



# Legacy of Parks and Recreation

Plymouth Township  
Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Plan  
2019 - 2029



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# **Plymouth Township**

## **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan 2019 - 2029:**

### **LEGACY OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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Financial support for this plan was provided by Plymouth Township and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation through the Community Conservation Partnerships Program funded by the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund

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# Acknowledgements

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With special thanks to the Montgomery County  
Planning Commission for coordination and  
support in the public engagement process

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# Foreword

Plymouth Township made no small plans for making our community one of the best places in Pennsylvania in which to live, work, raise a family, and retire. Visionaries here dared to dream of establishing the Greater Plymouth Community Center and our eleven beloved parks. We marvel at the dedication and commitment that our elected and appointed officials continue to have in providing one of the finest parks and recreation systems in Pennsylvania. Today, Plymouth Township is a highly desirable place in which to live, with houses often sold as they enter the market and businesses vie for locations here. The Township's reputation is due in large part to our parks and recreation opportunities. Our parks and recreation system serves as a central gathering place, a point of local pride, a source of health and wellness, and a sanctuary from stress.

As Plymouth Township evolves and the needs, interests, and lifestyles of our residents change, our parks and recreation system needs to go forward, stay relevant, and be the best part of everyone's day! To ensure that our parks and recreation system remains environmentally and financially sustainable, we have developed our plan of action for the next ten years. This plan will ensure that present and future generations will have opportunities to connect with nature close-to-home, safely walk and bicycle, enjoy our top-notch parks, and participate in our programs that add years to our lives and life to our years.

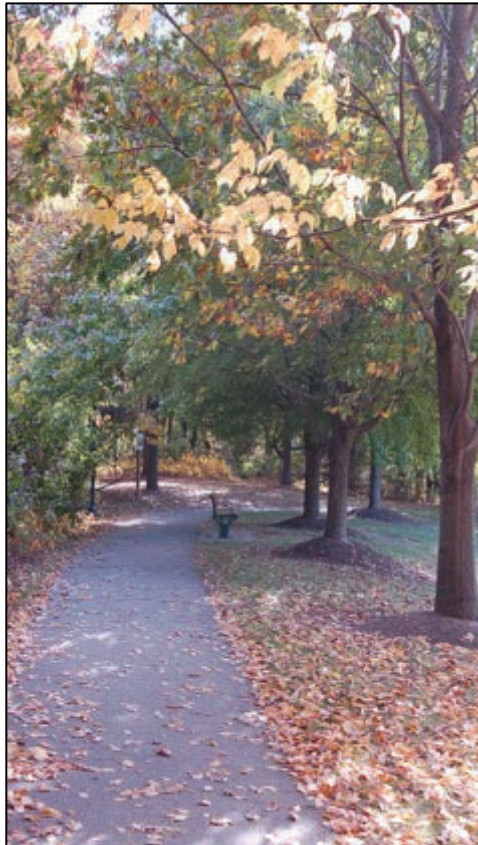
**Legacy of Parks and Recreation: Plymouth Township's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2019 – 2029** celebrates what the Township has already achieved and defines a path for making the Greater Plymouth Community Center, parks, programs, and services even better. Everyone who cares about Plymouth Township has a role to play in taking our parks and recreation system to its next level of excellence. Plymouth Township is committed to implementing this plan. I am asking you to join us in making it a reality.

Signature - Karen S. Franck, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation



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Connecting with nature close to home in Plymouth Township's parks.

# Building Upon Success

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## Parks and Recreation Matters

Our parks and recreation system serves as a central gathering place, a point of local pride, a source of health and wellness, and a sanctuary from the stresses of modern life

We found throughout the planning process that people love our parks, programs, and the Greater Plymouth Community Center. People go to our facilities to be with their friends and meet new ones, play with their children, enjoy organized sports, exercise, connect with nature, play music, eat, get away from it all, relax, and refresh. Our programs help our children to feel safe, develop positive interests, learn how to socialize and play sports, and create life-long healthy active lifestyles and interests. We reduce the isolation of the elderly and those who live here – a vital service that improves the health, well-being, and quality of life.

Research shows that parks and recreation are good for you. Parks and recreation improve health, deters crime, stimulates the economy, and enhances the livability of all communities.

- Public safety is strongly linked with parks and recreation opportunities.

- Quality parks and recreation in a community is a critical driver in attracting and retaining businesses and jobs.
- Parks and recreation are an essential factor in how livable communities are.
- Proximity to parks increases private property value, which increases property tax revenues and improves local economies.

## About the Plan

Plymouth Township secured grant funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) to support this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. It will help to ensure that the Township will continue to have a thriving public parks and recreation system far into the future. By undertaking this plan, Plymouth Township demonstrated its ongoing commitment to public parks and recreation.

## Commitment to Implementation

Plymouth Township has a successful track record of creating action plans that get implemented. This plan is the fifth in a series of comprehensive plans for Plymouth Township's parks, recreation, and open space. These plans included the original parks and recreation plan in 1994, two updates, and the Township's open space plan. In addition to these plans, the Township developed four park master plans as well as plans and updates, both physical and management, for the Greater Plymouth Community Center. This work resulted in the:

- Improvement of existing township parks over the last 25 years.
- Acquisition and development of Harriet Wetherill Park earned a state award for being the first "Green Park" in Pennsylvania in 2010.
- Development of the Community Center Park which includes the baseball field as an NCAA Division 1 facility in partnership with Villanova University.
- Establishment and expansion of the Greater Plymouth Community Center now recognized as a national model of community center operation.
- Expansion of programs and services that provide year-round opportunities for all ages and interests.
- Integration of parks into overall township planning, sustainability, and management.

## Plans Developed and Implemented by Plymouth Township

- Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan: Pathways to the Future (1994)
- Plymouth Township Community Center Master Plan Study (1994)
- Pathways to the Future Addendum: A Plan for Open Space and Natural Resource protection (1995)
- Park Master Plans for JFK Park (2008), Colwell Park (2010), and the Community Center Park (1994 & 1996)
- Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan: *Plymouth...Naturally!* (2006)
- Harriet Wetherill Park Master Plan (2006)
- Harriet Wetherill Park Conservation and Management Plan (2013)
- Harriet Wetherill Park Land Management and Stewardship Plan (2013)



## **Parks and Recreation: On the Move**

The Parks and Recreation Department has evolved over the last three decades by:

- Developing the parks into a system with high-quality recreation opportunities mainly focused on active recreation, then...
- Establishing the Greater Plymouth Community Center to provide indoor recreation. Preparation for this included the revitalization of existing parks and recreation facilities to ensure a balance of outdoor and indoor recreation, then...
- Connecting the community with nature. The acquisition and development of Harriet Wetherill Park was a significant transition into natural resource management and education, and stewardship, then...
- Expanding programs and services, resulting in thousands of hours of recreation opportunities for our residents year-round and adapting recreation opportunities so that they are fresh and relevant amidst seismic changes in technology, climate, and society.
- Connecting our community with safe places to walk and bicycle. The Montgomery County Bicycle System has spurred bicycle trail use countywide. It has sparked interest and demand among township residents for safe places to walk and bicycle close to home that also connect to regional trails.

## **Plan Purpose**

This current plan update celebrates these accomplishments and builds a roadmap for further success as the Parks and Recreation Department looks to the future. Of particular significance in this plan update is creating safe places to walk and bicycle; updating the Greater Plymouth Community Center; optimizing our community parks with facilities, services, and continued maintenance; positioning our programs to anticipate changing community needs and recreation interests; connecting people to nature; advancing health and wellness through recreation; and continuing to manage our parks and recreation system with excellence and ensuring optimal benefits to all citizens and community organizations.

Consistent with all previous plans, the overarching aim of this plan is to establish a practical, achievable course of action.

## **Plan Process**

The Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department launched the planning process with the support of Toole Recreation Planning, Wilson Design Studios, and ATC Engineering. A Study Committee and three sub-committees of thought leaders and community advocates served as advisors guiding the plan. The team conducted research and fieldwork, gathered information on community needs, evaluated existing conditions, assessed service levels, and identified future needs and opportunities in five areas, including the following:

- Plymouth Township trends and coordination with the Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan;



- Parks and Recreation Facilities;
- Greater Plymouth Community Center
- Programs and Services; and
- Administration, Management, and Financing.

## Heart of the Plan: Community Engagement

Community engagement was at the foundation of the plan. The process to involve citizens in Plymouth was explicitly designed to meet the needs of the busy lifestyles of the community evident here, collaborate with the Comprehensive Plan, and maximize the breadth and depth of the input. The process included advisory committees, a community public opinion survey, focus groups, interviews, and public meetings.

## Advisory Committees

Five committees organized around specific purposes served to inform the planning process.

- **Core Committee** – The Township Manager, Director of Parks and Recreation, Assistant parks and Recreation Director, and Buildings and Grounds Director. Together, they provided oversight and direction in maximizing public engagement within the framework of other township functions.
- **Plan Advisory Committee** – Five citizen members:
  - Advised parks, recreation, open space, and trails overall.

- Advocated as champions of the plan and planning process.
- Engaged in public outreach.
- Lent support and assistance to the planning team regarding issues, opportunities, and concerns.

- **Sub-Committees** – Three subcommittees were formed to address the main topics presented in this plan:
  - The Trails Committee worked on safe places to walk and bicycle, building upon the efforts of the Environmental Advisory Council.
  - The Parks, Facilities & Conservation Committee worked on parks and recreation facilities for the future.
  - The Recreation Programs and Services Committee helped to formulate recreation and service delivery over the Next ten years.

## Public Opinion Questionnaire

The online public opinion survey generated 393 responses.

## Focus Groups

The planning team met with

### Parks and Recreation: Make Plymouth a Great Place to Live

95% of respondents to the public opinion questionnaire indicated that township parks, trails, and the Greater Plymouth Community Center make this a great community in which to live.

small groups of people with a common interest related to parks, recreation, open space, trails, and community planning. They included the Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Board, Sports Organizations, Comprehensive Plan committee meetings on the riverfront, Plymouth Meeting Mall, open space and community destinations and hubs. A meeting with the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society was held in conjunction with another project with findings applied to the PROS plan. Focus group meetings were also held with township program staff and maintenance staff.

## Interviews

More than 25 interviews were conducted with general citizens, elected and appointed officials, township management, Parks and Recreation Department management and staff, community-based organizations, Montgomery County Planning Commission staff; special needs organizations, sports organization representatives, community center expert and community centers in other areas, business people, teachers, environmental education, and trail advocates.

## Public Meetings and Community Venues

Two public meetings were held with about 130 people in attendance. Both sessions were a collaborative effort of the **Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan** and the **Legacy of Parks and Recreation Plan**. In the first interactive forum, citizens identified opportunities, ideas, and concerns about parks, recreation, trails, and open space. In the second forum, citizens responded to parks, recreation, and trail improvement recommendations for the next ten years.

In addition to the public meetings, the planning team reached out to citizens at Plymouth Township Community Day, an annual fair attended by more than 3,000 people. A second Community Day was planned, but the event was canceled for the first time in over 25 years due to rain.

### Parks & Recreation Department: Community Favorite

Among all public services, citizens ranked Plymouth Township's parks and recreation as their most preferred, second only to the schools.

Plymouth Township Day  
attended by thousands of residents

## What the Citizens Had to Say

Overall, the citizens highly appreciate and use Plymouth Township parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

- Parks and recreation and schools are the most liked public services in Plymouth Township.
- The parks and recreation system was cited as a reason that people are moving into the Township.
- According to the public opinion questionnaire, nine out of 10 respondents use township parks and recreation facilities.
- Favorite park uses are walking, using the playgrounds, and sports.

- The most used facility is the Greater Plymouth Community Center, including the community center and the park. The next most used is East Plymouth Valley Park.
- The top priority identified was safe places to walk and bicycle as the chief improvement for parks and recreation.
- More programs in the parks, especially for adults, is the top programming preference.
- New ballfields, especially rectangular fields, pickleball courts, play equipment, and pavilions are the top facility preferences for the future.
- For indoor recreation, more room in the community center for programs, fitness, and camps was identified as necessary.

## Findings

The research, fieldwork, and public outreach yielded the following conclusions.

1. **Importance of parks and recreation** - Plymouth Township residents deeply value their parks and recreation facilities and programs.
2. **Implementation is vital** - Plymouth Township has a successful track record of establishing one of the finest parks and recreation systems in Pennsylvania grounded in public engagement, the commitment of elected and appointed officials, and excellence in management. Planning the continued legacy of excellent management is to be an essential task in the next five years.
3. **Staying Relevant** - The 8.49 square mile community with a population of 17,597 is nearly fully developed. While the population is increasing, diversifying, and aging, young families are moving in, and properties are turning over from empty nesters. The elementary school required expansion and a new middle school is being built.
4. **Park System** - Eleven parks with 149 acres range include small neighborhood parks to larger community parks that are about 50% active and 50% passive. Making the most of every facility is important here as the Township is short of parkland by a minimum of 31 acres in the form of a true community park. While the Township has been improving parks for decades, these improvements are aging, outdated, and incapable of meeting changing community needs. Continued revitalization of the facilities is crucial; improving, adding, and changing parks to meet community needs and recreation trends is a hallmark of the Parks and Recreation Department.
5. **GPCC** - The Greater Plymouth Community Center is the crown jewel of the community. Now 19 years old, the center requires cyclic replacement and repair and re-branding to ensure that it continues to be relevant, changes with the times and perspective of those who enjoy and use it.
6. **Programs** - Plymouth Township is known far and wide for excellence in programming. Offering hundreds of programs and thousands of hours of opportunities in a wide range of interests to citizens from pre-school through retirement, the Department specializes in fitness, aquatics, youth, and smaller-scale special events. All programs garner top-notch reviews by participants. Based upon public input, the next frontier in

programming is more significant special events, more programs in parks, more programs for adults, nature and environmental education and the arts. Limitations in parks due to park size and limited parking will affect programming.

7. **Financing** - Financial conditions are changing with past sources of revenues such as tipping fees from the Trash to Steam Plant decreasing require the Department to be ever vigilant in revenue and expenditure management. The Department has been a national model in community center management and cost recovery that is expected to continue. Major Township needs, such as a new township building will impact the capital improvement budget for parks and the Community Center.
8. **Maintenance** - While Plymouth Township parks are consistently safe, clean and aesthetically pleasing, support continues to be the biggest challenge as it is in park and recreation systems everywhere. Long-term, about 75 percent of the cost of a park over its lifetime is in maintenance. The demands on township maintenance overall are high, and within township operations, park maintenance needs are significant. The park maintenance team provides support for other township maintenance needs and projects beyond parks. The maintenance management team and staff are dedicated, passionate workers in taking care of parks and recreation facilities. As facilities are developed or revitalized, planning for the protection of this investment through effective maintenance is essential.

9. **Capital Improvements** - Capital Improvement Projects for parks and recreation must be considered within the framework of overall township planning with respect to other township initiatives.

10. **Continued recognition and support of parks and recreation.** While the Township government and its facilities have significant needs and financial challenges, it is crucial for Plymouth Township to continue to invest in and support parks and recreation as its primary asset. Ensuring that the parks and recreation facilities continue as the community jewels is essential to the overall well-being of the community and township government.





Participants enjoying the programs of the Parks and Recreation Department



# Moving Forward

## **Plymouth Township: A Community of Choice**

The eight square mile community of population of 17,597 is a community of choice with houses being sold as they enter the market, often at higher prices than advertised. Reasons for this include the top-notch parks and recreation opportunities, Greater Plymouth Community Center, excellent schools, and superb public service.

### **The Citizens**

Although Plymouth Township is nearly fully developed, the population continues to grow. From 2010 to 2017, the growth rate was 4.8, more than double that of Montgomery County at 2.1 percent and more than five times that of Pennsylvania's growth at 0.69 percent. New multi-family housing developments added about 800 people. This population increase also brought changes that indicate that the community is diversifying and aging as young families are calling Plymouth home now. While the municipality is predominantly Caucasian at 78 percent, the Asian population (9%) and the African American (10.6%) percent have increased. The Hispanic population, regardless of race, also grew to 4.8 percent.

As the median age decreased from 42.4 to 40 since 2010, households with children under 18 increased by 1.5 percent from 20.3 percent to 21.8 percent. The most significant change was the increase of people over 62 years of age from 21.8 percent to 36.5 percent in the last seven years.

The Township continues to be affluent and well-educated. The median household income increased in actual value from \$68,598 to \$83,654, about a \$5,000 gain beyond inflation. Despite the increase in household income, Plymouth Township has gotten to be a more expensive place to live. In 2000, about 31 percent of renters paid more than 35 percent of their income on rent, but in 2017, 38 percent did. Buying a house here increased the percentage of household income from 20.8 percent to 23.4 percent since 2010. Since 2012, poverty rose from 3.6 percent to 4.8 percent. Those most affected by poverty are senior adults, youth, females, Latinos, and those with lower educational levels.

### **Implications for Parks and Recreation**

As the population increased, diversified, and continued to age while also adding young families, the following impact on parks and recreation require consideration in this plan:

- Although the population increased by 800 people since 2010, the Township did not add any parkland.
- A primary target market is those age 62 and older, a vital membership group of the Greater Plymouth Community Center.
- Parks and recreation facilities and programs are essential in addressing significant issues of the residents. These issues include isolation of the elderly and single heads of households, the health of wellness of the community, and the use of electronic devices that inhibit social interaction.
- Recreation programs, services, and outreach will require exploration to ensure meeting the changing needs, interests, and ways of expanding cultures and ethnicity.
- As a public service, the Parks and Recreation Department must continue to find ways to ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of parks and recreation. Historically marginalized groups, including those with physical and cognitive disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, and new Americans have different needs and interests in parks and recreation.

### Market Segmentation: Beyond Demographics

Esri's Tapestry program provides information on communities beyond demographics alone. The Tapestry report contains information about major population segments by their lifestyles, economics, and spending patterns. Such information is beneficial in targeting the service market and advertising programs and services and providing facilities that people desire. The top three population segments that emerged for Plymouth Township include the "Golden Years," "Savvy Suburbanites," and "Pleasantville."

#### Golden Years

Citizens are active, independent seniors who are either retired or nearing retirement. Most are singles or empty nesters. They stay busy with travel, sports, eating out, visiting museums, attending concerts, and focusing on their physical fitness and good health. They are generous supporters of the arts and charitable causes. They are very well-educated and are avid readers. Good health is a priority. They lead active social lives and spend time on sports like tennis, golf, and fishing. They spend above average on health, education, entertainment, and recreation.

#### Savvy Suburbanites

Savvy Suburbanites are well-educated, well-read, and well-capitalized. Most of their adult children have left home or will soon. They tend to live in older neighborhoods and enjoy re-modeling, gardening, sports, and exercise. They are physically fit actively pursuing several sports from skiing to golf with all sports in between like tennis, golf, and working out. They invest heavily in sports gear and exercise equipment. They spend nearly double the average on recreation, education, and health care. They are well connected, do their research, and focus on quality.

#### Pleasantville

The Pleasantville group lives in older housing. Their families are older, with adult children (some of whom still live at home). They maintain dual-income households with higher net worth. They enjoy gardening, going to the beach, visiting theme parks, frequenting museums and attending rock concerts. They spend more than average on recreation, education and spend more freely on quality services for what they like.

## About Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation

### Parks and Recreation Facilities

Plymouth Township has 11 parks with 149 acres and the Greater Plymouth Community Center. Facilities include game courts for tennis and basketball, ball fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball, playgrounds in all parks, pavilions, concession stands, and amphitheater, lighting, parking, restrooms, seating areas, drinking fountains, and landscaping.

Plymouth Township has worked diligently over nearly three decades in building the kind of parks and recreation system that the community desires. Based on a continuous dialog with the community, the Parks and Recreation Department planned and developed the Greater Plymouth Community Center, master-planned and improved the parks, acquired parkland, secured more than \$3.5 million in grant funds, and used innovative strategies to create exemplary partnerships and facilities such as the GPCC Baseball field and the joint venture with Villanova University.

### Organized Programs and Park Use

Annually, the Parks and Recreation Department offers more than 100 types of programs with 1,800 sessions with 4,000 hours serving 25,000 registered participants. Along with Plymouth Township Day and other events, the Township is serving more than 30,000 people in organized programs and events. Many of these programs involve another person or two who come to watch, so there is a multiplier effect

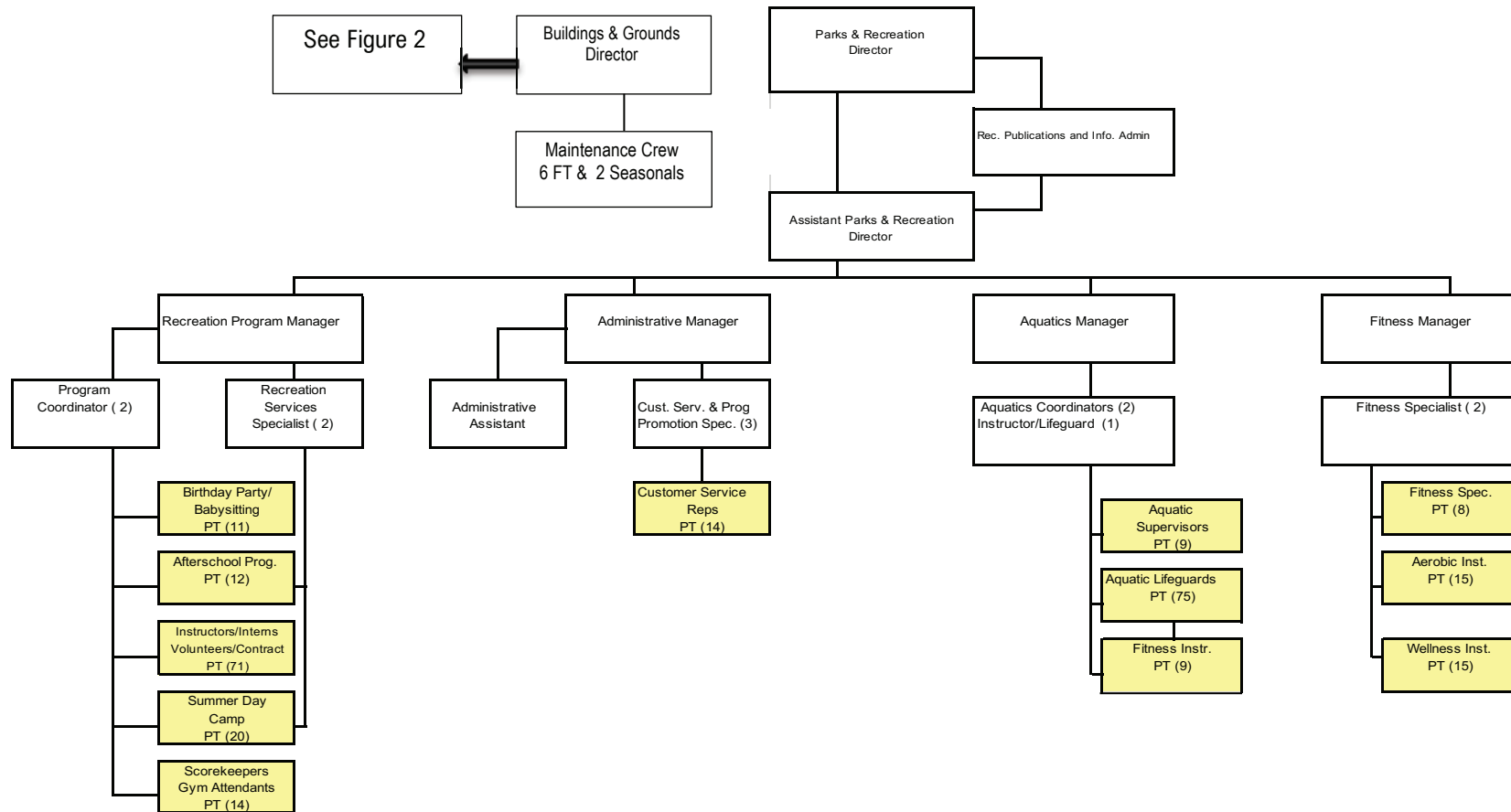
here that raises that number to 40,000. In a typical community, organized programs generate about 18 – 20 percent of overall facility use. That translates into more than 160,000 visits to Plymouth Township parks, roughly 400 people a week and over 300,000 visits to the Community Center. Parks like East Plymouth Valley and the Community Center Park generate higher visitation than that while small neighborhood parks have far less visitation. Those numbers increase annually as new programs are added and word of mouth about the high-quality programs generates more participation.

### Organization and Staffing

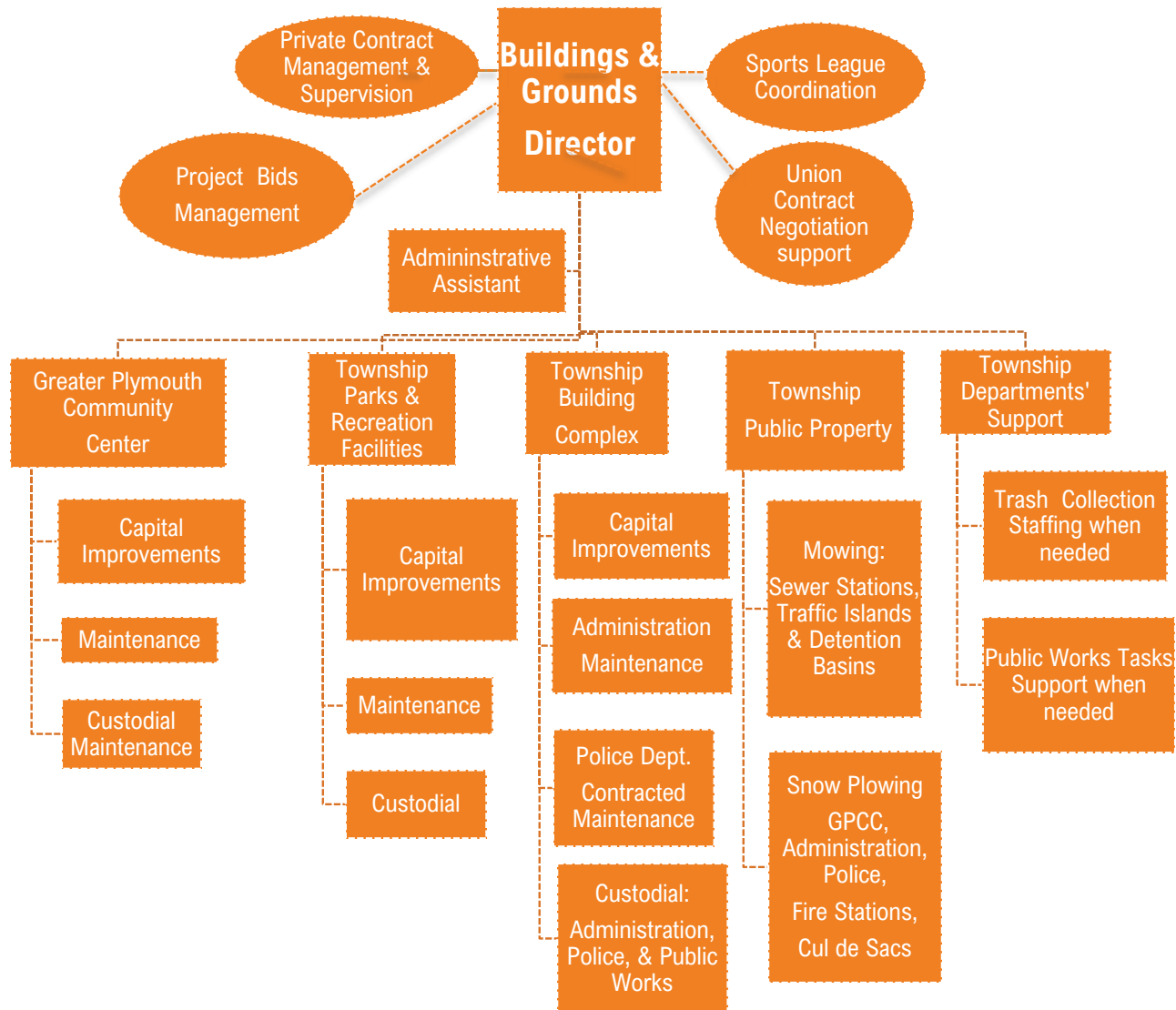
**Figure 1** shows the organizational structure for parks and recreation in Plymouth Township. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for all functions related to parks and recreation except for park maintenance. The Parks and Recreation Department has 20 full-time positions and 173 part-time and seasonal positions. The leadership team consists of the Director, Assistant Director, and four division managers for Programs, Administration, Aquatics, and Fitness. The Buildings and Grounds Division has a manager, six full-time and two seasonal workers. The Parks & Recreation Department and Buildings & Grounds closely collaborate on all facilities of the parks and recreation system. **Figure 2** presents the organizational structure for Buildings & Grounds. The Buildings and Grounds Director is responsible for park maintenance as well as all Township publicly owned land and buildings as well as the management of the Township's associated capital improvement projects.

Figure 1

Plymouth Township Parks Recreation Department  
2019 Organizational Chart



**Figure 2.**  
**Buildings & Grounds Organizational Chart**





## Budget and Financing

Plymouth Township's budget for parks and recreation is \$1,453,016. For the Greater Plymouth Community Center, the budget is \$2,782,694. The Parks and Recreation Department generates 80 percent of the budget for the Greater Plymouth Community Center through fees and charges. The Community Center is a model of community center management nationwide. Revenues from recreation programs outside the walls of GPCC generate 64 percent of the cost, a most favorable return in comparison to an expected return of 35 percent elsewhere in Pennsylvania and a remarkable increase of nearly 50 percent from 44% in 2006. The buildings and grounds budget of \$768,644 translates into \$5,158 per acre for maintenance, an increase from the \$4,377 per acre in 2006.

### **Parks and Recreation: An Investment not a Cost**

For every \$1 the Township contributes to parks and recreation, the Parks and Recreation Department generates another \$1.37

Of the total parks and recreation budget of \$4,235,710, the Parks and Recreation Department generates \$2,449,690. Township support is \$1,786,710. The Parks and Recreation Department generates another \$1.37 for every dollar that the Township budgets for parks and recreation.

Also, the Parks and Recreation Department has generated \$5,292,306 in grants since the last plan in 2006.



Nearly 6,000 people learn how to swim at GPCC annually.

## Plymouth Township Parks & Recreation, Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges & Opportunities

### Strengths

- Commitment of Elected and Appointed Officials
- Strong management team
- Highly favorable support by the public
- Reputation
- Dedicated staff
- Fiscally responsible, accountable, and transparent
- Valuable assets in GPCC, parks, and facilities

### Challenges

- **Not enough parkland**
- GPCC needs more room
- Insufficient parking at GPCC and the parks results in crowding and program limitations for special events and activities.
- Demands on maintenance staff exceed their capacity.
- Township projects such as the Township Building improvements may hamper capital improvements in parks and recreation.
- Creating safe places to walk and bicycle in a developed community with significant highway barriers
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in aquatics and fitness
- Keeping pace with changes in the fitness industry as a revenue source
- Strengthening the image of GPCC as a facility for people of all ages and interests
- Balancing public service with revenue generation and getting all-staff buy-in on the need to press forward with innovation and changes in service delivery.

### Opportunities

- Since the Township is nearly fully developed with limited land remaining, there is a small window of opportunity left to obtain additional parkland.
- Technology presents an opportunity in program expansion, promotion, and management.
- The staff is interested in technology and innovation. Those interested in moving into the future must be supported as a priority.
- The addition of part-time program staff for nature-based programming will free up staff and expand programs in the direction that citizens prefer.
- Transform GPCC's maintenance area into programming area.
- Parks could be "re-organized" to more broadly distribute facilities among all larger parks using a strategic funding plan to relieve the GPCC park of overcrowding and making other parks community destinations with more facilities and programs.

### Threats

- The rate of development and desirability of the Township may preclude the acquisition of much-needed parkland for a community park and a park maintenance location.
- Inability of the Township to move quickly when a key parcel becomes available or before that to negotiate ahead for land.
- Township financial needs may preclude continued investment in the parks and the Greater Plymouth Community Center.
- Wages and salaries in the private sector are higher than Plymouth Township's wage rates for parks and recreation. The wage differential could hamper recruiting for part-time and seasonal positions.

## Values, Vision, and Mission

### Values

SPIRIT encapsulates the Department's passion and success, as shown in its values of sustainability, public service, innovation, responsiveness, integrity, and teamwork. These values will be the basis for all decisions and actions in all levels and areas of parks and recreation.

**Sustainability**, both environmental and financial: By helping to protect and maintain our natural and developed resource as well as by responsibly and efficiently managing the financial health of the Parks and Recreation Department today and for generations to come.

**Public Service**: By knowing our customers, delivering what matters to the community, encouraging and embracing new ideas, seeking and responding to feedback, acting with transparency, and expecting greatness in our Township.

**Innovation**: By encouraging our organizational culture to value new ideas, not fear change or a different way of doing things and be agile enough to move resources to meet the changing needs of our customers, community, and staff.

**Responsiveness**: By creating a culture based on listening, identifying community needs and opportunities, and providing excellent customer service.

**Integrity**: By doing everything personally and professionally possible with value, honesty, and logic.

**Teamwork**: By fostering an atmosphere of cooperation, trust, and resourcefulness with our citizens, community organizations, business, Colonial School District, and other organizations.

### Vision

*By 2029, our parks, recreation, and trail system will be a premier community destination that captives its visitors. The parks help to shape the character of our community and serve as havens of beauty that are part of daily life. Our natural, cultural, and recreational resources cultivate health, fun, relaxation, fitness, and learning for all in building a strong sense of community in Plymouth Township. Our system will be sustainable, both environmentally and financially. Aware of the importance and benefits of parks and recreation, our residents will be proud and involved stewards and supporters of our exceptional parks, recreation, and trail system.*

## Mission

Our mission is to deliver notable value to Plymouth Township by providing exceptional parks, recreation facilities, programs, and safe places to walk and bicycle for our community.

## Plan Recommendations

The recommendations were formulated to move Plymouth Township into its next level of excellence in parks and recreation based upon the assumption that the Township will continue its commitment to plan implementation.

### Goal 1

Ensure the long-term sustainability and success of the Greater Plymouth Community Center.

### Goal 2

Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreational trends.

### Goal 3

Connect our community with safe places to bicycle and walk.

### Goal 4

Provide recreation opportunities that inspire personal growth, healthy lifestyles, connect people with nature, and build a sense of community.

### Goal 5

Continue to manage, operate, and maintain the Plymouth Township park and recreation system in a fiscally responsible, innovative, and dedicated manner that conveys maximum benefit to the public.

## Reader's Guide to the Recommendations

The following sections address each of the five goals. The sections include an overview, why it is important, and the specific actions recommended. The final section provides the action plan with the schedule, responsibilities, and resources.

## Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- **Human health and wellbeing:** positive impacts of parks and park use on human health (both mental and physical) and wellbeing, either through direct or indirect effects such as recreation and leisure activities.
- **Social cohesion and identity:** Parks and recreation strengthen social ties, community relations, and cohesion.
- **Reduces Isolation:** Parks and recreation lessen the isolation of the elderly and those who live or work alone.
- **Economic Development:** parks and recreation is a leading factor in economic development by establishing a high quality of life that attracts workers and businesses.
- **House prices:** the value of parks and recreation as part of the living environment is reflected in higher real estate prices (for both houses and apartments).
- **Biodiversity:** Parks help to harbor and promote biodiversity and species diversity in particular. Biodiversity has a direct link to human wellbeing (e.g., through nature experience), while it also provides the base for ecosystem functioning and thus a range of ecosystem services.
- **Air quality and carbon sequestration:** Parks with their landscaping and trees reduce air pollutant levels and carbon sequestration.
- **Water management:** Parks contribute to the regulation of stormwater and run off. They can help Plymouth Township meet its MS4 requirements.





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# Goal 1

## Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Greater Plymouth Community Center

### Our Vision

The Greater Plymouth Community Center will continue to be our crown jewel as a vibrant, lively community hub serving people of all ages and abilities year-round. Our recreation opportunities will contribute to the health and wellness of our residents, reduce the isolation of the aging and those who work alone, bring families and friends together, and engage our youth in development as productive members of society.

### Why We Care

The Greater Plymouth Community Center opened 19 years ago. Since then, the Center has served the indoor recreation needs of Plymouth Township's residents and the surrounding area. The Center is an exceptional facility, with reliable staff, well-established management practices, a high level of maintenance and where a wide variety of programs and

services are available. It has been a model for public recreation center management and operations not only in eastern Pennsylvania but also nationally. However, due to the Center's age as well as changes to the recreation, aquatics, and fitness market in the Plymouth area, the facility faces new challenges. While the Center is well maintained, it is no longer state of the art and lacks some essential amenities that are in newer recreation centers.

### Analysis and Findings

#### Strengths

**The Facility** – GPCC is clean and very well maintained. It has held up well over the last 18 years. GPCC, with its building and park grounds, is the preferred recreation and fitness destination in the community. The Center has (or will be) replacing some features of the building:

- Lighting changed to LED
- Replacement of the rooftop mechanical systems
- Replacement of the roof



**Commitment of Elected and Appointed Officials -** Plymouth Township elected and appointed officials have always supported and taken an active interest in the Greater Plymouth Community Center.

**National Model of Management and Professional, Dedicated Staff.** The GPCC management team is a stable dedicated group focused on the public good. The management of the Center is continuing at a high level with strong budgeting and operations policies and procedures in place.

**Positive Public Regard and Support** – GPCC is an iconic public facility with widespread name recognition extending well beyond Plymouth Township.

**Diverse and Creative Programming** - The Greater Plymouth Community Center has always offered a wide range of recreation programs and services with a focus on fitness, aquatics, special events, and youth programming. The center staff does an excellent job tracking program characteristics (performance measures). Tracking performance measures needs to continue. The Center currently offers programs in the following general areas:

- Aquatics
- Fitness/Wellness
- Youth (after school/camps/pre-school age)
- Adult General Interest
- Adult Sports
- Youth Sports
- Cultural Arts (arts programming)
- Special Events

**Impact** – The Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department management and staff have a treasure trove of

anecdotal stories attesting to the positive results and value that the GPCC provides to the community.

## **Challenges**

The Greater Plymouth Community Center is in a changing market with more providers and more specialty facilities in the area than when the Center was established. Competition for the Center includes boutique fitness facilities (yoga, barre, cross-fit, etc.), sports specific training facilities, and private swim schools. These facilities provide unique fitness and wellness services, swimming lessons, and other programs. There has also been an influx of conventional fitness centers such as LA Fitness, Retro Fitness, and Planet Fitness that have a low price point. GPCC needs to continue to evolve with the trends in recreation facilities and programs as well as changes in the market or risk becoming less relevant in the community. By not keeping pace with similar facilities and programs burgeoning in the Center's service area, the Center's use and revenues could suffer.

In the coming years, the Greater Plymouth Community Center is going to need to deal with the following challenges:

- The need to rebrand the Center and make physical improvements. Adding additional fitness space should be a priority to increase memberships.
- Moving beyond being known as a "senior center" needs attention and a strategy to generate more significant appeal to younger adults and families.
- A partnership(s) with a health care provider is needed to reinforce the fitness programs and services.

- Supervisory staff must buy-in and be accountable to carry out needed improvements to the management and operations of the Center.
- Renewed focus on marketing the Center, its amenities and programs are crucial.
- Without some reinvestment in the Center, the potential for revenue loss exists that will reduce the current cost-recovery level.

## Opportunities

The Greater Plymouth Community Center managed by the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department has remarkable public support. Elected and appointed officials both recognize and support GPCC and parks and recreation operations. The synergistic benefits of management excellence and support of elected and appointed officials is the solid foundation on which to plan and launch actions to ensure the continued vibrancy and relevancy of GPCC over the next 20 years. Recognition that the Center must continue to evolve is necessary as is the understanding that "resting on the laurels" of its first two decades of success will impede future cost recovery and community service. Fortunately, Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department has never been one that reverts to "that's the way we have always done that." Building upon the can-do attitudes, entrepreneurial spirit, the innovation of the management team, and commitment of elected officials will propel GPCC forward.

## Recommendations with Background

The following section weaves together the framework and rationale for the specific recommendations for GPCC building, programs, management, and financing.

### Physical Status of GPCC

#### *Background*

The Center is not readily visible from Germantown Pike. Since the Township owns most of the property between the Center and the road, there should be an effort to open the area up more. Providing higher visibility to the public will be even more critical if the park maintenance area in GPCC moves elsewhere and the space is turned into more recreation space both indoors and outdoors.

- Many of the colors, signage, and finishes in the building are older and need to be updated.
- The weight cardio area, even with the expansion a few years ago, is still significantly undersized. There is no functional training area or personal training space. This has a substantial negative impact on membership sales and overall center revenue.
- Group exercise classes have to share Activity Central with a variety of other programs that limits fitness-based programming. This also impacts overall center revenues.
- The gym is a large space that is divisible into four smaller areas. For its size, the space is underutilized.

- The aquatics area is also large with a 10-lane lap/competitive pool as well as a leisure pool that features zero-depth entry, interactive play features, and a slide. There is also a warm water whirlpool and a sauna. The aquatics area could also have a higher rate of overall use with some improvements to the existing amenities.

## Recommendations for the Building

- **Maintenance Shop** – The Park Maintenance Shop should be moved out of GPCC and relocated elsewhere. It is occupying a very valuable space in which additional programs and services would generate increased revenues. Convert this area to fitness.
- **Safety and Security** - Center patrons have identified safety and security as an area of concern. Improved security cameras and other equipment could help to address these concerns. Increase the emphasis on safety and security measures by upgrading the Center's emergency action plan.
- **Aquatics Center** - A true therapy pool could be added to the aquatics area if there were a formal partnership with a robust medical partner. A compelling partner could be a health care provider who was willing to commit to a long-term financial commitment to use the pool.

The mechanical systems for the pools will need to be replaced in the next two to three years.

- **Welcome Area and Lobby** - The front desk should have a designated station where center members can scan their card for admission.

The lobby area beyond the front desk is large and generally underutilized. This space should be improved to serve as a social gathering area.

There needs to be a general update in the use of technology throughout the Center. Upgrading technology would include membership check-in, fitness workout tracking, the use of video monitors for center information, charging station for cell phones in the lobby, and individual room signs with video screens with the day's schedule.

- **Classrooms** - Investigate the possibility of making the necessary changes to the classroom area so that the pre-school program can be licensed. Also, determine the cost of licensing the drop-in childcare room as well. The classroom/community room areas have a very institutional look and feel. This really impacts rentals. Consider this in the rebranding effort.

Many of the furnishings in the Center also need to be upgraded. This is particularly true for the chairs in the classrooms.

- **Parking** - During heavy use times at the Center and when there are other park activities, the parking lot can reach maximum capacity. There is also a need for more accessible parking spaces.
- **Locker Rooms** - The Center has appropriately-sized locker rooms for its level of use. There may need to be improvements made to the shower/changing area to increase privacy.

- **Storage** - There is a general lack of storage space in the building. Insufficient storage is really a problem for Activity Central, where a wide variety of programs take place.

## Recommendations for Operations

- **Staffing** - A sound staffing plan is in place for the Center with more than adequate full-time staff coverage that is augmented by part-time staff.
  - Ensure that staff has a clear vision for the Center and specific goals to guide future operations and programming at the Center.
  - Make sure that manager, specialist, and coordinator level personnel be on board with the future direction of the Center. Give them the direct responsibility for instituting the long-range master plan. Accomplish this by establishing specific work plans and performance milestones for these staff members. Follow through with recognition, rewards, and consequences for the implementation of the work plans.
  - Be vigilant about wage rates. The rates of compensation for full-time staff appear to be in the range for other similar positions in eastern Pennsylvania. However, there is real concern over the part-time pay structure and the ability to attract well-qualified staff. It has become increasingly more difficult to attract part-time lifeguards, swim lesson instructors, and general

fitness instructors. Attracting staff in an area where part-time wages are higher is a problem that other public recreation centers are also having. The current tight labor market nationally compounds this problem. Center staff should continue to benchmark full-time and part-time pay rates with other townships with comparable community centers. Plymouth Township should at least be in the mid-range. The Department should do benchmarking annually.

- *Staff Ratios* - The Center has a reasonably high ratio of full-time staff to part-time. This ratio is instrumental in the Center's high cost recovery rate. However, considering the difficulty in recruiting and retaining part-time staff, this is probably wise.
- *Training* - Place a greater emphasis on staff training which will require additional funding. The focus of training should be on professional growth, customer service, safety and security, supervisor/manager traits, and trends in recreation, fitness, and wellness.
- *Staff Time Purpose and Use* - With a 35-hour work week, most full-time staff should only spend a limited amount of time, either teaching or leading programs. Establish limits based on a percentage of time for each level of staffing:
  - Manager – Less than 5% (only for certification or substituting)
  - Specialist – 10-15%
  - Coordinator – Maximum of 25%

Limiting full-time staff's time on directly providing programs or services will enable them to spend more

time on supervision, management, and planning new programs and ways to generate more income. This will likely require additional part-time staff for program purposes.

- Consider using a part-time staff scheduling software such as "When to Work" to ease the process of filling staffing needs and identifying the availability of staff.
- The formula for contract program providers should be a gross revenue split of no less than 70% (contractor) – 30% (Center). Set a goal of 60%-40% split to provide the Center with a more realistic revenue stream for these programs.
- **Rebranding** - The community center needs to be rebranded. The rebranding includes not only updating the physical aspects of the Center (see above) but also how it is operated and marketed. One of the keys to this effort is to generate a stronger appeal to families and younger adult age groups.

The Center has a reputation as being a "senior" community center. About 45 percent of the Center's members are seniors which contributes to this public perception. There needs to be a well-coordinated effort to increase the appeal of the Center for families and younger adult users.

- **Marketing** – Renew the emphasis on marketing to increase memberships as well as fitness and aquatics revenues. Develop a more comprehensive and definitive marketing plan that has clear performance measures.

Address specific marketing efforts in the following areas:

- Improve the web site.
- Use more color and more pictures in the **Leisure Visions** publication.
- Conduct annual focus groups with center users as well as non-users.
- Conduct an every-other-year survey of center users.
- Expand a sponsorship program for major program areas as well as center events and activities.
- Replace the paper bulletin boards with video monitors.
- Increase the use of on-line registration from the current level of 30% to at least 50%.

### Recommendations for Financing

The Department has robust performance metrics in place for virtually every aspect of the Center's operation and budget.

- **Financing** - GPCC has always had a very high-cost recovery rate which is unusual for most public recreation centers. A high cost recovery rate is also difficult to maintain over a long period of time. Overall revenue has continued to increase for the Center. However, income is stagnated (or declined) for membership revenue, swim lesson revenue, and fitness. During that same time, substantial increases in

general recreation program revenue took place. In future years, the Center should expect to see continued increases in personnel costs, utilities, and other operating costs. Membership numbers have declined, especially the family-based options. Pass numbers for seniors (including Silver Sneakers and Silver & Fit) have increased. To maintain the 80% cost recovery level, the Center will need to see increases in membership revenue as well as program and rental income.

- **Impact of Wage Rates in the Service Sector**  
**Overall** - Future operating budgets will likely be affected by a projected increase in the national minimum wage in the next five years to at least \$10 an hour as well as competitive wage rates and benefits in the private sector. Competing wage rates and projected new national standards for wages will have a ripple effect through the entire part-time pay scale and could even impact some of the entry-level full-time staff. Plymouth Township, as are most parks and recreation departments in southeastern Pennsylvania, is experiencing the challenges of hiring part-time and seasonal staff. Due to a shortage in the labor market, retail, restaurants, and big-box stores are paying hourly wages well over \$10 per hour, some with benefits.
- **GPCC Clients** - It is critical to understand the importance of continuing to draw non-residents to the Center as members as well as program participants. Overall for members, nearly 50% are non-residents (led by seniors), while many programs have 30% or more non-resident participants. For budget purposes attracting non-residents is essential.
- **EFT (Electronic Fund Transfers)** - The percentage of members that are on EFT is approximately 50%. Work to raise this number to 80%. The Center should be able to accept EFT on credit cards as well as debit cards.
- **Fitness** - Overall revenue coming from fitness and personal training as well as drop-in fitness class participation is not where it should be. This is due in part to issues associated with a lack of a genuine commitment to being a fitness provider but is also due to lack of space and adapting programming to changing expectations.
- **Aquatics** - Aquatic revenue has also slowed, and this is not due to the lack of a proper facility. Make a concerted effort to regain the number of learn-to-swim classes offered as well as other traditional programs. Also, increase the amount of money coming from swim team rentals and other specialty programs.
- **Fees** – Update the fee structure.
  - Work to streamline the current membership rate structure. Consider establishing a straight Household rate than the more complicated system of building a unique multi-membership rate.
  - Increase the senior rate to mid-way between the youth and adult rate. With the high numbers of senior memberships in place and an aging market, relying on this demographic group to pay a more significant share of the cost is appropriate.
  - Reduce the differential between the resident and non-resident rate to 20% to encourage more use by non-residents.



- Consider eliminating the resident/non-resident fee differential for facility rentals and adopt the non-resident rate as the single rate. Also, consider allowing alcohol in certain areas of the Center (under strict control) to increase not only the fees that can be charged but also the number of rentals booked.
- The Center currently has several promotions for memberships, and while this is wise, there should not be any additionally added.
- The Department would benefit by having a comprehensive fee policy in place that guides fee setting policies for all programs, services, and rentals.
- **Capital Funding** - Increase funding for capital replacement items over the next five-plus years. Include such items as furnishings, moveable partitions, and possible replacement of the pool slide, play features, and mechanical equipment. Establish a five-year Capital Improvement Plan and update it every year.

### Recommendations for Programs and Services

There needs to be more of a holistic approach to recreation programming that looks for opportunities beyond the community center. Determining other possible locations (indoors and outdoors) at park and recreation facilities throughout the Township needs exploration. The programming of other township parks and recreation facilities will not reduce the pressure on the Center and its park grounds. It will also enhance the use of such areas as Harriet Wetherill Park and other parks.

The Greater Plymouth Community Center has always offered a wide range of recreation programs and services with a focus on fitness, aquatics, special events, and youth programming. The Center currently offers programs in the following general areas:

- Aquatics
- Fitness/Wellness
- Youth (after school/camps/pre-school age)
- Adult General Interest
- Adult Sports
- Youth Sports
- Cultural Arts (arts programming)
- Special Events

Program areas where there is limited programming:

- Youth Sports
- Cultural Arts (performing arts)
- Outdoor Recreation/Environmental Education
- Special Needs
- Seniors (except for Silver Sneakers and Silver & Fit)
- Teens
- Increase focus on the following in the future:
  - Fitness/Wellness
    - Functional training (will require physical changes to the Center)
    - Wellness programming (lifestyle education, nutrition, etc.)
  - Aquatics
    - Learn to swim (try to rebuild)
    - Specialty classes
    - Competitive swimming (including lane rentals)
  - Youth
    - Camps (school breaks)
    - Education (STEM)

- Seniors
  - Senior sports
  - Education
  - Special interest
- **Aquatics** - The number of swim lessons is dropping, partly due to the number of private swim schools that are opening up in the market. A renewed effort to increase swim lessons in the next few years is imperative.
  - Increase use of the aquatics area in a number of program options by:
    - Placing a greater emphasis on more specialty classes such as Scuba, Kayaking, and Canoeing
    - Developing more programs for private schools and homeschoolers
    - Increasing the use by outside organizations (primarily through rentals)
    - High school swim teams
    - Masters teams
    - Diving
  - Starting in-house teams
    - Swim teams (US Swimming Team)
    - Master swim team
    - Water Polo
    - Diving
- **Fitness** - The overall number of weekly group exercise classes is low for a full-service recreation center. If an expanded fitness center with multiple studios is built, the number of classes that are offered as part of a membership should double. No more than three to four group exercise classes should require an extra fee.

- **Wellness** - One of the keys to expanding the types of fitness and wellness programs that are available will be establishing a partnership with a health care provider who is willing to lend their name and professional assistance to building new wellness programs and upgrading fitness class offerings.

Brand Group Exercise Classes through the partnership with the health care provider or in some other form.

- **Silver Sneakers** - The Silver Sneakers and Silver & Fit is a significant program for the Center. Continue this program.
- **Special Events** - The Department has had a strong emphasis on providing special events, but this has required a great deal of time and resources to accomplish. Define what special events are and limit the number of in-house programs now classified as special events to offer in a year.
- **Pre-School Licensing** - Staff will need to determine if they want to try to obtain licensing of their pre-school program. Licensing of the pre-school program will require physical changes to the Center (see above).
- **Activity Central Programming** - Activity Central has been the prime location for both group exercise classes and also active based youth programming. The dual-use of this space has limited some programming opportunities for both program areas. Move more youth programming to the gymnasium to help alleviate this problem. If the existing parks maintenance area is converted to fitness uses, then Activity Central could be utilized for more youth programs as well.

- **Teen and Tween Programming** - Attempt to develop programming at the Center that appeals to teens and tweens. It is recognized that teens are a difficult group to program for, and this may require partnerships with other organizations to accomplish.
- **Pickleball** – Continue to emphasize growing the pickleball program at the Center. Make Plymouth a Pickleball hub with GPCC and the Pickleball center slated for JFK Park. With the large gym, space is available to increase the days, times, and the number of courts that are available for pickleball.
- **Diversifying Population** - There needs to be a recognition of the different ethnic and demographic markets that should be served. The youth and family populations in the area should be specifically addressed.
- **Program Only Clients** - A valuable characteristic for the Center is the fact that people that are not members of the facility can still take programs. Increase the number of program-only users to reinforce and grow another market for the Center itself.
- **Program Tracking** - Tracking the cancellation rate of all programs offered at the Center needs to be a new performance metric.
  - Keep the program cancellation rate number between 10% and 20%, ideally 15%.
- **Capacity Analysis** - A capacity/use analysis (number of uses/activities per space for the hours available, determined on a percentage basis) should be completed.
  - For each major space in the building, determine the current percentage of utilization. Most of the spaces in the Center are operating at or near capacity during the high use times of operation.
  - Based on findings, develop basic priorities of use by space and activity.
  - Ensure that some spaces (aquatics, gym, and fitness) have time available for drop-in use as this is critical.
  - Provide time for rentals in the building.
  - Work toward a balance of programmed, drop-in, and rental spaces.





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## Goal 2

Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreational trends.

### Our Vision

Our vision for our parks is one that unifies dynamic public use with nature and scenic beauty. Public uses range from relaxation to socializing, from team sports to health and fitness, from soaking in quiet and tranquility to enjoying lively special events for people of all ages. All of our parks serve as assets and community hubs that contribute to the highly desirable quality of life in Plymouth Township.

### Why We Care

Our parks play an essential role in the physical, economic, and social well-being of Plymouth Township, our residents, and businesses. In the public process for this plan, residents stated that they moved to or decided to remain in Plymouth Township because of the Greater Plymouth Community Center, the parks, and recreation facilities. Parks provide access to recreational opportunities, increase property values, spur local economies, combat crime, and protect our clean air and water. Nine out of ten respondents to Plymouth Township's public opinion survey for the **Comprehensive Plan** use the parks. Parks and Recreation was named as the favorite public service provided by Plymouth Township at

Community Day where thousands of residents participate. Ensuring that this system so treasured by the residents is protected, relevant, and meets changing community needs is crucial to the Township's prominence as a vibrant municipality.

### Analysis and Findings

The 8.4 square mile Plymouth Township is nearly fully developed. The community is conveniently located near the Pennsylvania Turnpike northeast extension and main east-west corridor, the Blue Route, and Germantown Pike. A thriving residential and commercial hub, the community is bisected by the Turnpike, the Blue Route, Germantown Pike, and Ridge Pike. Given the level of development, the parks and recreation system is mostly established as shown on the map on page 34. The following analysis provides perspective to the need to optimize the use of all parks as opportunities for adding more parkland are limited.



### Plymouth Township's Parks

**Harriet Wetherill Park** (67 acres) is a nature-based park with playground, restrooms, pavilions, and building.

**Community Center Park** (30 acres) is a community park devoted to play, fitness, and sports.

**East Plymouth Valley Park** (22.2 acres) is the Township's outdoor sports hub with fishing, pavilion, concession, and restrooms.

**John F. Kennedy Park** (11.2 acres) is a small-scale community park with game courts, ballfield, playground, and picnic areas.

**Colwell Park** (5 acres) is a neighborhood park with playground, game courts, pavilion, shelter, and restrooms.

**Black Horse Park** (2 acres) is a small neighborhood park with a playground, game courts, and picnic area.

**Alan Wood Park** (0.8 acres) is the Township's smallest park with a playground, game courts, and picnic area.

**Bicentennial Park** (2 acres) is a natural area by the township building.

Undeveloped open spaces include **Plymouth Hills Park** (2.7 acres), **Plymouth Meeting Park** (2.9 acres), and **Sandwood Park** (3.4 acres). These are landlocked spaces not suitable for use as active parks.

### Amount of Parkland

Plymouth Township has 149 acres of parkland. The parkland standard of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents adopted by Plymouth Township in its previous plans remains in place. With 17,597 residents, this standard translates into a minimum of 180 acres of parkland required to serve community needs. This is a shortfall of 31 acres of parkland or roughly one community park. Based upon a projected population of 19,934 by 2045, another 20 acres of parkland will be needed. **This is a total shortfall of 51 acres of parkland.**

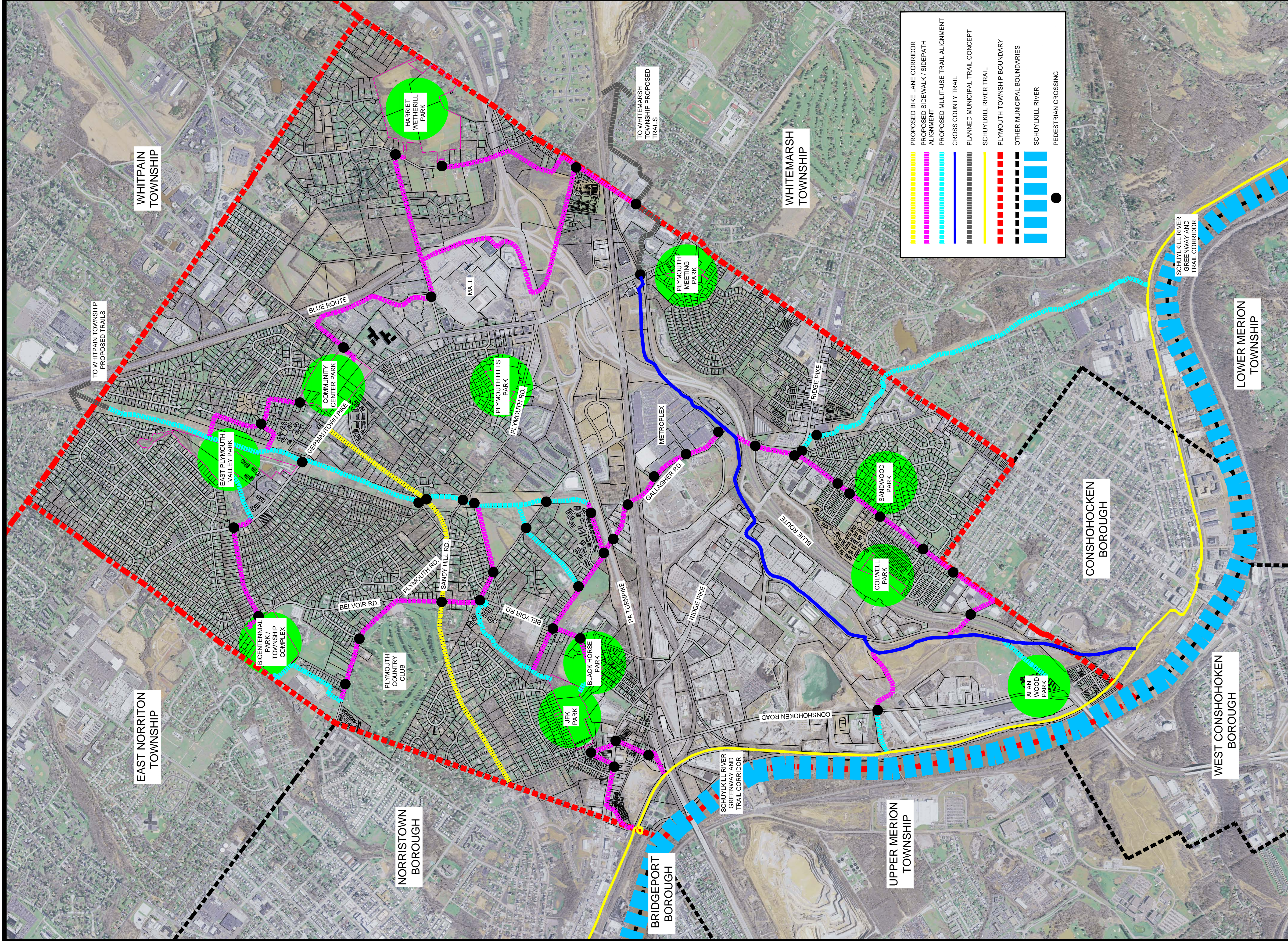
### Configuration of Parkland

Plymouth Township has 11 parks with 149 acres of land ranging in size from .8 acres to 67 acres. The Township has five types of parks:

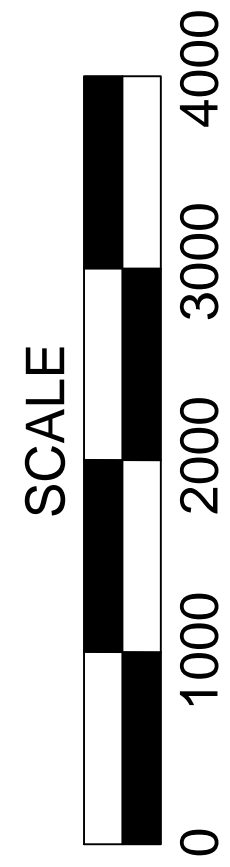
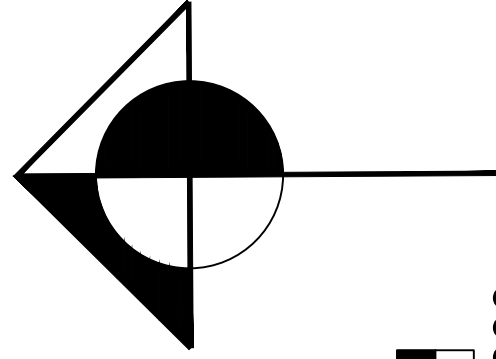
- **Nature Park:** Parks devoted to connecting people with nature. Harriet Wetherill (67 acres)
- **Community Park:** 20 – 50 acres. Community Center Park (30 acres), East Plymouth Valley Park (22.2 acres)
- **Neighborhood Park:** 5 – 19 acres John F. Kennedy Park (11.2 acres) and Colwell Park (5 acres)
- **Mini Park:** Less than 5 acres Black Horse Park (2 acres) Alan Wood Park (0.8 acres) and Bicentennial Park (2 acres).
- **Open Space:** Publicly owned parkland devoted to the preservation of open space includes Plymouth Hills (2.7 acres), Plymouth Meeting Park (2.9 acres) and Sandwood Park (3.4 acres).

Harriet Wetherill Park, Community Center Park East Plymouth Valley Park and John F. Kennedy Park comprise 90 percent of the Township's parkland. Community Center Park and East Plymouth Valley Park are the most used parks.





# PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE MAPPING



Toole Recreation Planning

**BCM**  
ENGINEERS  
ATC GROUP SERVICES LLC

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## Connections to Parks

Given the 8.4-mile square mile size of the Township and its level of development, the park locations are fairly set. The industrial area by the Schuylkill River is the one area least served by public parkland. This plan has considered that and is recommending that public parkland and trails be established on the riverfront as the industrial uses evolve over the next ten years and beyond into a post-industrial town-center type of development. The main issue with park locations is access from some neighborhoods. Busy roads traverse the Township making road crossings dangerous on Germantown Pike, Ridge Pike, and others as well as impossible along the Turnpike and the Blue Route. The public process found that residents would like to be able to go to parks via bicycle.

## Recreation Facilities

Plymouth Township has worked strategically for more than 25 years in master planning, adding, and revitalizing community recreation facilities. Additions have been spectacular such as the development of the Greater Plymouth Community Center and its fitness center expansion, Harriet Wetherill Park's connections to nature, Greater Plymouth Community Center, GPCC's baseball field in partnership with Villanova University, the expansion of the Community Center's fitness area among other improvements in all the parks.

These improvements were successful and well used by the public. They are now experiencing the consequences of time, overuse, climate change, more competition, and changing recreation interests.

- **Parking** - The most significant facility challenge is insufficient parking in township parks, especially the Greater Plymouth Community Center. Continuing the

long-term acquisition plan for the Community Center campus over the next 100 years is critical to provide for the expansion of facilities, especially parking. It would be important to consider adding parking in Harriet Wetherill Park in an appropriate manner based upon park use and programming when resources are available parking in Harriet Wetherill Park.

- **Overdevelopment and Overuse** - The Community Center Park is overdeveloped and overused as the preferred park of most residents. East Plymouth Valley Park is the second most used park. Revising or relocating the facilities and uses of these parks by enhancing the facilities in other Township parks could help provide improved recreation opportunities that even more people could enjoy. Bringing other township parks up to the caliber of the Community Center Park would also enhance Plymouth Township's image overall.

Overuse of sports fields combined with climate change warrants the installation of alternative synthetic surfaces. Synthetic turf fields would facilitate more play, reduced game cancellations, and increased costly maintenance to repair field damage.

- **Special Events Important** - The community is interested in more special events such as community fairs, performing arts, and special interest events. Township park facilities are generally small, not designed for special events, and have insufficient parking.
- **Modernizing** - facilities such as the concession and playgrounds need updating. New facilities such as pickleball will serve a broader range of park visitors throughout their lifetime.

- **Serving Special Needs** - People with special needs want more opportunities such as playgrounds for all.
- **Technology** - Technology can help with existing facilities such as electronic systems for restroom opening and closing as well as lighting for enhanced security, especially in East Plymouth Valley Park.
- **Beautification** - Now that the Township has developed its basic level of facilities, it can turn its attention to the beautification of public spaces. The addition of landscaping, trees, and re-branding would help capture more park visitation of Millennials, Generation Z, families, and seniors for the next ten years and beyond.

## Park and Recreation Facility Conditions

While the parks appear clean and safe, maintenance is the major challenge as it is in the majority of parks and recreation systems. While a report on each park is next, a summary of overall park conditions highlights the following:

- **More Parkland Needed** – To relieve some of the conditions resulting from overuse and lack of sufficient space for parking, special events, etc., additional parkland is needed. Parkland should be added where possible adjoining existing parks and publicly owned land or other available parcels.
- **Wear and Tear** - Although the Township has been improving parks for decades, they are showing their age, overuse, and deterioration.

- **Beautification and Safety** - The parks lack shade and landscaping. The Township has tree planting money available that should be used in the parks. Shade sails are another option to provide immediate shade such as at the playground in Harriet Wetherill Park.
- **Storage** - Storage for organized sports is an issue.
- **Aging and Use of the Community Center** - The Community Center is nearly 20 years old and needs updating through re-branding as well as safety improvements in the front of the building due to design features that are unsafe and deteriorating. With the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching, the next five years could be critical years for re-branding and fundraising for the purpose of having a community celebration in 2024.
- **Maintenance** - Maintenance is the most critical factor in reducing exposure to liability and lawsuits. The workload on township parks and recreation maintenance is significant due to all of the projects underway in publicly owned buildings and land. The Buildings and Grounds Department is responsible not only for parks and recreation facilities including the Greater Plymouth Community Center but also the Township Building, retention basins and other properties. Since most of the Township's developed facilities are devoted to supporting organized sports, demands on the maintenance staff are particularly high. They spend most of their time on sports fields, mowing, and trash removal. Field damage due to use when they are too wet requires expensive repair in labor, equipment, and materials.
- **Restrooms** - Restrooms operate without technology for opening and closing resulting in vandalism and loss

of control by township management due to the number of keys circulating for restroom access.

- **Vandalism** – East Plymouth Valley Park is experiencing vandalism and theft from cars.
- **Continuing to Be A Model of Sustainability** – Plymouth Township set the bar for sustainable parks by winning Pennsylvania's first green Parks Award in 2010. The Township then developed a stewardship plan for this park in partnership with Natural Lands. Continuing the sustainability efforts that the Parks and Recreation department launched in Harriet Wetherill park is essential. It needs to be a critical component of park maintenance in Plymouth Township. Maintenance should advance initiatives related to 21st-century park design and construction, innovative natural resource management, and the strategic reduction of the Township's fuel, energy, and materials consumption.

When developing and improving parks and recreation facilities, it is essential to maintain positive drainage and use environmentally friendly Best Management Practices (BMP's) to handle stormwater. This is most critical for high impervious areas (parking lots) and athletic fields. Exploring the potential for green stormwater infrastructure when developing parks and recreation facilities can be used to also address MS4 regulations.

## Recommendations

Recommendations for park and recreation improvements fall into two broad categories parkland acquisition and park and recreation facility improvements.

### Parkland Acquisition

Since Plymouth Township is short of park land by 51 acres and the Township is nearly fully developed, there is both urgency and patience required.

For urgency, acquiring land for another park should be pursued. While few large parcels remain, land that is currently in use for other purposes could be considered especially if it is contiguous to other parks and recreation facilities. This is important for two reasons. One principle reason is to acquire land over 25 acres to provide one true community park. A community park is a mix of active and passive recreation for a wide variety of uses. Currently, the Township's parks are configured as sports parks such as East Plymouth Valley Park; as a nature-based park such as Harriet Wetherill Park; and as neighborhood parks such as Alan Wood and Colwell Parks. The GPCC Park functions as a community park but it is already fully developed and heavily used. The other reason is to expand space for parking as limited parking is the chief problem in all parks and especially so at GPCC. The acquisition recommendations are as follows:

1. Continue to seek 51 acres of parkland preferably with at least one parcel of more than 25 acres.

Continue to monitor large properties in use for other purposes for consideration as parkland.

2. Monitor the use and status of properties near existing parkland to purchase parcels adjoining existing parks to enlarge them.
3. Work with PECO on an expanded MOU for use of PECO lands by East Plymouth Valley Park for park improvements as well as for trail development.
4. Build upon the Township's success in the "100 year" acquisition program to enlarge the GPCC campus. This involves securing additional properties for redevelopment as parkland in the proximity of GPCC.
5. Strive to create a mechanism to provide agility and quick action to enable the Township to secure land quickly just as or before it comes on the market. One approach could be developed in house and supported with township funds. Another approach for land acquisition commonly used is by arrangement with a conservancy or land trust to help secure property as an agent of the Township. The Township and the non-profit land conservation organization would have an agreement that spells out the terms of re-payment and transfer of ownership of the property.
6. Continue to pursue grant funding for land acquisition from PA DCNR. If a property comes up for sale quickly, seek a waiver from PA DCNR to allow the purchase and still be eligible for grant funding in the next grant cycle.

## **Park and Recreation Facility Improvements**

To protect the Township's investment in park improvements over the last 30+ years, the parks need a program for revitalization in accordance with their heavy use, sound risk management, community preferences, and recreation trends. The recommendations for park improvements are designed to optimize every park that the Township owns. Revitalization is more of a challenge than in previous plan recommendations. They involve adding and moving facilities around to better accommodate new or improved facilities in the limited parkland that the Township has. So, the improvements may be rather complex in some cases such as at the Community Center Park where additional properties are needed to move facilities, add new ones, and configure proper access and parking. ***All future park improvements should address the incorporation of natural features, fitness and active healthy living opportunities, socialization to build a sense of community and help reduce the isolation of community members, and public art to further distinguish Plymouth Township.*** The following section presents recommendations depicted by narrative and site plans for Alan Wood Park, Black Horse Park, Colwell Park, Community Center Park, East Plymouth Valley Park, Harriet Wetherill Park, and John F. Kennedy Park,.

## Alan Wood Park

**Size:** 0.8 acres

**Type:** Mini-Park

**Features:** Playground / Tot Lot  
Basketball Court  
Small Volleyball Area  
(2) Picnic Tables and Grills  
Small Parking Area (7-10 Spaces)  
Vehicular Access – Fulton St.  
Pedestrian Access – Fulton St.

### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park has very little tree cover and/or landscaping
- The chain link fence that borders the park property is unsightly
- Very limited area for parking / parking improvements / expansion
- The orientation / interaction of the play equipment is haphazard and disconnected

- The park lacks definition and flow (sense of direction) as it pertains to internal special elements – Basketball Court / Open Area / Play Area
- There are no internal park walkways / paths
- There is little definition appeal or elements to the ingress / egress of the park
- ADA accessibility





## Priorities

- Pedestrian and circulation improvements
- Upgrade the play area and tot lot with shade, seating and landscaping
- Beautification with landscaping and buffers

## Opportunities and Recommendations

- Create a defined open space / lawn through landscaping and specimen trees
- Remove volleyball court
- Redevelop the parking area to widen the access sidewalk
- Create an inviting entrance to the park that incorporates ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Pedestrian crossing of Fulton Street at park entrance
- Implement an internal path / trail system connecting park elements
- Redevelop the play area / tot lot to provide cohesion with a centralized gathering area
- Upgrade / replace existing play equipment
- Naturalize and buffer the park boundaries with landscaping and specimen trees

- Remove the chain link fence or replace with a more attractive option
- Upgrade / Resurface the Basketball Court



# 0.8 ACRES EXISTING FACILITIES

- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT
- BASKETBALL COURT
- SMALL VOLLEYBALL AREA
- TWO (2) PICNIC TABLES AND GRILLS
- LIMITED PARKING (7-10 SPACES)
- PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS AT FULTON RD.
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FROM FULTON RD.

# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / NEW FACILITIES

- PROVIDE ONE (1) ADA PARKING SPACE
- NATURALIZED BUFFER AREAS AT PARK PERIMETERS
- IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK (6-8 FOOT PAVED OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)
- VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN TO IMPROVE PARK TREE CANOPY AND AESTHETIC
- IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOOD
- REMOVE SMALL VOLLEYBALL COURT
- NEW: BENCHES; PICNIC TABLE
- TRASH CANS; DOG STATION; ETC
- REDEVELOP PLAY AREA / TOT-LOT WITH CENTRALIZED GATHERING AREA



# PARK PRIORITIES

- 1) PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, PATHS AND CONNECTIONS
- 2) REDEVELOP PLAY AREA / TOT-LOT
- 3) LANDSCAPE BUFFERS AND DESIGN

CONSHOHOCKEN ROAD

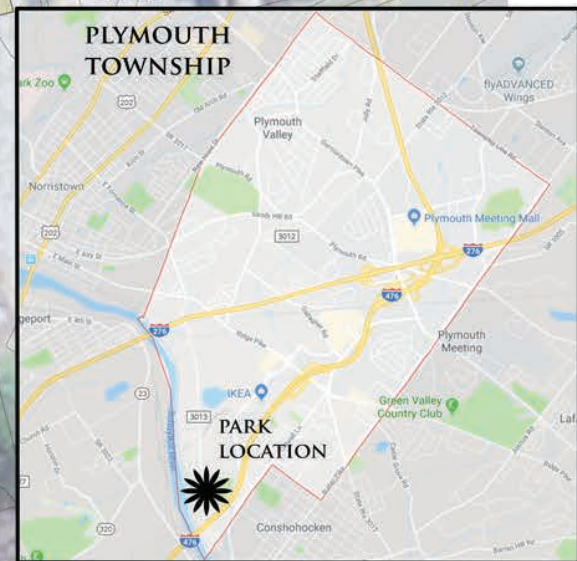
FULTON STREET

RETAINING WALL

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

POTENTIAL CONNECTION TO CROSS COUNTY TRAIL VIA THE I-476 (BLUE ROUTE) CORRIDOR

ALAN WOOD PARK



PROJECT TITLE PLYMOUTH TWP. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN		SHEET TITLE ALAN WOOD PARK	
PROJECT MANAGER TIMOTHY PAUL WILSON		SCALE 1" = 100'	
DESIGNED BY TIMOTHY PAUL WILSON		DATE FEBRUARY 2, 2019	
CHECKED BY TIMOTHY PAUL WILSON		PROJECT NO. 205700031.3	
SUB-COMMITTEE TITLES YORK STUDIO 310 ELMWOOD BLVD. JUNK, PA 17177-843-1897		SHEET NO. 4 OF 7	
BCM ENGINEERS ATC GROUP SERVICES LLC		DATE FEBRUARY 2, 2019	



## Black Horse Park

**Size:** 2.0 acres

**Type:** Mini Park

**Features:** Playground / Tot Lot  
(2) Basketball Courts  
Youth Baseball / Softball Field  
Picnic Tables and Benches  
Open lawn area  
Parking Area (20-25 Spaces)  
Vehicular Access – School Lane  
Pedestrian Access – School Lane,  
Coleman Street and Manor  
Avenue

- There is no designed transition between internal park elements – Parking, Basketball Court, Play area
- The park lacks definition and flow (sense of direction) as it pertains to internal special elements – Basketball Court / Parking / Play Area
- There are no internal park walkways / paths for proper user direction and circulation
- There is little definition, appeal, or elements to the ingress / egress of the park
- Lack of signage and restroom facility
- Lack of landscaping and visual aesthetic
- Limited ADA Accessibility
- Baseball / Softball field gets very little use

### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park lacks comfort areas – picnic tables, benches, sitting areas, etc.
- The chain link fence that borders the park property is unsightly
- Play area proximity to School Lane is uncomfortable, no landscape or visual buffers



## Recommendations

### Park Vision

Blackhorse Park will be a unique small park featuring “Plymouth Town”, a child-scale interactive play area designed to replicate Plymouth Township community features including businesses, schools, community destinations evoking “Main Street Plymouth”.

### Priorities

- Create “Plymouth Town”
- Site improvements: drainage and parking
- Remove ballfield
- Relocate a basketball court
- Pavilion and Restrooms
- Pedestrian Improvements and Trail Connections

### Proposed Improvements

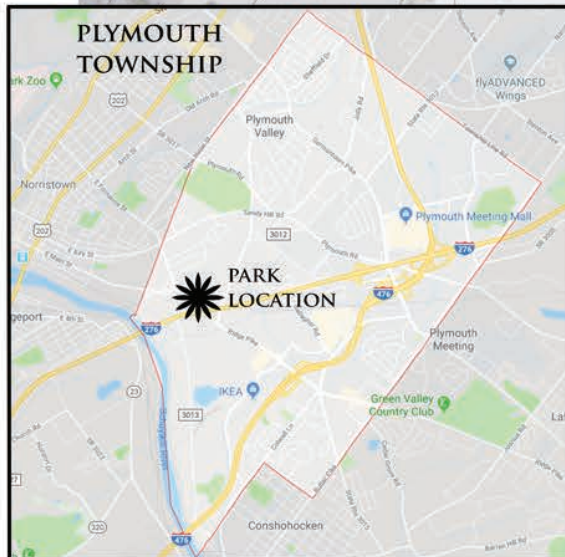
- Design and construction of “Plymouth Town”
- Beautification with landscaping
- Parking improvements
- Planting design to improve aesthetics and park tree canopy
- Drainage improvements with rain gardens and infiltration swales

- Naturalized buffer area at eastern end of park
- Implement pedestrian circulation with 6-8 foot paved or crushed stone pathways
- Installation of park furnishings such as benches, tables, dog station, and signage

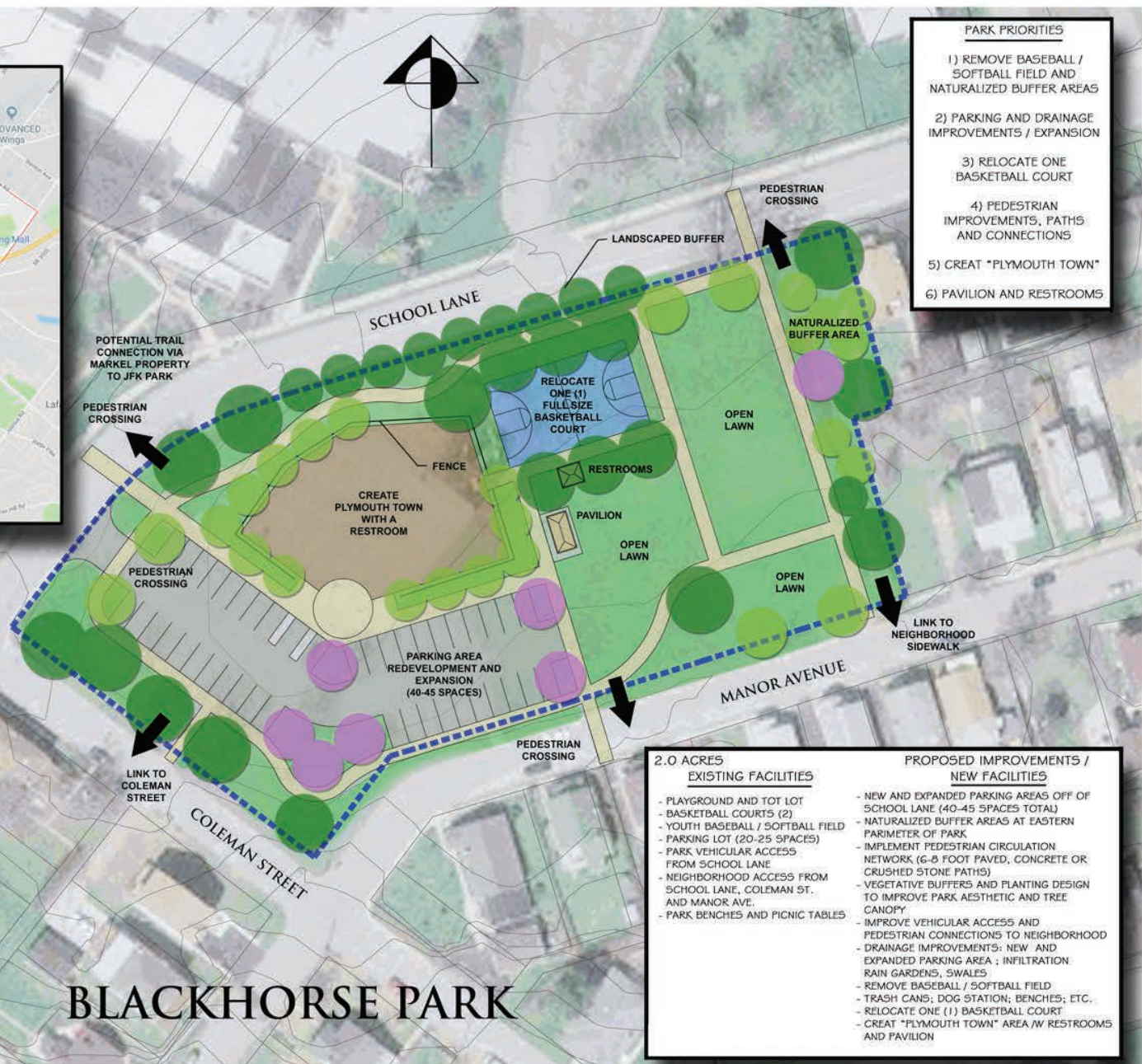
### Support

The design, construction and maintenance are proposed as a partnership project. The Parks and Recreation Department would develop an outreach campaign to garner partners’ financial support. Their businesses or organizations would be prominently recognized through the design of the interactive play area.





- LEGEND**
- VEGETATION / LANDSCAPE
  - PEDESTRIAN PATH / TRAIL / SIDEWALK
  - LAWN / OPEN GRASS
  - PROPERTY LINE
  - - - PARK BOUNDARY
  - TOT LOT / PLAYGROUND
  - PARKING / ROADWAY
  - HYDROLOGIC FEATURE
  - PR. BUILDING
  - EX. BUILDING
  - ➔ CIRCULATION PATTERN / ACCESS



- PARK PRIORITIES**
- 1) REMOVE BASEBALL / SOFTBALL FIELD AND NATURALIZED BUFFER AREAS
  - 2) PARKING AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS / EXPANSION
  - 3) RELOCATE ONE BASKETBALL COURT
  - 4) PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, PATHS AND CONNECTIONS
  - 5) GREAT "PLYMOUTH TOWN"
  - 6) PAVILION AND RESTROOMS

- 2.0 ACRES**
- EXISTING FACILITIES**
- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT
  - BASKETBALL COURTS (2)
  - YOUTH BASEBALL / SOFTBALL FIELD
  - PARKING LOT (20-25 SPACES)
  - PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM SCHOOL LANE
  - NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS FROM SCHOOL LANE, COLEMAN ST. AND MANOR AVE.
  - PARK BENCHES AND PICNIC TABLES

- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / NEW FACILITIES**
- NEW AND EXPANDED PARKING AREAS OFF OF SCHOOL LANE (40-45 SPACES TOTAL)
  - NATURALIZED BUFFER AREAS AT EASTERN PERIMETER OF PARK
  - IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK (6-8 FOOT PAVED, CONCRETE OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)
  - VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN TO IMPROVE PARK AESTHETIC AND TREE CANOPY
  - IMPROVE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOOD
  - DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: NEW AND EXPANDED PARKING AREA; INFILTRATION RAIN GARDENS, SWALES
  - REMOVE BASEBALL / SOFTBALL FIELD
  - TRASH CANS; DOG STATION; BENCHES; ETC.
  - RELOCATE ONE (1) BASKETBALL COURT
  - GREAT "PLYMOUTH TOWN" AREA W/ RESTROOMS AND PAVILION

PROJECT TITLE	PLYMOUTH TWP. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
SHEET TITLE	BLACKHORSE PARK
DATE	FEBRUARY 2, 2019
PROJECT NO.	2057000313
SHEET NO.	2 OF 7

YORK STUDIO  
310 ELMWOOD BLVD.  
YORK, PA 17403  
STUDIO PH: 717-843-1897

**BCM ENGINEERS**  
A/C GROUP SERVICES LLC

## Colwell Park

**Size:** 5.7 acres

**Type:** Small regional park

**Features:** Playground / Tot Lot  
In-line rink / Basketball Courts  
Multi-purpose Field  
Horseshoe pit area  
Multi-use Trail  
Parking Area (30-35 Spaces)  
Sand Volleyball Courts  
Pavilion and restrooms  
Small programs shelter  
Vehicular Access – Hillcrest Rd.  
Pedestrian Access – Hillcrest Rd.

### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park has very little tree cover and/or landscaping
- Park has insufficient parking for its size, facilities and use
- Vehicular (and pedestrian) access to the park is nondescript and lacks the sense of invitation

- Park lacks landscaping and visual aesthetic
- Needs screening and a defined boundary between the park and residences on Hillcrest Rd.
- Restroom security, maintenance and availability
- Playing field area has drainage issues





## Recommendations

### Park Vision

Colwell Park will be a community destination for gatherings of families, friends and community-based organizations; sports; play; and fitness.

### Opportunities and Recommendation

- Add a new pavilion
- Create parking area and access drive off of Woodside Rd. This will need to be studied and require PennDOT coordination
- Remove volleyball courts and horseshoe pits and expand parking area off of Hillcrest Rd.
- Expand and improve drainage through parking expansion / development
- Create an inviting entrance to the park that incorporates ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Turf playing field and correct drainage problem through vegetated infiltration swales
- Implement an internal path / loop trail system connecting park elements
- Naturalize and buffer the park boundaries with landscaping and specimen trees
- Improve park tree canopy / cover through landscaping and planting specimen and ornamental trees
- Modify protocols and facility use standards for the restroom building for better user accessibility, maintenance and security
- Additional comfort amenities: benches; tables; trash cans; dog stations; etc.





5.7 ACRES <u>EXISTING FACILITIES</u>	<u>PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / NEW FACILITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT</li> <li>- IN-LINE RINK / BASKETBALL COURTS (2 FULL)</li> <li>- MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD</li> <li>- HORSESHOE AREA</li> <li>- MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL</li> <li>- SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS</li> <li>- PAVILION</li> <li>- SMALL PROGRAM SHELTER</li> <li>- RESTROOMS</li> <li>- PARKING (30-35 SPACES)</li> <li>- PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM HILLCREST RD.</li> <li>- NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK ACCESS FROM HILLCREST RD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NEW PARKING AREA AND ACCESS DRIVE OFF OF WOODSIDE RD. (35-40 SPACES)</li> <li>- NATURALIZED BUFFER AREAS</li> <li>- REDESIGN PARKING AND ACCESS DRIVE OFF OF HILLCREST RD. (45-50 SPACES)</li> <li>- IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK (6-8 FOOT PAVED OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)</li> <li>- TURF FIELD</li> <li>- VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN</li> <li>- IMPROVE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOOD</li> <li>- DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: NEW PARKING AREA AND BALLFIELD; INFILTRATION RAIN GARDENS, SWALES</li> <li>- REMOVE SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS</li> <li>- NEW: BENCHES (6); PICNIC TABLES (4)</li> <li>- TRASH CANS (4); DOG STATIONS (2)</li> <li>- REMOVE HORSESHOE PIT - MAKE OPEN LAWN</li> <li>- NEW PAVILION</li> </ul>



## Community Center Park

**Size:** 30.0 acres

**Type:** Large regional park

**Features:** 76,000 SF Community Center

- (2) indoor pools
- Gymnasium
- Fitness Center
- Rental & Program Rooms
- Playground / Tot Lot with track
- NCAA Baseball Field
- Multi-purpose Recreational Field
- Softball Field
- (2) Bocce Courts
- Multi-use Trail
- Parking Areas off Jolly and Walton Roads
- (2) Beach Volleyball Courts
- Pavilion and restrooms
- Amphitheater
- Vehicular Access – Jolly Rd and Walton Rd.
- Pedestrian Access – Jolly Rd, Walton Rd., and Germantown Pike

## Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park lacks comfort areas – picnic tables, benches, sitting areas, etc.
- Park has insufficient parking for its size, facilities and use
- Storage area adjacent to GPCC's Baseball field is unsightly
- Community Center entrance needs to be redesigned
- Playing fields have drainage issues
- Park boundary vegetation and screening needs to be enhanced and naturalized



## Park Vision

Community Center Park will continue to be the crown jewel of Plymouth Township. The park will be the hub of fitness, fun, and play. The premier facilities will attract people of all ages and abilities for socializing, competitive and pick-up sports, and entertainment. Rental facilities will help to support public parks and recreation with non-tax revenues.

### Priorities

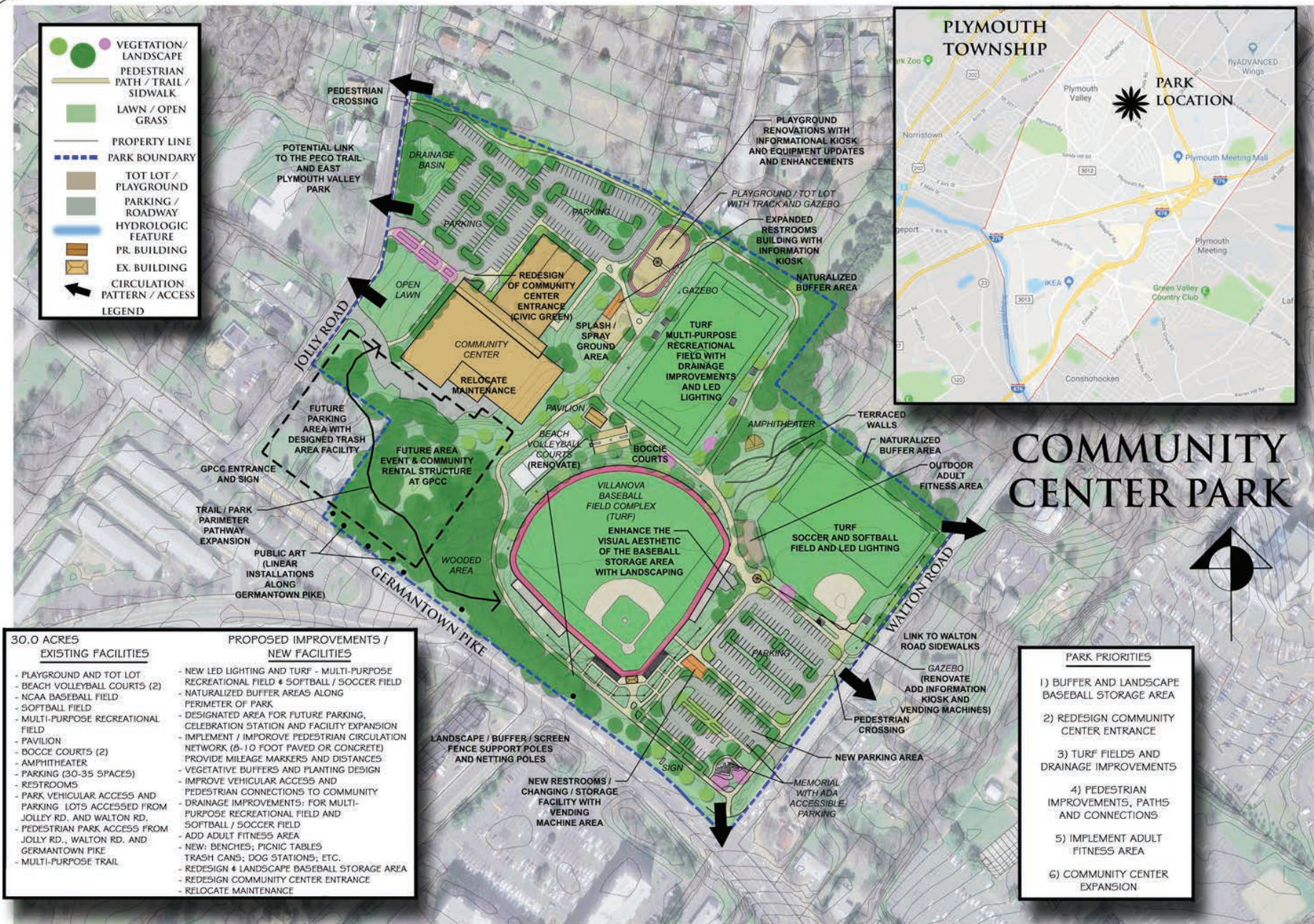
- Re-design and improve the GPCC entrance area for safety, maintenance, and aesthetics
- Add properties for site expansion
- Turf and light multi-purpose field
- Splash pad and adult outdoor fitness area
- Event & Community Rental Structure
- Re-branding of GPCC and park grounds

### Opportunities and Recommendation

- Acquire additional adjoining properties and follow through with the “100-year plan” to expand the campus through the redevelopment of properties to be acquired.
- Add restroom building with changing area and storage facility by the GPCC Baseball Field in partnership with Villanova University
- Redesign of community center building entrance
- Add a community event and rental structure

- Study and plan expansion of the Community Center resulting from relocation of maintenance
- Implement outdoor fitness area and splash pad
- Improve entrances to the park that incorporate ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Link to neighborhood sidewalk system, PECO trail, and East Plymouth Valley Park
- New Lighting, turf and drainage improvements – multi-purpose recreation field and softball / soccer field
- Naturalize and buffer the park boundaries with landscaping and specimen trees
- Additional comfort amenities: benches; tables; trash cans; dog stations; etc.
- Add new park furnishings
- Provide for a trash management and removal area





PROJECT TITLE: PLYMOUTH TWP. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN  
SHEET TITLE: COMMUNITY CENTER PK  
SCALE: 1" = 100'

PROJECT MANAGER: TIMOTHY PAUL WILSON  
DESIGNED BY: [blank]  
DRAWN BY: [blank]  
CHECKED BY: [blank]  
DATE: [blank]

CLIENT: PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP  
PROJECT NO.: 2057000313  
SHEET NO.: 6 OF 7

YORK STUDIO  
310 ELWOOD BLVD.  
JUNK, PA. 17403  
STUDIO PH: 717-843-1897

BCM ENGINEERS  
ATC GROUP SERVICES LLC

DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2019  
PROJECT NO.: 2057000313



## East Plymouth Valley Park

**Size:** 22.2 acres

**Type:** Community Park

**Features:** (4) Baseball/softball fields  
Playground / Tot Lot  
(2) Basketball Courts (1 lighted)  
Multi-purpose field  
Walking paths  
Football field (lighted)  
Picnic tables and park benches  
Pavilion  
Pond with accessible pier  
Parking Areas off West  
Germantown Pike (80-90 spaces)  
Multi-purpose building with  
restrooms  
Concession Stand  
Vehicular Access – West  
Germantown Pike

- Park has insufficient parking for its size, facilities and use
- Lack of sufficient lighting / security elements in parking areas
- Bridge between parking areas / access drive is old, narrow and lacks pedestrian accommodations
- Playing fields have drainage issues
- Park would benefit from better signage and wayfinding elements



### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- Internal pedestrian circulation is lacking – need additional formal paths and crossings to connect park facilities and surrounding communities



## **Park Vision**

East Plymouth Valley Park is Plymouth Township's premier sports complex complete with a play area for all, game courts, connections to nature including fishing, safe places to walk, and event spaces.

## **Priorities**

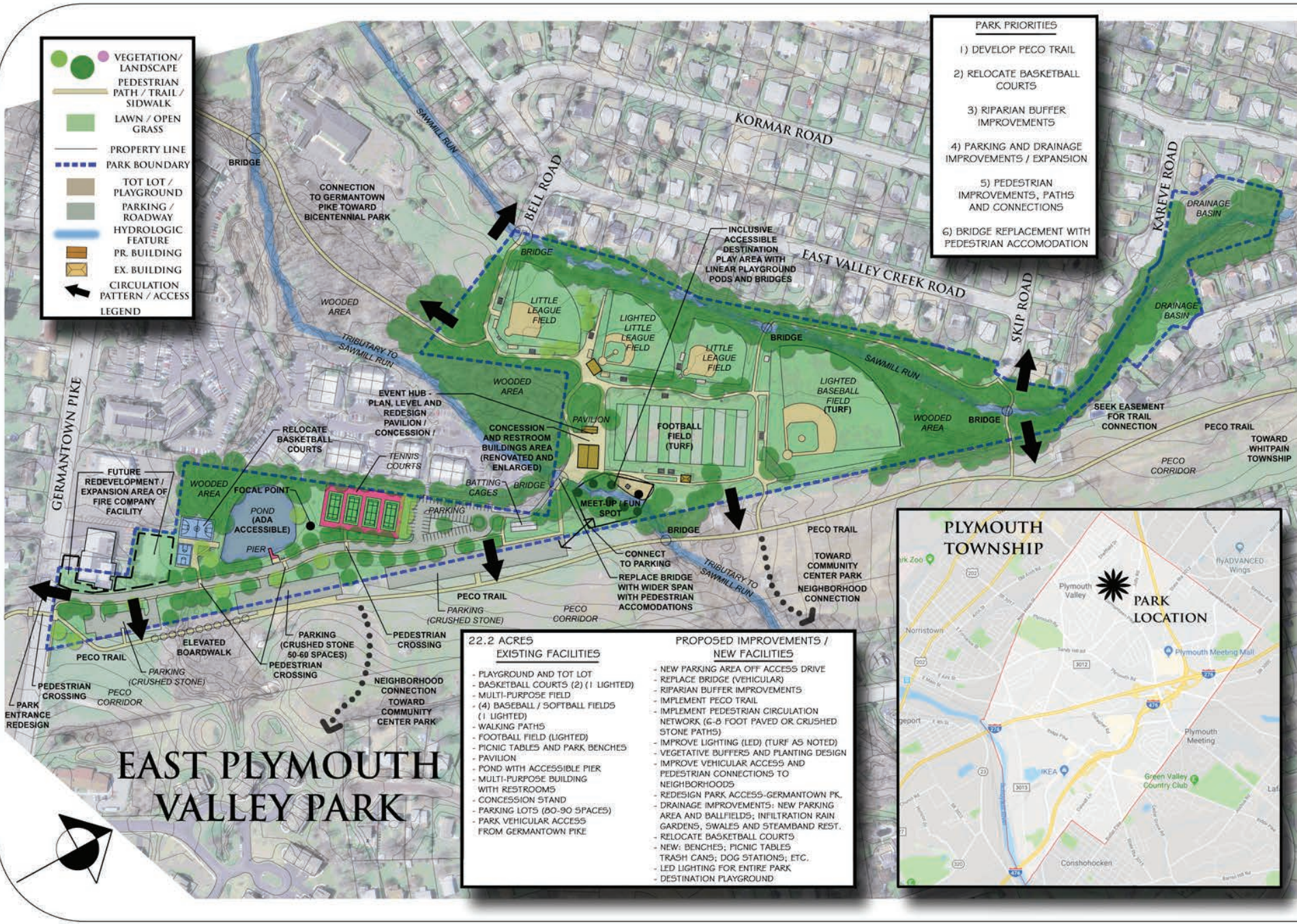
- Re-design and improve the GPCC entrance area for safety, maintenance, and aesthetics
- Add properties for site expansion
- Turf and light multi-purpose field
- Splash pad and adult outdoor fitness area
- Event & Community Rental Structure
- Re-branding of GPCC and park grounds

## **Opportunities and Recommendation**

- Playground for All on both sides of creek with pod area theme for different play experiences
- Create new parking area off of park access drive – will need to coordinate with PECO
- Riparian Buffer and general site drainage improvements
- Implement PECO Trail – will need to study and coordinate with PECO
- Create an inviting entrance to the park that incorporates ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Relocate Basketball Courts

- Redesign Park Access – Germantown Pike
  - Improve internal path / trail system connecting park elements and surrounding neighborhoods
  - Raise elevation of ballfields (drainage) and improve lighting including energy efficiency
  - Additional comfort amenities: benches; tables; trash cans; dog stations; etc.
  - Drainage improvements – Ballfields and parking areas



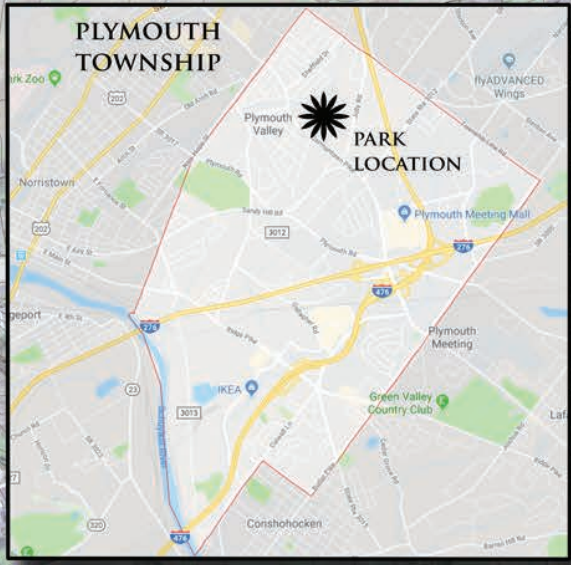


**LEGEND**

- VEGETATION / LANDSCAPE
- PEDESTRIAN PATH / TRAIL / SIDEWALK
- LAWN / OPEN GRASS
- PROPERTY LINE
- PARK BOUNDARY
- TOT LOT / PLAYGROUND
- PARKING / ROADWAY
- HYDROLOGIC FEATURE
- PR. BUILDING
- EX. BUILDING
- CIRCULATION PATTERN / ACCESS

- PARK PRIORITIES**
- 1) DEVELOP PECO TRAIL
  - 2) RELOCATE BASKETBALL COURTS
  - 3) RIPARIAN BUFFER IMPROVEMENTS
  - 4) PARKING AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS / EXPANSION
  - 5) PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, PATHS AND CONNECTIONS
  - 6) BRIDGE REPLACEMENT WITH PEDESTRIAN ACCOMODATION

- 22.2 ACRES EXISTING FACILITIES**
- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT
  - BASKETBALL COURTS (2) (1 LIGHTED)
  - MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD
  - (4) BASEBALL / SOFTBALL FIELDS (1 LIGHTED)
  - WALKING PATHS
  - FOOTBALL FIELD (LIGHTED)
  - PICNIC TABLES AND PARK BENCHES
  - PAVILION
  - POND WITH ACCESSIBLE PIER
  - MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING WITH RESTROOMS
  - CONCESSION STAND
  - PARKING LOTS (80-90 SPACES)
  - PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM GERMANTOWN PIKE
- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / NEW FACILITIES**
- NEW PARKING AREA OFF ACCESS DRIVE
  - REPLACE BRIDGE (VEHICULAR)
  - RIPARIAN BUFFER IMPROVEMENTS
  - IMPLEMENT PECO TRAIL
  - IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK (6-8 FOOT PAVED OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)
  - IMPROVE LIGHTING (LED) (TURF AS NOTED)
  - VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN
  - IMPROVE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS
  - REDESIGN PARK ACCESS-GERMANTOWN PK.
  - DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: NEW PARKING AREA AND BALLFIELDS; INFILTRATION RAIN GARDENS, SWALES AND STEAMBAND REST.
  - RELOCATE BASKETBALL COURTS
  - NEW: BENCHES; PICNIC TABLES
  - TRASH CANS; DOG STATIONS; ETC.
  - LED LIGHTING FOR ENTIRE PARK
  - DESTINATION PLAYGROUND



**PROJECT INFORMATION**

PROJECT MANAGER: THOMAS PAUL WILSON  
 CLIENT: PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP  
 PROJECT TITLE: PLYMOUTH TWP. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN  
 SHEET TITLE: E. PLYMOUTH VALLEY PK.  
 SCALE: 1" = 100'

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 2, 2019  
**PROJECT NO.:** 20570003.1.3  
**SHEET NO.:** 7 OF 7

**YORK STUDIO**  
 310 ELMWOOD BLVD.  
 YORK, PA 17403  
 STUDIO PH: 717-843-1897

**BCM ENGINEERS**  
 ATC GROUP SERVICES LLC



## Harriet Wetherill Park

**Size:** 67.0 acres

**Type:** Large regional park

**Features:** Playground / Tot Lot  
Butterfly Garden  
Multi-purpose meeting / educational meeting space (farmhouse)  
Natural and wooded areas  
Multi-purpose walking trails  
(2) Picnic Pavilions  
(2) Parking Areas off Butler Pike and Narcissa Road  
Restrooms  
Vehicular Access – Butler Pike and Narcissa Road

### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park needs additional comfort areas – picnic tables, benches, sitting areas, etc.
- Park has insufficient parking for its size, facilities and use
- Drainage and water course erosion issues

- Development restriction – Agricultural preservation
- Lacks programming and facilities as a natural and passive recreational facility



## Opportunities and Recommendations

- Create a defined open space / lawn through landscaping and specimen trees
- Enhance field as open play area and space for appropriate special events
- Improve entrances to the park that incorporates ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Improve / Implement an internal path / trail system connecting park element and connections to Butler Pike and Narcissa Rd.
- Expand existing play area / tot lot - Implement new “natural” play area along water course and the Harriet Story Trail
- Planting Design and riparian area enhancement
- Consider the potential to expand parking area off of Narcissa Road access drive and create new parking area off of the same access drive
- Drainage improvements
- Additional comfort amenities: benches; tables; trash cans; dog stations; and interesting seating.





- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT
- BUTTERFLY GARDEN
- MULTI-PURPOSE MEETING / EDUCATIONAL MEETING SPACE (FARM HOUSE)
- NATURAL AND WOODED AREAS
- MULTI-PURPOSE WALKING TRAILS
- (2) PICNIC PAVILIONS
- RESTROOMS
- (2) PARKING AREAS
- PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM BUTLER PIKE AND NARCISSA ROAD

- NEW PARKING AREA OFF ACCESS DRIVE FROM BUTLER PIKE
- FLEXIBLE PLAY AREA WITH POTENTIAL SEASONAL SKATING RINK
- AUXILIARY PARKING AREA
- IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK (6-10 FOOT PAVED OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)
- EXPAND TOT-LOU & ADD NATURAL PLAY AREA
- VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN
- IMPROVE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOOD
- DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: PARKING AREAS AND PERFORMING ARTS AREA; INFILTRATION RAIN GARDENS, SWALES
- NEW: BENCHES; PICNIC TABLES
- TRASH CANS; DOG STATIONS; ETC
- HARRIET STORY TRAIL
- TEMPORARY MAINTENANCE STRUCTURE

- 1) PARKING AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS / EXPANSION
- 2) MAINTENANCE STRUCTURE
- 3) PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, PATHS AND CONNECTIONS
- 4) PROGRAMMING
- 5) POTENTIAL SEASONAL SKATING RINK
- 6) STREAMBANK RESTORATION

- 
- VEGETATION / LANDSCAPE  
 PEDESTRIAN PATH / TRAIL / SIDEWALK  
 LAWN / OPEN GRASS  
 PROPERTY LINE  
 PARK BOUNDARY  
 TOT LOT / PLAYGROUND  
 PARKING / ROADWAY  
 HYDROLOGIC FEATURE  
 PR. BUILDING  
 EX. BUILDING  
 CIRCULATION PATTERN / ACCESS  
 LEGEND





## John F. Kennedy (JFK) Park

**Size:** 11.2 acres

**Type:** Small regional park

**Features:** Playground / Tot Lot with track  
In-line rink / street hockey  
Multi-purpose field soccer / softball / baseball  
Horseshoe pit area  
(2) Bocce Courts  
(2) Tennis Courts  
Walking trail  
Pavilion  
Scenic natural / wooded area  
(2) Parking lots (50-60 spaces)  
Vehicular Access – Fairfield Rd and Jefferson Street  
Pedestrian Access – Jefferson St.  
Picnic tables and park benches

### Facility Constraints and/or Issues

- The park needs additional comfort areas – picnic tables, benches, sitting areas, etc.
- Internal pedestrian circulation needs additional formal paths and crossings to connect park facilities and surrounding communities

- Park has insufficient parking for its size, facilities and use
- Park does not have a restroom facility



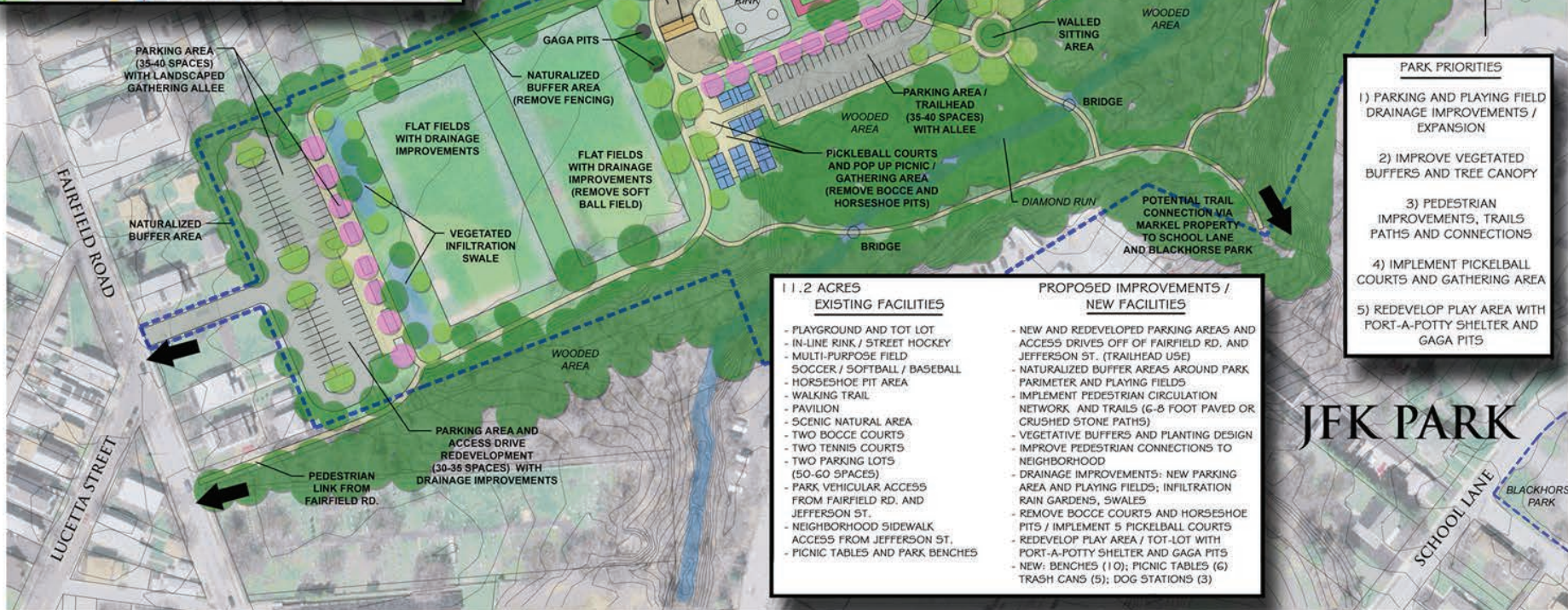
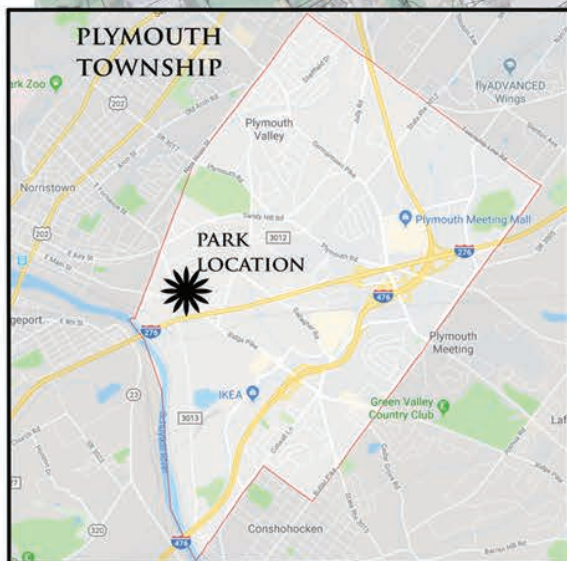
- Needs natural screening and a defined boundary between the park and residences – issue with field use and residences
- Playing / flat fields have drainage issues
- Park would benefit from better signage and wayfinding elements
- Vehicular (and pedestrian) access to the park is nondescript and lacks the sense of invitation

## Opportunities and Recommendations

- Design and develop pickleball area and gazebo (5 courts) as destination facility with elements for comfort and enjoyment. (Remove bocce and horseshoe pits)
- Redevelop parking and add new parking areas to both areas off of Fairfield Road and Jefferson Streets (trailhead use)
- Naturalize buffers around park and playing field boundary – remove fencing – improve park tree canopy and landscaping
- Improve entrances to the park that incorporates ADA accessibility, signage, efficient pedestrian ingress / egress and landscaping
- Redevelop play area / tot lot – add splash park and restroom facility
- Expand internal path / trail system connecting park element and link to surrounding neighborhood
- Improve drainage around playing fields and new / redeveloped parking areas
- Additional comfort amenities: benches; tables; trash cans; dog stations; etc.
- Develop sitting wall area off of redeveloped and new parking areas – Jefferson St. access  
Connect to Blackhorse







- PARK PRIORITIES**
- 1) PARKING AND PLAYING FIELD DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS / EXPANSION
  - 2) IMPROVE VEGETATED BUFFERS AND TREE CANOPY
  - 3) PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, TRAILS PATHS AND CONNECTIONS
  - 4) IMPLEMENT PICKLEBALL COURTS AND GATHERING AREA
  - 5) REDEVELOP PLAY AREA WITH PORT-A-POTTY SHELTER AND GAGA PITS

- 11.2 ACRES EXISTING FACILITIES**
- PLAYGROUND AND TOT LOT
  - IN-LINE RINK / STREET HOCKEY
  - MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD SOCCER / SOFTBALL / BASEBALL
  - HORSESHOE PIT AREA
  - WALKING TRAIL
  - PAVILION
  - SCENIC NATURAL AREA
  - TWO BOCCIE COURTS
  - TWO TENNIS COURTS
  - TWO PARKING LOTS (50-60 SPACES)
  - PARK VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM FAIRFIELD RD. AND JEFFERSON ST.
  - NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK ACCESS FROM JEFFERSON ST.
  - PICNIC TABLES AND PARK BENCHES
- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / NEW FACILITIES**
- NEW AND REDEVELOPED PARKING AREAS AND ACCESS DRIVES OFF OF FAIRFIELD RD. AND JEFFERSON ST. (TRAILHEAD USE)
  - NATURALIZED BUFFER AREAS AROUND PARK PERIMETER AND PLAYING FIELDS
  - IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION NETWORK AND TRAILS (6-8 FOOT PAVED OR CRUSHED STONE PATHS)
  - VEGETATIVE BUFFERS AND PLANTING DESIGN
  - IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORHOOD
  - DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS: NEW PARKING AREA AND PLAYING FIELDS; INFILTRATION RAIN GARDENS, SWALES
  - REMOVE BOCCIE COURTS AND HORSESHOE PITS / IMPLEMENT 5 PICKLEBALL COURTS
  - REDEVELOP PLAY AREA / TOT LOT WITH PORT-A-POTTY SHELTER AND GAGA PITS
  - NEW: BENCHES (10); PICNIC TABLES (6) TRASH CANS (5); DOG STATIONS (3)

PROJECT TITLE	PLYMOUTH TWP. PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
CLIENT	PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP
PROJECT MANAGER	TIMOTHY PAUL WILSON
DESIGNED BY	PROJECT NO.
DRAWN BY	DATE
CHECKED BY	SCALE
DATE	1" = 100'
<b>JFK PARK</b> SHEET TITLE PLAN RENDERING	
YORK STUDIO 310 ELWOOD BLVD. YORK, PA 17402-843-1897  ATC GROUP SERVICES LLC	
DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2019	PROJECT NO. 2057000313
SHEET NO. 1 OF 7	





Cross County Trail



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# Goal 3

Connect Plymouth Township with safe places to walk and bicycle.

## Our Vision

Residents will be able to access parks, schools, neighborhoods, shopping, and other destinations via safe places to walk and bicycle.

## Why We Care

Safe places to walk and bicycle is Plymouth Township's next logical frontier in parks and recreation. Progressing from small disparate parks into a premier parks and recreation system featuring a model community recreation center, an award-winning nature park, and an NCAA ballfield, the Township has a reputation far and wide as being a preferred place to live. This is largely because of its premier parks and recreation system. The missing piece is green connections: safe places to bicycle and walk.

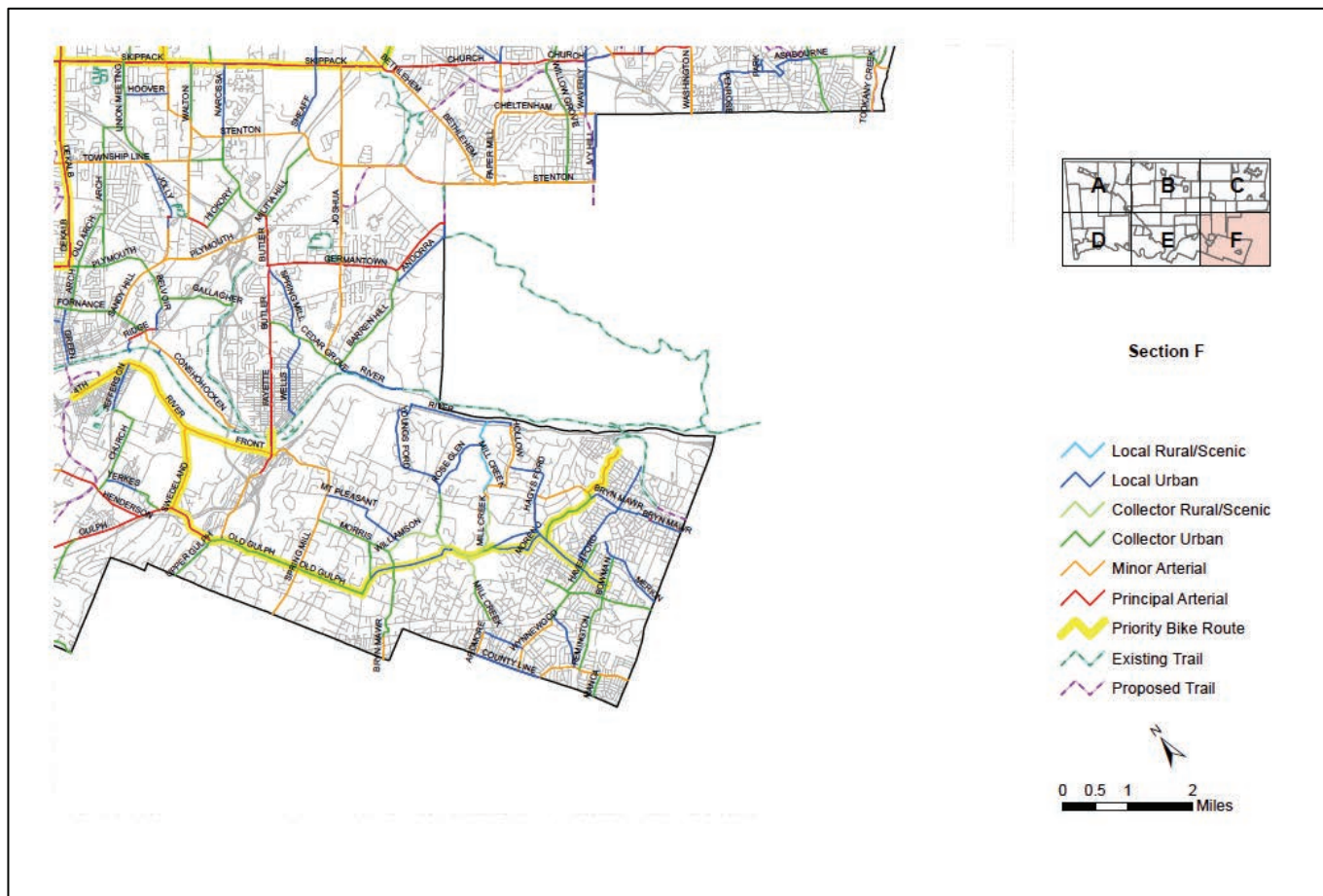
- Trails were a priority in all previous parks and recreation plans as well as the current Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan.
- The public participation process found that safe places to bicycle were the most frequently mentioned and desired improvement to the parks and recreation system.

- The Environmental Advisory Board has been working on trails as a priority for many years, providing a sound framework for trail planning, grant funding potential and development.

Since Plymouth Township is nearly fully developed, has heavy traffic, and is bisected by major roadways, safe connections for bicycling are challenging but possible. The need to move forward on bicycle pathways is pressing as time works against municipalities that are attempting to develop trail connections.

## Analysis and Findings

The context for trail planning is important. Plymouth Township sits in the heart of the greater Philadelphia area's Circuit Trails. Circuit Trails is a growing regional network of 750 miles of multi-use trails. The Circuit connects our local communities, providing endless opportunities for recreating and commuting. Montgomery County has been putting into place one of Pennsylvania's most highly regarded county bicycle networks for the last 30 years. These systems have sparked high trail use as well as being the catalyst for municipalities to develop their own connections to regional trails. Plymouth residents want to get access to these trails via safe connections close to their own homes. They would like to be able to bicycle to them safely rather than drive to them.



**Bike Montco: The Bicycle Plan for Montgomery County.**  
 Section F showing Plymouth Township in context with surrounding municipalities.



Beside contained loop trails (parks, schools, etc.) and informal paths, Plymouth Township has two heavily used multi-use trails:

1. The Cross County Trail will ultimately connect from the junction of the Schuylkill River Trail in Conshohocken to Willow Grove and into Bucks County. *This 17.5-mile pathway* will provide the principal north-south route through the heart of Montgomery County. About three miles of this multi-use trail now connects with the Schuylkill River Trail near West Elm Street and Colwell Lane in Conshohocken and carries up through Plymouth Township, past the Metroplex, and terminating at the intersection of Chemical Road and West Germantown Pike.

Schuylkill River Trail – Is a high-volume multi-use trail that generally follows the course of the Schuylkill River from Philadelphia to Pottsville. Plymouth Township sits along a 30+ mile completed section of trail from Philadelphia to Parkerford. North of Parkerford and on toward Pottsville, the trail is patchwork between planned sections of trail, on-road signed sections of trail and completed trail. Overall the trail has a projected length of approximately 130 miles in Southeastern PA. It is very heavily used.

## Strengths

Plymouth Township has been putting a great deal of attention on trail planning. The Environmental Advisory Board has been focused on trail planning for several years with a solid strategy in place to get going. The Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan has identified bicycle

pathways as a priority. Plymouth Township Council has been committed to extending sidewalk connections throughout the Township and has gotten grant funding for this along Chemical Road. The Parks and Recreation Department has been reaching out and coordinating on all of these efforts and identified safe places to walk and bicycle an important part of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

## Challenges

Being a heavily developed community makes trail planning a challenge but not impossible.

- Traffic is a concern.
- Road crossings on Germantown Pike, Ridge Pike, and Butler Pike have been raised as concerns.
- Securing linkages for trail connections will require negotiation.
- Unfounded fears and misinformation about trails tend to cause opposition by a small but vocal minority.
- Bus stops for SEPTA need to be made safer and more attractive.

## Opportunities

Plymouth Township has significant opportunities for trail connections.

- The Township's new Comprehensive Plan and this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan support and mirror many previous plans. They include Bike Montco, the Township's parks, recreation, and open

space plans, and the County's trail study for the rail trail corridor 26 years ago.

- The surrounding townships and the County are moving aggressively in developing trails to which Plymouth Township can connect.
- As land development and re-development projects arise, the Township can work toward securing linkages and advancing trail connections. Trail funding is available through PA DCNR, PennDOT and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.
- Safe places to bicycle and walk the number one preference of the community, providing a sound foundation of public support.
- A group of committed citizens is sparking creative thought and work on setting the framework for a bicycle network.
- Over the next ten years, the re-development of the Schuylkill Riverfront is expected to change from industrial to mixed-use. Getting people safely to the river via trails will open up many significant recreational, living, business, and working opportunities.
- A lot of creative thinking is going on to try to make trails happen from how to get easements to out of the box ideas such as a bridge over Germantown Pike using a Lego theme. The Lego theme could lead to a partnership with a local business.

The following section provides recommendations for establishing a connected system of bicycle pathways in Plymouth Township. Not every trail can be achieved at once, but over time and with the successful establishment of pathways,

the Township can chip away at establishing a connected community.

### **Proposed Plymouth Trail Network & Connections**

The proposed trail network is a system of signed, publicly accessible corridors linking township open space, community areas and assets. The Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept Map on page 64 shows the suggested route of a proposed (suggested) trail network. The proposed route is based on the following principles:

- The Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept Mapping should link various nodes, such as parks, other open spaces, neighborhoods, major commercial areas, and schools.
- The Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept should incorporate or connect with existing trail corridors (Cross County Trail), the Schuylkill River Trail and Greenway, and neighboring municipal trails, initiatives, and plans.
- In addition to developing its own trail network, Plymouth should continue to work with others. This includes Montgomery County, as well as East Norriton Township, Whitpain Township, Whitemarsh Township, Norristown Borough, Conshohocken Borough, Upper and Lower Merion Townships, Bridgeport Borough, and West Conshohocken Borough. Multi-municipal



trail collaboration can help advance the Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept network by linking to other trail and greenway initiatives in the region.

- Having a clearly signed network of trails, paths, sidewalks and open spaces connecting Plymouth Township parks, recreation areas, greenways and the like.
- The right-of-way for the trail would be secured through the dedication of publicly accessible right-of-way, acquisition, conservation easements, and access easements (if necessary).

The following describes the concept alignment route of the Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept. The numbers correspond with the fold-out map. This is only a suggested alignment based on walkability, potential connections, linkage potential, and condition of sidewalks and corridor.

1. **Community Center to PECO ROW and East Plymouth Valley Park** – Sidewalk/side path connection via Jolly Rd., Harvard Rd. and Harvard Circle. Crossings of Jolly Rd. and Harvard Circle.
2. **PECO ROW Trail** – Multi-use trail connecting to Proposed Whitpain Township trails and East Plymouth Valley Park. Crossing of Germantown Pike.

3. **East Plymouth Valley Park to Bicentennial Park** – Sawmill Run wooded corridor to Sidewalk/side path along Germantown Pike. Sidewalk/side path along Valley Rd. Crossings of Germantown Pike and Belvoir Rd.
4. **Community Center to Mall** - Sidewalk/side path along Walton Rd. and Fountain Rd. Crossings of Walton Rd. and Hickory Rd.
5. **Mall to Harriet Wetherill Park**- Sidewalk/side path along Hickory Rd. and Narcissa Rd. Crossing of Narcissa Rd.
6. **Mall Complex** - Sidewalk/side path along the Mall access drive.
7. **Crossing** - Grade separated crossing of Turnpike and Sidewalk/side path along Plymouth Rd. to Butler Pike.
8. **Butler Pike to Harriet** - Sidewalk/side path along Butler Pike. Multi-Use path through “Parc Plymouth Meeting” development to Narcissa Rd. Sidewalk/side path along Narcissa Rd. Crossing of Narcissa Rd.
9. **Butler Pike to Cross County Trail and Proposed Whitemarsh Township Trails** - Sidewalk/side path along Butler Pike. Sidewalk/side path through “Johnson

Controls” business park connecting to the Cross-County Trail. Crossing of Plymouth Rd. and W. Germantown Pike.

10. PECO ROW Multi-use Trail – Germantown pike to N. Gravers Rd. Crossings of Hallowell Rd., Sandy Hill Rd., Plymouth Rd., Johnson Rd., and N. Gravers Rd.
11. **PECO ROW to Metroplex / Cross County Trail** - Sidewalk/side path along N. Gravers Rd. and Gallagher Rd. Crossings of N. Gravers Rd., S. Gravers Rd., Davis Dr., and Metroplex access drives. Retrofit bridge on Gallagher Rd. over Railroad for Pedestrian use.
12. **Gallagher Rd. Corridor to Black Horse Park - Sidewalk/side path along Gallagher Rd., Belvoir Rd., and School Lane.** Possibly through Romano development property. Crossings of Belvoir Rd. and School Lane.
13. **Black Horse Park to JFK Park Connection** – Multi-use trail through the “Markel Corp” complex. Crossing of School Lane
14. **Gallagher Rd. to JFK Park and Belvoir Rd. via Diamond Run Corridor** – Multi-use trail along Diamond Run Corridor. Sidewalk/side path along Gallagher Ct. (to Gallagher/Belvoir intersection). Crossing of Belvoir Rd.
15. **Belvoir Rd. / Plymouth Rd. (Plymouth Country Club) to Bicentennial Park - Sidewalk/side path along Belvoir Rd. and Plymouth Rd.** Multi-use Trail through the Technical High School or Colonial Middle School property. Crossings of Plymouth Rd. Maplewood Dr., and Sandy Hill Rd.
16. **Belvoir Rd. to PECO ROW** - Sidewalk/side path along N. Gravers Rd. and Johnson Rd. Possibly through development property. Crossing of Belvoir Rd. and Johnson Rd.
17. **Gallagher Rd. (at Romano property) to PECO ROW** – Connection through swim club, the wooded property behind the swim club, and through possible development property. Crossings of Gallagher Rd. and N. Gravers Rd.
18. **JFK Park to Schuylkill River Trail** - Sidewalk/side path along Fairfield Rd., Lucetta St., Ridge Pike and Ross St. Crossings of Fairfield Rd. and Ridge Pike.
19. **JFK Park to Schuylkill River Trail** - Sidewalk/side path along Fairfield Rd., Conshohocken Rd., to Turnpike Corridor along Diamond Run. Crossings of Fairfield Rd., Conshohocken Rd., and Ridge Pike.
20. **Cross County Trail to Schuylkill River Trail** - Sidewalk/side path along access drive road through Proving Grounds to and through Riverfront development. Crossing of Conshohocken Rd.



21. **Alan Wood Park to Cross County Trail** – Parallel green space corridor to the Blue Route (Proving Grounds property). Crossing of Fulton St.
22. **Cross County Trail to PECO ROW** (and eventually the Schuylkill River Trail in Whitemarsh Township) - Sidewalk/side path along Chemical Rd. and W. North Lane. Crossings of Blue Route interchange, Chemical Rd., and Ridge Pike.
23. **Ridge Pike to Cross County Trail** - Sidewalk/side path along Colwell Lane and Brook Rd. Crossings of Brook Road, Overhill Road, Hillcrest Road, Clay Drive, and Turf Lane.

Using the suggested alignment for the Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept, it is easy to start envisioning larger (red circles) and smaller (black circles) "loop" trail alignments within the network. These are illustrated to the right and on the following page.

Plymouth Township Trails and its potential "loop" trails should use the existing Schuylkill River Trail and Greenway, the Cross-County Trail and other existing (and proposed) trail alignments whenever possible.

The trail network can be established in Plymouth Township incrementally as time, opportunities, and resources permit. Ways for securing the right-of-way, not in the public domain (if necessary) would include fee simple acquisition, gaining access by an easement, and acquiring property through the Township's regulations on the mandatory dedication of parkland (if applicable). Trails could also be established using bike lanes along wide shoulders of suitable roadways when possible. The objective is to preserve trail segments that could gradually be linked to the overall regional trail network.

## Trail Planning Guidelines

The Plymouth Township Trails and Connector Concept should consider the following trail development guidelines:

### a. Maintenance of the Trail Network

In addition to Township park maintenance staff, it could be possible to get volunteers and community groups to contribute to maintaining public trails. This system is used very successfully to maintain the Appalachian Trail and even locally along the Schuylkill River Trail. Groups such as hiking/walking clubs and "Friends" group organizations could accept some responsibility for walking trails two or three times a year to clear obstructions, clean up trash, and perform other light maintenance.

### b. Parking for the Trail Network

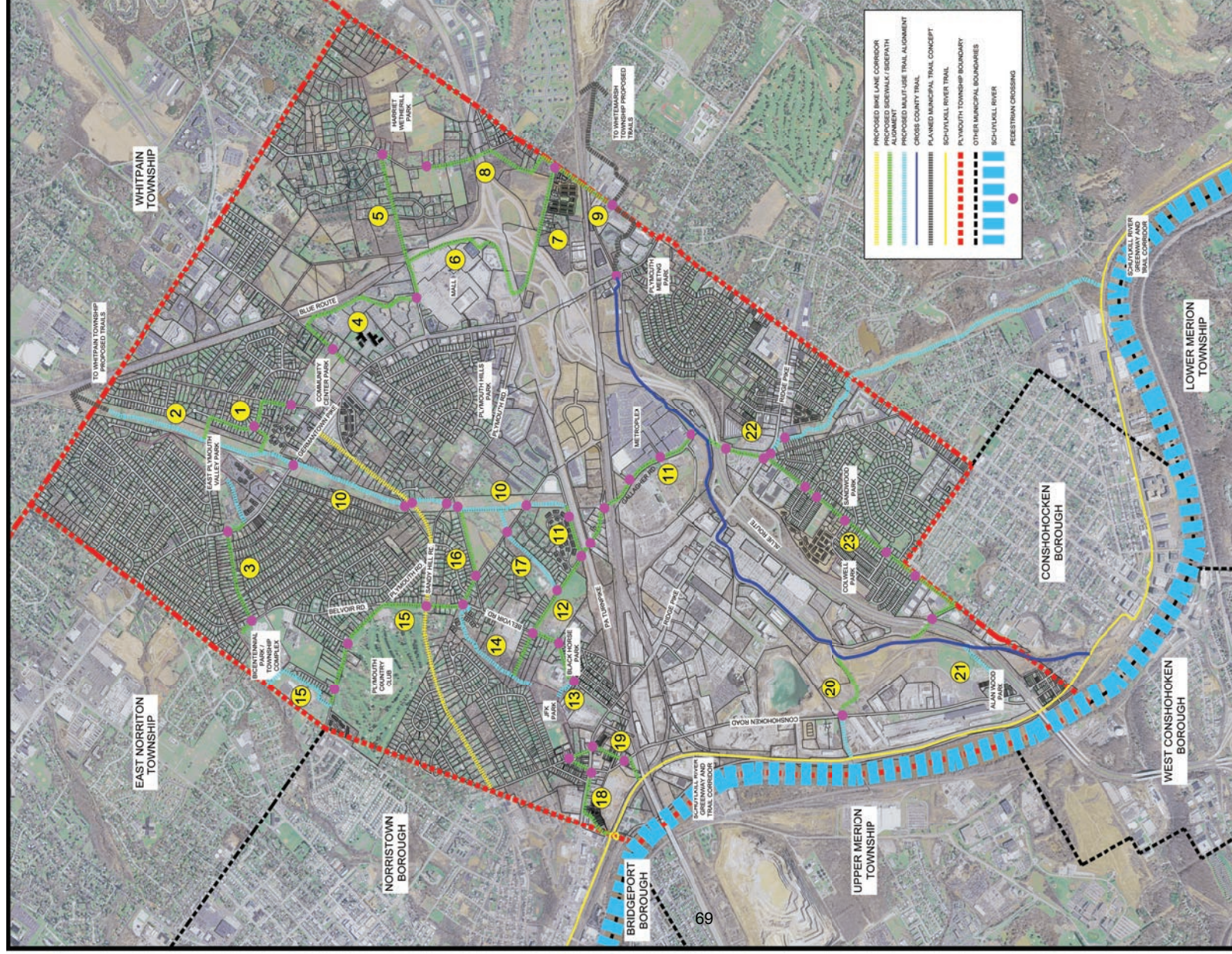
To avoid issues for neighbors and traffic hazards along roads, parking areas along trail corridors should be provided at identified locations such as township parks, other open space facilities or parking agreements /partnerships with other private or public entities. In some cases, local businesses may be willing to allow the use of some of its parking area by trail users at specified times, mainly if peak demand for parking is a time when they do not need their full parking area.

### **c. Public Education and Outreach Concerning Trails**

Public education outreach is vital to gain public support for trails. Some residents who own property adjacent may oppose the trail because they fear increased crime, noise, trash, and trespassing on their property. Many studies show this is typically not the case and prove that trails in

communities generally increase property values, raise awareness and foster stewardship, for the trail, the environment, and the municipality. The involvement of the public in the trail planning process is critically important to ensure that the good of the overall community is the top priority over small narrow interests.





# PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP TRAILS AND CONNECTOR CONCEPT MAPPING



### Toole Recreation Planning



**BCM**  
ENGINEERS

WORK STUDIO  
310 ELWOOD BLVD.  
YORK, PA. 17403  
STUDIO PH. 717-843-1800

**ENGINEERS**  
4520 GARDEN AVENUE  
STUDIO CITY, CA 91604-1897



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# Goal 4

Provide recreation opportunities that inspire personal growth, healthy lifestyles, connect people with nature and build a sense of community

## Our Vision

The recreation experiences that we offer to all those we serve will be consistent with our Department's goals and core values. The diversity in programs and services that we offer will serve all ages and interests township wide. Our programs will enhance the quality of life in Plymouth Township.

## Why We Care

Research has shown that the single most important way to increase the use of parks and recreation facilities is to provide programs and activities in them. Our residents are passionate about our programs even with demographic shifts, technological advances, economic pressure, social changes, and recreation trends. Our programs remain at the core of our Parks and Recreation Department's role in making Plymouth Township a healthy, lively, and prosperous community of choice. Support for our programs is evident in the increasing participation over the years. Programs are the lifeblood of our Department, contributing to the financial support of the community center and parks. Our programs recover about 65 percent of the recreation budget about twice the national average. We must be vigilant in recognizing changes that are affecting programs. These changes involve competition from new businesses, increases in wage rates in the private sector,

pending minimum wage increases, and attracting and retaining qualified, dedicated staff.

### Programs: Plymouth Township's Trademark

The Parks & Recreation Department annually offers:

- 13 Program Areas
- 1,803 Sessions of Programs
- 4,020 Classes
- 297 Birthday Party Packages
- 1,856 Indoor Facility Rentals and Pavilions
- 1,682 Outdoor Facility Permits
- Support for 10 sports leagues with about 5,000 participants and supporter involved and NCAA Division I Villanova Baseball Team

**Between 2006 and 2018, the Parks and Recreation Department increased program cost recovery from 45% to 65%. The Greater Plymouth Community Center recovers 80 percent of its costs.**



## Analysis and Findings

Although the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department is highly regarded for its organized, scheduled recreation programs, it provides recreation opportunities in additional ways. The Department:

- Provides, improves, and maintains 11 parks with recreation facilities and natural features that residents use at their discretion. Visitation to these parks totals over a million hours of use annually with sports, fitness, play, social activities, and special interests of people wanting to get outside.
- Supports community-based sports organizations by providing facilities, customer support, and funding.
- Facilitates recreational experiences by permitting the use of facilities by individuals and organizations who plan their own events.

The Department's role in providing support beyond organized programs is essential and beyond measure.

### Programming Overview

During the public participation process, community members expressed positive comments about the programs that the Parks and Recreation Department provides. They most frequently mentioned the large number of programs along with their consistent high quality, excellent leaders, and the convenience that the Department offers. They especially commented on the welcoming atmosphere and the services provided for senior adults.

Except for fitness and swimming lessons, registration for all programs has been growing. As described in the chapter on the Greater Plymouth Community Center, fitness is in part limited

by the small size of the facility. Swimming lessons have been affected by new commercial aquatics centers in the area as well as the difficulty in attracting qualified staff.

Program constraints include:

- **Space limitations.** Facilities such as Activity Central is shared between youth programs and fitness. The demand for space for programs in both areas exceeds the capacity of the space.
- **Parking.** There is insufficient parking on-site to accommodate the various rentals and programs.
- **Staff Limitations** - Program managers are functioning as program leaders taking time away from their planning and development of new programs and evaluation and promotion of existing programs.
- **Parks Program Potential** - Township parks have limited programming but great potential for more.
- **Community Preferences** – The GPCC Complex is superb. That's where people want to be rather than in other parks. It is the heart and soul of the community.
- **Resistance to the Outdoors** – Staff has found that children and parents are resistant to programs in the outdoors. Camps that are in the Community Center tend to fill up while camps elsewhere in the Township have limited enrollment.

### 2019 General Recreation Trends

The National Recreation and Park Association provides information on the top trends in parks and recreation annually. These trends cover not only recreation programs but also the very real concerns and issues that communities face that are related to parks and recreation operations and public service. The general recreation trends are:

**Investment** in parks and recreation is increasing for the first time since 2008.

**More technology:** Beacon counters, drones, monitoring of park visitors, biometric monitoring at facility entrances, and charting of park management such as control of invasive species.

**Esports:** Esports is a form of recreation in which spectators essentially sit and watch individuals and teams compete in a variety of electronic sports. Esports draw teens and young adults into recreation venues. Esports events and tournaments have revenue potential as well as the potential to reach hard to reach audience.

**Dogs:** Dog parks are the fastest growing type of recreation facility.

**Pickleball:** Departments nationwide report not being able to build enough pickleball courts fast enough to meet this trend.

**Yoga:** All kinds of yoga featuring animals as participants – goats, puppies, pigs and who knows what else.

**Libraries,** health services, social services and after-school care are all in parks and recreation facilities. Walkable/bikeable access, intergenerational programs, healthcare, childcare can all be incorporated into a unified location through parks and recreation providing ultimate convenience for the public.

**Nonbinary gender identification:** Increasing gender equality is a major effort of parks and recreation agencies adopting inclusive policies and engagement of the LGBTQ+ community.

**Opioid Abuse** in Parks: Parks and Recreation Departments are increasing efforts to ensure safety of park visitors and maintenance staff as well as forging partnerships with health departments and others to work toward prevention of addiction.

### 2019 Fitness Trends

Keeping community members engaged in fitness is as important for community wellness as it is important for revenue generation in the Community Center. Introducing new programming is essential which makes monitoring fitness trends necessary. The top trends are:

1. **Wearable technology** – Using fitness trackers for programming in keeping people engaged in fitness.
2. **Group training** – Bringing a fresh look to classes of five or more is a key to success.
3. **High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)** – Features short bursts of high intensity exercise followed by a brief rest.
4. **Fitness Programs for Older Adults** – Programs designed for adults to maintain an active healthy lifestyle.
5. **Bodyweight Training** – Fitness training with little or no equipment. This makes training out in the parks possible.
6. **Employing Certified Fitness Professionals** – Fully accredited fitness professionals are required for fitness programming.
7. **Yoga** – Participation in Yoga continues to grow,
8. **Personal Training** – A certified trainer working one-on-one with a client.
9. **Functional Fitness Training** – Strength, balance, coordination and endurance training to help people maintain their fitness.
10. **Exercise of Medicine (EIM)** – A global initiative in which primary care physicians encourage patients to commit to fitness.



- Keeping pace with or ahead of trends. The area is becoming a life sciences and health mecca. Tapping into these could help advance partnerships and program use. Using social media to do things like "pop-up" recreation events and activities fits in with today's culture among Generations X and Y. The desire of just about every demographic group to have more "live programs and larger-scale special events."

## Participation

In 2018, the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department offered over 4,000 classes of scheduled recreation programs. Participants in these 13 different program areas totaled 24,181. This number does not include people who drop in for things like birthday parties, to watch games, or use the pool for fitness, competition, or fun. On any one day, the community center has 600 to 1,000 people using it. The parks are open 365 days a year. The Community Center is available for about 5,500 hours annually.

### Parks & Recreation: Big Reach into the Community!

The Parks & Recreation Department directly serves 7 out of every 10 households in the community. Nearly 5,000 households are in the Parks & Recreation Department's system for involvement in its programs and services.

Contrast that with the national average of about a 20 percent reach into the community to find that Plymouth Township directly serves three and half times the percentage of households that a typical parks and recreation department across the nation serves!

## Tracking Participation

The analysis of metrics performed in the Community Center assessment found that the management team has strong metrics on its program performance.

- About 45 percent of the Center membership is senior adults. Children are heavy users of the Center. Public outreach found that the Center has little appeal to Millennials. The fitness center is too small, and there is little programming for this age group.
- While tracking is done by the number of participants in each program or class, these most likely include multiple counts of the same person.
- Public feedback indicated that there is a public interest in more programming for:
  - **Pre-schoolers** – Regulations established by the state legislation placed limitations on all public parks and recreation department for pre-school programs. Standards of care enacted required a prohibitive level of staffing supervision for recreation more in line with daycare standards. The Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society has been working to cure this significant issue that has resulted in a lack of pre-school recreation programming statewide.
  - **Special needs population** – The Department accommodates special needs populations. Additional services would require partnerships with other providers. Developing an accessible playground is essential to this community.

- **Culturally diverse population** – As Plymouth Township continues to experience increasing diversity, working with community members in these diverse cultures will become increasingly important. This is especially important for children and youth. Parks and recreation can bring people of diverse backgrounds together within the community as a whole.

## Core Programming Areas

Quality recreation programs provide participants with a wide range of benefits that are linked to physical, mental, spiritual development, and well-being. The Department has a philosophy of providing a wide range of recreation opportunities at a basic level for people to try out many different activities to find out what they enjoy. What people do as adults is linked to what they did as children, so this variety of programming is especially important for children and their families.

Core programming areas are the primary focus of the Department's programs. These categories are offered in all program sessions year-round. They have a broad demographic appeal and consistently high quality of service. These categorical areas are integral to the success of the Department and are crucial to cost recovery and revenue generation. They require special attention in promotion and customer service with strong customer interaction. The core program areas, all of which have partnership potential, include:

- **Recreation** – General programs, camps, trips, special events, youth, after-school program, pre-school

program, and adult sports leagues. In 2019, the Department added staff devoted to nature programming.

- **Aquatics** – Swim lessons and aquatics programs and events
- **Fitness** – Senior fitness, general fitness, cycling, and personal training

Examples of programs include:

- Socialization and education programs such as day camps, early childhood classes, babysitting course
- Adult interests such as tennis, line dancing
- Senior socialization such as health fairs, nights out
- The arts such as dancing, pottery classes, drawing
- Wellness such as cooking classes, driver safety
- Nature such as nature photography, butterfly

## Other Providers of Recreation Services

### Organized Sports

The Township has two main branches of sports: community-based sports leagues and Villanova University.

Plymouth Township has a partnership with Villanova University with the NCAA Division1 baseball field in the Community Center Park. Villanova paid to develop the field and support its maintenance and continuous facility improvements. Villanova University's home baseball games and practices are at the facility. The community can use the field for which the Department charges a rental fee.



## Community-Based Sports Leagues

Organized sports leagues provide year-round sports primarily for children and youth. Volunteers operate the leagues contributing thousands of hours of time. The leagues perform some limited maintenance and make improvements.

The Township provides all sports facilities, maintenance, and league support. The leagues include:

**Greater Norristown Wrestling Club** - The league has 124 participants. Participation is increasing annually. The league uses the elementary and middle schools for tournaments and practices. The association would like to be able to hold more home tournaments if space were available.

**Plymouth Little League** has 530 participants with modest growth of about three to five percent annually. The league uses fields at East Plymouth Valley Park, Greater Plymouth Community Center, JFK Park, and Colonial Middle School.

**Colonial Soccer Club** has 1400 participants, youth through adults. The league includes both recreational and travel teams. Colonial Soccer Club uses the Greater Plymouth Community Center (both fields and the gym) and JFK Park in the Township. They also use Victory fields, Miles Park, Ridge Park, Plymouth Elementary School, Colonial Middle School, and Fellowship House. The league does not have enough lighted field space in the fall for practices and pays a third party to use fields elsewhere.

**Plymouth Whitemarsh Ice Hockey** has 45 participants in three teams. The organization uses the high school for off-the-ice training.

**Plymouth Whitemarsh Spartans** is the community football organization. The home field is at East Plymouth Valley Park. The league includes both football and cheerleading. Participation in football is generally trending downward.

**Plymouth Jr. ABA** is a basketball league with instructional, intermediate, junior varsity, varsity, senior, and travel divisions. The league uses gyms in the Community Center, Colonial Middle School, Colonial High School, Plymouth Elementary School, and Ridge Park Elementary School.

**Mount Carmel Mounties American Legion Baseball** fields one team of senior players ages 19 and under. They play at Colonial Middle School.

**Conshy Bulldogs Youth Lacrosse Club** is a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization. Their goal is to provide a positive and fun lacrosse experience for both boys and girls in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The organizations serve participants in the Colonial School District and use school fields for games. Participation is increasing annually.

**Plymouth-Whitemarsh Aquatics Club** is a year-round competitive swim team offering high-quality professional coaching and technique instruction for all ages and abilities. The goal of the Club is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor. The club uses both the Plymouth Whitemarsh pool and the Community Center pool for practice.

**Colonial Community Aquatics** is an organization of swimmers and divers within the Colonial School District. CCA's swim and dive program is fun, competitive, and teaches lifelong lessons of commitment integrity and dedication. CCA participates in the Suburban Aquatic League (SAL)

## Colonial School District

The Plymouth Whitemarsh Adult Evening School is a nonprofit organization sponsored by the Colonial Board of School Directors. Course offerings fall under the categories of:

- Arts and Crafts
- Business and Finance
- Languages
- Special Interests and
- Health and Recreation

The classes are designed mainly for the self-improvement and enjoyment of the students. The programs are held at the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School.

## Commercial Providers

More than 20 fitness-type commercial enterprises are within commuting distance of the Greater Plymouth Community Center. More are moving in with a new fitness center locating in the mall in the fall of 2019. These include a range of types of facilities from Planet Fitness and The Edge to specialized facilities for Cross-Fit, Barre, weightlifting, and personal training.

## Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

### Strengths

- Programs are the lifeblood of the parks and recreation system in terms of community service and revenue generation for fiscal support.
- Since most programming is run through the Community Center, the program analysis conducted in

the Community Center analysis was integral to the findings. Overall the analysis found that programs are very well run through planning, implementation, and tracking of all metrics associated with programming.

- The program management team is reliable and professionally driven.
- The Recreation Core Area has been increasing in growth and revenues.
- The public perceives recreation opportunities as plentiful and high quality.
- Programs for seniors, especially in fitness, to be engaging, important for revenues, fill the Center during non-peak times, and for many participants, the single most crucial factor in reducing their isolation and providing socialization.
- The afterschool and holiday programs enable parents, in this primarily two-income community, to work and have peace of mind in knowing that their children are safe and engaged in healthy recreational and educational opportunities.
- Aquatics is making a rebound by making changes in staffing and wages that will enable the re-growth of programs such as swimming lessons.
- Marketing and promotion are key to GPCC and the Parks & Recreation Department's success. It is crucial to increase efforts on advancing departmental promotions with a formal plan and implementation schedule with designated staff responsibilities to use all forms of media to increase public awareness about the Township's services as similar facilities are competing



for the very same clients and revenues. All divisions within the Parks & Recreation Department need to be working toward the same vision and goals in promotion and advertising to maximize increasing public awareness. Orchestrating a unified marketing approach is essential with all of the enterprises in the region vying for the same clients and revenues.

- The programs contribute to the strong sense of community here, which is vital to the overall success of the Township's high quality of life.

## Challenges

- Space limitations in the community center significantly affect programming. The Park Maintenance Division is housed in the Community Center. It takes up valuable revenue-generating space that could be used for more recreation opportunities for the community as well as revenue support.
- Staff expressed the need for additional programming help. While the team spirit is prevalent, program managers may get too involved in directly leading or implementing programs that lower-paid, part-time or seasonal workers could do. This would enable program managers and coordinators to focus on program development and evolution to keep pace with trends, generate more revenues, and attract more diverse participants especially in the generations of X, Y, and Millennials.
- Parking at all parks and recreation facilities is very limited. The lack of sufficient parking interferes with programs such as special events in the parks and multiple programs in the Community Center that have revenue potential as rentals.

- Programming has been concentrated at the Community Center with limited programs in the parks.
- Fitness programming revenues have been declining. This is due in part to space limitations, keeping pace with a continuously changing industry, and competition. No fitness programming occurs in the parks.
- The use of the fitness area is predominantly by senior adults. Younger generations find fitness available here is very limited and go elsewhere.
- People generally prefer going to the Community Center and its park over all other township parks and recreation facilities.
- Community attitudes toward the outdoors. Families would prefer their children to be indoors rather than out in parks. Getting more people to connect with nature will be important.
- Programming partnerships are limited.
- The Greater Plymouth Community Center is nearly 20 years old. To keep pace with design trends and similar businesses in the area, it needs re-branding.

## Opportunities

- The parks represent major opportunity areas for additional programs. Research has shown that the most critical factor in increasing park use is programming. Fitness programming should be expanded to the parks.

- The addition of a part-time program coordinator for nature at Harriet Wetherill Park is a major advancement.
- The proposed renovation of the Township Building presents an opportunity to re-locate Park Maintenance out of the Community Center. Vacating this space will open up a major opportunity to increase recreation programs in the newly available space.
- Adding more pre-school recreation programs would serve an identified community need.
- The Community Center has the potential to catalyze building a culture of health in Plymouth Township. However, the Parks and Recreation Department cannot do this alone. It will require partnerships. But this area is plentiful with healthcare-related businesses, industries, and organizations to tap.
- A more rigorous evaluation system for programs could support the staff in program and event planning. Reaching out to non-users may be telling in figuring out ways to improve the programming of the Community Center and the parks to generate more use by a broader age range of participants.
- Knowledge of trends, especially in the fitness industry, and applying that information to Township programs is crucially important in program planning. With revenues declining in the fitness core program area, this is especially important. A training plan with requirements for the application of training outcomes to Plymouth

Township's recreation programming would help in all program areas.

- New program types such as “Pop-Up” events could be added.
- A department-wide program management plan could help to reign in programming that requires too much of existing staff such as re-defining and limiting "special events." This could also improve support staff by focusing core program area managers on planning and development of programs to serve the public and generate revenues while leaving the actual program execution to recreation leaders whether full-time, part-time, seasonal or contract.

#### Loneliness: A Disease

Loneliness has reached epidemic levels and rivals obesity and smoking as a health risk. While loneliness has been classified as a top disease of the elderly, in a recent study, 30 percent of Millennials said they always or often feel lonely. Gen Z (ages 18 – 22) may be the loneliest generation. While the root causes of loneliness are involved, the fraying of communities and isolation of individuals has resulted in people finding friends and connecting with humans very difficult. Public parks and recreation are one very important tool in addressing the significant public health issue. Frequent users of the Greater Plymouth Community Center and young isolated parents testified about the importance of Plymouth Township's recreation opportunities in helping to reduce their loneliness and isolation.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

1. **High Quality of Service** - Continue to emphasize high quality in every aspect of programming from promotion to leadership.
  - Customer service is the hallmark of the Department. Ensure that this continues.
  - Develop an evaluation system for all programs. Consider adopting interim evaluations for programs such as camps rather than waiting until the end to facilitate quick improvements.
2. **Health and Wellness** - Adopt *Building a Culture of Health* as a goal, broadening the fitness core program area and integrating health into all core program areas and for all age groups. Building a *Culture of Health* means working together to improve *health* for all in Plymouth Township. It involves placing well-being at the Center of every aspect of our programming to ensure that our community flourishes and individuals thrive. To undertake this effort, partnerships are required. Tapping the related health and wellness providers in the area will be necessary. The local nonprofit hospitals such as Suburban General Hospital are required by federal tax law to spend some of their surplus on “community benefits,” which are goods and services that address a community need. While Plymouth Township is generally considered an affluent community, issues such as the opioid crisis, addiction, obesity, and loneliness cross all demographic groups. The Greater Plymouth Community Center can serve as an important venue as the Center for this program. While previous plans included the recommendation that the Fitness

Director manage this effort, changes in society and health care warrant the oversight of this program to be at the Director or Assistant Director level. The reason for this is that the development of this program will require outreach and partnership building as the Department cannot do this on its own. The program should be woven into all programming areas, not just the Fitness Core Program area.

- Develop a plan for Building a Culture of Health.
  - Inventory and brainstorm with staff and Board members potential partners.
  - Plan and organize a summit of potential partners to determine how to build a collaborative system of public-private partners. Consider getting a RecTAP or Peer grant for this purpose.
  - Use the findings of the Summit to craft a plan of action that is practical and implementable in building the Culture of Health in the Township.
3. **Locations** - Plan, implement, and evaluate programs in township parks.
    - Focus on Harriet Wetherill Park as the Township’s home base for nature and environmental education. But weave nature and environmental education into as many recreation programs as possible such as the camps.
    - When the Pickleball hub goes into JFK Park, use this as an opportunity to create new leagues, instructional, recreational and competitive programs there.
    - Use the park themes proposed to drive the creation of programs such as Plymouth Town at Colwell; nature, culture, and the arts at Harriet Wetherill, family play for all and sports at East

Plymouth Valley; fitness and sports at the Community Center; and neighborhood connections with small scale activities such as movie nights, gardening, or games such as chess in the small neighborhood parks with few facilities.

4. **Age Groups** – Continue to focus on seniors and children. These are important groups both in needs and support in the community as seniors are a powerful voting bloc. To build the reputation of the Greater Plymouth Community Center as a cool place for all ages to go throughout their lifetime, work to attract Millennials through Gen Z. Millennials, in particular, are interested in participating in live events, something that the Parks & Recreation Department does very well and is their hallmark. Use the "Interests of Millennials to Gen Z"<sup>1</sup> to guide program planning.
5. **Diversifying Community** - Address the diversifying population by involving Asian, Hispanic, and special-needs residents in program planning and participation.
  - Contact faith-based institutions to learn how to involve key stakeholders of these communities.
  - Conduct interviews with key stakeholders suggested by the faith-based institutions, the Colonial School District or patrons of the Greater Plymouth Community Center regarding programs and services they would like to have. Strive to hire staff representative of the population, especially if they are multi-lingual.

- Consider the evolution of the composition of the Parks, Recreation & Shade Tree Advisory Board to ensure that it reflects the changing population.

#### Interests of Millennials to Gen Z People ages 13 to 36

1. Music / Playing an instrument
2. Sports
3. Gaming
4. Reading
5. Cooking / Baking
6. Fitness – Yoga, Pilates. Running is down.
7. Art
8. TV / Netflix
9. Crafting
10. Dance
11. Writing
12. Sewing / Knitting / Crochet
13. Travel
14. Running
15. Outdoor activity
16. Movies
17. Walking / Hiking
18. Photography
19. Shopping
20. Food — The National Gardening Association found that Millennials are responsible for the growth in gardening related to food and cooking.

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Y Pulse: Actionable Research on Gen Z and Millennials. (April 23, 2019) *Most of Gen Z and Millennials' hobbies are offline*. <https://www.ypulse.com/article/2019/04/23/most-of-gen-z-millennials-top-20-hobbies-are-offline/>

Slate. *Can just for fun hobbies survey in the era* (February 21, 2019) of the hustle? <https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/02/hobbies-hustle-era-leisure-time-coins.html>.



6. **Facility improvements to support programs -**

Use the facility improvement recommendations to support programming such as re-locating Park Maintenance out of the Community Center to the Township Municipal Complex.

7. **Promotion and advertising –** With changes and additions of commercial businesses related to Community Center programs, promotion is vital.

- Establish a formal written marketing plan with action steps, timelines and staff responsibilities. Hold a staff work session to brainstorm promotional approaches, on-going department wide staff support, and monitoring of marketing results.
- Continue to produce the newsletter while advancing the use of social media in advertising and promotion of programs, services, and facilities. Monitor how customers learn about programs and services.
- Monitor how print materials are used or not used as generational use and interests change to become more "in the cloud." Determine when to make the switch to online, based upon customer preferences, use, and cost.

8. **Coordination with community-based sports organizations.**

- Hold an annual summit for community-based sports organizations.
- Work with sports organizations to define long-range planning and investment in community facilities via specific five-year sport-related facility improvement plans.

- Use this as a forum to make the case for all that the Township does in support of community sports. This includes providing costs for this support.
- Adapt facilities to support high use, additional sports, maintenance, and changes in facility conditions via climate change that is producing extremes of wet and dry conditions that affect the use of ballfields, their playability and maintenance costs.

9. **Program Evolution Strategy –** Since the Parks and Recreation Department has four core program areas, they operate fairly independently. While there is no set format or method for determining the success of a recreation program, unifying the evaluation and modifications in a common format could help advance overall department goals in community service and revenue generation. Consider the following factors which are already used in some format by all divisions. Using a common framework for evaluation will support overall community recreation program planning. These factors are cost driven and are based upon the assumption that each program advances the vision, mission and goals of the Department. Consider the following factors to help make informed decisions about program modifications.

- Participation Numbers – Number of participants in each program.
- Percent Capacity – Number of participants in each program divided by the maximum capacity. Add waiting list information.
- Cost Recovery – Total revenue generated by the program minus costs. Include direct costs, indirect costs and a defined percentage of administrative

costs. Divide this by the total revenue received for the program.

- Revenue – Total revenue for the program area minus the total costs.

When a program demonstrates low numbers, percentages, cost recovery or revenue in any of these four categories, evaluate the program further. Use the following questions as guidelines in determining the value of the program:

1. Is the program a new program? Annually, about 15 percent of programs in each program area should be a new program. Cancellation rates should be about 20 percent.
2. Is the program trending up or down nationally?
3. Does the program have significant historical or cultural significance?
4. Is program serving an under-served population?
5. Is the program valuable to population groups who might otherwise not be physically active?

6. Does the program help to foster a sense of community?

7. What do the participant evaluations' show?

After considering all these factors, if the program is determined to be valuable to Plymouth Township residents, then explore other options such as:

- Partnerships with private/public entities to share costs.
- Evaluate if minor modifications could be made to eliminate costs.
- Assess if program is resource intensive, and if multiple programs could be combined to reduce costs.
- Evaluate if expanding program to provide increased access would increase participation.
- Evaluate the promotion of the program to determine if more advertising could increase participation.
- Evaluate if fees could be increased.



### **Changes to consider since the Greater Plymouth Community Center was established...**

We don't memorize phone numbers anymore. Selfies are normal. Smoking vanished entirely from restaurants – and parks! Gay marriage became a norm. "Friend" became a verb. We take our shoes off when we fly. TV's became cheap and awesome. Voice mail has gone from innovation to annoyance. Life moved to the Cloud. Online dating has zero stigma. We've gotten lazy about spelling. A self-driving car might be next to you on the road. It's gotten easier to be green. You are always available. We worry about charging batteries. WIFI is a necessity. Privacy may or may not matter. Retail giants are disappearing as shoppers moved online and Amazon Prime emerged. The weather has gotten scarier and affects us more. The world has shrunk; people travel everywhere easily. Radio shows are back with podcasts and more. Everyone's a star now that we have social media. "There's an app for that." We're all connected. Helicopter parents. Instant gratification. Life coaches. Political upheaval. Life expectancy is declining for the first time in history. Isolation and loneliness are prevalent. Complexity – things have gotten so much more complex.

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## Goal 5

Continue to manage, operate, and maintain the Plymouth Township park and recreation system in a fiscally responsible, innovative, and dedicated manner that garners widespread public support and maximum benefit

### Our Vision

The Parks & Recreation Department is in the business of planning, developing, implementing, and professionally managing the parks, programs, policies, and facilities established under the leadership of the Plymouth Township Council. Our vision is to provide financially sound, exceptional service through professional management and operations. By planning, directing, implementing, and evaluating our operations, we will ensure that our facilities and services are safe, clean, and attractive, thereby limiting the Township's exposure to risk and liability. We will continue to leverage every tax dollar with non-tax support to recover costs for programming, most of the operation of the Greater Plymouth Community Center, and grants to support necessary improvements for health, safety, cost recovery, and continued public support.

### Why We Care

With nearly 149 acres of municipal parkland and open spaces in 11 parks, including the Greater Plymouth Community Center, state of the art ballfields, neighborhood parks that are close-to-home, and beautiful places to experience nature, we have an essential legacy to protect and advance. Our citizens have told us that they highly value our parks and recreation facilities.

Plymouth Township has been steadily investing in parks and recreation for the last three decades. As a result, our parks and recreation facilities are well-used and are now at a point where they need revitalization, updating, and cyclic repairs. Just as any home requires ongoing investment to ensure that it stays safe, clean, and attractive, so do our parks and our Community Center. The original capital investment in facility development and improvements is significant; ongoing support is crucial. We need to ensure that our parks and recreation system is one that continues to attract people to want to live, work, and establish a business here. We are committed to being proud and skilled stewards of managing this public trust. Every community deserves great parks – and ours will be the best!

### Analysis and Findings

Three main functional areas cover the operation of the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department:

- Organization and Administration
- Maintenance
- Financing

## Organization and Administration

### Overview

The Parks and Recreation Director is responsible for all aspects of parks and recreation, including coordination on park maintenance. The Buildings and Grounds Director is responsible for providing park and recreation facility maintenance along with other major township responsibilities for public property such as the Township building.

As shown in the organizational chart on page 13, the Parks and Recreation Department has 20 full-time and 173 part-time/seasonal employees. The Parks & Recreation Director is responsible for the overall management and operation of the Department by implementing the policy directives of the Plymouth Township Council. The Assistant Parks & Recreation Director works closely with the Director and is responsible for the operations of the Community Center, permitting, coordination with organized sports leagues, and supervision of the division managers. The Buildings & Grounds Department has six full time employees and one seasonal as depicted in the organizational chart on page 14.

Four divisions comprise the organizational structure:

- **Recreation Programs** include all general recreation programs in all facilities, special events, birthday parties, building rentals, and sales.
- **Fitness** covers all community health and wellness programs and services, including the operation of the Community Center's fitness area.
- **Aquatics** is responsible for the operation and management of the Community Center's aquatics center, including pool care, instructional and recreation swimming, training, and certifications.

- **Administration** manages all customer service functions from the front desk to advertising.

### Strengths

- **Organizational Structure** - The organizational structure put into place 15 years ago continues to be efficient and effective. The management team uses staffing changes to adapt the organization based upon the skills and talents of the employees because the organizational framework is robust.
- **Staffing** - Overall, the Parks and Recreation Department has a strong professional staff with appropriate levels of full and part-time employees. The staff is exemplary in their professionalism and passion for their work and Plymouth Township's Parks and Recreation Department.
- **Teamwork** - The staff works as a team helping and supporting the organization as a whole.
- **Organizational Changes** - The Department added a part-time professional skilled in environmental education to provide programs centered in Harriet Wetherill Park and that also overlap into supporting township recreation programs with nature-based activities, events, or information.
- **Legacy Planning** – The Parks and Recreation Department focuses on legacy planning, both long-term and for short and intermediate-term staff changes. This foresight enables the administration to move with alacrity in making smooth and seamless transitions that belie the extreme work effort that supports it.



## Challenges

- The actual number of work hours available to the Department for each employee is much less than the 1,820 hours prescribed for full-time employees with a 35-hour workweek annually. With vacations, holidays, and sick leave, the gap between actual work hours and the work year is considerable. Employees tend to remain in the Township for their careers due to the quality of the Township and its benefits. Consequently, paid-time-off accumulates.
- Recruiting part-time staff is a challenge due to the plethora of part-time jobs in the area with considerably higher wage rates than the Department offers. Part-time staff hiring is only going to become more difficult. Even with the potential for the government to set a higher minimum wage, the local market will drive higher wage rates for part-timers.
- Recruiting staff for early morning hours is difficult.
- Turnover in the Fitness Center has been frequent.
- Hiring qualified staff for the Aquatics Center has been a challenge. The Department has adopted several strategies, such as paying for certification and increasing the wage rate.
- Program managers tend to spend time in actual leadership and the conduct of programs and services that is otherwise more appropriate in terms of pay and skill level accomplished by recreation leader level personnel. Salary levels for managers, along with the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes required for management-level positions, make their direct provision of programs too expensive. Given the need

for the Department to re-brand, keep pace with trends, and recover more revenues, the time of the managers would be more productive focused on planning and development of new or revised programs, services, and partnerships.

- As changes in participation and revenue generation in the program areas have occurred, managers need to ensure that they remain in growth patterns in both participation and revenues.
- All managers must have the same vision and goals for their program areas as the Parks and Recreation Department as a whole.
- Training is available. For the Department to benefit from its investment in employee training, outcomes for the training expenditures need to be fleshed out and monitored. A long-term employee development plan would support both departmental and employee goals.
- Maintenance is the primary function of the Buildings & Grounds Department, so there is no direct control over the tasks that are accomplished. Given the expensive responsibilities of Buildings & Grounds, functions such as the supervision of Community Center custodial staff are hampered.

## Opportunities

- Technology – Reflecting trends and staff capability, calling out technology as a significant organizational function would be valuable. Technology improvements ranging from facility improvements such as electronic information screens, electronic controls for remote park buildings such as restrooms, social media,

Esports, and on will advance productivity, customer service, and departmental image.

- Training – An employee development plan with goals, expectations, and outcomes is essential for the Department as a whole and the employees to keep pace with trends.
- Building upon Reputation – The public is most supportive of the Parks and Recreation Department. It is their favorite municipal service. Continuing to grow this reputation is essential as challenges are ahead with funding, wages, staffing, and facility improvement needs. In addition to the Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Board and coordination with the Environmental Advisory Board, additional methods for public involvement need to be formalized and added as a department function. These include a survey of the Community Center users every other year, a public opinion survey every five years, focus groups, targeted interviews, and outreach to non-users.
- Partnerships and Sponsorships – The role of the Director needs to evolve to cultivate more partnerships. Building partnerships is an essential step to support the recommendation of "Building a Culture of Health." Partners in the health care community are necessary to maximize the potential of the Community Center as a venue for community-based health and wellness programming. Partnership building will take time and commitment requiring the highest-level management.
- Re-Branding – Staffing up to take on re-branding will require specific assignments and workloads, as this is a significant work effort. The Director and Assistant

Director should drive this and designate how staff members will participate.

## **Park and Recreation Facility Maintenance**

### **Overview**

The Buildings and Grounds Department is responsible for the maintenance of parks, recreation facilities, and the Greater Plymouth Community Center. Besides, the Buildings and Grounds Director is also accountable for township facility maintenance and projects such as the Township Building. Such projects include planning for the renovation of the Township Building, a project that will be \$10 – 18 million. The park maintenance staff is an organized union shop of AFSCME. Per this agreement, the Buildings & Grounds Department must transfer park maintenance staff to the Public Works Department for identified Public Works' tasks or projects. The staff has a high average age nearing retirement, having been in place for decades. The Department is regularly short-handed due to medical leave and transfers to Public Works. The Township received a grant from PA DCNR that supported the development of a formal written maintenance management plan for parks and recreation facilities in 2007. Following its completion, the Department purchased TRMS software to track workload and costs. TRMS can be used to produce reports on maintenance costs by task, by facility, by time frame, and other reports as needed. The crew spends most of its time on mowing and trash removal, as is the case in most parks and recreation departments. Community Center custodians primarily perform their work without supervision as that falls out of the realm of responsibility of Community Center management. Limited time is spent on natural resource management and stewardship, although the Township is progressively using parks to address MS4 requirements. The Township also contracts out some mowing that includes retention basins that have no recreational value. The Parks and

Recreation Department employs a part-time worker on-site at Harriet Wetherill Park for site care for 25 hours per week.

### Strengths

- The parks and recreation facilities look good to the public. They appear to be safe, clean, and attractive.
- The Buildings & Grounds Director is a dedicated and passionate manager who is committed to doing whatever he can for Plymouth Township overall.
- The work crew has been in place for many years and knows and understands Township goals and Department expectations. In a work session with them for this plan, it was evident that they are committed to providing high-quality maintenance for the Township's parks and recreation facilities and wish that they could get more done.
- The Department uses DVIT for playground safety inspections.
- The Township has a Conservation and Management Plan in place that was developed by Natural Lands for Harriet Wetherill Park. The Conservation and Management Plan is a tool for use by Plymouth Township to manage the resources of Harriet Wetherill Park and to provide expanding recreational and educational experiences for visitors. Seldom are plans prepared that can be implemented at one time given limited financial resources, whether they are from municipal budgeting, grant funding, or donations. Plans must also be flexible in responding to changing conditions over time. To that end, the Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Buildings & Grounds Director has implemented a

strategy that is working. The strategy includes the part-time site manager and the part-time Nature Programmer.

### Challenges

- Rarely is a full crew working on park maintenance due to paid time off, medical conditions, and transfers to Public Works.
- Facilities are older and need rehabilitation. Due to age and use, facilities such as playgrounds, roofs, pool mechanical system, drainage systems, concession stand, and others need repair or replacement. These are health and safety issues, not cosmetic.
- The challenge on facility upgrading is that the parks and recreation system has received ongoing investment that may be perceived as "once and done." However, use, age, and weather mandate continuous investment and improvement. Such repairs done as a regularly schooled maintenance program and Capital Development Plan are much cheaper than done as an emergency repair. Worse yet, are unsafe conditions that expose the Township to risk and liability that result from deferred maintenance. Deferred maintenance has been identified as the number one issue in Pennsylvania in local and state park systems.
- Being responsible for more than parks and recreation is a challenge for Buildings and Grounds. As a top-notch department, there is resistance to saying when something cannot be done – and this Department simply has too much to do.
- Major ongoing tasks such as mowing and litter pick-up/trash removal take up most of the work time,



leaving some tasks impossible to get to, such as drinking fountain repair and installation.

- There is no direct supervision for Community Center Maintenance on a regular basis.
- While the TRMS program captures workload/cost tracking information, no analysis and reporting of the findings are conducted. Conveying information from such reports could help park maintenance tremendously in securing understanding of park maintenance needs and challenges as well as for the effective allocation of resources and decision-making. As the old saying goes, "You can't manage what you can't count."
- Without workload cost tracking, it is challenging to set fees and charges and make decisions about maintenance resources.
- Enforcement of township policies such as field use is not done, resulting in unsafe conditions and costly repair of fields used in wet, non-playable conditions.
- There has been no training budget for the workers for the last five years in the Buildings & Grounds Department budget.

## Opportunities

- Use the TRMS data collection to analyze costs.
- Use the cost analysis to tell the story of park maintenance accomplishments, issues, and challenges. It is apparent that key stakeholders do not fully understand township maintenance, maintenance challenges, and implications for planning and the allocation of staffing and budget. Using this information to convey the facts and figures of park maintenance would be an invaluable service to the Township. It could produce relief on the workload of Buildings and Grounds as well as decrease the Township's exposure to liability.
- Address the storage problem with the leagues. Strive to limit storage on-site in parks.
- The addition of an Assistant Director to the Buildings & Grounds Director would help to relieve workload and direct resources where needed.

**Figure 1. Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2015 – 2019**

<b>Recreation Programs</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
Recreation Program Fees	97,500	101,772	97,020	101,422	101,422
Rentals and Leases	20,000	19,000	31,260	24,950	31,050
Sales	117,650	116,450	110,950	98,480	92,250
Sponsorships and Donations	22,600	15,000	16,100	17,500	22,000
Plymouth Township Day Revenue	6,750	7,250	9,350	6,150	6,150
Total	264,500	259,472	264,680	248,502	252,872
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Recreation Programs					
Full-time Civilian Programmers Salaries & Incentives	118,976	123,099	130,748	129,420	134,456
Part-time, Seasonal, Instructor Wages, & Overtime	54,564	55,779	52,500	52,583	54,031
Program Expenses	141,970	143,790	146,770	128,570	121,783
Advertising	21,055	23,540	23,190	21,290	21,377
Office	11,915	12,340	13,591	13,009	13,314
Vehicle Expenses	5,350	6,100	6,100	10,600	10,600
Professional Development: Training, Dues, Subscriptions	4,970	4,935	4,860	4,900	5,040
Park Partners	0	0	0	0	500
Plymouth Township Day	20,300	24,400	23,875	23,255	23,255
Sports Organizations	29,600	31,300	32,300	33,300	34,300
Total	\$426,235	\$439,608	\$451,012	\$436,203	\$437,307

**Figure 2. Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2015 – 2019**

<b>Harriet Wetherill Park</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	\$9,400	\$8,450	\$4,000	\$9,000	\$25,626
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Full Time Civilian	0	0	27,500	27,500	0
Part-time & Seasonal Employees and Instructors	14,715	14,765	14,765	14,740	45,695
Program	1,725	2,135	2,135	2110	6750
Advertising	1,050	900	1,300	800	775
Office	400	10,435	10,385	2295	2295
Vehicle Expenses	50	650	550	50	200
Professional Development – Training, Dues, Subscriptions	250	250	500	500	800
Park Partners	1,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,000
Miscellaneous Services	25,000	0	25,000	15,000	15,000
Professional Consultants	42,000	24,050	24,000	44,000	41,000
Grounds Equipment and Supplies	4,500	4,400	3,900	4,750	6,000
Grounds Maintenance	10,000	25,000	40,000	58,000	52,000
Building Maintenance	0	35,000	25,000	60,000	55,000
Utilities	2,100	26,200	3,480	6,550	6,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$109,990</b>	<b>\$146,335</b>	<b>\$181,065</b>	<b>\$249,770</b>	<b>\$247,065</b>



**Figure 3. Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2015 – 2019**

<b>Greater Plymouth Community Center</b>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Revenues</b>					
Community Center Programs	\$477,350	\$537,853	\$545,712	\$587,289	\$567,725
Aquatics	364,990	388,443	412,049	423,983	352,118
Fitness	100,420	106,009	96,603	90,572	133,742
Memberships	691,200	660,500	668,100	625,941	635,547
Rentals	200,100	166,500	168,500	158,380	179,013
Silver Sneaker	80,920	75,600	80,700	79,700	83,900
League Revenue	97,360	101,550	103,300	111,087	122,610
General Services	90,125	68,571	79,592	87,280	91,737
Miscellaneous Revenues	4,400	4,500	4,000	4,500	4,800
Total	2,102,465	2,109,526	2,158,556	2,168,7311	2,171,192
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Administration – Full Time Civilian	440,801	454,596	480,053	485,308	497,021
Administration – Part Time	35,170	35,650	36,175	37,263	34,260
Fitness Center	327,142	332,869	317,977	335,199	401,567
Aquatics	493,551	519,996	532,044	544,746	526,579
Programs	486,289	475,812	502,102	529,823	541,721
Building Maintenance	300,174	319,160	367,451	387,986	393,516
TOTAL	\$2,491,835	\$2,549,349	\$2,634,807	\$2,712,242	\$2,782,694

**Figure 4. Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Budget 2015 – 2019**

Buildings & Grounds	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Expenditures					
Salaries Full Time Civilian	100,084	103,534	107,615	110,298	114,123
Salaries AFSCME	385,976	403,658	412,395	432,500	443,288
Part-Time and Seasonal Employees	27,070	27,614	28,258	28,760	29,363
Clothing	3,200	3,400	3,400	3,400	3,400
Office Supplies & Telephone	8,750	7,200	7,200	7,950	4,500
Grounds Supplies	23,000	23,000	23,000	23,000	23,000
Vehicle Operation and Repair	26,000	25,000	21,500	21,500	20,500
Equipment	6,000	6,000	50,000	3,500	6,000
Utilities	46,000	50,000	6,000	55,000	55,000
Buildings & Grounds Repairs	23,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000
Miscellaneous	44,220	44,220	47,470	47,470	47,270
Training	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>693,300</b>	<b>715,626</b>	<b>728,838</b>	<b>755,378</b>	<b>768,444</b>

Figure 5. Parks and Recreation Budget Summary 2019	
Parks & Recreation Revenue	
Recreation	\$278,498
GPCC	2,171,192
Total	\$2,449,690
Expenditures	
Recreation	\$437,307
GPCC	2,782,694
Harriet Wetherill Park	247,065
Park Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds	768,644
Total	\$4,235,710

### Financing: A Mix of Public and Private Support

Plymouth Township is at a crossroad of important decisions to make regarding public facilities and financing. Elected and appointed officials have been committed to fiscal responsibility and excellent public service. Plymouth Township's tax rate has remained at 1.60 mills since 1996 when Council lowered the rate from 1.72 mills. At the current rate, the owner of the average Plymouth Township home assessed at \$180,000 continues to pay \$288 a year for **all** municipal services.

As a municipal public service provider, the Parks and Recreation Department works within the framework of overall township goals, planning, and financing. This plan is framed within the context of this being a time of uncertainty in Plymouth Township with financial challenges and significant decisions about public facilities pending. The plan also recognizes that circumstances change, that there is

considerable public support for parks and recreation, and that improvement is essential in supporting the parks and recreation system to which the Township has been committed over the last 30 years. Continued investment in parks and recreation is critical to overall community goals and demonstrate that parks and recreation have been a crucial factor in establishing the highly desirable quality of life that all residents enjoy.

### Parks and Recreation: An Investment

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 present the Parks and Recreation budget. Plymouth Township's budget for parks and recreation is \$1,453,016. For the Greater Plymouth Community Center, the budget is \$2,782,694. The Parks and Recreation Department generates 80 percent of the budget for the Greater Plymouth Community Center through fees and charges. The Community Center is a model of community center management nationwide. Revenues from general recreation programs generate 64 percent of their cost, a most favorable return in comparison to an expected return of 35 percent elsewhere in Pennsylvania and a remarkable increase of nearly 50 percent from 44% cost recovery in 2006. The buildings and grounds budget of \$768,644 translates into \$5,158 per acre for maintenance, an increase from the \$4,377 per acre in 2006.

#### Parks and Recreation: An Investment not a Cost

For every \$1 the Township contributes to parks and recreation, the Parks and Recreation Department generates another \$1.37

Of the total parks and recreation budget of \$4,235,710, the Parks and Recreation Department generates \$2,449,690. Township support is \$1,786,710. The Parks and Recreation Department generates another \$1.37 for every dollar that the Township budgets for parks and recreation. The Buildings & Grounds budget for parks and recreation facility maintenance is \$768, 644. Park maintenance does not



generate revenues – even though the quality of park maintenance greatly influences facility rental pricing and the total amount of revenues generated through facility rentals.

Also, the Parks and Recreation Department has generated \$4,292,206 in grants since 1998. Grants help to leverage Township tax dollars producing improvements for the community that would otherwise not be possible.

## Strengths

- **Municipal Support** - Plymouth Township's elected and appointed officials have been managing parks and recreation strategically in an effective, efficient, and dedicated manner. The management team and staff pull together to advance Township parks and recreation goals, create a sense of community through special events, and support the efforts of other recreation providers for essential recreation opportunities for the public.
- **Sound Organizational Structure** - The Organizational Structure that has been in place for more than 15 years is sound. It provides for efficient and effective operations while facilitating the fluidity that managers need to shift staff in response to changing conditions and needs. It works.
- **Cost Recovery** – The Parks and Recreation Department generates \$1.37 for every dollar of tax funding. The Greater Plymouth Community Center is a model of fiscal management with a steady 80 Percent cost recovery rate. Recreation programs generate a cost recovery rate of 64 percent, up from 44 percent in 2006 and higher than the traditional benchmark of 35 percent.

- **Parks: Safe, Clean, and Functional** - The Buildings & Grounds Department keeps parks safe, clean, and functional. Maintenance is a challenge with aging and outdated facilities, park improvements happening mainly in response to emerging opportunities and pressing needs and increasing demands for their services. Usually, these improvements do not consider maintenance impacts. Progressive maintenance strategies include contracting out of routine maintenance tasks, including 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 a park site manager to provide a presence in Harriet Wetherill Park. The part-time worker undertakes tasks to keep this nature-based park as the Township wants it to be as the community's nature area.

- **Financing: Solid and Creative** - The parks and recreation budget is about 6.8 percent of the Township's operating budget, which is in line with PA DCNR's recommendation of a *minimum* of five percent.

## Challenges

### Staffing

Attracting and retaining qualified part-time and seasonal staff will become more of a problem in the future. The Department has already experienced difficulties in getting aquatics staff.

With limited staff, there is no central organization/department for professional park planning, trail planning, policy development, and implementation,

## Park Maintenance

Park maintenance is primarily focused on mowing, trimming, and litter pick up and removal. The crews undertake special projects for park improvements when possible. The major challenge for park maintenance is that they simply have too much to do. Buildings & Grounds provides services beyond parks and recreation facility maintenance that impacts accomplishing all of the tasks necessary for the parks and recreation facilities. Using the TRMS data for workload cost tracking and the development of reports to use in presenting maintenance needs to elected, and appointed officials will help support reigning in demands on limited staff time. Information on the real costs of taking care of parks, recreation facilities, trails, open space, natural resources, and support of recreation events and programs. Recordkeeping 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 lawsuits is having a formal written maintenance management plan in place that documents all aspects of maintenance.**

The Buildings and Grounds Department is housed within the Greater Plymouth Community Center. GPCC is very expensive real estate to locate maintenance operations. GPCC needs this space to generate revenue via programs for fitness patrons and children's programs.

The Greater Plymouth Community Center custodial staff operates relatively independently without ongoing supervision. Having a person assigned to managing park maintenance as a dedicated function as an assistant to the Buildings & Grounds Director would help address maintenance and supervisory needs.

## Budget

It is a time of uncertainty in Plymouth Township regarding funding and significant decisions to be made about township facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department is continuing to operate with a philosophy of cost recovery of 80 percent for the Community Center and increasing the cost recovery rate for general recreation programs and services. The Township has no debt, but there has been no tax increase in 30 years. Revenues from the trash to steam plant have disappeared, supporting the Township's wisdom in not relying on that source for operations.

While revenues are generally increasing, memberships, the fitness center, and the aquatics center are experiencing a downturn in revenue generation. The aquatics center has made some strategic moves to get back on track.

## Capital Improvements

Township parks and recreation facilities require revitalization and upgrading to meet community needs as well as health and safety issues. The challenge is that the Township has been investing over the years in improving all the parks, and the perception is that the work on parks and recreation facilities is now complete. However, age, use, weather, and changing community needs make cyclic maintenance inevitable. Deferred maintenance is a prime factor in increasing the Township's exposure to liability. Repairs done on an emergency basis cost seven times more than if done as a planned, scheduled task. Although previous plans recommended allocating \$400,000 annually in a cyclic improvement fund, about \$100,000 has been allocated.

Re-branding and updating of the Community Center are the most critical facility challenge. The Capital Improvement Program for the Center has resulted in the replacement of significant facilities such as the roof units and the roof. However, more improvements are needed for the mechanical pool system.

### **Employee Development and Training**

The largest expense of the parks and recreation budget is personnel. Ensuring that all managers and staff have the most current information and certifications required for optimal functioning is essential for successful operations. The need to provide staff training is especially significant in our world that is rapidly changing. Currently the Parks and Recreation Department budget allocates 0.2 percent for training. Park Maintenance has no training budget. Investment in employee development needs to be woven into an agreement with employees about the necessary level of expectations and results from training. All training should result in identifiable practical advances in operations and public service for the Department. The biggest concern is not investing in the training of employees who might leave – it is not training those who stay for years in the same position. At least one good idea from every training session should help to pay for itself.

### **Opportunities**

While the Township is experiencing much more challenging financial conditions than when previous parks and recreation plans were developed, those same challenges represent opportunities for strengthening public service and the quality of life here through parks and recreation improvements.

The renovation of the Township Building is the opportunity to relocate Park Maintenance out of the Community Center. Freeing the space now occupied by Buildings & Grounds equipment will result in the opportunity to reconfigure that space for expanded services in fitness and children's programs. This facility improvement will result in increased revenues through the income raised in additional programming.

The positive regard of the public for the Community Center and parks and recreation can serve as the foundation for financial solutions ahead. With decisions to be made about township facilities and their implications for municipal taxes and the Township being debt-free, it may be the advantageous time to consider borrowing funds to make the improvements needed for the Community Center, the parks, and the township complex. Other communities have found that using the popularity and positive public regard for parks and recreation facilities to generate support for township investment a wise strategy. Using this strategy could help the Council to navigate future investment decisions, especially if it might mean a reasonable tax increase, something not done here for 30 years. The Township can decide to borrow money on its own. Other municipalities have established voter referenda to help make this determination. The successful referenda are usually tied to parks and open space because of the high level of public support they garner.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Fiscal resources are tight in Plymouth Township and getting tighter. With significant decisions on the docket regarding township facilities, no debt, and no tax increase in decades, the Parks and Recreation Department is at bay on carrying out a Capital Improvements Program. The Township is at risk



of creating a situation in which park and recreation facility maintenance is deferred resulting in distressed facility below community expectations and the Community Center falling behind in competing with similar businesses merging in the Township. The risk is that without improvements to the Community Center, it is likely that revenues will decrease below the 80 percent cost recovery rate for which the Township is known. Formal written maintenance management is the Township's most potent tool in limiting its exposure to liability and ensuring the health and safety of residents using township facilities. The most essential actions to consider are the following:

- **Continued Township investment in parks and recreation operations** – The support of the Township through the General Fund for operations of parks and recreation is essential. With this investment the Parks & Recreation Department leverages non-tax support that contributes to 80 percent of the GPCC operating costs and yields program revenues that help to support operating costs.
- **Park Maintenance Relocation** - Relocate park maintenance to the municipal complex as soon as possible. If the renovation of the Township Building will require an extended period of time, consider locating park maintenance in an interim location.
- **Re-branding and updating the Community Center** - Develop a plan for the Greater Plymouth Community Center based upon the assessment conducted for this plan update with the recommendations described in this **Parks and Recreation Plan Update**. This plan should incorporate three key areas: re-branding of the Community Center and Parks and Recreation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; upgrading the exterior of the Community Center to improve customer safety and reduce the Township's risk due to unsafe conditions, and interior

design to revitalize the Center for modern, lively appearance as well as safety of staff and patrons.

- **Investment** – Continue to leverage tax dollars to generate grants for the improvement of township parks and recreation facilities. Consider a bond or other means of borrowing to establish a Capital Improvement program to carry out needed cyclic improvements to the Community Center and the parks as well as to update and re-brand the Community center to ensure that it continues to recover 80 percent of its operating cost.
- **Cost Recovery Modifications** – The Parks and Recreation Department strives for 80 percent cost recovery for the Community Center. It has increased cost recovery on programs from 44 to 64 percent since the last plan. Recovering these costs is always a challenge, and present financing indicates that this will get even harder. To that end, every dollar is important to ensure the improvement of parks and recreation for the community as a whole. A funding and pricing policy should be established to guide how fees and charges are set and how township funds are spent. This would cover all areas in which fees are charged or township dollars provided.
- **Establish the “Partnerships for Parks” program.** Plymouth Township now provides \$34,000 annually in donations to organized sports groups. The Township welcomes partnerships for parks and recreation efforts consistent with approved plans such as this Plan Update that includes park site plans featuring improvements. The **Partnerships for Parks** program builds upon the generosity and foresight of the Township in supporting community groups that provide important services for the betterment of the community. In establishing the Partnerships for Parks program, the Township would

provide a designated amount of funding annually to support the partnerships. The current level of funding as evident in the sports league donations is \$34,000. The Parks & Recreation Department would provide technical support for community-based organizations to apply for grants under this program. The program would have the following guidelines.

- **Conform to Township Plans** - The project being requested must conform to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update and related park and recreation facility master plans;
- **Three Year Project Plan** - The group needs a three-year plan in place for their project to ensure sustainability through organizational changes.
- **Community Benefit** - The funding request must be based upon that plan to make improvements that will benefit the community at large; and
- **Grant Awards** - The Township would issue their funding in the form of grants for the designated purposes.
- **Annual Report** - Each group receiving such a grant would report at year's end how the funds were used and the community benefit.
- **Technology** - Coordinate technology with the Plymouth Township technology specialist. Integrate parks and recreation technology within the overall Township's technology framework.
- **Program Area Planning** - Assign each program manager with the responsibility for developing a three-year plan for their area. The first year of the plan

would be the action plan for the next fiscal year. The plan should include the vision, mission and goals for the program area with a specific action plan that includes programs, budget, and time frame. Cost recovery goals should be spelled out. Use the management team to create a format that would be commonly used by all divisions for this purpose.

- **Partnerships and Building a Culture of Health** - Adapt the role and responsibility of the Director to work on partnerships and sponsorships primarily in "Creating a Culture of Health". Culture of Health is an important recreation trend for which the Greater Plymouth Community Center is perfectly positioned. Establishing a health-based program could be a new form of customer service as well as revenue. At present, the Parks and Recreation Department operates independently without partnerships and sponsorships except for Community Day.
- **Maintenance Analysis and Reporting** - Use TRMS reports on workload and cost tracking for making informed decisions on staffing and financial resources. Use this information to plan, direct, control, and evaluate park maintenance and the related tasks required for all township functions.
- **Make the case for parks and recreation** – Public support for parks and recreation, especially for the Greater Plymouth Community Center, is strong. The need to continuously make the case for the importance of parks and recreation cannot be overstated. In the development of the formalized advertising and promotional program, include seeking testimonials and the stories about the impact of parks, recreation, and the Community Center are crucial to ensuring that key stakeholders are aware of the importance of their support. Continue to use photos and testimonials in department communications such as Leisure Visions

and the website helps to tell these stories about the benefits of parks and recreation to our community. Reporting to elected and appointed officials should include information with stories and testimonials about parks, recreation, and the Community Center. Showing outcomes has more value than simply reporting on input such as being on target with budget, numbers of programs and participants, and maintenance tasks conducted.



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# Implementation Plan

## Building Upon Plymouth Township's Successful Implementation of Plans

### Our Vision

By 2029, Plymouth Township will have carried out a plan of action to:

- Re-brand and update the Greater Plymouth Community Center ensuring its status as our crown jewel, financial sustainability and model cost recovery, and unique community service that makes it our community's hub.
- Revitalize our well-used parks to support our sense of community, foster active healthy living, connect our citizens with nature, and provide benefits to Plymouth Township such as increased property values, attraction of businesses and residents, and enhance the quality of life here.
- Connect our community with safe places to walk and bicycle within and between parks, to community destinations and to southeastern Pennsylvania with its 750-mile regional trail system.
- Ensure the maintenance of our recreation facilities as safe, clean, functional, and enjoyed by our residents.
- Continue to provide the optimal return on the community's investment in parks and recreation.

### Why We Care

Plymouth Township is at a time of major decisions regarding public facilities and investment. The intent of this action program is to provide a reasonable path toward successful implementation of action steps in this "Legacy of Parks" Plan.

This program will help to preserve and enhance our township's reputation for having a top-notch parks and recreation system not available anywhere else in our region. By continuing to incorporate parks and recreation in municipal planning, parks and recreation can help to foster community support for overall township improvements. The outstanding reputation of GPCC and the parks and recreation system provide a halo effect for all township operations. With direct services to seven out of ten households in the Township, parks and recreation may be the service that most directly connects resident to township government in a very positive way as evident in its ranking as the favorite community service, second only to schools, at a community event attended by thousands of residents.

Plymouth Township's investment in parks and recreation has paid dividends in property value increases, attraction of residents and businesses, enhanced quality of life and reputation as a great place to live. This action program provides a way to keep that moving forward.

## Priorities

Plymouth Township has successfully implemented its previous parks and recreation plans. Now with an exemplary parks and recreation system established, improvements are more complex as they largely focus on parks and facilities that are already established. Yet recreation facilities are never “finished”; they are organic and change over time with use, community needs, opportunities, trends, and resources.

For example, Central Park in New York City, the most visited park in the world, is 162 years old. It is still being improved, currently with a ten-year \$300 million campaign underway. Partnerships, grants and fundraising are central to that campaign and improvements. That is the model that successful parks and recreation systems everywhere follow, including Plymouth Township.

This Plan Update is proposing improvements that will enhance the quality of life in our community. The improvements will address all aspects of parks and recreation including the Greater Plymouth Community Center, parkland, safe walking and cycling, recreation facilities, programs and services, park and facility maintenance, and continued township financial support with a focus on increased revenue generation through fees, charges, grants, gifts, donations, partnerships and sponsorships. It’s a tall order but a challenge that Plymouth Township has risen to before. Not everything can be accomplished at once. With committed township support; professional, dedicated management and staff; and as resources become available, every improvement, no matter how small, is a success that will spur more success.

## Focus Projects

Based upon findings from public involvement, parks and recreation assessment and analysis, and the goals established for this Plan Update, the following **Focus Projects** are the priorities for the Implementation Plan for the next 10 years and beyond:

1. **Maintenance Staff** - Ensure the continued maintenance of GPCC, parks, and recreation facilities. Create a position or the Assistant Buildings & Grounds Director to focus on routine daily operations and supervision for park and recreation facility maintenance and custodial services.
2. **Maintenance Location** - Relocate maintenance from GPCC to the Municipal Complex as part of the township building improvement project. The vacated space will be used for more public recreation programs that will expand public service and generate revenue for GPCC financial sustainability.
3. **Park Land** - Continue to focus on land acquisition to meet the 51-acre parkland shortfall, solve issues such as parking and special event space, and create linkages for safe cycling
4. **Safe Cycling Pilot Project** - Undertake a pilot project for connecting the Township with safe places to walk and bicycle that would be the East Plymouth Valley Trail.

5. **GPCC Building Revitalization** - Upgrade the front of GPCC for safety, security and accessibility with rehabilitation of the arch, new front doors, new seating, and curbless entry.
6. **GPCC Lobby Security Improvements** - Renovate the lobby and front desk area to provide more security.
7. **Pool Cyclic Replacement Program** - Conduct a study of the Aquatics Center in GPCC and make improvements needed for cyclic replacement and improvement of the facility including the pump room, ventilation, surfacing, and piping.
8. **Playground for All** - Plan, design and construct a “Playground for All”, an accessible playground in East Plymouth Valley Park.
9. **Spray ground in Community Center Park** - Coordinate the re-organization of Community Center Park so that a Spray Ground can be installed in the near future.
10. **Pickleball Center** - Coordinate planning in JFK Park so that a pickleball center can be established there.
11. **Parking at Harriet Wetherill Park** - Create more parking at Harriet Wetherill Park.
12. **Community Center Walton Road Entrance Improvements** - Improve parking at the Walton Road entrance to Community Center Park and add a building for baseball with restrooms, storage and changing facilities.



## Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Ensure that the Greater Plymouth Community Center continues to thrive as the heart of our community.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Plan Implementation</b>					
<b>Undertake a capacity analysis of GPCC and develop priorities for space</b>	2020	Team of P&R Dir. Asst. Dir, and Program Area Mgrs.	Staff Time	Analyze GPCC use by space, activities, hours and use. Establish priorities for use of space. Ensure that drop-in space is available. Develop a Building Use Program that is optimal for a mix of programmed, drop-in, and rental spaces.	Optimized use of limited space. Potential revenue increases. More opportunities for GPCC users. Potential introduction of new programs.
<b>Re-brand GPCC</b>	2021-2022.	P&R Director & management team	TBD	Retain a consultant to collaborate with management team on a 21 <sup>st</sup> century image, facility improvements, and interior and exterior appearance.	Attract more age groups, solidify GPCC with respect to competition, and sustain/improve cost recovery.
<b>Building Improvements</b>					
<b>Relocate Buildings &amp; Grounds maintenance to the Municipal Complex</b>	2020 planning with move as soon as possible	B&G Director with P&R Director & Township Manager	Cost TBD during Municipal Complex renovation process	B&G Director to work with the Township manager in developing the plan to house B&G maintenance in the renovated Municipal Complex	Relocation will free space to be used for programming that will generate more revenues and provide more public services and programs.
<b>Develop and implement a plan to re-configure the former maintenance space into a program area for fitness and youth</b>	2021 – Develop plan. 2023 – Implement improvements for new program space	P&R Director & management team	Plan \$30,000 Implementation to be determined. \$220 - \$250 per square foot	Propose & confirm movement of maintenance to the municipal complex. Create a management team to collaborate on planning and project implementation. B&G Director to manage capital construction with support from P&R Director	More fitness and youth programs, Increased revenues for cost recovery.

<b>Goal 1 Continued</b>	<b>Ensure that the Greater Plymouth Community Center continues to thrive as the heart of our community.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Building Improvements Continued</b>					
<b>Update security and visitor safety</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director & Asst. P&R Director	Staff and Emergency Management time Cost of security cameras: \$10,000 – 15,000,	Update operations regarding safety, add security cameras, evaluate need for changes in then entry and lobby	Increased safety and continued favorable public perceptions of GPCC as a safe place
<b>Explore pre-school programming licensing requirements for facilities to plan for and make changes necessary</b>	Ongoing. Also include as part of planning for space now occupied by maintenance	P&R Director, Program Staff	Staff time Cost of physical improvements TBD and incorporated into childcare fees and charges over time.,	Staff would do the research to determine facility requirements. Decide if an architect is needed or if work could be performed by a contractor.	Increased space and services for childcare. Childcare is a major revenue generator.
<b>Develop a plan for upgrading the Aquatics Center</b>	2021 - 2022	P&R Director, Assistant Dir. & Aquatics Manager B&G Director	\$30,000	Retain a community center architect & aquatics facility specialist to work with the GPOCC management team on a plan to upgrade the Aquatics Center. Coordinate with Re-Branding Project.	Update and refresh the 20-year-old pool with new therapy pool, pool amenities, mechanical system. Increased revenues and programs.
<b>Carry out pool improvements</b>	2024 – 2025 in time for 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GPCC	P&R Director, Assistant Dir. & Aquatics Manage	TBD	Apply for grant funding that would cover design costs and a portion of the pool improvements, Phase in all improvements as resources allow.	Increased revenues. Reductions in liability if need for safety upgrades is determined and implemented.
<b>Upgrade front of GPCC Building</b>	2020 - Planning 2022 – Construction	P&R Director and B&G Director	Township CIP	Continue to work with the architect who has been providing technical support and illustrated renderings of potential improvements.	Increased public safety for GPCC visitors, reduced maintenance costs, reduced exposure to liability.

<b>Goal 1 Continued</b> <b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Ensure that the Greater Plymouth Community Center continues to thrive as the heart of our community.</b>				
	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Building Improvements Continued</b>					
<b>Parking</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director and B&G Director	Staff time, Township funds and grants	Continue to ask for right of first refusal on properties that would enlarge the GPCC Campus. Manage outreach for potential properties. Use site GPCC Park site plan for this project to plan additional parking.	More on-site parking, improved safety on-site, potential new patrons and revenues resulting from additional parking.
<b>Address storage, classroom configurations and furnishings with Re-Branding Project</b>	2024 - 2026	P&R Director, Assistant Dir. & Management Team	Township CIP with price TBD	Conduct a needs assessment regarding storage and identify space needed. Contract out or make improvements in-house. Develop a budget to upgrade GPCC furnishings.	Increased revenues through high quality and sustainable furnishings.
<b>GPCC Operations</b>					
<b>Continue with sound staffing plan.</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director, Assistant Dir. Program Area Managers	Staff time; Salaries and Wages	Monitor wages rates in the area and develop a plan to remain competitive to attract qualified, energetic, and desirable workers. Develop a plan to compete with big box store wages at the \$15+/hr. rate.	Increased costs for staff must be offset by price adjustments in fees and charges.
<b>Continue to review and Update Policies and Procedures</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director, Assistant Director	Staff time	Update EFT transfers. Streamline fee structure. Review policy on resident/non-residents. Develop a fee- setting policy.	Increased efficiency and revenues.
<b>Expand Marketing and Promotion</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director, Assistant Dir., Designated staff	Staff time Social Media expertise Re-Branding outcomes	Continue the print program guide monitoring when it should flip to all online. Focus on social media. Designate a staff person who is primarily responsible for social media. Develop a social media plan and protocols.	Increased public awareness especially among target groups such as Millennials.



<b>Goal 1 Continued</b> <b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Ensure that the Greater Plymouth Community Center continues to thrive as the heart of our community.</b>				
	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>GPCC &amp; Park Fitness Programming (General recreation programs are in Goal 4)</b>					
<b>Plan and Implement a Health Partnership Program to build a culture of health in Plymouth Township</b>	2020 & ongoing thereafter	P&R Director primarily with support from Assistant Dir.	Staff time	Create a strategic plan for the partnerships. Formulate a vision for the partnerships with GPCC and the parks as venues as well as potential roles for partners. Identify partners. Identify the steps necessary for outreach. Consider having a health partner summit to kick this off.	Creation of important community connections, development of potential partners and sources of support for financing, programming and advocacy.
<b>Fitness</b>					
<b>Increase group exercise classes</b>	2020 & ongoing	Fitness Manager & Assistant P&R Director	Staff Time	Set benchmarks for increasing classes, participation, & revenues. With space in former maintenance area, double the number of group exercise classes. Monitor, modify or replicate activities in other fitness centers	Increased participation, variety in programs, and revenues.
<b>Plan and implement a program of "Fitness in the Parks"</b>	2020 & ongoing	Fitness Manager & Team as designated	Staff Time	Develop a program management plan for fitness in the parks. Include pop-up activities as well as organized scheduled activities. Target Millennials and families in programs appropriate to their interests.	Increased participation, optimizing use and public awareness about parks, increased revenues.
<b>Aquatics</b>					
<b>Work toward growing participation in the swim lesson program</b>	Ongoing	Aquatics Manager & Aquatics Staff	Staff time With support from Administrative Manager and future Social Media specialist	Continue to recruit instructors. Develop an advertising and promotional program for the swim lessons. Use GPCC image with its unique position in the community to advertise and attract patrons.	Investment in time and advertising should yield increase participation with increased revenues.
<b>Add specialty aquatics programs</b>	2021 & ongoing thereafter	Aquatics Manager Asst. P&R Director & Team as designated	Staff time. Online resources about aquatics programming.	Develop a plan to replace programs that are aging out of demand. Increase rentals by outside groups where possible.	Increased participation, more word of mouth advertising about expanded programs, new client groups and more rev

## Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreation trends.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Parkland Acquisition</b>					
<b>Strive to secure 51 acres of parkland to meet the minimum standard required.</b>	Ongoing through 2029	P&R Director, Township Manager with Council Support	Staff Time and funds for properties. Grants can help with acquisition.	Be watchful of properties that could come on the market. Create a means to secure property quickly via township funds or a partnership with a land conservation organization. Create a funding strategy for and acquisition.	A complete park system that will meet community needs now and in the future.
<b>Include in the 51 acres of parkland needed, property near existing parks and GPCC</b>	Ongoing through 2029 & "100 Year Plan"	P&R Director, Township Manager with Council Support	Staff Time and funds for properties. Grants can help with acquisition.	Continue to work with willing property owners on rights of first refusal and identifying properties that are about to come on the market.	More land for parking and park uses.
<b>Park Improvements</b>					
<b>Community Center Park addition of Restroom, Storage, &amp; Changing Facility, vending area and parking by baseball field</b>	2022 - Planning  2023 - Construction	Assistant P&R Director	Estimates Design \$7,000 – 10,000 Construction \$55,000 – 75,000	Partnership with Villanova University as a funding source	Completes this facility in the park in meeting the standard set for provision of a NCAA collegiate facility.
<b>Community Center Park Improvements</b>	2026 – 2029+ Start with plan to move facilities, relocate facilities, and add new ones as multi-year, multi-phase project.	P&R Director, Assistant Director with support from B&G Director	Staff time for planning. Costs to be determined for design and construction. TBD	The addition of a spray ground, restrooms, community & event rental structure, parking, trash management area, public art, game court relocation, & adult fitness area require significant planning and strategic timing of facility moving, improvement and construction. Seek grants and partnerships to make improvements.	Upgrade park to ensure its flagship park status, support public use, solve problems with current configuration, add needed facilities, keep pace with trends, and generate revenues.

Goal 2 Continued Recommendations and Actions	Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreation trends.				
	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources	Method	Outcomes
Add turf rectangular fields at Community Center Park, East Plymouth Valley Park, & Colwell Park	2028 – 2029+	Assistant P&R Director in coordination with B&G Director	Estimate for each field. Design: \$100,000 construction \$1 million Lighting additional TBD	With climate change creating extremes of wet and dry seasons, turf fields can support ongoing league play more effectively than grass fields. Work with soccer organizations to undertake the turfing of fields as a collaborative project.	Reduced maintenance costs, avoidance of weather-related cancellations. More field use time in this small park system with limited field availability. Potential fund-raising partnerships.
East Plymouth Valley Park Playground for All	2020 -Planning 2021 – Seek grant 2022 - Construction	P&R Director primarily with support from Assistant Dir.	Staff time. Estimates Design & Construction Documents: \$100,000 – 200,000 Construction: \$1 – 2 million.	Create a strategic plan for the partnerships. Formulate a vision for the partnerships for a playground for all. Organize a committee of community champions to advance this effort. Seek grants. Conduct a fund-raising campaign.	First playground for all in the community with partnerships formed that can be orchestrated to support maintenance and cyclic improvements perhaps through an endowment.
East Plymouth Valley Park Improvements	Phased from 2021 - 2029	P&R Director with support from B&G Director	Price TBD	Energy study of lighting in 2021. Parking upgrades and bridge replacement. Addition of pedestrian circulation system. Drainage improvements with raingardens and biofiltration swales. Re-grading park areas to optimize all areas for public use and enjoyment. Add trail system with PECO corridor.	EPV Park is heavily used, and these improvements will; make the park work better and be easier to maintain and reduce operating costs.
Harriet Wetherill Park Lowe's Plaza Courtyard	2020	P&R Director & B&G Director	\$202,750	Use the \$202,750 in total grant funding to complete the Lowe's Plaza Courtyard	Establishment of a key design and visitor use feature at no cost to the Township.



Goal 2 Continued Recommendations and Actions	Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreation trends.				
	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources	Method	Outcomes
Harriet Wetherill Park Activity Trail	2022 - 2023	P&R Director	Estimate: Design \$1,500 Construction: \$15,000 – 20,000	Seek PECO Green Region grant	Trail will provide family recreation opportunity, one of the chief needs found in this planning process.
Harriet Wetherill Park Potential Parking	2025 - 2026	P&R Director	Estimate to be determined	Continue to use township engineer's configuration to provide an appropriate amount of parking based upon use.	Solves a major problem here that also exists in all parks and the GPCC.
Black Horse Park Plymouth Town	2021 – 2024 Start planning in 2021. Partnerships & Design in 2022 - 2023. Construction 2024	P&R Director	Staff time Costs to be determined Estimate \$750,000 – 1,000,000	Use "Plymouth Town" as a potential kickoff for a new partnership development program in parks and recreation. Strive to undertake this facility as a collaborative effort with township businesses including fund-raising. Upgrade existing park facilities.	Play area unique to Plymouth Township developed with private funds and township support, possibly with an endowment. Seek grants
Colwell Park Restroom Renovations	2021	B&G Director	Staff time Construction Cost; \$20,000	Township funds	Will provide restroom improvements which are a priority for park visitors in all parks.

Goal 2 Continued Recommendations and Actions	Create dynamic parks by optimizing all existing facilities to ensure that they help to shape our community's character and respond to community needs, interests, and recreation trends.				
	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources	Method	Outcomes
Colwell Park Pavilion and Pathways with expanded parking and upgrades	2027- 2029	P&R Director	Staff Time Estimate for Planning: \$50,000 – 70,000 Construction: TBD	Township funds and grants	Will provide expanded public service for gatherings, improved aesthetics, and revenue generation
JFK Park	2022 – 2024 – Pickleball Center  2025 – 2029 – other park improvement projects	Asst. P&R Director	Staff Time Seek grant for construction of Pickleball: \$350,000 – 380,000 with preparation of construction documents covered by a grant Other costs TBD.	Establish JFK as a Pickleball hub complete with features that provide comfort and enjoyment as a great public space. Incorporate features such as innovative seating, shade, misters cooling sprays, and beautification via landscaping. Undertake several smaller projects to add other amenities such as walking paths, playground improvements and parking as resources become available. Seek grants that will include funding for the construction documents.	Outdoor venue for Pickleball, a sport with a major following in the Township. This addition provides unique facility in township parks for older park visitors in contrast to ballfields and playgrounds for youth.
Alan Wood Park	2020	P&R Director with B&G Director	\$25,000 for installation of pre-school play structure	P&R Director will meet with neighborhood to discuss addition of play structure and settle on neighborhood preferences.	Will build community connection with neighborhood and provide new play opportunities for families.
Alan Wood Park	2026 - 2028	P&R Director with B&G Director	Design \$55,000 Construction \$600,000 - \$750,000	Installation of pathways and beautification via landscaping	Community beautification and creation of a great public space to spend time in.
Bicentennial Park	2020	B&G Director	\$30,000	Paving and bridge abutment repair	Will increase safety, reduce risk and improve aesthetics resulting in more park use and favorable public opinion

## Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

Goal 3					
Connect Plymouth Township with safe places to walk and bicycle.					
Recommendations and Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources	Method	Outcomes
Plan and phase in a townshipwide pathway system for safe walking and bicycling	Ongoing through 2029+	B&G Director with EAB, P&R Director & Asst. P&R Director	Volunteer time. Grant potential from multiple sources.	Use the land development process to try to secure connections and linkages. Build upon the EAB's experience and expertise in trail planning to start phasing in pilot projects. Recognize that the full development of a township trail system will take decades but getting one success will lead to other successes. Getting started is the hardest part.	Community connections for safe walking a cycling would complete the parks and recreation system meeting the top need expressed by the citizenry.
Include pathways in all parks.	Ongoing through 2029	B&G Director P&R Director and Assistant P&R Director	Staff Time for planning.	Use the park improvement process to plan and install pathways in parks.	More places for people of all ages to walk, the number one leisure activity in the USA.
Start with a pilot project to connect East Plymouth Valley Park to PECO ROW and GPCC	2020 - 2024	B&G Director EAB, P&R Director & Asst. P&R Director	Estimates Design: \$90-110,000 Construction: \$800,000 – 1,100,000.	Seek grant funding from PA DCNR, PennDOT and DVRPC. Seek and easement from a willing landowner necessary to complete this trail segment.	The successful development of this trail as a pilot project will be the successful springboard for additional trail projects.
Use this Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan to establish phasing in additional trails.	2021 - 2022	B&G Director with EAB, P&R Director, Asst. P&R Director	Develop cost estimates in the planning process.	Seek more trail champions in the community to advocate and advance planning and building. Strive to create a trail support group that would serve as trail ambassadors making the case for trails serving as model trail users, and volunteering to maintain trails.	Safe places for people to walk and bicycle, community support for trail building, and volunteer support for maintenance



<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Provide recreation opportunities that inspire personal growth, healthy active living, connect people with nature, and build a sense of community.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Explore the potential for pre-school licensing at GPCC and/or additional sites</b>	2021	Asst Director and Recreation Program Manager	Staff Time	Coordinate with licensing agency to determine facility and staffing requirements. Field test the requirements in GPCC and with staff. Analyze costs and potential revenues to determine if this is worth the effort and cost of improvements if needed.	Pre-school programming is a major revenue generator for other community centers. In a community like Plymouth, it would be an essential public service for families.
<b>Determine how to increase services in limited programming areas including the arts, environmental education, special needs, teens and activities for active seniors beyond Silver Sneakers</b>	Ongoing through 2029	P&R Director, Asst Director, Recreation Program Manager, and professional recreation staff.	Staff Time for planning.	Hold a staff work session during Shut-Down Week to focus on these five program areas where there is limited programming. Develop a program management plan for these client groups one at a time. Increasing services to all these groups will take years, partnerships, and probably additional staff depending on how the partnerships work. Use a strategic planning framework for each client group working on one group at a time. Identify groups such as special needs that will require partnerships. Developing these partnerships would be a work item unto itself. Address financing by assessing revenue impacts in budget, staffing and revenues.	A strategic plan to be implemented for one group at a time over the course of the plan implementation. Expansion of recreation opportunities to underserved groups. Increased revenues.
<b>Establish a “Culture of Health” in Plymouth Township through parks and recreation</b>	Ongoing 2020+	P&R Director with support from Asst Director, Rec Prog Mgr, Fitness Mgr	Staff time	Use this as a pilot project to establish a partnerships program for parks and recreation, Undertake a strategic planning process that identifies a vision, mission, goals, potential partners, potential actions for collaboration, a case statement on GPCC as an important health venue and why Plymouth Township Parks & Recreation Department can be the catalyst to advance public health efforts.	A health provider summit to launch the partnership. Establishment of GPCC as a public health venue. Increased membership and revenues. Consider seeking a RecTAP or Peer grant to provide assistance.

<b>Goal 4 Continued</b> <b>Provide recreation opportunities that inspire personal growth, healthy active living, connect people with nature, and build a sense of community.</b>					
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Build upon the success of “special events” and limit them to be manageable for staff</b>	2020+	Recreation Program Manager with support from the P&R Director and Asst. Dir.	Staff Time	Define what special events are. Determine the optimal number and scale of special events to hold over the course of a year. For the existing “special events”, have management team explore re-naming and re-organizing them to serve the public and make them manageable for staff.	More breathing room for staff that works hard at these events. Preservation of special events that are important to the community
<b>Increase programming in the gym</b>	2020+	Recreation Program Manager with support from the P&R Director and Asst. Dir.	Staff Time	Move more youth programming from Activity Central into the gym to try to alleviate the overcrowding problem in Activity Central Scheduling for both fitness and youth programs.	Better use of space resulting in optimal scheduling and program opportunities for both youth and fitness clients.
<b>Program tracking and Evaluation</b>	2021-2022	Asst. Director, Recreation Program Manager, & all program staff in all departments	Staff Time	Assess current methods for evaluating programs to provide optimal information for staff to use in planning and improving programs. Focus on generating testimonials to use in advertising. Include cancellation rates as a performance metric striving for an overall rate of 15%.	Ability to improve programs and outcomes based upon current feedback.
<b>Look toward service for a diversifying population</b>	2022+	P&R Director, Asst Director, Recreation Program Manager, and professional recreation staff.	Staff Time for planning.	Consider representation of Millennials, youth, Hispanic and LGBTQ community members. Seek their guidance on programming and services. Consider appointing a sub-committee on the Park, Recreation and Shade Tree Board to address this changing population. Contact faith-based organizations for help.	A strategic plan to be implemented for one group at a time over the course of the plan implementation. Expansion of recreation opportunities to underserved groups. Increased revenues.

<b>Goal 4 Continued</b> <b>Provide recreation opportunities that inspire personal growth, healthy active living, connect people with nature, and build a sense of community.</b>					
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Expand fitness programming in township parks and GPCC as it expands into the maintenance area</b>	2020+	Create a team of programming & fitness managers and staff with Director and Asst. Director to develop & implement the program	Staff time	Develop a program plan for offering fitness program in the parks and the expanded space in GPCC. The strategy should include a vision, mission, target groups, park locations, and pilot program for designated activities, events or programs. Focus on quality and success to get going not on a large number of programs. Focus on both fitness and general recreation programming in the expanded GPCC space. Expand programs based upon success.	Increased use of parks and motivating citizens to engage in activities for health and well ness outdoors. This will result in enhanced quality of life and reduced health care costs.
<b>Continue to advertise and promote GPCC, programs and the parks.</b>	Ongoing	Create a staff committee to focus on increasing public awareness about GPCC, programs and parks.	Staff Time	Focus on technology and social media. Establish a philosophy that customer service and advertising is everyone's job. Continue to have a staff member monitor social media as it applies to the Department including GPCC.	Increased public awareness s and continued positive public regard.
<b>Coordination with sports organizations</b>	2020+	Asst Director	Staff Time	Hold an annual sports group summit to find out what is working well, what could work better, league plans, and any other ideas or topics those involved want to discuss.	Harmonious collaboration with all parties working toward common goals for community betterment through sports.



## Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Implementation Schedule

<b>Goal 5</b>	Continue to manage, operate and maintain the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation system in a fiscally responsible, innovative and dedicated manner that garners widespread public support.				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
<b>Continue to generate a mix of public and private support for parks and recreation</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director and Asst. Director	Staff Time	Continue to use financing strategies to recover 80 percent of GPCC operating costs and 64% of the recreation budget. All program areas, especially fitness and aquatics, will need to step up revenue generation with similar enterprises moving into the area, future wage requirements to remain competitive and increased operating costs. .	A mix of public and private support for park sand recreation that is a national model and provides optimal and transparent financing to the citizenry.
<b>Strive to raise the percentage of GPCC members on EFT (Electronic Fund Transfers) from 50% to 80%</b>	2020	P&R Director, Asst. P&R Director, & Administrative Manager	Staff Time for planning.	Promote signing up among the membership and allow EFT for both credit and debit cards.	Increase the revenue stream to GPCC.
<b>Increase revenue in the Aquatics Center</b>	2020+	Aquatics Manager and Aquatics Staff	Staff time	Develop an action plan for increasing revenues in the aquatics center. Expand programming to include special water-based classes such as kayaking, canoeing, stand-u paddle boards, SCUBA, polo, and other special interest programs.	Increased participation, revenue and client expansion and satisfaction
<b>Increase revenue in the Fitness Center</b>	2020+	Fitness Manager and Fitness Staff	Staff time	Develop action plan to increase revenues in fitness, personal training and drop-in fitness class participation. Adapt programming to fit changing interests and expectations of a fitness center. Explore programs elsewhere and adapt them for GPCC's size and facilities. 60 percent of the Manager's time should be spent on outreach, program planning, and developing strategies to increase use of the fitness center and its income.	Increased participation, revenue and client expansion and satisfaction

<b>Goal 5 Continued</b>	<b>Continue to manage, operate and maintain the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation system in a fiscally responsible, innovative and dedicated manner that garners widespread public support.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Update the fee structure for GPCC</b>	2020+	P&R Director and Asst. Director	Staff Time	Streamline the household membership rate. Increase the senior rate. Reduce the non-resident rate differential to 20% to encourage non-residents to use GPCC. Do not add any more special promotions for memberships or passes. Develop a fee setting policy for all programs, services and rentals.	More revenues and streamlined management that is easier for both staff and members or GOCC users.
<b>Establish the “Partnerships for Parks” program</b>	2020 ongoing	P&R Director with support from Council	\$34,000 current township budget for donations	Establish “Partnerships for Parks” as a grant program for community-based organizations such as sports leagues. Potential grantees could submit an annual grant application to undertake a park and recreation project or service that is consistent with this PROS Plan. As part of the application, the community-based organization would submit its three-year plan of action for projects or programs it intends to carry out including how the project funded with a Plymouth Township grant would be sustained.	Support for community-based organizations including but not limited to sports leagues undertaking projects to improve parks that would benefit our community at large.
<b>Increase funds for Capital improvements</b>	2020/2021+	Council	Bonds, loans and grants	Updating GPCC and the parks is vital to sustaining their positive impact on the quality of life in Plymouth Township as well as protecting the investment that the township has made in these facilities. Consider incorporating parks and recreation improvements in an overall township financing plan for the renovation of the municipal complex and other capital projects. Leverage these funds with grants to multiply the benefit of township dollars.	The condition of GPCC, parks and recreation facilities are never the same: they are either going up or down in condition and quality. Investment in capital improvements will ensure that they remain a source of community pride.
<b>Legacy Planning</b>	Ongoing	P&R Director and Asst. Director with the management team	Staff Time	Continue to work collaboratively on planning, directing, controlling and evaluating parks and recreation operations, facilities and services. Focus on policies, procedures and operating guidelines to ensure that all team members understand operations and how to carry them out.	Continued effective and efficient management through transitions of managers, staff, elected and appointed officials.

<b>Goal 5 Continued</b>	<b>Continue to manage, operate and maintain the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation system in a fiscally responsible, innovative and dedicated manner that garners widespread public support.</b>				
<b>Recommendations and Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Management &amp; Operations</b>					
<b>Maintenance Management</b>	2020 – 2021 Ongoing	Council, Township Manager, B&G Director, P&R Director	\$100,000 salary and benefits	Establish the position of Assistant Buildings & Grounds Director. The B&G Director would transition his workload into capital project planning and management for the municipal complex, public properties, GPCC, parks and recreation, police and some public works projects. The Assistant B&G Director would be responsible for routine parks and recreation maintenance and custodial services.	Splitting functions into capital improvements and routine maintenance will enable the two managers to provide maximum efficiency and effectiveness for public facilities. Effective park maintenance with record keeping and tracking is the best deterrent to liability and lawsuits.
<b>Use TRMS</b>	2020 ongoing	Assistant B&G Director	Staff time	Using TRMS for workload cost tracking will help in decision-making, resource allocation, budgeting, staffing, setting fees and charges as well as other township policies. The B&G Director has too much to do for this kind of analysis that could help “do more with less” and save time and money to use on other township initiatives.	Improved risk management, cost saving, and more work production.
<b>Explore more maintenance management alternatives</b>	2022+	B&G Director or Asst B&G Director	Contracting out volunteerism, park friends’ groups	Explore contracting custodial service such as park restroom cleaning. If an Asst B&G Director is hired, that person could work on volunteerism to generate more assistance in parks at no cost.	Volunteers are not free; they must be managed. A new position could help to develop such a program.
<b>Implement a training program</b>	2023+	P&R Director B&G Director	1-2% of department budget	Establish a five-year employee development program that would strengthen departmental operations.	85% of the budget is on personnel. Training is key.



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# Appendices

## **A. Demographics**

## **B. Plymouth Township Recreation Program Inventory 2019**

## **C. Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Update Public Engagement Process**

## **A. Demographics**

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# Demographics

## Population Overview

Plymouth Township is nearly fully developed, but the population keeps growing. In 2017, the population of Plymouth Township was 17,221, according to an estimate by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This is an increase of 1,072 from 2010. The Delaware Regional Planning Commission forecasts the population to grow to 19,934. The Township is densely populated, with 2,373 people per square mile. The community is relatively affluent, well-educated, and Caucasian. However, the Township is becoming increasingly diverse, with more residents identifying as Black, Asian, and Hispanic. While the affluence is significant, it is essential to recognize that about 5% of the community lives in poverty or about 900 people, mostly children and Hispanic. The Parks & Recreation Department serves the whole community of Plymouth Township. Specific population cohorts merit special attention in parks and recreation planning and operations beyond the traditional focus populations being served, such as children to the age of about 12 and seniors. They are people living alone; those identifying as Black, Asian, and Hispanic, and those living in poverty or paying a high percentage of their income for housing.

## Age

Plymouth Township's population is impressive as the median age is getting younger. It was 40 years of age in 2017 and 43.1 in 2009. This is an indication that families are being attracted to live in Plymouth Township. Both the age group of 19 years and under and the age group of 60 years and over are each about a quarter of the population. The age group 19 and under increased from 21% of the population in 2009 to 24.7 percent in 2017. This is a reverse trend of most communities in Pennsylvania. The public participation process for this plan found that the Greater Plymouth Community Center, the parks, recreation programs, and the schools are drivers in attracting and retaining residents. In planning recreation services and facilities is vital that they serve both older and younger age groups as well as families. The following table shows Plymouth Township's 2017 population estimate by age group and percentage of the population for each age group.



### Population by Age Group & Percentage

Age Group	Total	%
Under 5 years	1,064	6.2%
5 to 9 years	1,037	6.0%
10 to 14 years	991	5.8%
15 to 19 years	1,060	6.2%
20 to 24 years	737	4.3%
25 to 34 years	2,574	14.9%
35 to 44 years	2,200	12.8%
45 to 54 years	2,330	13.5%
55 to 59 years	1,283	7.5%
60 to 64 years	1,165	6.8%
65 to 74 years	1,432	8.3%
75 to 84 years	923	5.4%
85 years and over	425	2.5%

### Race

Plymouth Township's population is becoming more diverse. In 2017, Plymouth was approximately 78% white, 10% black or African American, and 9% Asian (see Table 2 below). In 2017, 4.8% of Plymouth's population identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race. As the population diversifies, so should parks and recreation services. Since nearly a quarter of the population is Black, Asian, or Hispanic, residents identifying with these groups should be represented on the advisory board and in the staffing at a ratio of about one out of four, preferably lining up with the racial composition groups.

### Plymouth Township Racial Composition 2010 - 2017

	2010	2017
White	83%	78%
Black	7%	10%
Asian	7.2%	9%
Hispanic	2.6%	4.8%

### Gender

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the population reports itself as 48% male and 52% female. Groups are campaigning to have the census include questions on gender orientation but so far the 2020 census does not ask for that in respect to the LGBTQ community.

Our goal in Plymouth Township is to be an equitable, knowledgeable, sensitive and welcoming organization for all including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) individuals/identities. The LGBTQ community is a thriving group that has unique needs that must be addressed. The fear of discrimination causes many LGBTQ people to avoid addressing their own needs and studies indicate that LGBTQ people are not consistently treated with the respect that all people deserve. We strive to embrace the "All Are Welcome" message and show our community that we support everyone, no matter their gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.

## Households

In 2017, Plymouth Township had 6,874 households, 82 more households than in 2017. Yet the population increased by 696, another probable indication of more children. This is confirmed with the presence of children in the household rising from 27% in 2010 to 30% in 2017. About 27% of the population lives alone. This is a significant factor to consider as loneliness has been identified as a major disease in America and the number one disease of the elderly. Just as children under 19 and adults over 60 each comprise a quarter of the population, so do those living alone. This would be an important target group in recreation service planning.

### Households with Single Head of Household

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Plymouth Township had 1,053 households with a Single Head of Household. There were 807 households with a female head of household with no husband present in 2017. This is about 12% of the households in Plymouth Township. About 3% of the Township's households were headed by a male with no wife present for a total of 232. Combined 15% of Plymouth's households have a single head of household. This is an important population sub-group that would have special recreation needs and support requirements for participation in recreation activities by various members of the household.

## Housing Value

In 2010, the median housing value for Plymouth Township was \$294,900, which is only \$2,300 less than the county-wide median housing value. In 2018, the median price for all types of units was \$310,000 and \$330,00 for single-family dwellings.<sup>1</sup> The median rent was \$1,357 in 2017.

### Rental vs. Ownership

The popularity in apartment rental units, both in terms of new construction and existing units, is one of the factors that has reduced homeownership demand in recent years. As many young people struggle to save money in the face of student debt, stagnant wages, and a rising cost of living, they are increasingly turning to rental housing instead of entering the buying market. As millennials age, many will likely turn to homeownership, but at a point in life later than their parents or grandparents did. Multifamily construction has trended away from condo ownership as the dominant form of occupancy and shifted towards luxury apartments with amenities such as clubhouses, pools, and dog runs. A downside to this trend, rents are being driven higher by the increased demand, which has proven to be true in Plymouth Township. About 38% of those renting is paying more than 35% of their income on rent, which is higher than in 2010 when 31% of renters did.

## Income & Poverty

In 2017, the median household income for Plymouth Township was \$83,654, approximately \$1,000 less than the county-wide median but more than \$20,000 greater than the median value for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole. The median income is rising in real terms as adjusted for inflation; the 2010 median would be \$77,560 in 2017 dollars.

The poverty rate in Plymouth Township increase from 3.7% in 2010 to 4.8% in 2017. The poverty rate is higher among children and Hispanics indicating that families identifying as Hispanic would be focus group in recreation planning

## Education

Educational attainment levels can often indicate the community's overall income potential and economic status. In 2017, 46.8% of Plymouth Township's population had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 48.3% at the county-level. About 6% of Plymouth's population aged 25 and over have a high school diploma, which is similar to the county overall. The trend is toward a more well-educated population with the percentage of people over the age of 25 earning a bachelor's degree or higher increasing from 41% in 2010 to 47% in 2017. The median income for those with a high school education is about \$32,408, contrasting with those with a bachelor's degree of \$51,318 and \$73,173 for those with a graduate or professional degree.

## Implications

In Plymouth Township's diversifying, well-educated, and affluent community, the Parks and Recreation Department can consider the following:

- Striving to represent the people identifying as Hispanic, Black, or Asian on the Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Board as well as any other committees that may be organized.
- Incorporating diverse ethnic groups representation into full and part-time staffing. Hiring will become more challenging in the future as wage rates in the private sector escalate. Nevertheless, a workforce that resembles the population will be essential.
- Consider working with faith-based organizations to reach out to diverse populations. Typically, outreach to groups of various racial compositions is challenging. So, getting assistance requires collaboration with other organizations that already provide services to them. Faith-based organizations are respected and trusted, so they are excellent partners in such an effort.
- Consider setting some scholarship programs for those with financial needs. This could be done as a partnership effort with a service club, business, or other community-based organization.
- Address the population that lives, works, or functions alone. Many of these are older and struggle with losses of spouses, family, and friends. A mentor program could be considered that could work in partnership with other community organizations or faith-based



institutions to get people to come out and participate in activities at GPCC or the parks. This population could also include those who work alone and child-care givers who gave up careers to raise their children or look after aging or disabled family members. Homeschoolers also fall into this category. Parks and recreation can be a life-changing resource for those experiencing loneliness.

## **B. Plymouth Township Recreation Program Inventory 2019**

## **Recreation Program Inventory**

The following program inventory is a work in progress for 2019 as registrations were through 10 months with two months still underway. The numbers reflect the number of participants enrolled and not the total attendance in each program and each class. These numbers change and are closely monitored as trends in recreation create changes in enrollment.

Changes in enrollment and participation guide program planning and dictate when to introduce new programs, modify existing ones, or retire those with decreasing participation. In an effort to offer new programs, cancellation rates of 15% are expected and necessary – if a department is not showing cancellation rates in this range, it is likely that not enough new programs are being introduced. This is all a normal process in professional recreation program planning and management.

Numbers that are not tracked but obvious in daily observations are the many people that come to GPCC as spectators and drop-in customers. Capturing attendance is an art more than a science. Plymouth Township is vigilant in working to monitor and track participation numbers, registrations, and visits to GPCC in a world of changing technology and computer software advances that will make this easier over time.



Plymouth Township Recreation Program Inventory 2019

Program Category: Adult			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Adult and Pediatric CPR/AED	Adult	30	5
Adult and Pediatric CPR/AED	Adult	30	5
Adult Pottery	Adult	20	8
Adult Tennis	Adult	8	4
Beginner to Advanced Fly Tying	Adult	25	19
Drivers Safety Class	Adult	25	9
Drivers Safety Class	Adult	24	14
Drivers Safety Recert	Adult	35	11
Fly Fishing- Tactics & Strategies	Adult	25	7
Fly Tying- Advanced	Adult	25	17
Know Your Medicare Options	Adult	25	4
Line Dancing 1pm	Adult	15	12
Line Dancing 6pm	Adult	15	10
On Your Own in NYC	Adult	50	50
Radio City Music Trip	Adult	45	44
Radio City No Show	Adult	7	6
Tai Chi & Qigong- Adv	Adult	25	8
Tai Chi & Qigong- Advanced	Adult	25	5
Tai Chi & Qigong- Beg/Int	Adult	25	7
Tai Chi & Qigong- Intermediate	Adult	25	0
Tai Chi & Qigong S1 - Int/Adv	Adult	25	6
Tai Chi & Qigong S2- Beginner	Adult	25	0
Tai Chi & Qigong S2- Int/Adv	Adult	25	11
Tai Chi & Qigong S3- Beginner	Adult	25	0
Tai Chi & Qigong S3- Int/Adv	Adult	25	4

Program Category: Adult (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Tai Chi & Qigong S4- Int/Adv	Adult	25	4
26 Adult Programs			270
Program Category: Pre-School			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
B-ball for Tykes	Pre-school	14	14
B-ball for Tykes	Pre-school	14	14
Hummingbirds Soccer	Pre-school	23	23
Hummingbirds Soccer	Pre-school	20	14
Jumpin' Jack & Jill's	Pre-school	10	6
Jumpin' Jack and Jill	Pre-school	12	9
Just for Me	Pre-school	15	9
Just for Me	Pre-school	15	8
Just for Me Friday	Pre-school	12	11
Just for Me- Friday	Pre-school	12	12
Just for Me Tuesday	Pre-school	12	12
Just for Me Tuesdays	Pre-school	12	10
Karate Kids	Pre-school	16	10
Kids in Motion	Pre-school	15	11
Kids Karate	Pre-school	20	4
Little Chefs	Pre-school	10	8
Little Chefs	Pre-school	10	7
Mini Sport Stars	Pre-school	14	14
Mini Sports Stars	Pre-school	14	6
Parent / Child Messy Time Playgroup	Pre-school	10	7
Preschool Combo Class	Pre-school	15	15
Preschool Combo Class	Pre-school	12	12
PS Combo Class	Pre-school	15	14

Program Category: Pre-School (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Story Time- June	Pre-school	20	0
Story Time- May	Pre-school	20	0
Super Soccer Stars	Pre-school	15	14
T Ball for Tykes	Pre-school	14	8
T-birds T-Ball	Pre-school	20	19
Tennis 5 - 6-year olds	Pre-school	8	7
Tot Picasso	Pre-school	12	8
Tot Picasso	Pre-school	12	8
Twinkle Toes	Pre-school	13	11
Twinkle Toes	Pre-school	13	4
Twinkle Toes	Pre-school	13	12
Twinkle Toes	Pre-school	17	16
Weird Science	Pre-school	10	3
Weird Science	Pre-school	10	7
Wild Neighbors	Pre-school	30	20
38 Preschool Classes			387
Program Category: Special Events			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Bat Night	Spec. Evnts	15	10
Breakfast with Santa	Spec. Evnts	40	3
Breakfast with Santa Family	Spec. Evnts	20	5
Breakfast with The Characters-2 & Under	Spec. Evnts	7	7
Breakfast with The Characters-Family	Spec. Evnts	8	8
Breakfast with The Characters-Individual	Spec. Evnts	50	48
Brunch with the Bunny 2 and under	Spec. Evnts	18	11
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		



Program Category: Special Events (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
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	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
	Spec. Evnts		
<b>29 Special Events</b>			<b>349</b>
Program Category: Youth			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		



Program Category: Youth (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
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	Youth		
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	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
	Youth		
<b>53 Youth Programs</b>			<b>552</b>
Program Category: Specialty Camps			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
	Spec Camp		
	Spec Camp		
	Spec Camp		



[illegible]

Program Category: Camps			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
<b>Camp GPCC/Teen/Playground Camp</b>			<b>1837</b>
Program Category: Leagues			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
<b>Leagues</b>			
		<b>10</b>	<b>132 Teams</b>
Program Category: Fitness			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Bsball/Sball Con Prg	Active	15	7
Core Sculpt	Active	10	4
Group Cycling T	Active	10	4
Boot Camp Friday	Active	17	8
Boot Camp Friday	Active	17	6
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	7
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	6
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	7
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	9
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	12
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	7
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	10
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	11
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	10
War of the Core F	Active	10	1
War of the Core F	Active	10	1
War of the Core F	Active	10	2
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	8

Program Category: Fitness (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	8
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	8
Weekend Warrior	Active	10	10
Weekend Warrior	Active	10	6
Fit to Run	Active	22	22
Band Shell Boot Camp T	Active	9	4
Band Shell Boot Camp Th	Active	9	2
Band Shell Boot Camp T&Th	Active	9	9
Band Shell Boot Camp FRi	Active	17	8
Band Shell Boot Camp FRi	Active	17	6
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	7
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	4
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	5
Body Weight Burn	Active	8	4
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	8
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	7
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	6
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	9
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	9
Cycle & Core TH	Active	10	8
War of the Core F	Active	10	1
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	9
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	7
Band Shell Boot Camp T	Active	8	7
Band Shell Boot Camp Th	Active	8	2
Band Shell Boot Camp T&Th	Active	10	9
Band Shell Boot Camp Fri	Active	17	8
Cycle & Core T	Active	10	6



Program Category: Fitness (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
C cle & Core TH	Ac i e	10	7
C cle & Core TH	Ac i e	10	7
Ho o Trea Yo r Back a Home	Ac i e	30	5
Nigh of Fi ne	Ac i e	60	19
Boo Camp o ide F	Ac i e	15	6
Boo Camp g m F	Ac i e	15	7
Boo Camp g m F	Ac i e	15	4
E e Boo Camp	Ac i e	24	1
E e Boo Camp	Ac i e	24	2
Boo Camp am W	Ac i e	15	0
B rn Before he Bird	Ac i e	25	2
12 Da of Chri ma	Ac i e	25	0
12 Da of Chri ma 6pm	Ac i e	25	0
Bod Weigh B rn	Ac i e	8	4
Bod Weigh B rn	Ac i e	8	4
C cle & Core T	Ac i e	10	10
C cle & Core T	Ac i e	10	9
C cle & Core T	Ac i e	10	7
C cle & Core TH	Ac i e	10	9
C cle & Core TH	Ac i e	10	8
C cle & Core TH	Ac i e	10	7
Weekend Rall	Ac i e	10	0
Core Balance AOA	Ac i e	10	7
Core Balance AOA	Ac i e	10	8
Program Category: Fitness			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Core Balance AOA	Active	10	7
71 Small Group Training classes			459

Program Category: Fitness (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Aerobics			
124 classes ran			
17,347 participants			
Program Category: Aquatics			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Adult Lesson Sat 10am SPRING Session	Active	5	4
Adult Lessons Fall 1 Saturday 10am	Active	5	5
Adult Lessons Fall 1 Tuesdays 8pm	Active	10	4
Adult Lessons Fall 2 Saturday 10am	Active	10	7
Adult Lessons Fall 2 Tuesdays 8pm	Active	10	10
Adult Lessons Sat 10:00am Winter 2	Active	5	3
Adult Lessons Sat 10am SUMMER	Active	5	4
Adult Lessons Tues 8:00pm Winter 1	Active	5	2
Adult Lessons Tues 8:00pm Winter 2	Active	5	3
Adult Lessons Tues 8pm SPRING Session	Active	10	4
Total			46
Explorers Fall 1 Saturdays 8:30am	Active	16	4
Explorers Fall 1 Saturdays 9:15am	Active	16	10
Explorers Fall 2 Saturdays 8:30am	Active	16	7
Explorers Fall 2 Saturdays 9:15am	Active	16	9
Explorers Sat 8:30am Winter 1	Active	16	5
Explorers Sat 8:30am Winter 2	Active	16	9
Explorers Sat 830am SPRING Session	Active	16	15
Explorers Sat 830am SUMMER	Active	16	12
Explorers Sat 9:15am Winter 1	Active	16	13
Explorers Sat 9:15am Winter 2	Active	16	10

Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Explorers Sat 915am SPRING Session	Active	16	16
Explorers Sat 915am SUMMER	Active	16	15
Explorers Tues 11am SPRING Session	Active	16	3
Explorers Tues 11am SUMMER	Active	16	6
Explorers Tues 615pm SUMMER	Active	16	12
Goldfish Fall 1 Mondays 6pm	Active	4	4
Goldfish Fall 1 Saturdays 10am	Active	4	4
Goldfish Fall 1 Thursdays 6pm	Active	8	7
Goldfish Fall 1 Wednesday 7pm	Active	8	3
Goldfish Fall 2 Mondays 6pm	Active	4	3
Goldfish Fall 2 Saturdays 10am	Active	4	2
Goldfish Fall 2 Sundays 10am	Active	4	4
Goldfish Fall 2 Wednesday 7pm	Active	4	4
Goldfish Mon 6pm SPRING	Active	4	4
Goldfish Mon 6pm SUMMER	Active	8	8
Goldfish Sat 10:00am Winter 1	Active	4	4
Goldfish Sat 10:00am Winter 2	Active	4	4
Goldfish Sat 10am SPRING	Active	4	4
Goldfish Sat 10am SUMMER	Active	4	3
Goldfish Sun 10am SPRING Session	Active	4	3
Goldfish Sun 10am SUMMER	Active	4	4
Goldfish Thurs 6:00pm Winter 1	Active	8	6
Goldfish Thurs 6:00pm Winter 2	Active	8	9
Goldfish Thurs 6pm SPRING	Active	8	8
Goldfish Thurs 6pm SUMMER	Active	8	7
Goldfish Wed 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	4	4
Goldfish Wed 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Goldfish Wed 7pm SPRING	Active	8	8

Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Seahorse Fall 1 Mondays 7pm	Active	6	5
Seahorse Fall 1 Wednesdays 7pm	Active	8	8
Seahorse Fall 2 Mondays 7pm	Active	8	8
Seahorse Fall 2 Tuesdays 7pm	Active	8	6
Seahorse Fall 2 Wednesdays 7pm	Active	4	4
Seahorse Tues 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	12	11
Seahorse Tues 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	8	9
Seahorse Tues 7pm SPRING	Active	12	9
Seahorse Tues 7pm SUMMER	Active	12	10
Seahorse Wed 4pm SUMMER	Active	8	8
Seahorse Wed 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	4	4
Seahorse Wed 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	8	8
Seahorse Wed 7pm SPRING Session	Active	8	8
Seal Fall 1 Mondays 6pm	Active	6	2
Seal Fall 1 Thursdays 7pm	Active	10	7
Seal Fall 2 Mondays 6pm	Active	6	6
Seal Fall 2 Thursdays 7pm	Active	6	5
Seal Mon 6:00pm Winter 1	Active	8	8
Seal Mon 6:00pm Winter 2	Active	12	8
Seal Mon 6pm SPRING Session	Active	6	6
Seal Mon 6pm SUMMER	Active	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>
Seal Thurs 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
Seal Thurs 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
Seal Thurs 7pm SPRING	Active	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>
Seal Thurs 7pm SUMMER	Active	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>
Speedboat Fall 1 Saturdays 9:15am	Active	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Speedboat Fall 1 Tuesdays 6:15pm	Active	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
Speedboat Fall 1 Wednesdays 6:15pm	Active	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>



Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Speedboat Fall 2 Saturday 9:15am	Active	8	5
Speedboat Fall 2 Tuesdays 6:15pm	Active	8	6
Speedboat Fall 2 Wednesdays 6:15pm	Active	4	3
Speedboat Mon 915am SUMMER	Active	8	4
Speedboat Sat 915am SPRING	Active	8	8
Speedboat Sat 915am SUMMER	Active	8	8
Speedboat Thurs 615pm SPRING	Active	4	4
Speedboat Thurs 615pm SUMMER	Active	8	8
Speedboat Tues 615pm SPRING	Active	8	6
Speedboat Tues 615pm SUMMER	Active	8	7
Speedboat Wed 415pm SUMMER	Active	8	8
Speedboat Wed 6:15pm SPRING	Active	8	6
Speedboats Sat 9:15am Winter 1	Active	8	6
Speedboats Sat 9:15am Winter 2	Active	8	8
Speedboats Thurs 6:15pm Winter 1	Active	4	2
Speedboats Thurs 6:15pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Speedboats Tues 6:15pm Winter 1	Active	8	4
Speedboats Tues 6:15pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Speedboats Wed 6:15pm Winter 1	Active	8	5
Speedboats Wed 6:15pm Winter 2	Active	4	5
Stingray Fall 1 Mondays 8pm	Active	6	5
Stingray Fall 2 Mondays 8pm	Active	6	3
Stingray Fall 2 Thursdays 8pm	Active	6	2
Stingray Mon 8:00pm Winter 1	Active	6	4
Stingray Mon 8:00pm Winter 2	Active	12	7
Stingray Mon 8pm SPRING Session	Active	12	7
Stingray Mon 8pm SUMMER	Active	12	6
Stingray Thurs 8:00pm Winter 1	Active	6	1

Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Stingray Thurs 8pm SUMMER	Active	6	2
Submarine Fall 1 Mondays 7pm	Active	4	4
Submarine Fall 1 Saturdays 11am	Active	8	5
Submarine Fall 2 Mondays 7pm	Active	5	5
Submarine Fall 2 Saturdays 11am	Active	8	7
Submarine Wed 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	4	5
Submarine Wed 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Tadpole Fall 1 Saturdays 10am	Active	8	3
Tadpole Fall 1 Wednesdays 6pm	Active	4	3
Tadpole Fall 2 Wednesdays 6pm	Active	4	2
Tadpole Sat 10:00am Winter 2	Active	8	8
Tadpole Sat 10am SPRING	Active	4	4
Tadpole Sat 10am SUMMER	Active	4	4
Tadpole Wed 5pm SUMMER	Active	8	7
Tadpole Wed 6:00pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Tadpole Wed 6pm SPRING	Active	8	6
Tugboat Fall 2 Tuesdays 7pm	Active	4	4
Tugboat Fall 1 Saturdays 11am	Active	4	4
Tugboat Fall 1 Saturdays 8:30am	Active	8	7
Tugboat Fall 1 Tuesdays 7pm	Active	8	4
Tugboat Fall 1 Wednesday 7pm	Active	4	3
Tugboat Fall 2 Saturdays 8:30am	Active	4	4
Tugboat Fall 2 Wednesday 7pm	Active	4	4
Tugboat Sat 11am SPRING Session	Active	8	8
Tugboat Sat 11am SUMMER	Active	8	8
Tugboat Sat 830am SPRING Session	Active	4	4
Tugboat Sat 830am SUMMER	Active	4	4
Tugboat Sun 11am SPRING Session	Active	4	4

Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
Tugboat Sun 11am SUMMER	Active	4	4
Tugboat Thurs 7pm SPRING Session	Active	4	4
Tugboat Tues 7pm SUMMER	Active	8	8
Tugboat Tues 915am SUMMER	Active	8	8
Tugboat Wed 5:15pm SUMMER	Active	8	5
Tugboat Wed 7pm SPRING Session	Active	4	4
Tugboats Sat 11:00am Winter 1	Active	8	9
Tugboats Sat 11:00am Winter 2	Active	8	8
Tugboats Sat 8:30am Winter 1	Active	8	8
Tugboats Sat 8:30am Winter 2	Active	6	6
Tugboats Tues 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	4	3
Tugboats Wed 7:00pm Winter 1	Active	4	4
Tugboats Wed 7:00pm Winter 2	Active	4	4
Total			794
Private Lesson - Winter 1	Active	99	15
Private Lesson - Winter 2	Active	99	25
Private Lesson SPRING	Active	99	25
Private Lesson SUMMER	Active	36	29
Total			94
1 on 1 Swim Instruction	Active	999	14
YST December Session	Active	32	20
YST November Session	Active	32	25
YST October Session	Active	32	25
YST September Session	Active	32	25
January YST Session	Active	32	22
March YST Session	Active	32	20
May YST Session	Active	32	22

Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
April YST Session	Active	32	15
February YST Session	Active	32	20
Total			194
ARC Lifeguard Training	Active	10	7
ARC Lifeguard Training	Active	10	4
ARC Lifeguard Training	Active	10	9
ARC Lifeguard Training	Active	10	0
ARC Lifeguard Training - Blended Learning	Active	10	0
Total			20
Swim Lesson Evals	Active	15	9
Swim Lesson Evals	Active	15	6
Swim Lesson Evals	Active	15	8
Swim Lesson Evals	Active	10	0
Swim Lesson Evals	Active	10	0
Swim Lesson Evaluation	Active	12	12
			35
Neon Pool Party - Individual	Active	50	22
Neon Pool Party - Family	Active	50	8
Float Day - Individual	Active	50	47
Float Day - Family	Active	50	22
MARCH-Flick n' Float: Teen Titans GO!	Active	50	29
MARCH-Flick n' Float Family: Teen Titans GO!	Active	50	15
APRIL Flick & Float Individual	Active	50	19
APRIL Flick & Float Family	Active	50	4
April On Your Own Aquatics	Active	10	2
May On Your Own Aquatics	Active	10	2
June On Your Own Aquatics	Inactive	10	0
PoolOWeen Individual	Active	70	62



Program Category: Aquatics (Continued)			
Program	Status	Max Count	Enrolled
PoolOWeen Family	Active	40	31
Holiday Swim & Give Registration	Active	200	8
Flick & Float Individual	Active	50	24
Flick & Float Family	Active	50	8
			303
<b>Aerobics</b>			
<b>60 classes</b>			
<b>9491 Participants</b>			

## **C. Community Engagement Process**

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# Community Engagement Process


## Foundation of the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan Update

### Purpose

Public engagement was at the heart of the development of the **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update**. The information gleaned from the public formed the core of recommendations and the action plan.

### Coordination with the Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan Process

Fortunately, the Montgomery County Planning Commission was simultaneously working with the Township on developing the municipal Comprehensive Plan through 2040. This enabled close coordination on public engagement, a fortuitous circumstance in a municipality in which most households are hectic. This approach helped to respect the time of the citizenry and yet still involve them in significant ways in which they could contribute to the planning process.



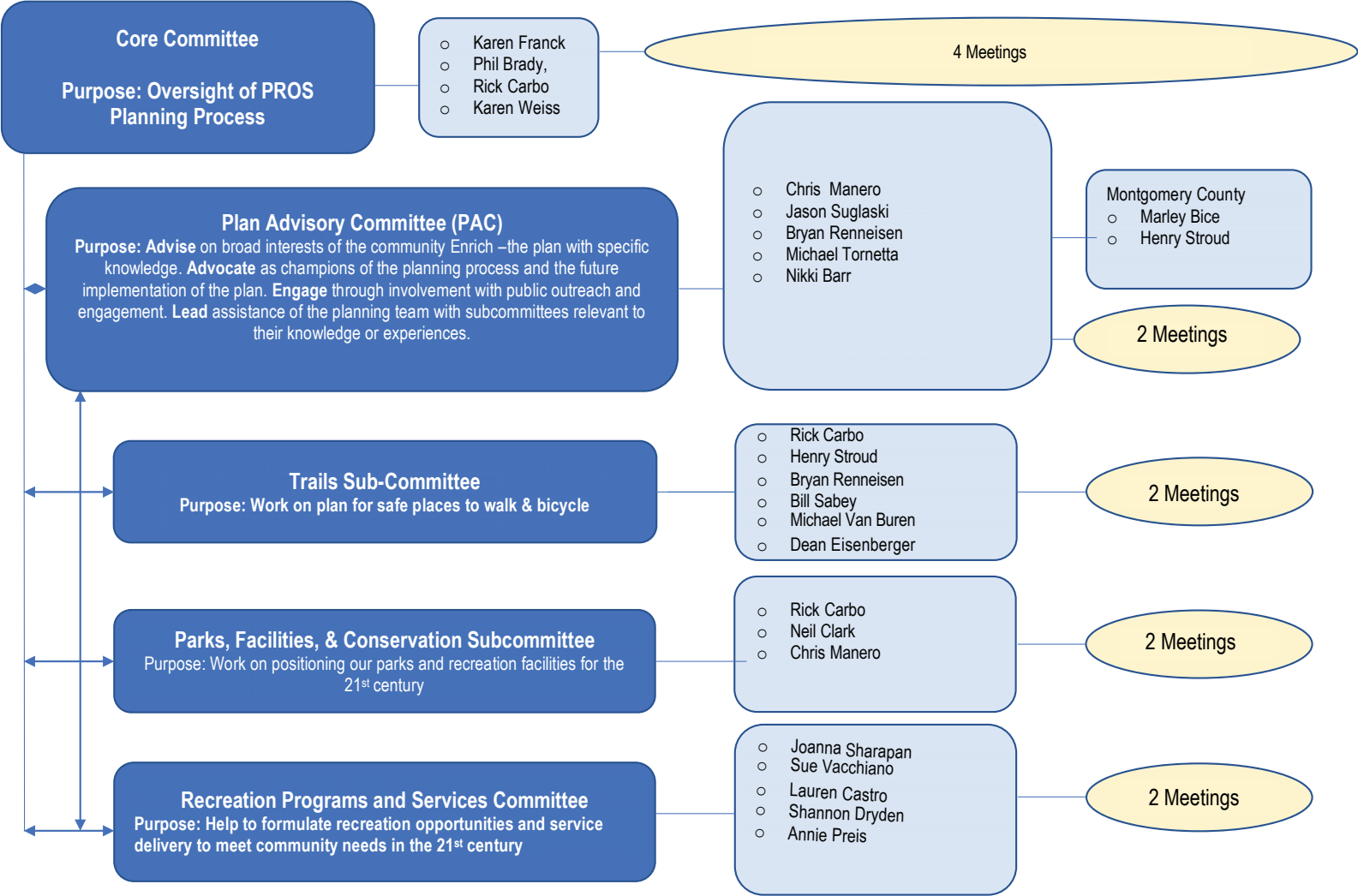
### Seven-Part Process

The public participation process included a Core Committee; the Plan Advisory Committee and sub-committees for trails and open space, programs, and parks, facilities & conservation; key person interviews; focus groups; public meetings; newsletter articles; and coordination with the Comprehensive Plan Public Opinion Survey. The Plan Update chose a different approach to civic engagement to make the most use of the time of the busy people in this community. The figure on the following page illustrates the proposed **Organizational Structure for the Citizen Advisory Groups**, which the planning team adapted in the process with participants and additional meetings and work sessions.

### Core Committee

Due to the large number of committees, the planning team formed a Core Committee of the Township Manager, Parks & Recreation Director, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director, and the Buildings & Grounds Director. Their knowledge and perspective on the community and their functional areas provided significant insight to steer this complex project. Since the Township is undergoing significant decisions related to municipal public facilities and investment, it was essential for this Plan Update project to be in the framework of overall municipal operations..

**Plymouth Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan  
Citizen Advisory Organizational Structure**





### Plan Advisory Committee PAC)

The PAC purpose was to:

- Advise on the planning team in the broad interests of the community
- Enrich the plan with specific knowledge.
- Advocate as champions of the planning process and the future implementation of the plan.
- Engage through involvement with public outreach and engagement.
- Lead assistance to the planning team with subcommittees relevant to their knowledge or experiences.

### Plan Sub-Committees

Three sub-committees served as advisors on trails, parks and recreation facilities, and programs.

**Program Committee** – The Program Committee helped to formulate programs and services and delivery opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee** – The Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Committee guided how to make our parks and recreation facilities work best in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: for active, healthy living, to connect people with nature, and to anticipate and meet the needs of population sub-groups now and into the future.

**Trails Committee** - The Trails Committee provided advice and recommendations on connecting Plymouth Township with safe places to walk and bicycle as well as to connect to the region beyond for bicycling. The Trails Committee included two members of the Plymouth Township Environmental Advisory Board who have been working on trail planning for several years and were instrumental in formulating recommendations for this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update.

### Interviews

Interviews with key stakeholders generally found satisfaction and pride with the municipal parks and recreation system, urging the Township to keep on going with its support and improvements. Safe places to walk and bicycle, sports field improvements, shade, and more trees, and preserving whatever opens pace is left were pervasive themes. Interviews included:

- Colonial School District
- Plymouth Township Council
- Township management
- Township department heads
- Township engineer
- Business owners
- Historic preservation
- Environmental Advisory Board
- Community Center members

- Community sports leagues
- Montgomery County Planning Commission: trails, opens pace and community planners
- Park neighbors
- Trail supporters
- Parks & Recreation Department Management, Division managers, and staff
- Buildings & Grounds Management, administrative assistance, and workers
- Arts community
- Private recreational facility owners
- Neighboring townships about trail connections
- GPCC community center specialist
- Community center managers in other municipalities

### Focus Groups

Focus groups were small group discussions with related interests, experience, or expertise. They included:

- Buildings & Grounds Maintenance Staff – Need for more staff for expanded recreation facilities and having too much to do serving overall township public properties maintenance. Staff approaching retirement age with significant paid

time off yields less work time than would appear to the eye.

- Parks & Recreation Department Work Sessions – The planning team had work sessions with every divisions in the Parks & Recreation Department. The work sessions included management and staff and followed up with interviews. The planning team's Community Center Specialist met with management and staff in several work sessions to discuss operations, programming and updates needed, customer service, and revenue generation. Work session included the following functional areas:
  - Community Center (several sessions)
  - Recreation Programs
  - Fitness
  - Aquatics Center
- Sports Leagues - Leagues indicated their appreciation for township support, facilities, and maintenance. Turfing and field lighting could help to extend games and practices in a township with limited land left to purchase for the construction of additional facilities.
- Historic Preservation – Plymouth Township has a significant heritage to preserve. This should be considered in all park planning. The Historic Preservation Board now manages substantial historic resources in the community

### Public Opinion Questionnaire

The Montgomery County Planning Commission conducted an online public opinion survey. The questionnaire included five questions about parks and

recreation. The planning team crafted the questions using public opinion findings to date. Nearly 200 respondents answered the questionnaire. Overall, their responses were highly favorable and supportive of the Township's parks and recreation system. Clearly, those who responded were patrons of the parks and recreation parks, GPCC, and program.

**1. How frequently do you go to a park, community center, trails, or other recreation sites in the Township?**

**All respondents**

- 91% reported using parks, the community center from daily (12% to frequently 44%)
- Only 9% reported rarely or never using them

**2. Over the past 12 months, have you visited a park, community center, trail, or other recreation sites in the Township for any of the following activities? Circle all that apply.**

**All Respondents**

- More than half: Walking/Jogging /Running/Hiking (80%) and Playground (60%)
- Sports (43%)
- Special Events (39%)
- Swimming (35%)
- Bicycling (34%)
- Fitness Classes (27%)
- Bird/Nature Walking (13%)
- Other: dog walking, working out, and Plymouth Township Day

**3. Which park, trail, or other recreation sites do you typically go to?**

**All Respondents**

- GPCC (79%)
- East Plymouth Valley Park (49%)
- Schuylkill River Trail (30%)
- Harriet Wetherill Park (27%)
- Colwell (27%)
- Cross County Trail (13%)
- JFK Park (9%)
- Bicentennial, Alan Wood, and Black Horse Parks (5% or less)
- Other: Parks in Conshohocken, Sandwood Park, Miles and Ridge Parks in Whitemarsh, Maple Acres Farm, Plymouth Hills Park

**4. How do you typically get to parks, community centers, trails, and other recreation sites in the Township?**

**All Respondents**

- 65% drive
- 27% walk
- 3% bike
- And nobody takes public transportation
- Comments:
  - People: take bikes in cars to get to a trail; express concern about taking their life in their hands; wish for sidewalks; say that even though they know it is dangerous, they do bike – and take their kids along, and mostly want ped/bike safety and sidewalks. Some people walk, drive, and bike.

**5. The final parks, recreation, trail, and open space question dealt with the level of satisfaction with Plymouth Township's parks, recreation, trail, and open space system.**

**All Respondents agree or strongly agree that:**

- 95% - parks, trails, and community center make Plymouth Township a great place in which to live.
- 95% - they are aware of township parks, trails, community center.
- 86% - township parks, trails, and community center are safe, clean, and attractive.
- 86% - think that the Township provides a wide variety of recreation opportunities for people of all ages and interests.
- 81% - feel that they are kept informed of events happening in all township parks and recreation facilities.
- 79% - they are aware of township parks, trails, community center.
- 79% - are satisfied with the number of township parks, trails, community centers.
- The highest levels of satisfaction are with the concept of “parks, trails and the community center making Plymouth a great place in which to live” (83% strongly agree) and feeling informed (53%)
- No one strongly disagreed with any statement about their level of satisfaction with parks, trails, and recreation. Those did not agree that parks, trails, and GPCC make Plymouth Township a great place in which to live totaled less than four percent. Except for the 11% who disagreed with their being satisfied with the number of parks, trails and community centers. The comments inform us that this dissatisfaction is primarily related to safe places to bicycle.

**Open-ended Responses for Improvements**

- It would be nice to be able to ride to the trail.
- Too much emphasis/effort on Harriet Wetherill. It is very unattractive and minimally useful.
- Wasted opportunity to make Bicentennial Park more educational by labeling the trees along the path, e.g., Katsura Tree, Black Walnut, Pin Oak, Red Maple, that were planted years ago and clearly allowed to deteriorate. No tree trimming is done. Really shameful lack of attention.
- Improve quality of fields, especially soccer fields. Too many bare spots, weeds, and uneven surfaces
- We need a skating rink for hockey and public skating
- Expanding and connecting increasing tree cover in Township
- Creating partnerships
- Improving access to trails.
- Offering nature
- Expanding and connecting trail and pathway systems
- Increasing tree cover and shade within Township parks
- Creating partnerships to promote community health
- Improving access to Schuylkill River for fishing, boating, etc.
- Offering nature programming at Harriet Wetherill Park
- The single most important improvement, in my opinion, is the creation of sidewalks and bicycle lanes. This would allow for safe commuting and walking. This is one of the main reasons I would consider moving out of Plymouth Meeting. It does not allow for walking or biking to destinations. It is even difficult to get to the cross-country trail on your bike to access the Schuylkill Trail. It is completely unsafe as there are no bicycle lanes or pavements.
- Publicize activities more widely-Times Herald, social media



- Fix up the bicentennial by trimming the trees and removing the rotting statues
- I would really enjoy a park with a lit trail for evening walks, especially in the winter when it gets dark early
- Make it safer/easier to access the Cross-County Trail from Germantown/Butler intersection. A lot of cyclists come from Lafayette Hill area or down Butler and have to deal with a dangerous stretch of Germantown to get to the trail. Also, finish the trails in Wetherill - nice park, hard to walk around sometimes.
- Pedestrian access to Harriet Wetherill park is limited due to lack of sidewalks along Narcissa Rd
- Put in a sprinkler park
- It would be nice if we could develop other open lands owned by the Township into parks, for example, there are two adjacent to my neighborhood that aren't technically registered or seemingly "open" to the public.
- The lack of shade is a big one because I noticed how sunny the small child playground is with very little coverage for the young toddlers and babies.
- We would like a sprinkler park or outdoor water type water park at the community center.
- Combine art and nature. Look at Schuylkill center for inspiration for ideas
- Ocean City, NJ, has mesh canopies over some of the playground equipment for shade.
- Would like to see a nice riverfront, not built up like Conshy, but open and accessible. Would like to see a green corridor established from Plymouth Valley Park through GPCC through Silver Springs through Maple Acres to Harriet Wetherill.
- A dock near the SRT would be ideal. The closest one is in Norristown in a less than ideal part of town
- Big, nice dog park, please
- Colwell Park needs Trees.
- I would like to see hunting programs available to Plymouth Township Residents for some of the parks, maybe during certain winter months or weeks.

- We would love to see a splash park, and some shade with updated toddler equipment. I do worry about our safety when alone at the park. Not sure how to remedy that.
- Tree/shade coverage for Colwell playground and open bathrooms
- Gazebo, grill rentals
- Dog Park
- Safer bicycle paths
- All the playgrounds need shade over the equipment
- Add pickleball courts or change over unused/underused tennis courts to pickleball
- EPVP needs major reinvestment.
- Nature programming at Weatherill is a waste of resources - Morris Arboretum is less than 10 minutes away. It has a \$60M annual operating budget, so I don't understand why we are attempting to compete with them.
- The playgrounds definitely need shade
- Add a splash pad (outdoor spray ground), add playground equipment to Bicentennial Park, or the Middle School grounds - there are a lot of kids in the area and no playgrounds within walking distance. Not sure what that would entail
- More open green space and trails; we have enough tennis courts and ballfields.
- Add an outdoor swimming pool.
- Please keep Harriet Wetherill mostly undeveloped. We need more plain open space, fields, and forests, not more ball fields and playgrounds.
- Would appreciate a playground at Bicentennial Park to serve the residences near the middle school/offer them a "walkable" playground.
- Playground at Bicentennial Park!! No PT park is in walking distance
- More trails for bikes! not along the road
- How about at least a Children's Lending library at the Har. Wetherill barn?
- Improve play equipment at East Plymouth Valley Park

- The following are typically offered at libraries for free. Since we don't have one, the Community Center should offer free: preschool storytimes, organized baby/preschool playgroups, opportunities for teen volunteers, adult & senior book clubs, other adult & senior activities like walking groups, cards, crafts, seminars, and lectures.

### Public Meetings

In conjunction with the Plymouth Township Comprehensive Plan development, the Township held three public meetings:

Project Launch – the first public meeting was an interactive work session in which participants provided their ideas and concerns for improving Plymouth Township. For parks, recreation, open space, and trails, they participated in small group exercises to tap their ideas on what is working well, what could be improved, and ideas for future improvements in parks recreation facilities, programs, and services. The second public meeting was to obtain feedback on plan recommendations in an open house-style format. The parks, recreation, and trail planning stations collected feedback on proposed trails, park distribution, and seven park master plans. The third public meeting was for plan adoption. Combined, more than 200 residents participated in these sessions.

### Newsletter Articles

Through the public involvement process, the planning team learned that the Township's newsletter was a preferred way for residents to learn about township activities, projects, and information about the community. The planning team wrote newsletter articles to inform residents about the **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update** in conjunction with the **Comprehensive Plan** team.

## Analysis and Findings

Among all seven forms of public engagement, the following findings emerged as common:

### What the Citizens Like About Parks, Recreation Trails and Open Space

- **Parks and Recreation Facilities**
  - GPCC is our community's hub, our main street, and our crown jewel. No other community has anything like this.
  - GPCC and our parks are where neighbors meet neighbors.
  - Well-placed throughout the Township
  - High quality of the parks
  - Neighborhood parks are convenient
  - Diversity of parks from athletic facilities to nature.
- **Programs**
  - Variety of opportunities
  - Different activities and amenities
  - Programming for all different age groups
  - Programs for sports, youth, and nature
  - Collaboration of Plymouth Township with community sports leagues
  - The Parks & Recreation Department works on growing and evolving its programs progressing with changing community needs and interests

- **Nature**
  - Stewardship and conservation are essential in Plymouth Township
  - Harriet Wetherill is an integral part of our parks and recreation system
  - Can get away from it all close to home
  - Nature programs are great for kids and families
  - A good place for Eagle Scout projects

### What Plymouth Township Can Improve in Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails

- **Nature**
  - Maintain and keep natural features
  - Work more on stewardship of natural areas especially Harriet Wetherill Park
  - Preserve the remaining open space while it is still available. Act quickly before it is gone. Identify properties that are key to improving our system and secure them in various ways.
- **Trails**
  - Safe places to walk and bicycle emerged as the most critical feature that citizens want to add to the parks and recreation system.
  - Connectivity of community parks, schools, public properties, neighborhoods, shopping, and community destinations is a top community preference.
  - Pedestrian connections and safe crossings for cyclists and pedestrians are critical.

- **Maintenance**
  - While the parks are clean, the continued maintenance of the park and custodial care of the buildings including GPCC is critical
  - Ensure that enough staff is available to carry out routine tasks of park and recreation facility maintenance now and in the future. The parks and recreation facilities have expanded, but has staff support been able to keep up with all they have to do?
  - If park and GPCC improvements are planned, is maintenance included?
- **Accessibility**
  - A playground for all is a significant priority in the community
  - Low cost and free events for people with special needs would be important
  - Barrier-free access in all parks and recreation facilities
- **Programming**
  - Bigger events at all parks – not just at GPCC
  - Promote healthy lifestyles
  - \More activities in the park for seniors, adults, and preschoolers – especially nature and health-related programs
  - More activities in the parks overall
  - More for families, caregivers
  - Promote healthy lifestyles and activities
  - Offer free, low cost, unusual, or “attention-getting” activities for people to try out, discover that they like the activity or similar one to continue to do so they get active
  - Continued expansion of programs at Harriet Wetherill Park

- More programming in neighborhood parks
- More partnerships in programming
- Partner with PMM for more programming in Green Space
- **Funding**
  - Create new partners and sponsors
  - Look for additional profit centers
  - Ensure continued support of the Township for parks and recreation operations and capital improvements

### Opportunities in Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

- Identify properties that are important to secure for parkland, conservation, trail linkages, and to solve problems in parks such as parking. Develop and put into place township mechanisms to enable the Township to move fast in securing properties that could be available for purchase and before they are lost to development.
- Connections – get linkages before they are lost and try to gain access for easements that are critical for connecting the community with safe places to walk and bicycle
- Continue the extension of sidewalks throughout the Township
- Expand partnerships
- Get sponsors for parks, facilities, and programs
- Incentivize developers to provide park and recreation facility improvements
- Look into professional fund-raising for special projects in GPCC and the parks
- Provide education of the community regarding donation opportunities and promote a donations and gifting program

### Plan Goals, Questions to Answer or Confirm

- The commitment of the Township to implement the plan. Without that, the Plan Update is just an exercise.
- Need to partner with Montgomery County on extending the Cross-County Trail and connecting our community to it
- Defining a short term and long-term plan for maintenance
- Engage renters in the community and address their needs too
- Expanded use of all parks
- More big events
- Bring the community together more – parks and recreation is the only way to build our sense of community here

### One Single Most Important Thing to Accomplish

- Ensure that adequate support and planning is in place for park maintenance so that all of our parks and recreation facilities are safe, clean and attractive
- Financial sustainability of GPCC
- Ongoing and evolving programming for people of all ages with a major focus on community building, health and wellness, nature, special needs, and building life-long active, healthy lifestyles and interests that will help people to socialize and avoid loneliness.
- Continued education and promotion of the value of parks, recreation, open space, and trails.
- Ensure that the plan is implementable, sustainable, and includes conservation.
- Securing community buy-in for plan implementation is crucial.
- Continued community engagement for all projects to be carried out as plan recommendations.