architect or other physical

site planner, and the various conservation zoning options (described in the *Growing Greener* book) would all make a significant difference.

A final word on *Sketch Plans*: we believe they (and other more detailed plans submitted later in the process) should be reviewed not only by the Township Engineer but also by your Planner, whose charges could be paid through updated application fees. The two kinds of professionals have different backgrounds and look for different kinds of things. They are both necessary, especially at this highly critical initial planning stage (the Engineer's comments become increasingly important as the documents become more technical and detailed.)

- E. **Four-Step Design Approach.** We believe that the most effective methodology for producing subdivision layouts that are centered around the principle of land conservation is one that begins with the determination of open space as the first step. If this is done, and if the ordinance requires that a significant proportion of the unconstrained land be designated as open space, it is nearly impossible to produce a truly inferior or simply conventional plan. In fact, to the extent that the property contains elements of the community-wide network of conservation lands, the plan is likely to be at least fairly good. The logical second step, after locating the open space areas, is to select house locations, with homes positioned to take maximum advantage of the open space in neighborhood squares, commons, greens, playing fields, greenways, farmland, or forest preserves. The third step involves "connecting the dots" by aligning the

streets and trails to serve the new homes. Drawing in the lot lines, Step Four, is the least significant part of the process.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the existing cluster/performance subdivision regulations is that the open space is not defined in this manner, and therefore tends to become a collection of whatever bits and pieces of land that have proven difficult or challenging to develop. The other common failing of such provisions is that they often require deep perimeter buffers around the proposed development (as if it were a gravel pit or junkyard), a practice that inadvertently leads to very poor layouts in which a substantial percentage of the total open space is consumed by this excessive separation (particularly needless when new single-family developments are being "buffered" from existing single-family developments).

The above approaches are fully described in Chapter 5 of the *Growing Greener* book.

F. **Additional Observations on Design Standards.**

Section 322, Community Facilities, sets standards for parks in new developments. The Township should consider offering a fee in lieu option and requiring more rigorous standards for new neighborhood parks.

Section 324, Non-residential Developments. This section requires landscaping of these developments, an excellent practice. The planted

islands are required to be raised and curbed. More current standards would allow these areas to serve as stormwater infiltration areas, with notched curbs and depressed planting areas that infiltrate stormwater and serve the multiple purposes of improved water quality, cooling and aesthetics.

Section 325, Landscaping. This section requires that landscape plans are prepared by a registered landscape architect, an excellent standard.

- G. **Final Thoughts.** We have suggested a few standards, to your otherwise well written SLDO, to improve and better meet the open space and conservation goals in the new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. We suggest that the Planning Commission, Open Space Committee and Township staff tour the Township and see how well the current regulations are working. Seeing the results of regulations, on the ground, is one of the best indicators of where changes most need to be made.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The following paragraphs detail some zoning considerations as they pertain to conservation design provisions. This section is intended as a checklist of items to keep in mind when updating the zoning to encourage this more creative approach to development in the low-density rural parts of the Township, where development cannot be prohibited. There are also comments on Warrington Township's commercial corridors, where changing real estate markets may make these areas prime for redevelopment to mixed-use commercial centers.

I. COMPARISON OF TYPICAL CLUSTER REGULATIONS AND THE GROWING GREENER APPROACH

Inasmuch as the Township is looking for ways to achieve interconnected greenways that link parks and schools to new neighborhoods, we suggest that the current cluster provisions be fine-tuned to make them true conservation subdivisions.

- A. Density Issues:** Most cluster regulations offer varying degrees of density bonuses, but we are not convinced that such bonuses are necessary. Developers experienced in conservation design recognize that their development costs often decline due to much less mass grading, and also to shorter or less-wide street pavements. They also recognize the premiums they can charge for lots that abut or face onto protected open space (much as golf course developers do).

In addition to counting all kinds of completely unbuildable land as part of the minimum required open space (because that open space is based on a percentage of the gross tract area), cluster regs typically allow density to be calculated on the basis of gross tract acreage (sometimes minus the street ROW land), instead of on the basis of the actual number of house lots that could normally be created on the parcel, taking into consideration the location and extent of wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes. In Warrington Township, a mix of approaches is applied. Density is determined based on Gross Buildable Land Area, and per Section 304 determined either by siting the homes, or where applicable, using a density formula. This site capacity approach is an excellent one and the hallmark of a

Performance Zoning ordinance, such as yours. While Warrington Township based density on site capacity constraints, it is less clear why the open space appears to be based solely upon the gross tract area, ranging from 83% in the RA District to 25% in the R2 district.

- B. Districts Where Permitted.** Warrington Township limits the number of residential districts in which cluster is permitted to the RA through R2-1 Districts. However, to help the Township achieve its broader open space and rural character conservation goals, it is recommended that conservation design be permitted wherever it would be likely to preserve open space, which may include additional residential zones and those industrial districts within the central and western portion of Warrington.
- C. Conditional Use vs. By-Right.** We feel rather strongly that any new conservation design option should not be written to require review under the Conditional Use process, a common practice among townships that effectively discourages many developers from ever proposing this kind of design approach, Warrington included. When adopting such flexible approaches, it is not necessary to designate open space developments as CUs because they can be made to “perform” well through a set of detailed and strict “performance standards” relating to the quantity, quality, and configuration of the protected open space.

We believe that CU designation, which many townships use to classify non-conventional developments with smaller lots and greater open space, typically produces a chilling effect upon many applicants, frequently

discouraging them from opting for this flexible design approach, and we would therefore strongly urge the Township, if and when it adopts more flexible design standards, to avoid the common mistake of running this superior approach to development through that additional process.

- D. Calculating Open Space Areas.** In most “cluster” ordinances, some percentage for open space is established, and typically that number suffers from two flaws relating to quantity (too low a percentage, sometimes 20-25%) and quality (allowing wetlands and steep slopes to be included, as well as stormwater detention basins and land under high-tension electrical transmission lines). Warrington’s cluster regulations reflect both these weaknesses, at least in some of the zoning districts. In particular, Warrington has acquired stormwater basins as part (or all) of the open space in numerous cases and this should be remedied by permitting a small percentage at most to qualify as dedicated open space.

In our view, much greater minimum required open space percentages should be established in rural areas, and they should reflect land that is in addition to the most severely constrained parts of the property. We believe it is important to set minimum open space requirements as a percentage of the *net* buildable land area that is not constrained by wetness, floodability, or steepness. Said another way, in addition to certain percentages of lands that are inherently unfit for development (wetlands, floodplains, and slopes >25%), at least 50% of the remaining land should be earmarked

as permanent open space in the lower-density districts where conventional lot size is 40,000 sq. ft. This would ensure that a good part of the total open space would be usable by more than ducks or mountain goats.

In higher-density districts with water and sewer service --where it is more difficult to reduce lot size to the same extent -- the minimum required open space percentage could decrease to 40 or 30% (again, based on net buildable land), versus the 25% in your current ordinances.

- E. TDR Receiving Zones.** The “transfer of development rights” (TDR) technique – which is another tool for protecting agricultural lands and rural character, can be a powerful tool for conserving farmland, extending more traditional conservation easement programs. Your current ordinance provides for TDR. Has the tool proven valuable and have the resulting subdivisions been acceptable, in terms of quality, to the community? Are standards for the “receiving zones” strong enough to ensure attractive new developments that fit in with the community?

One of greatest concerns of residents living near such areas is that the quality of the denser development will not be as high as that of their lower-density conventional subdivisions. This perception is often based on the appearance of higher-density development, which they have seen in other parts of the county and elsewhere, where the township simply permitted more dwellings per acre without requiring that they be arranged in a manner reflecting the area’s historical building traditions.

F. Requiring Conservation Design in Certain Districts.

Warrington might consider requiring conservation design (instead of conventional plats) in certain situations where parcels are proposed for development along the Township's pre-determined trail and greenway corridors, to ensure that possible future greenway connection opportunities are not lost. This may be appropriate in RA Districts, which includes much of the Mill Creek watershed. See Map 2: Open Space Opportunities. This approach would ensure that the interconnected network of open space would become a reality, and not simply be another good idea, which is not implemented.

II. COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates part of the route 611 Corridor as a Mixed-Use District. This seems a likely and appropriate designation for a commercial corridor likely to redevelop over the next decade, in a pattern that varies from the current "strip" centers. Just as the Route 202 Corridor was re-envisioned as a parkway through the County, it appears that the Route 611 Corridor is ripe for redevelopment and re-envisioning. While not the purpose of this study to focus on commercial development, the opportunity exists to incorporate trails and public gathering spaces in new mixed-use development along the 611 designated Mixed-Use area. In order to accomplish this task, new standards would be required in the Zoning and SLDO Ordinances, providing design standards for new mixed-use centers. Such standards would:

- Replace single-story, single-use structures with multi-story, mixed use development, including residences.
- Integrate with existing and future transit, most likely to include bus routes and trails, in Warrington Township.
- Create an internal street network, perhaps included and pre-determined on an Official Map.
- Establish minimum (versus maximum) height standards to encourage mixed-use, multi-story buildings.
- Establish maximum building setbacks, with parking relegated to the rear of buildings.
- Ensure safe pedestrian walkways.
- Provide for affordable housing, if desired by the Township.
- Design around natural and historic features, incorporating them into the new development.
- Require shade trees.

- Provide places for stormwater infiltration, within and under parking areas and in natural areas retained as part of the redevelopment.
- Use native species as areas are landscaped.
- Enact standards for signage and lighting that respect the residential uses and new residents in the community.

In a March 2011 article in *Urban Land*, Edward T. McMahon, Senior Fellow writes, “Commercial strips are not going to disappear overnight, but it is becoming increasingly clear that strip retail is retail for the last century. The future belongs to town centers, main streets, and mixed-use development.” Warrington Township can embrace that future, combining new revenue-producing development, with community amenities.

III. LANDOWNER CONTACT

No conservation review would be complete without mentioning that Township efforts at working with landowners and selectively using County and Township funds to purchase open space are also vital to conserving community character. By combining selective acquisitions or donations with development regulations that produce conservation design, a community conservation network can be realized, even as growth occurs.

Appendix D – Park Assessments

The purpose of the parks assessment is to evaluate the municipal park system both in terms of individual parks as well as a whole, in order to identify potential improvements to facilities and usage, as well as their overall quality, functionality, safety and accessibility. A great park, and park system, is one that achieves and balances sociability, safety, comfort, and accessibility.

The park system was explored over the course of multiple visits, during which each individual park was walked and observed, and users interviewed when possible. The park system is of a good size for the current Township population, and appears clean and maintained in terms of mowing. However, individual parks do not present as part of an overall park system, and signage, site furniture, landscaping and other visitor amenities were lacking. The overall system seemed heavily weighted towards organized sports. Equipment and facilities intended for children, teens and seniors were either non-existent or outdated.

Warrington has shown a keen interest in improving its parks and creating a system that encourages a diversity of uses and users. Long-term planning, which has already started in the form of this written report, could make this a reality, greatly aiding in the ability to design phased implementation to guide design decisions so that issues regarding cohesion, multi-functionality and accessibility can be addressed. Warrington has also shown interest in exploring the potential for cost savings in terms of maintenance, as well as the potential for implementing green stormwater infrastructure into the park system to address MS4 possibilities.

Key changes could be implemented across the board in order to enhance visitor experience within the parks, whether passive or active users. Accessibility within and access to parks can be improved. Trees and landscaping are minimal – the primary landscape feature appears to be mown grass, a pricey use in terms of maintenance. Under-utilized areas could be designed to better increase and encourage park usage.

KEY POINTS - PLACEMAKING

Design – Quality and consistency of park design could be improved across the board, and engaging with professional designers will help guide this process. A design guideline for site furniture and amenities such as lighting, fencing, path materials, benches, tables, and waste receptacles could help create consistency throughout the park system. Signage is a top priority – designing a full range of signage standards now will allow for a more cohesive look and streamlined installation down the road. Signage helps with orientation, directionality, and understanding how parks are intended to be used and what opportunities there are within parks to enjoy.

Access – Better connectivity and accessibility can greatly improve the park system. Creating better connections between parks via trails can increase safety and encourage usage. Improved, streamlined, and signed entries can create a more welcoming feel and create a sense of arrival. First impressions are important, so parking lots should be clearly marked, nicely landscaped, and cleaned up. Where there is currently storage at entry points (i.e. Upper Nike), the buildings could be improved aesthetically or relocated. Within the parks, improved circulation in the form of perimeter trails and internal paths will help

orient visitors, and create opportunities for other uses (i.e. walking, running and biking). Existing trails between different zones and activities should be signed, and new connections made where necessary. Trail materials should be selected for ease of accessibility as well as transportation of materials. At John Paul Park, for instance, the access to the park pavilions is of a trail material that does not easily allow dragging carts, coolers, etc. so is not a logical choice for the pavilion area's intended usage. They are also not easily accessible for those on scooters, walkers or wheelchairs.

Connecting People to Nature – Stewardship and landscaping within the parks should be designed for long-term improvements. Across the board, more landscaping is needed. Shade and ornamental trees and shrubs could start to create a more welcoming feel, delineate areas within the park, transform high-maintenance and under-utilized mown areas, and create more shade for users. Dangerous river rock areas should be converted to landscaped areas to create a softer and more welcoming feel, and allow for more effective stormwater management. Maintenance can be reviewed and certain areas mown less frequently in

order to create different habitats and reduce costs. Areas of problematic drainage, for instance, could be naturalized in order to create more stability within the soil structure and allow for water usage and treatment by the landscape plants. Natural areas could be promoted and access created to allow more passive interaction (i.e. paths through forested areas and/or boardwalks over or connections with water).

Places for All – As previously mentioned, the park system is heavily skewed towards organized recreation. This in turn is focused on adult and young adult users. Site amenities within the parks should be expanded to include a more diverse offering, and areas created for multiple uses. By creating uses geared towards seniors, children and teens, the park system as a whole will become more appealing; and encourage more users, who will explore, stay for longer, and want to return. Some of these additional uses to be considered would be natural play areas, passive seating areas, areas to appreciate nature, water features, gathering spaces for public events, an amphitheater, a cricket pitch, pickle ball courts, a disc golf course, a skate park, a dog park, and an indoor senior facility.

FACILITIES BY PARK

PARK	Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Football	Field Hockey	Gaga Pit	Lacrosse	Pickleball	Roller Hockey	Soccer	Swimming Pool	Tennis	Track	Volleyball	Gym	Playground	Trails/Walking	Picnic/Seating	Gardens	Natural Area	Restroom	Concession
Alou Tot Lot															X						
Barness Park	12			2											X	X				X	X
Bradford Reservoir Rec Area (County)																X	X		X		
Dapple Tot Lot															X				X		
Twin Oaks/Upper Nike/IPW Park						3			7							X			X	X	X
John Paul Park		1						1					1		X	X	X			X	
King Park	1	1	2						2		1						X			X	X
Mary Barness Tennis & Swim Club		1			1					3	2		1		X		X				
Palomino Park	1	1									2				X	X					
Penns Wood Tot Lot															X						
Shank Tot Lot															X						
Special Equestrian Center																X			X		
Valley Glen Park		1													X						
Warrington Village Tot Lot															X						
Willow Knoll Park		1													X		X				

King Park

Size: 36.17 acres

Type: Community/Special Use

Features:

- Baseball/Softball Field (1)
- Basketball Court (1)
- Soccer Fields (2)
- Football Fields (2)
- Tennis Court (1)
- Parking Areas (2)
- Overflow Parking with Storage Shed(1)
- Lighting
- Concession Stands (2)
- Restroom Facility (2)
- Pond/Potential Natural Area (1)
- Forested Areas

Issues/Constraints:

- The park has a highly utilitarian aesthetic, and functions more as an athletic complex than a community park. The vast majority of the park is dedicated to organized, scheduled sports, often leased to private clubs or organizations and not open to the public, leading to many fields that are only being used by a limited group. Parking lots and entry areas into the park are devoid of character and lack appeal.
- The park has little delineation between fields and different areas/zones.
- An unsightly maintenance/storage area lies within the center of the park, surrounded by a dirt/gravel overflow parking lot.
- The park consists mostly of mown turf.
- There are runoff issues in various spots in the park.
- There are few trails and little sense of directionality within the park – it is difficult to understand where you are, where you are

going or how to get where you need to be. Accessibility to certain areas of the park is impossible due to lack of paths/circulation.

- The perimeter fence at the Doylestown line seems unnecessary, and has been unofficially perforated in two spots by users.
- Park perimeters adjacent to residential areas are not screened sufficiently
- Very little landscaping, shade, seating and signage within the park, which does not create a comfortable or welcoming environment for visitors. Most seating is associated with concession stands only.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, teens or children within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Create a continuous loop multi-use trail system along the perimeter of the park, and include occasional seating, picnic, gathering or destination areas to allow for a diversity of usage along the route.
- Develop an internal circulation system to allow for accessibility to all fields and areas.
- Implement a comprehensive signing system that includes arrival signs, kiosks, regulatory, and environmental interpretive signing, as well as internal circulation signage.
- Incorporate a natural play area(s) for children and toddlers.
- Screen or relocate the maintenance building to a less prominent location.
- Remove the Doylestown perimeter fence.
- Incorporate more shade and seating throughout the park, and take advantage of natural wooded areas.
- Separate the basketball and tennis courts.
- Consider placing lighting around tennis and basketball court areas on a timer or paid system to extend hours of usage.
- Install landscaping between and around different zones of the park to help delineate space and create shaded comfort zones.
- Screen park boundaries immediately adjacent to other parcels.

- Enhance the retention pond area with natural landscaping.
- Stewardship: Naturalized areas should be encouraged and maintained as such. Grass areas where drainage occurs at lacrosse field and just south of the forested area should no longer be mown, and be allowed to return to a natural meadow state. Retention pond should be planted and maintained as a naturalized area. Wooded and natural areas should be monitored for invasive species. Stone-filled areas within parking lots should be re-designed as vegetated swales and/or raingardens if possible.

King Park – Issues/Constraints



King Park – Opportunities/Recommendations



Barness Park

Size: 34.65 acres

Type: Community/Special Use

Features:

- Ball fields (12)
- Field Hockey Fields (2)
- Walking Path (1)
- Playground (1)
- Concession Stand (1)
- Restroom Facility (1)
- Storage Shed (1)
- Parking Lot (1)
- Pond/Potential Natural Area (1)
- Stream (1)
- Lighting

Issues/Constraints:

- The main parking lot is unwelcoming and has no shade or landscaping.
- The park has a highly utilitarian aesthetic. Parking lots and entry areas into the park are devoid of character and lack appeal.
- The park has little delineation between fields and different areas/zones.
- The park consists mostly of mown turf.
- There is little sense of directionality within the park – it is difficult to understand where you are, where you are going or how to get where you need to be.
- There are few gathering spaces or seating areas except for those associated with the concession stands.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, teens or children within the park.

- Accessibility to certain areas of the park is impossible due to lack of paths/circulation.
- The vast majority of the park is dedicated to organized, scheduled sports, often leased to private clubs or organizations and not usable by the public, leading to many fields that are only being used by a limited group. Functions more like an athletic complex than a true community park.
- Very little landscaping, shade, seating and signage within the park, which does not create a comfortable or welcoming environment for visitors.
- There are few/no activities for seniors within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- The park appears to be well-kept and maintained.
- Natural areas within the park such as the stream could be highlighted and improved.
- Add a connection to the undeveloped parcels across the street.
- Signage should be added to provide orientation within the park.
- The perimeter trail could be improved to be more prominent and become an amenity for other age groups.
- The internal trail system could be expanded and improved with signage to make circulation throughout the park more comfortable and clear.
- Landscaping could be added in otherwise open areas in order to provide comfortable shaded seating areas or natural play areas.
- Enlarge the tot lot, expand the fencing outward and add landscaping in order to provide more comfort for caregivers.
- Stewardship: Naturalized areas should be encouraged and maintained as such. The stream and retention pond should be planted and maintained as a naturalized area: Parking lot should incorporate designed natural areas for stormwater treatment. Install interpretive signage where feasible.

Barness Park - Issues/Constraints



Barness Park – Opportunities/Recommendations



Twin Oaks/Upper Nike Park/Igoe Porter Wellings Park

Size: 71.15 acres

Type: Community/Special Use

Features:

- Soccer fields (7)
- Lacrosse Fields (3)
- Restroom Facility (1)
- Concession Stand (1)
- Natural pond area
- Parking Lot
- Perimeter Walking Trail (1)

Issues/Constraints:

- The main parking lot is unwelcoming and has no shade or landscaping.
- The park has a highly utilitarian aesthetic. Parking lots and entry areas into the park are devoid of character and lack appeal.
- The park has little delineation between fields and different areas/zones.
- The park consists mostly of mown turf.
- There is little sense of directionality within the park – it is difficult to understand where you are, where you are going or how to get where you need to be
- The large area currently consists of three separate parks with three separate names, despite being adjacent and connected.
- The entry is not well signed and visitors are immediately greeted with unused cabins and a large storage shed.
- There are few gathering spaces or seating areas except for those associated with the concession stand.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, adults or children within the park.
- Accessibility to certain areas of the park is impossible due to lack of paths/circulation.
- The parking area is not lit, nor is the rest of the park.
- The park appears to be in transition, with a lot of underused space and structures.
- Very little landscaping, shade, seating and signage are within the park, which does not create a comfortable or welcoming environment for visitors.
- There are few/no activities for seniors or children within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Site should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- The park appears to be well-kept and maintained.

- Remove existing unused structures, and move the storage shed to a less central location.
- Improve the signage and landscaping at the entrance and within the parking lot to create a sense of arrival.
- Add a clear connection to John Paul Park across the street.
- Natural areas within the park such as the pond area could be highlighted and improved.
- Provide consistent signage including destination signage at all entrances and internal orientation signage within the park.
- Enhance the perimeter trail to become more prominent and an amenity for other age groups.
- Create a logical and well-signed internal path/circulation system to connect different areas within the park.
- Add landscaping in otherwise open areas in order to provide comfortable shaded seating areas or natural play areas, and help delineate and separate spaces.
- Master planning the rear portions of the site and tying that effort into establishing a cohesive landscape planting strategy will ensure that all elements work cohesively together.
- Make the pond area a destination and natural feature.
- Stewardship: allow currently mown areas to convert to natural meadow areas. Add raingardens and/or vegetated stormwater treatment areas into parking medians. Remove invasive species in woodlands and naturalized pond area and replant with native species. Install interpretive signage where feasible.

Twin Oaks/Upper Nike/Igoe Porter Wellings Park – Issues and Constraints



Natural area is largely inaccessible

The parks consist mainly of mown turf, with little delineation between activities

Twin Oak, Igoe Wellings and Upper Nike Park boundaries are unclear and seem unnecessary

Twin Oaks structures are unmaintained and messy

Parking lot is utilitarian

There are few visitor amenities on site such as shade, seating, tables, or other site furniture

Overall, the parks are lacking in wayfinding signage

Parks are disconnected from Lower Nike just across the street

Twin Oaks/Upper Nike/Igoe Porter Wellings Park – Opportunities and Recommendations



- Improve perimeter trail and incorporate access to natural area
- Complete Kid's Mountain Play area
- Entire site should be master-planned in order to combine the parks, decrease underutilized spaces, and maximize the diversity and quantity of activities
- Re-purpose or remove existing Twin Oaks structures
- Add landscaping, signage and lighting to parking area, relocate storage structure to less visible location
- There are few visitor amenities on site such as shade, seating, tables, or other site furniture
- Add wayfinding signage, accessible paths, shade and site furniture throughout site
- Stewardship: allow some mown areas to convert to natural meadow, add GSI to parking area, monitor and remove invasives in wooded areas
- Create connection to Lower Nike Park just across the street

John Paul/Lower Nike Park

Size: 24.23 acres

Features:

- Playground (1)
- Basketball court (1)
- Roller Hockey Rink (1)
- Volleyball Area (1)
- Gaga Court (1)
- Covered pavilion/Grilling Area (1)
- Gazebos (5)
- Walking/Exercise Station Trail (1)
- Parking Lot
- Restroom Facility (1)

Issues/Constraints:

- The current facilities and amenities within the park appear to be randomly placed on the site with little consideration of overall efficiency or site maximization.
- Site should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- The park has a highly utilitarian aesthetic. Parking lots and entry areas into the park are devoid of character and lack appeal.
- The park consists mostly of mown turf.
- Signage within the park is lacking.
- Accessibility to the gazebo areas of the park is difficult due to path material.
- The parking area is not lit, nor is the rest of the park.
- Very little landscaping, shade, seating and signage are within the park, which does not create a comfortable or welcoming environment for visitors.

- There are few/no activities for seniors or children within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- The park appears to be well-kept and maintained.
- Pave the paths to the gazebo area and replace the largest half-gazebo with more of a performance area stage to encourage large-scale public use and gatherings.
- Improve the signage and landscaping at the entrance and within the parking lot to create a sense of arrival.
- Provide consistent signage including destination signage at all entrances and internal orientation signage within the park.
- Create a multi-use perimeter trail and connect it with the Route 202-Bradford Dam Connector Trail and Special Equestrian Center.
- Create a logical and well-signed internal path/circulation system to connect different areas within the park.
- Add landscaping in otherwise open areas in order to provide comfortable shaded seating areas or natural play areas, and help define and blend separate spaces.
- Consider replacing the underused roller hockey rink with pickle ball courts, and condensing the existing activities to the north of the access drive to help incorporate a cricket pitch, skate park, or other activity.
- Consider incorporating a dog run area within the park.
- Consider incorporating a disc golf course within the park, and extending it to the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and the undeveloped perimeter of the Special Equestrian Center.
- Stewardship: Convert areas of mown lawn to dry or wet meadows where appropriate. Monitor for and remove invasive species at woodland edge. Install more native trees and shrubs throughout park to provide wildlife habitat and shade for visitors. Install interpretive signage where feasible.

John Paul/Lower Nike Park – Issues and Constraints



Park lacks connection with neighboring parks such as Igoe Wellings, the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area, and the Special Equestrian Center

Other than entry signage, wayfinding within the park is lacking

Park is very utilitarian, and layout lacks overall planning and flow, furniture and activities seem haphazardly placed

Very little landscaping, shade, seating or other amenities throughout the park

Park lacks lighting, reducing usability

Gazebo structures are not easily accessible due to the path material choice, and lack certain amenities

Majority of park consists of mown grass

John Paul/Lower Nike Park – Opportunities and Recommendations



Create a clear connection with neighboring properties such as Igoe Wellings, the Special Equestrian Center and the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area

Improve signage and landscaping at entrance and parking areas in order to create a sense of arrival. Install wayfinding and other signage throughout park for orientation.

Install a perimeter multi-use trail, connect with similar trails at Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and the Special Equestrian Center

Replace the underutilized rink with pickleball courts, consider condensing all activities in this area to also incorporate cricket area or other uses

Install a disc golf course, extend and connect it with the Special Equestrian Center and Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area

Pave paths to gazebo structures and convert half-gazebo structure into a performance stage for events

Stewardship: convert mown areas to natural meadow, monitor woodland edge for invasives, plant native trees and shrubs, install interpretive signage where feasible

Mary Barness Swim Club

Size: 11.3 acres

Features:

- Swimming Pools (2)
- Splash pad (1)
- Tennis courts (2)
- Basketball court (1)
- Volleyball court (2)
- Playground (1)
- Concessions
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms
- Parking Area

Issues/Constraints:

- The current facilities and amenities within the park are dedicated only to seasonal members, and are not welcoming or open for use by the general public, nor year-round.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Improve the signage and landscaping at the entrance and within the parking lot to create a sense of arrival.
- Provide consistent signage including identification signage at all entrances and internal orientation signage within the park.
- Expand landscaping and plant more canopy trees for shade.
- Stewardship: Remove invasive non-native plants, including the Burning bush at the park entrance, and replace with native species. Incorporate environmental education into any camp or children's activities. Install interpretive signage where feasible. Convert unused mown lawn areas to natural wet or dry meadow. Provide access to natural water feature to north of property.

Mary Barness Swim Club – Issues and Constraints, Opportunities and Recommendations



Provide access to water
Provide screening at edge between Warrington Village tot lot
Stewardship: Remove and replace burning bush at entrance, monitor and remove invasives at wooded perimeter, provide GSI within parking area, incorporate nature education into camp activities, convert some mown areas to natural meadow

Expand landscaping and add more trees for shade

Improve signage and landscaping within parking lot and at entrance in order to create a sense of arrival

Improve identification and wayfinding signage at all entrances

*Issues/Constraints: Entire site is a summer swim club, closed to non-members and open only on a limited seasonal basis

Special Equestrian Center

Size: 65.34 acres

Features:

- Trail System
- Natural/Undeveloped Areas
- Parking Area

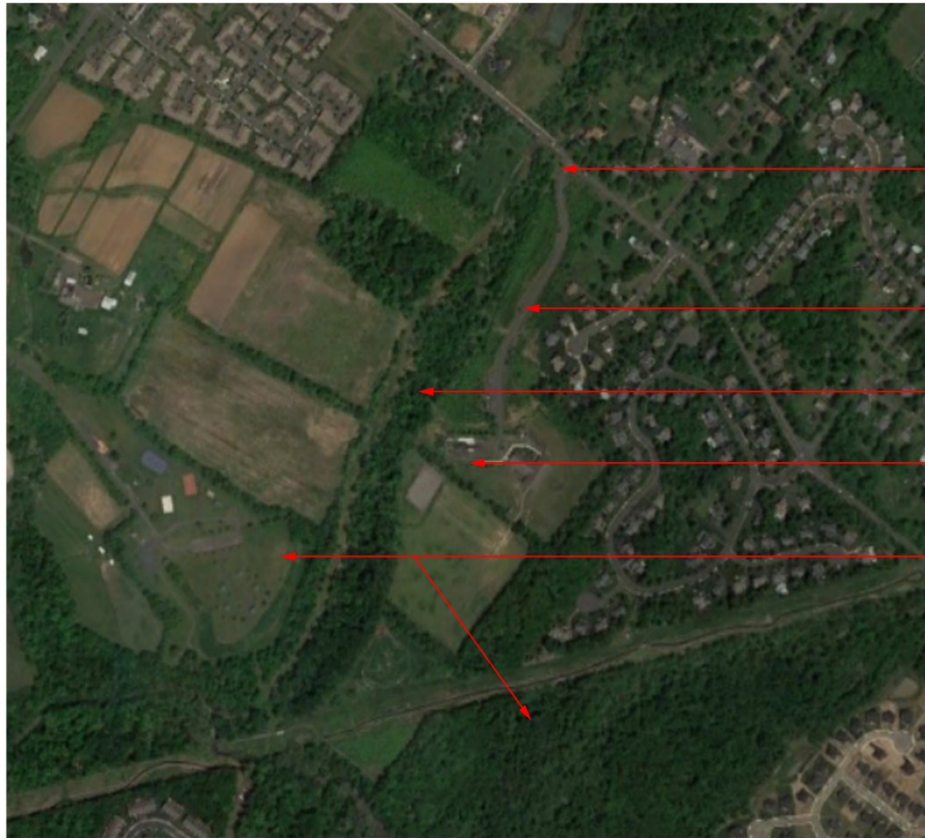
Issues/Constraints:

- The current facilities and amenities within the park are dedicated only to the Special Equestrian Center, and do not appear welcoming or open for use by the general public.
- No common park visitor amenities such as lighting, seating or tables are on site.
- The site does not have signage of any kind other than an entry sign, which does not clearly state that this is township open space land.
- The site is largely unmaintained and overgrown.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, teens or children within the site.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Site should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- Current site use is unique and should be celebrated and explained to the public.
- Improve the signage and landscaping at the entrance and within the parking lot to create a sense of arrival.
- Provide consistent signage including destination signage at all entrances and internal orientation signage within the park.
- Create a multi-use perimeter trail (including horseback riding use) and connect it with the Route 202-Bradford Reservoir Connector Trail and John Paul/Lower Nike Park.
- Create a logical and well-signed internal path/circulation system to safely highlight current site uses and connect to Route 202-Bradford Reservoir Connector Trail and John Paul/Lower Nike Park.
- Consider incorporating a disc golf course within the undeveloped perimeter of the area, and extending it to the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and John Paul/Lower Nike Park.
- Stewardship: Site is being maintained in a way that allows nature to run its course; allow this to happen while also monitoring for and removing invasive species. Install interpretive signage where feasible. Maintain or expand riparian buffers in order to improve water quality. Install rain gardens or other stormwater management infrastructure on site to treat rainwater from buildings and parking lot.

Special Equestrian Center – Issues and Constraints



Park entry signage does not identify as a township property, open to the public

Wayfinding within the property is lacking

Non-mown areas are not maintained and overgrown

Park lacks any site amenities or activities for the general public, such as trails, site furniture or lighting

Property lacks trail connections with adjoining Township-owned properties such as Lower Nike Park or the Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area

■

Special Equestrian Center – Opportunities and Recommendations



Park entry signage should identify and celebrate unique site activities and establish that it is open to the general public

Wayfinding and rules signage should be incorporated

Stewardship: Monitor and remove invasive species, install GSI solutions for stormwater overflow from structures and parking

Install basic site amenities for the general public, such as seating, picnic areas, waste receptacles, etc.

Establish trail connections with adjoining Township-owned properties such as Lower Nike Park or the Bradford Reservoir Recreation area, build perimeter or secondary trail system within undeveloped, unmaintained areas of the property

Implement disc golf course within undeveloped areas of park, to extend to and connect with Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area and Lower Nike Park areas

Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area

Size: 250.0 acres

Features:

- Trail System
- Signage
- Seating/Benches
- Natural/Undeveloped Areas
- Parking Area (within John Paul/Lower Nike Park)

Issues/Constraints:

- The site is not well-known to the general public.
- There are few visitor amenities on site such as picnic areas, seating, or trash receptacles/
- Site signage is minimal and appears to have been installed at different times by different groups.
- The site is largely unmaintained and overgrown, with many invasive plants.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, teens or children within the site.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Site should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- Current site use is unique and should be celebrated and explained to the public.
- Improve the signage and landscaping at the entrance and within the parking lot to create a sense of arrival.
- Provide consistent signage including destination signage at all entrances and internal orientation signage within the park.
- Connect the existing multi-use trail (including horseback riding use) with the Special Equestrian Center and John Paul/Lower Nike Park to create a larger system.
- Add more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, and overlooks.
- Create a secondary accessible and well-signed internal path/circulation system to increase use and interest.
- Consider incorporating a disc golf course within the undeveloped perimeter of the area, and extending it to the Special Equestrian Area and John Paul/Lower Nike Park.
- Stewardship: Continue efforts to manage invasive plants and reintroduce native habitat. Install interpretive signage where feasible. Install enhanced riparian buffer along waterways.

Bradford Reservoir Recreation Area – Issues and Constraints



Site is not well-known or obvious to the general public

The majority of the site is unmaintained space, with many invasive plants

There are few amenities on site such as picnic tables, seating, or waste receptacles.

The site is a multi-use trail only, and lacks a diverse group of uses

Bradford Reservoir Area – Opportunities and Recommendations



Improve site signage and landscape at entrance to create a sense of arrival

Create trail connections with adjacent Lower Nike Park and the Special Equestrian Center

Create additional secondary trail system and disc golf course

Stewardship: continue efforts to manage invasive plants and reintroduce native habitat. Install improved and cohesive interpretive signage.

Improve signage throughout site to make a more cohesive experience

Add more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, and waste receptacles

Palomino Park

Size: 5.0 acres

Features:

- Tennis courts (2)
- Baseball (1)
- Seating/Benches
- Large mown area
- Tot Lot (1)

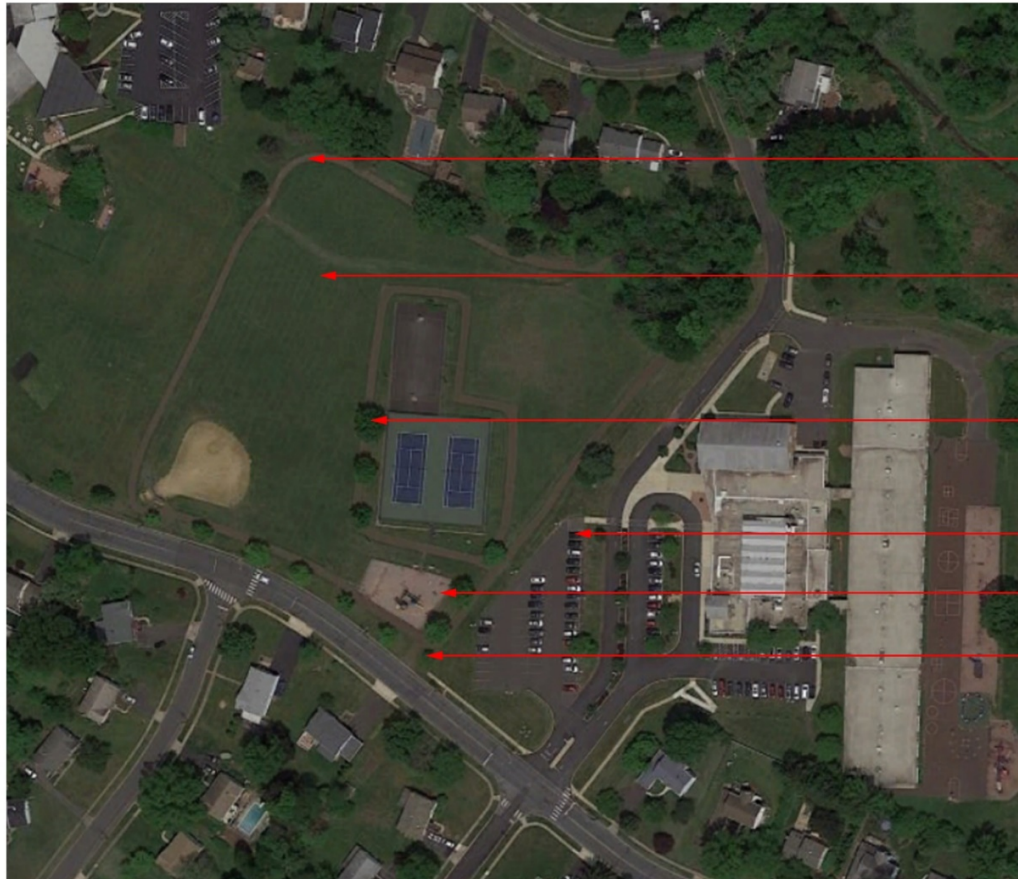
Issues/Constraints:

- There is very little shade.
- Site signage is minimal and appears to have been installed at different times by different groups.
- The tot lot is severely constrained by the close fencing
- The site seems disjointed and boundaries are unclear.
- Parking is unclear.
- There are few/no activities for seniors within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Park should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- Tree plantings and landscaping to provide shade and visual interest
- Improve the signage and landscaping to create a sense of arrival.
- Potential connections with larger park system through township-owned land (Palomino Park and Dapple Tot Lot)
- Add more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, trash receptacles and water fountains.
- Improve lighting.
- Add shade to the tot lot area, remove existing fencing and replace with less utilitarian option.
- Create a secondary accessible and well-signed internal path/circulation system to increase potential uses and interest.
- Stewardship: Allow large areas of mown lawn to convert to natural meadow areas, particularly north of the tennis courts, and plant a vegetated swale instead of high-maintenance mown grass. Plant native tree groves for shade and wildlife habitat. Monitor and manage invasive species at wooded edges. Close proximity to the elementary school and church could lend itself to opportunities for environmental education.

Palomino Park – Issues and Constraints



The site seems disjointed and has unclear boundaries

Very little shade, large underutilized areas of mown grass

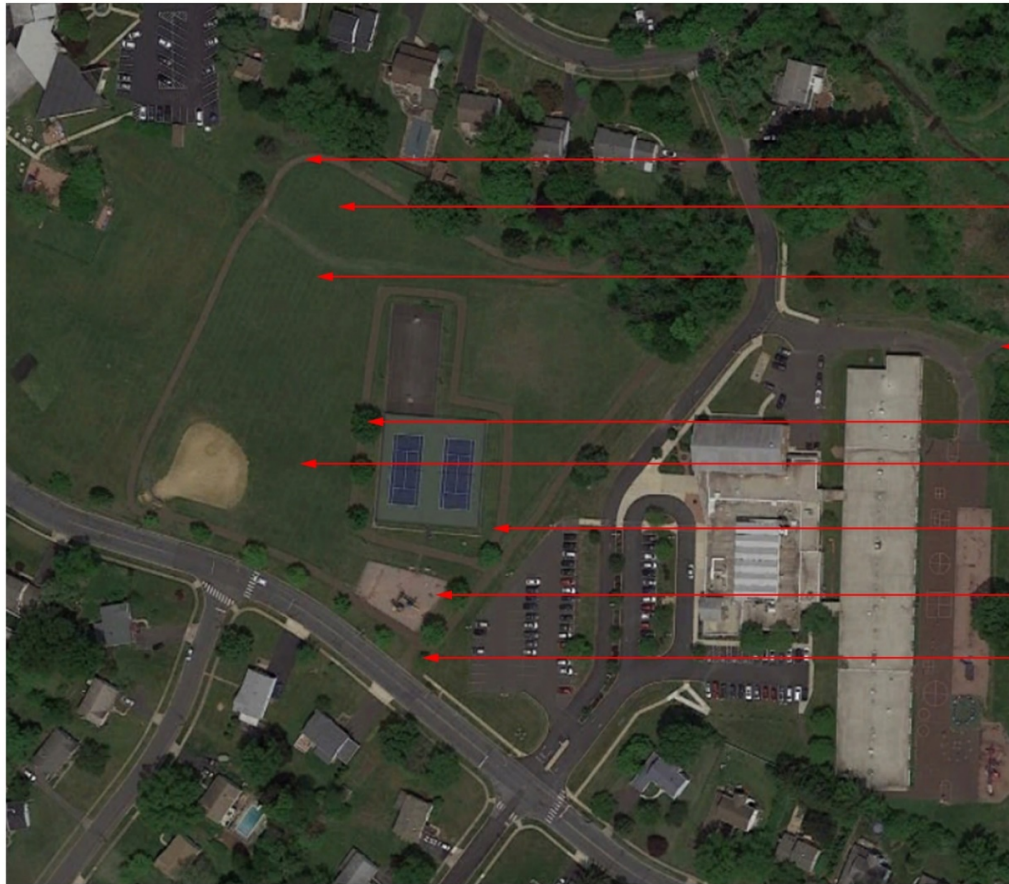
Lighting and other site furniture is not cohesive

Parking for park is unclear

Shade is lacking in tot lot area, and fencing makes area seem very constrained

Site signage is minimal and disconnected

Palomino Park – Opportunities and Recommendations



- Improve perimeter trail and interior circulation
- Stewardship: Allow some open areas to convert to natural meadow, manage invasives at park edge
- Look at currently open lawn areas to reduce mowing and add additional activities
- Create potential trail connection with natural area to east of school property and Dapple tot lot
- Improve lighting around court area
- Add more landscaping and trees throughout open areas of site to add shade, separation of activities and visual interest
- Add more site amenities such as seating, trash receptacles, water fountains and picnic tables in appropriate locations
- Add shade and seating to increase caregiver comfort near playground area
- Add wayfinding, regulatory and entry signage in appropriate areas

Valley Glen Park

Size: 2.91 acres

Features:

- Basketball court
- Additional paved area
- Tot lot
- Large Open lawn

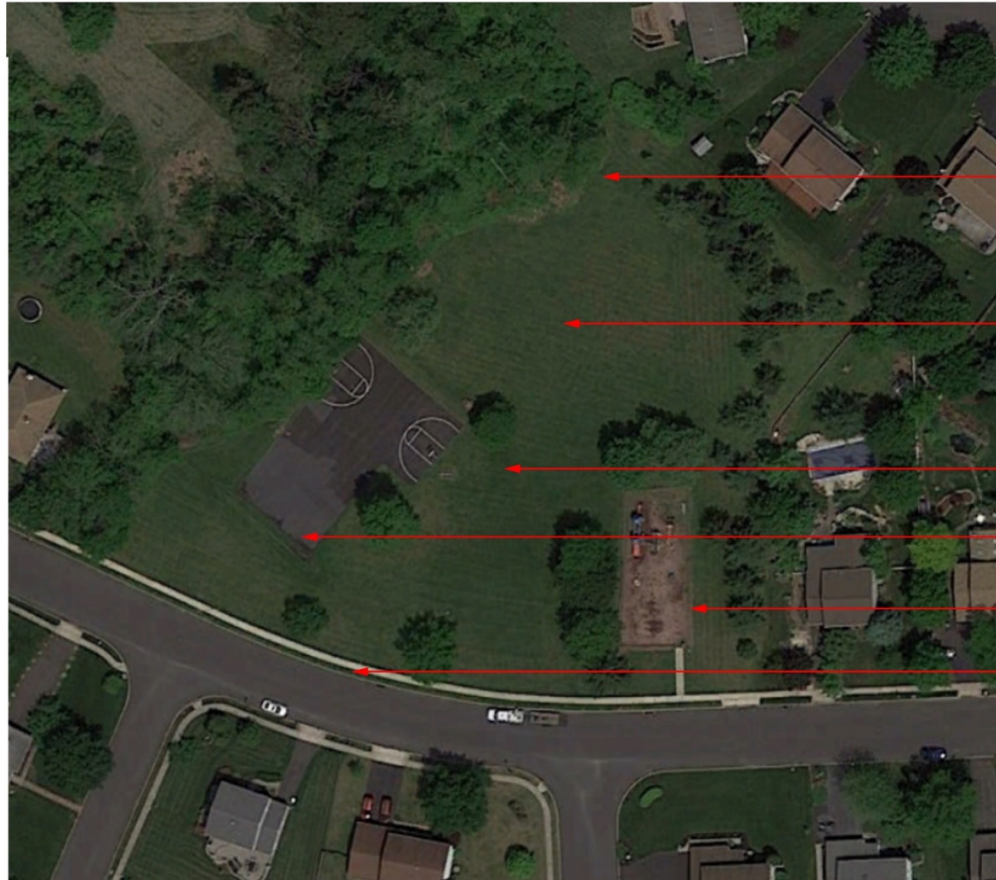
Issues/Constraints:

- Site does not seem well-planned and use is unclear, particularly the additional paved area adjacent to the basketball court
- There are few visitor amenities on the site such as shade, seating, trash receptacles, or lighting
- The tot lot is severely constrained by the close fencing
- The site seems disjointed and areas are not connected via a path system
- Parking is unclear.
- There are few/no activities for seniors within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Park should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- Tree plantings and landscaping to provide shade and visual interest
- Improve the signage and landscaping to create a sense of arrival.
- Potential connections with larger park system through township-owned land (Palomino Park and Dapple Tot Lot)
- Add more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, and lighting.
- Add shade to the tot lot area, remove existing fencing and replace with less utilitarian option.
- Create a secondary accessible and well-signed internal path/circulation system to increase potential uses and interest.
- Stewardship: Allow some areas of mown lawn to convert to natural meadow areas, plant native tree grove for shade and wildlife habitat

Valley Glen Park – Issues and Constraints



Boundaries between park area and neighboring residential areas are unclear

Majority of site is high-maintenance mown lawn, with unclear usage

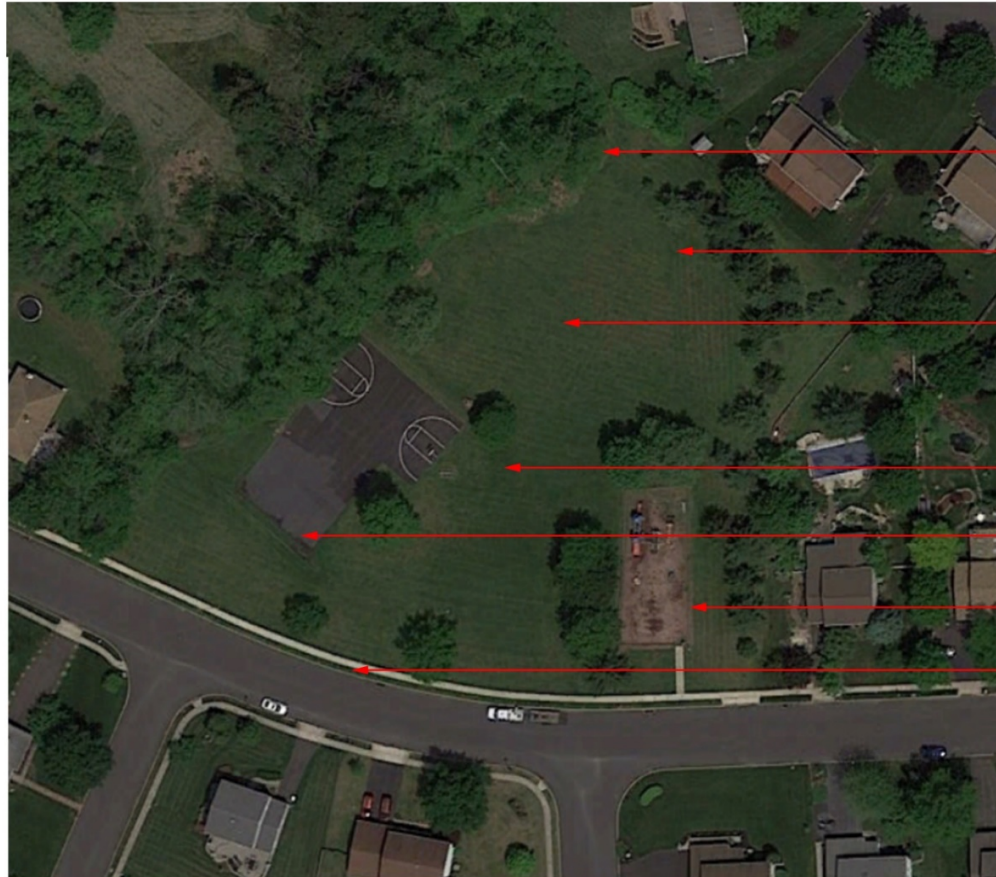
Park lacks basic site amenities such as seating, shade, picnic tables, and waste receptacles

Usage of additional paved area adjacent to basketball court is unclear

Playground area lacks shade and is constrained by chainlink fencing

Park identification and other signage is lacking

Valley Glen Park – Opportunities and Recommendations



- Landscape screening should be added to buffer residential area, potential connections to nearby parks such as Palomino and Dapple via trails or sidewalks should be explored
- Stewardship: allow some mown areas to convert to natural meadow, plant native trees to allow for shade and habitat
- Park should be master planned to cut down on underutilized mown lawn spaces, incorporate more activities and comfortable spaces, and connect them via a multi-use path system
- Park lacks basic site amenities such as seating, shade, picnic tables, and waste receptacles
- Additional paved area adjacent to basketball court should be removed or expanded into a more useful space
- Playground area should be planted with shade trees and fence should be expanded outwards
- Park identification and other signage should be installed

Alou Tot Lot

Size: 3.08 acres

Features:

- Large open lawn
- Backdrop
- Tot Lot

Issues/Constraints:

- There are few visitor amenities on site such as picnic areas, seating, or trash receptacles
- Site signage is minimal
- The site is mostly mown grass, and does not appear to be well-used
- Usage is unclear
- There is no shade or trees except on the edges of the park.
- There are few/no activities for seniors, adults or teens within the park.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Park should be master-planned to incorporate more activities and cut down on wasted open space requiring high maintenance (i.e. mowing).
- Improve the signage and landscaping to create a sense of arrival.
- Tree plantings and landscaping to provide shade and visual interest
- Add more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, and lighting.
- Add shade to the tot lot area, remove existing fencing and replace with less utilitarian option.
- Remove unused baseball backstop.
- Create a secondary accessible and well-signed internal path/circulation system to increase use and interest. Expand wooded area and allow path to meander through it.
- Stewardship: allow certain areas of mown grass to convert to native wet or dry meadow. Monitor and manage invasive species at woodland edge. Plant native tree groves for habitat and shade.

Alou Tot Lot – Issues and Constraints



Park boundaries are unclear

Park consists mostly of high-maintenance mown grass area

Park activities are unclear, and park lacks paths for circulation

There are few visitor amenities on site such as shade, seating, tables, or other site furniture

Playground area is constrained by chainlink fencing, and lacks shade or other amenities for caregivers

Park identification and other signage is lacking

Alou Tot Lot – Opportunities and Recommendations



— Landscape screening should be added to buffer residential area, potential connections to nearby via trails or sidewalks should be explored

— Stewardship: allow some mown areas to convert to natural meadow, plant native trees to allow for shade and habitat

— Park should be master planned to decrease amount of high-maintenance and underutilized mown lawn areas, and to incorporate other activities, a multi-use trail system, and signage

— Remove unused backstop structure

— Playground area should be planted with shade trees, fence should be expanded outwards, and seating installed

— Park identification and other signage should be installed

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots

Size: less than 1 acre

Features:

- Dapple Tot Lot
 - Play Area (1)
 - Natural Forested Area
- Penns Wood Tot Lot
 - Play Area (1)
- Shank Tot Lot
 - Play Area (1)
- Warrington Village Tot Lot
 - Play Area (1)
 - Basketball Court (1)
 - Tennis Court (1)
- Willow Knoll Park
 - Play Area (1)
 - Basketball Court (1)
 - Pavilions (2)

Issues/Constraints (in general):

- There are few visitor amenities on the sites such as picnic areas, seating, or trash receptacles
- Site signage is minimal and appears to have been installed at different times by different groups.
- The sites appear largely unmaintained and equipment appears aged and in disrepair
- Sites seem cramped, fencing is very close to play equipment
- Sites seem uncomfortable due to lack of shade
- There are few/no activities for seniors, adults or teens within the parks.

Opportunities/Recommendations (in general):

- Update equipment when possible, including surfacing
- Consider nature play elements if possible
- Consider splash elements if possible

- Add consistent entry and rules and regulations signage
- Add landscaping to increase appeal and provide much-needed shade
- Add consistent seating options, as well as waste receptacles, picnic tables and water fountains if possible.
- Replace chain link fencing with less utilitarian design, pull fencing and seating away from play equipment when possible
- Add perimeter or internal bike or toy-friendly loop paths if possible
- Improve lighting in parks that already have electrical, such as Willow Knoll.
- Stewardship: In all tot lots, native landscaping and trees could be installed as habitat, to provide shade for visitors, and to provide educational opportunities. In some areas, particularly Shank and Dapple, adjacent wooded areas must be monitored and managed for invasive species. At Willow Knoll, areas of mown grass could be converted to natural meadow. At Shank, Dapple and Warrington Village, connections to adjacent waterways or overlooks could be created.

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Issues and Constraints

Tot Lot

Dapple



- Some structures on site could use screening or transformation into usable park features
- Play surface either non-existent or requires improvement
- Park lacks interior paths for ease of access
- Park boundaries are unclear



- Park identification and other signage is lacking
- Park lacks connection with surrounding natural areas

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Opportunities and Recommendations

Dapple Tot Lot



- Stewardship: Monitor and manage invasives in adjacent wooded areas
- Install mulch safety surface underneath existing play equipment
- Install a meandering interior circulation path
- Install wood fencing or landscape screening along road edges



- Install additional site amenities such as seating, tables, etc.
- Install consistent park identification and other signage
- Install nature play zones within open areas of the park
- Create connections/access to adjacent natural areas

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Issues and Constraints

Woods Tot Lot

Penn



Play area lacks shade

Play area is not easily accessible

Landscaping needs improvement

Identification and other site signage is lacking



Chainlink fence is very close to play equipment and makes the space feel constrained

Play area lacks site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water or waste receptacles

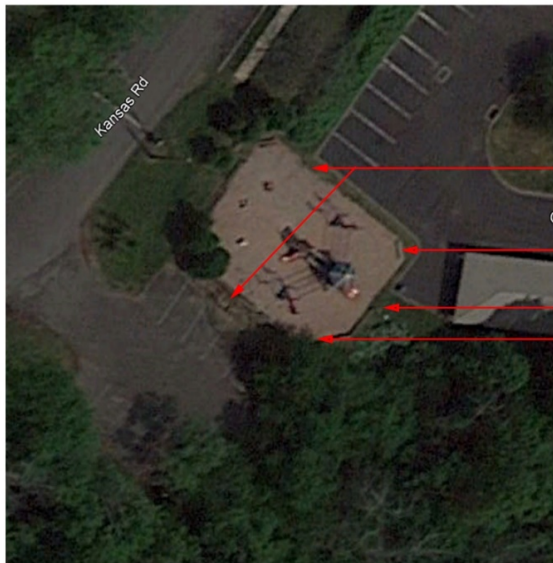
No path connection to parking

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Opportunities and Recommendations

Penn Woods Tot Lot



- Stewardship: Monitor and manage invasives in adjacent wooded areas
- Install mulch safety surface underneath existing play equipment
- Install wood fencing or landscape screening along road edges
- Install cohesive signage at entrance and throughout site



- Install a perimeter trail enclosed by fencing, and a connection to both parking areas
- Extend fencing outwards, consider replacing with less utilitarian look such as wood
- Install canopy trees to provide more shade
- Install more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water and waste receptacles

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Issues and Constraints

Tot Lot

Shank



- Tree canopy is overly dense, creating dark unwelcoming feel
- Surrounding wooded areas are overgrown and unmaintained
- Fencing is very tight to play equipment
- Safety surface is inadequate
- No accessible connection between parking and play area



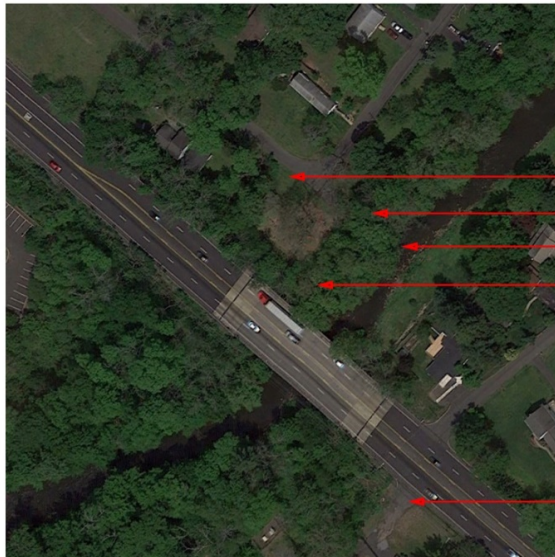
- Site signage is lacking and non-cohesive
- No connections with adjacent natural areas
- Basic site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water and waste receptacles are lacking
- No connection with existing trail across road

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Opportunities and Recommendations

Shank Tot Lot



- Stewardship: Monitor and manage invasives in adjacent wooded areas
- Expand fencing outwards, replace with wood or other type
- Install mulch safety surface underneath existing play equipment
- Install wood fencing or landscape screening along road edges
- Create path from parking/street



- Install cohesive identification and other site signage
- Lighten existing tree canopy to create more dappled shade
- Create connections with adjacent natural areas
- Install more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water and waste receptacles
- Create more of a connection with existing trail across road

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Issues and Constraints

Warrington Village Tot Lot



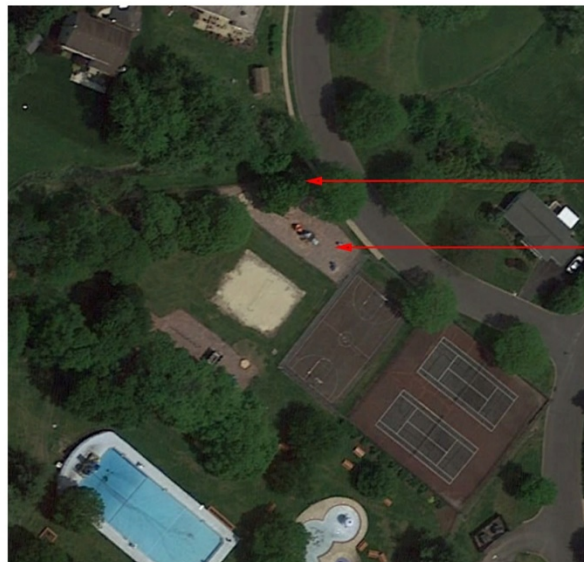
Existing trees do not adequately shade entire site

Adjacent membership-only club with larger, newer play area

No connection with adjacent natural area

Mulch safety surface is inadequate

Existing fence is utilitarian and unfriendly

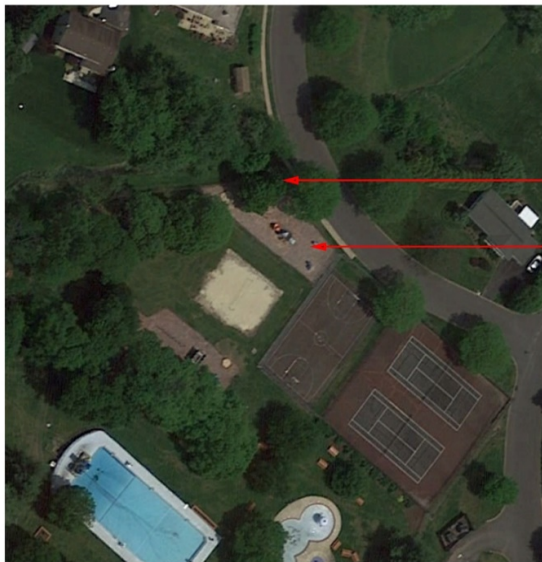


No identification or other site signage

Very few site amenities such as seating, picnic tables or water



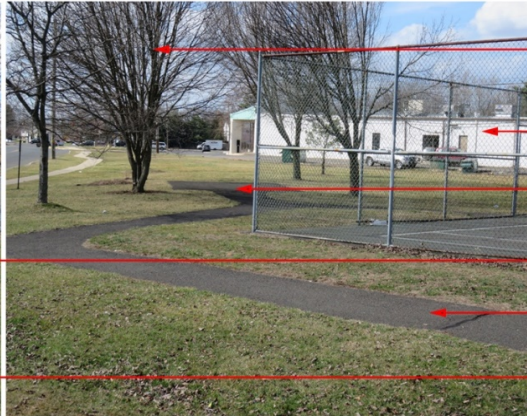
- Stewardship: Monitor and manage invasives in adjacent wooded areas
- Screen view to adjacent membership-only club
- Create connection with adjacent natural area
- Install mulch safety surface underneath existing play equipment
- Expand fencing outwards, replace with wood or other type



- Install cohesive identification and other site signage
- Install more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water and waste receptacles

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Opportunities and Recommendations

Warrington Village Tot Lot



- Existing trees require pruning and maintenance
- View to adjacent industrial properties are dominant
- Site amenities such as lighting, seating, picnic tables, and waste cans are lacking, water fountain is non-functional
- Safety surface underneath play equipment needs improvement
- Perimeter trail and interior circulation are disjointed and do not create a loop
- Garden plots are not maintained



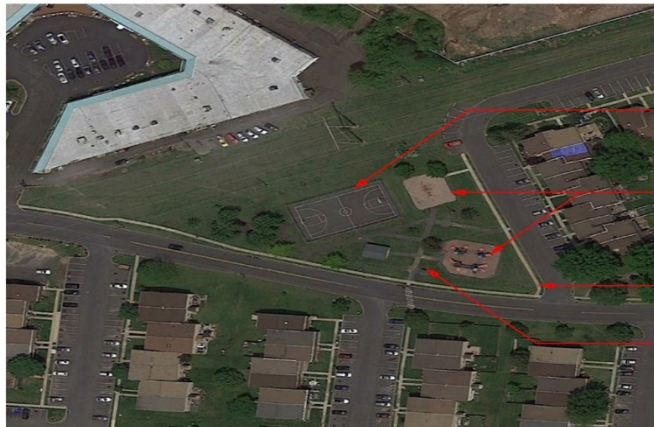
- Fencing, surface and hoops at basketball court area require repair
- Fencing adjacent to tot lot is too close, utilitarian and in need of maintenance, play areas are not combined and create difficulties for caregivers
- Site signage is lacking and/or fading and in disrepair
- Site kiosk is in disrepair and appears unused

Mini Neighborhood Parks/Tot Lots – Opportunities and Recommendations

Willow Knoll Park



- Stewardship: Allow some areas of mown lawn to convert to native meadow, plant native shade trees and landscape
- Screen view to adjacent industrial properties
- Install more site amenities such as seating, picnic tables, water and waste receptacles
- Install mulch safety surface underneath existing play equipment
- Expand perimeter trail and improve circulation within park
- Consider creation of community garden plots



- Repair fencing, surface and hoops at basketball court area, add lighting and bleacher-type seating to expand play opportunities
- Relocate play equipment to connect areas, consider larger area within fence or enclosing entire park in wooden or less utilitarian fence
- Add identification and other cohesive site signage throughout park
- Repair site kiosk, keep updated with township news and events

Other Significant Open Spaces

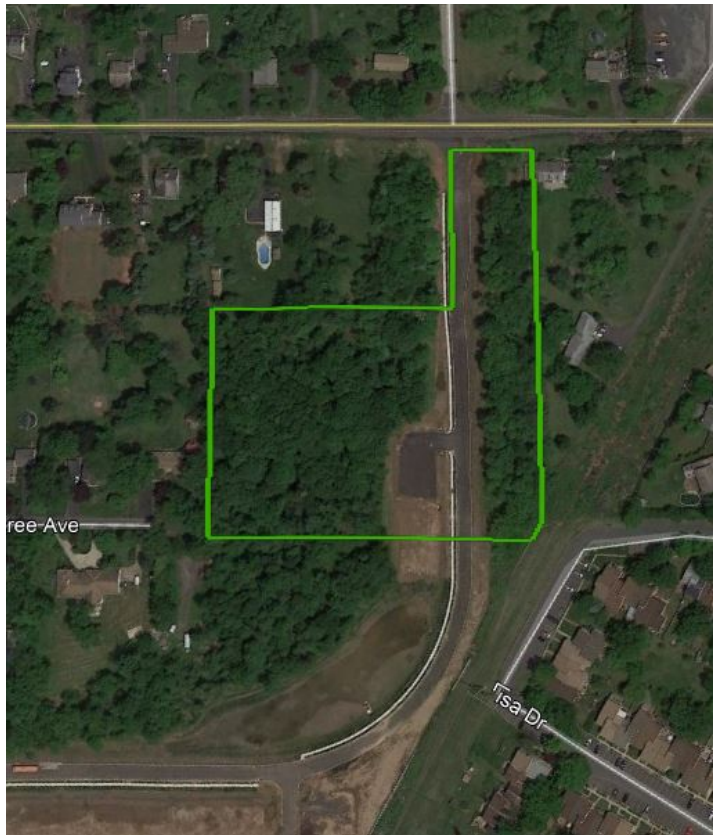
Anderson Way Parkland

Address/location: Anderson Way east of 611

Acres: 6

Current Features: Neighborhood playground, forest, parking

Opportunities: ?



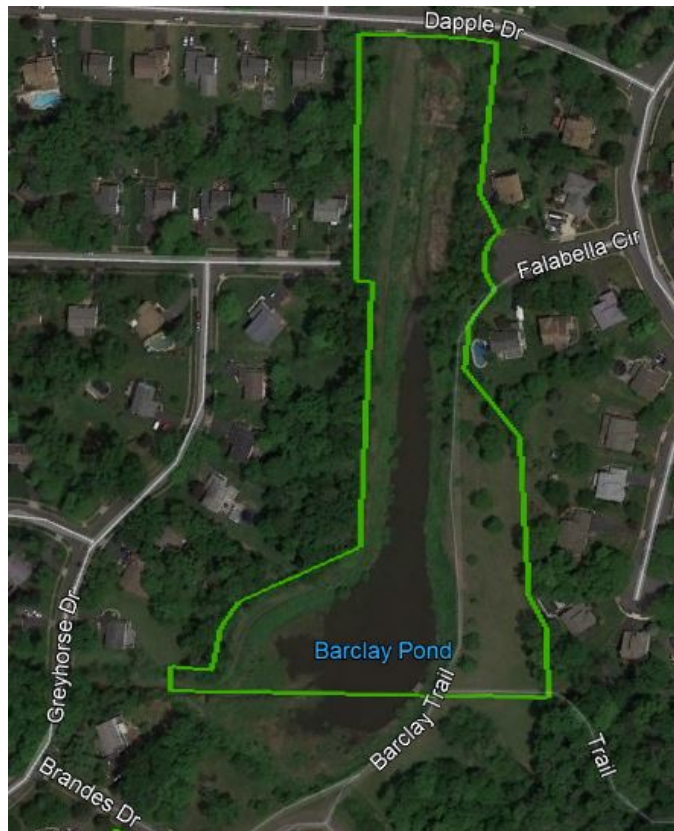
Barclay Pond

Address/location: Adjoining Barclay Elementary to Dapple Dr.

Acres: 6.66

Current Features: Stormwater detention, mowed grass, trails

Opportunities: Naturalize the basin as possible, create a more inviting space, signage and other recommendations common with other parks



Bradford Dam (Municipal)

Address/location: County Line Rd. just south of Bradford Dam

Acres: 9.33

Current Features: Forest, meadow

Opportunities: Maintain natural area, Bradford Dam access, trails



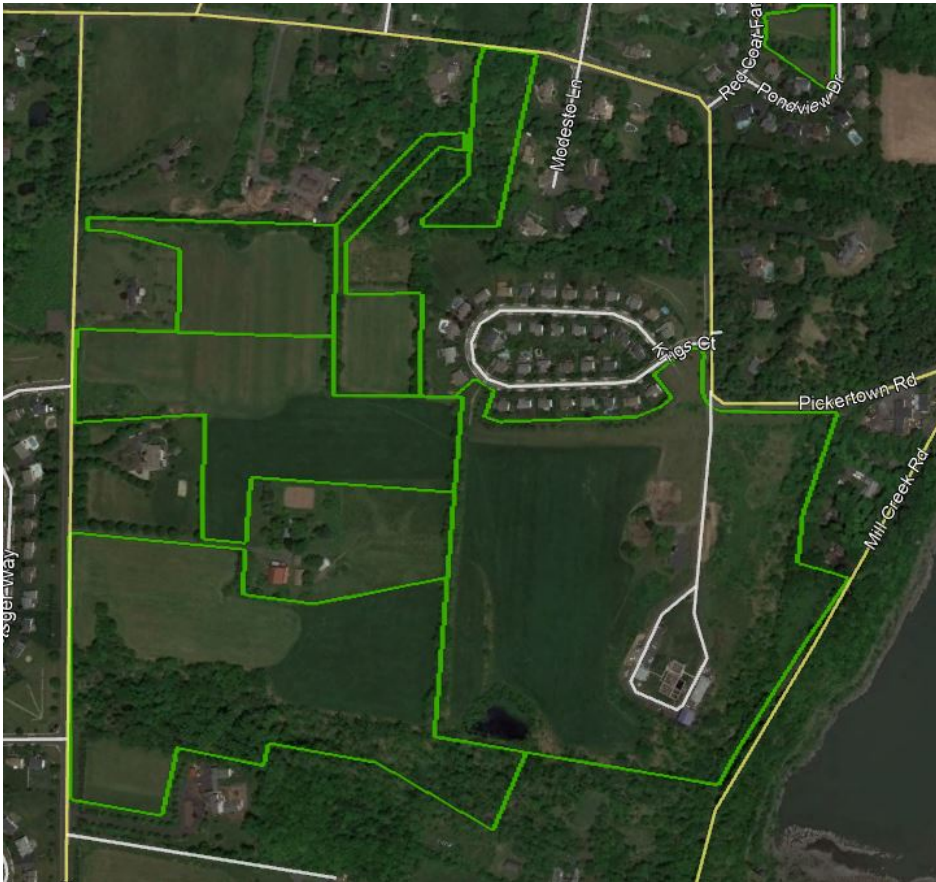
Mill Creek Preservation Area

Address/location: South of Pickertown Rd., east of Stump Rd., Kings Court

Acres: 75

Current Features: Forest, streams, wetlands, leased farmland

Opportunities: Develop public access and stewardship plan, multi-use and natural surface trails, meadows, minor park infrastructure and site furniture such as typical for environmental education, parking



Neshaminy Gardens

Address/location: Little Neshaminy Ct. adjoining Alou Tot Lot, Warrington Ave.

Acres: 10.44

Current Features: Forest, stream

Opportunities: Maintain as riparian corridor, trail links



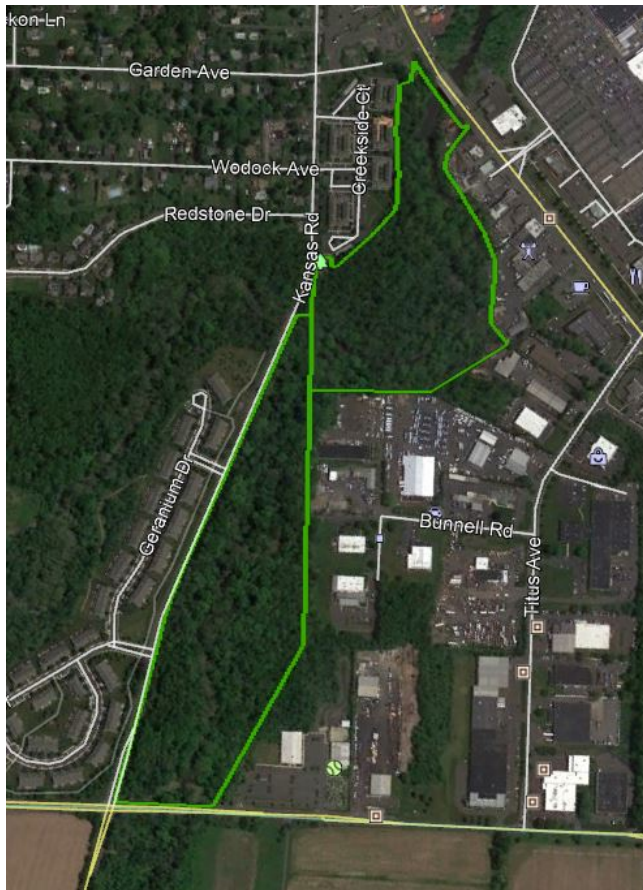
Park Creek Open Space

Address/location: Kansas Rd. between County Line Rd. and 611

Acres: 48.87

Current Features: Forest, stream

Opportunities: Develop management plan for the property, maintain as natural area, trails near Kansas Road



Stump Road Open Space

Address/location: Stump Rd. between Pickertown Rd. and Bristol Rd.

Acres: 35.56

Current Features: Forest, streams, wetlands

Opportunities: Develop management plan for the property, trails and connections, maintain as natural area



50 Benefits of Parks & Recreation

Fosters community pride. Protects scenic beauty. Makes our communities special places in which to live. Conserves natural resources. Creative play. Improves physical, cognitive, social and emotional functioning of people with special needs. Reduces the isolation of the elderly. Facilitates active healthy lifestyles. Enhances property values. Reduces stormwater management costs. Fortifies economic development. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Creates lively public spaces. Prevents drug abuse. Deters crime. Builds strong families. Keeps kids safe. Reduces pollution and carbon footprint. Promotes healthy food production and choices. Connects people to nature. Builds a sense of community. Preserves and sustains environmental quality. Buffers extremes of draught and flooding. Workforce preparation. Teen mentoring. Improves student performance. Administers nutrition programs. Increases community safety. Improves air quality. Enhances access to socio-cultural goods. Promotes diversity. Generates \$140 billion in economic activity in our country annually. Serves as civic repository of social capital and community wellbeing. Protects trees and beautiful landscapes. Interprets our cultural heritage. Celebrates our history. Reduces health care costs. Creates multi-modal transportation. Provides a forum for the arts. Fosters team building and leadership. Creates memories. Protects wildlife. Adds life to your years and years to your life.

Source: Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation Society 2017



Warrington Township
852 Easton Rd.
Warrington, PA 18976
215-343-9350
www.warringtontownship.org