

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND PARKS PLAN

July 2023



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

Matthew Vahey
*Vice President, Board of Commissioners &
Chair of the Advisory Committee*

Tara Wehmeyer
Assistant Township Manager

Karl Lukens
Director, Parks and Recreation

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Leah Anderson

Tim Barton

Krystn Kuckleman

Rachael McNeill

Steven Sacavage

Mike Scotese

Joe Stevens

Karen Rosen



Pat Stasio, Certified Park and Recreation Professional

Project No. 22044.10

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose 10

Vision, Goals, Objectives 11

Township Profile 13

2 INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Data Collection, Methodology, Site Reconnaissance 16

Public Participation 16

Summary of Existing Planning Documents 18

Zoning and SALDO Ordinances..... 22

Prior Open Space, Recreation and Environmental
Resource Protection Plan 2006 Plan Review 28

Inventory 30

Parks and Recreation Inventory and Analysis..... 36

Recreation Programming Analysis 64

Administration Analysis..... 66

Maintenance Analysis 68

Budget Analysis 73

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Plan Matrix 76

Vision 1.0 79

Vision 2.0 91

Vision 3.0 105

Vision 4.0 123

Vision 5.0 139

Park Case Studies..... 151

4 IMPLEMENTATION

Making Improvements in Phases, with Partners 168

Recreation is a Common Element within Many Public
Projects 169

Partners..... 170

Prioritizing projects 171

Potential Funding Formulas 172

Funding Sources 175

Implementation Schedule 183

Order of Magnitude Cost..... 184

5 APPENDIX



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **1**

Purpose

The Abington Township Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space and Park (CROSP) Plan was conducted as a year-long public planning process, that began in August 2022 and was completed in July 2023.

Over those twelve months, the project technical team engaged with residents in multiple opportunities to assess the conditions of existing open space and recreation facilities within Abington Township, and to explore alternatives for new facility developments; recreational trail options; and recreation programming to best meet future community needs and anticipated growth over the next 20-25 years.

In Abington Township, like communities across the nation, public demands on parks and trails expanded greatly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as people sought to escape quarantine confinement to outdoor recreation and open spaces to make connections with nature and to help reduce mental stress.

The COVID pandemic experience confirmed what many sources have documented, that access to nearby open space helps communities in many ways to: improve personal physical wellness and promote healthy lifestyles; reduce time off from work due to health reasons: and help lower health care costs for individuals.

Open space and recreation resources also provide a variety of social benefits, including: promoting a sense of community through events and activities. A well-developed and maintained system of recreation and open space infrastructure is considered a high value asset when families decide in which community to live and purchase a home.

Parks often symbolize the identity of a community, where residents of all ages share these cherished public spaces. The enthusiastic public participation by Abington Township residents during the planning process to produce the Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space and Park Plan confirmed the importance of the community’s legacy park system and continuing municipal stewardship – with carefully developed and articulated strategic recommendations for a full range of future improvements to facilities, programs, and maintenance.

The final CROSP plan will serve as a companion document, and may be adopted as an element of the Abington Township Comprehensive Plan, which is currently being updated through a separate planning process.

This CROSP plan was funded by Abington Township and prepared according to PA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCNR) guidelines, including the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Purpose, Goals, and Objectives
- Public Participation
- Background Information
- Agency Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives
- Agency Administration
- Agency Personnel
- Facilities and Open Space Inventory and Analysis
- Facilities and Equipment Maintenance
- Recreation Programs and Services
- Financing
- Recommendations and Cost Estimates

Vision, Goals, Objectives

Vision2035 – the Abington Township Comprehensive Plan Update

The process of updating the Abington Township Comprehensive Plan, Vision2035, was conducted concurrently with the CROSP plan development.

The Vision2035 plan describes the future envisioned by residents for all aspects of Abington Township – which may be briefly characterized by a smart mix of desirable residential areas, businesses, services, and vibrant destinations that all contribute to the goal of a thriving and equitable community supported by healthy people and sustainable environments.

Vision2035 is anticipated for Township adoption in 2023 and will replace the 2007 Abington Township Comprehensive Plan.

The CROSP Plan 2023

The Abington Township CROSP replaces the 2006 Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan, and my be adopted by Abington Township as an element of its Vision2035 Plan.

Vision

The vision statement for the CROSP was developed by the community to express its goals:

Enhance the quality, connectivity, and accessibility of the Township’s abundant recreational and open space facilities and resources to meet current and future demands for infrastructure and programming and to benefit the health and welfare of the entire community.



Goals and Objectives

VISION 1

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

VISION 2

Steward Park Resources

Goal Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

VISION 3

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

VISION 4

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming.

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all abilities, genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all abilities, genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

VISION 5

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park Recreation and Open Space System

Goal Identify sustainable management, maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

Township Profile

Population

The earliest known settlers in the region date back to 1681, who built along Susquehanna Road. In 1702, the area became known as Abington Township and would grow steadily from the estimated 22 landowners in 1696 to 881 people by 1790, then 3,803 people by 1900, and 58,502 people by 2020. This explosive growth was fed by several trends, including industrial production and manufacturing along transportation routes that all supported the development of Philadelphia. The onset of suburbanization trends of the mid-20th century proved to be the most influential in stimulating Abington’s growth, as population roughly tripled between 1930 and 1980, before falling and plateauing at approximately 56,000 people. This population level held steady until 2020, when the Township experienced its first jump in 10-year population measurements to its current level.

Community character / representation

Abington is a community of neighborhoods, consisting of 15 wards delineated around neighborhood identities and mail service. Each ward elects a representative to the Township’s governing body, the Board of Commissioners, and they elect a President of the Board.

Willow Grove Park history reflects the rich recreation heritage of Abington Township. Photo Credit: 12th Annual Excursion to Willow Grove, by Royersford M.E. Sunday School, 8, 21, 1909



INVENTORY & ANALYSIS 2



Data Collection, Methodology, Site Reconnaissance

The consultants performed an initial field reconnaissance in fall of 2022 to inventory and document existing conditions of parks, additional follow up visits were made in the winter and spring of 2023. Site photographs and field observations gathered during site visits were valuable throughout the project process.

Elements for this plan were compiled using the best available information. This includes Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping from sources: Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA); and site reconnaissance notes and images.

Public Participation

Public Meetings

Public Meeting #1: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – Plan Overview and Brainstorming

The consultants began the meeting by introducing the project team, relevant experiences, and explaining the importance of the planning process for recreation and especially for open space conservation. The team reviewed the project scope and schedule before presenting an overview of existing data and a virtual “tour” of the Township inventory of existing recreation and open space resources. During the public brainstorming session, residents were invited to share their ideas and desires regarding parks, recreation and open space. These ideas were compiled as “goals, facts, concepts, and partners.” The consultants announced that the public opinion survey and online GIS mapping tool were open for public participation and invited residents to respond. The meeting was opened to general discussion and ended with a review of project next steps.

Public Meeting #2: Thursday, January 26, 2023 – Initial Concepts/Recommendations

The consultants summarized the first meeting and reviewed initial responses to the public opinion survey, as well as a checklist of Focus Groups and Key Person interviews for the project. A review of the draft Goals & Objectives of the plan was presented before presenting progress on analytical base mapping. A current park system facility inventory with consultant recommendations for system-wide improvements, general municipal parks, and specific municipal parks was presented. A Q&A session was convened and concerned Residents were prepared with insightful and informed comments and questions which resulted in a highly productive discussion between the consultants, residents, and Township representatives.

Public Meeting #3: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 – Draft Plan

The consultant team presented a review of recommendations and the Draft Plan, by describing opportunities and suggested recommendations with examples of how / where recreation and open space improvements might be implemented within Abington Township. Opportunities for funding strategies were discussed before opening the floor for a productive public Q&A session.

Key Person Interviews

A total of 6 Key Person Interviews were conducted with organizations and individuals who have knowledge, experience, and specific interests in advancing various aspects of Recreation and Open space services in Abington Township. These focused interviews are an important component of the public participation process for the project and provided specialized information about local needs in a community context. Notes from Key Person Interviews are included in the Appendix.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are another important dimension of the public participation process for this Abington community project and were designed with the Township and conducted by the consultant team to gather information from representatives of specific demographic groups. Focus groups included: Ecology, Young Families, Sports Organizations, Seniors, and Teens. Results from Focus Group sessions are included in the Appendix.

Online Survey

An online survey was crafted by the consultants with the project committee and was made “live” for public participation as an alternative venue for residents to contribute ideas toward the new plan between October 19, 2022 and March 31, 2023. Tallied results are summarized in this report.

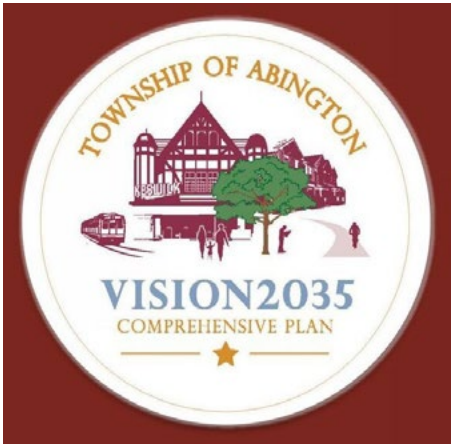
Online GIS Base Mapping

Residents were also invited to share feedback and ideas through an interactive web map, where people can highlight preferences and desired changes in geographical areas of concern.

Summary of Existing Planning Documents

Vision2035, Abington Township Comprehensive Plan Update – Draft2019

The full draft plan has not been issued for public review to date. As part of the planning process the consultant team conducted a key person interview with the County Planning Department to understand the plan priorities and how they may inform the Recreation, Open Space, and Park Plan. Key take aways included a focus on stewardship of natural spaces, the recommendation of adopting an official map, and the public desire for multi-modal connections to parks. This report may be incorporated as Chapter 10 (Parks and Open Space) into the Comprehensive Plan Update



Vision 2035 Logo



MontCo 2040 Logo

MontCo 2040: A Shared Vision

<http://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/7719>

The most recent revision of MontCo 2040 was adopted in July 2021 (the previous plan was adopted in January of 2015) and contains many goals, objectives, and recommendations that are relevant to this Abington Open Space Plan. MontCo 2040 is separated into 3 distinct themes, Connected Communities, Sustainable Places, and Vibrant Economy. Goals and objectives related to open space and recreation in Abington Township are focused in the first two themes and summarized below.



Montco 2040: A Shared Vision is designed around three interrelated themes.

Theme - Connected Communities

Goal: Expand and connect county trails, local trails, greenways, natural areas, and parks

Implemented by:

- Expanding the county trail system
- Working to connect local trails to the county system
- Increasing county parkland in greenway corridors and advocacy with others to preserve greenways

Theme– Sustainable Places

Goal: Conserve natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, and farmland

Implemented by:

- Permanently protecting natural resources, open space, and rural areas
- Adding environmentally sensitive land to parkland while improving county parks
- Preserving farmland

Goal: Provide more opportunities for residents to exercise and have healthy lifestyles

Implemented by:

- Expanding opportunities to exercise in county parks
- Advocating to make communities more walkable while coordinating recreation planning efforts
- Working with others to increase the supply of fresh local food

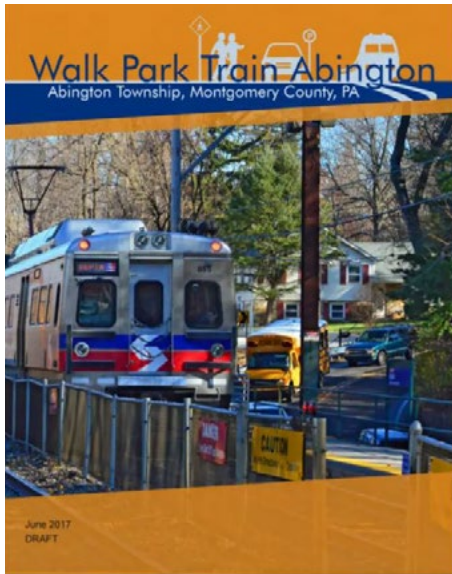
Walk Park Train Abington 2017

<https://www.abingtonpa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/6238/636325106380970000>

Walk Park Train Abington was adopted in 2017, with the vision of maximizing the capacity, quality and efficacy of Abington’s transportation infrastructure. The plan goals include: reducing traffic congestion; increasing energy savings; and promoting smart and sustainable growth to enhance quality-of-life for Township residents.

One of the 2017 objectives relevant to the Abington Open Space Plan is to plan for enhanced pedestrian mobility Township-wide by:

- Closing pedestrian gaps, recommending site-specific safety improvements,
- Emphasizing enhanced pedestrian connections to 7 SEPTA stations, 15 parks and open spaces, 16 schools, and several major and minor commercial areas, and
- Incorporating recommendations for stormwater BMPs.



The Walk Park Train study was conducted in 2017

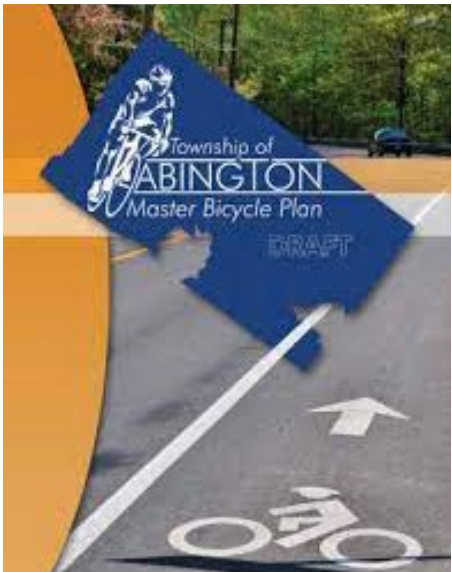
Abington Master Bicycle Plan 2016

<https://www.abingtonpa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/2244/637002479658070000>

The Abington Master Bicycle Plan was adopted by the Township in 2016 and includes information relevant to this Open Space Plan. The 2016 plan states, “As an effort to enhance its bicycle network and plan for future transportation needs, Abington Township commissioned this study to develop a comprehensive, township-wide network of bicycle routes and trails that link individual neighborhoods and various destinations in and around the Township.

Relevant goals include:

- Link neighborhoods and important destinations within the Township
- Provide linkages to trails and destinations in adjacent municipalities
- Link Abington to the regional trail network
- Provide additional recreational opportunities



The Abington Master Bicycle Plan study was conducted in 2016



Abington Master Bicycle Plan

Zoning and SALDO Ordinances

What is Zoning & SALDO?

Zoning ordinances are laws that regulate land uses by determining which uses are permitted in specific locations, with associated requirements and limits, such as: size, height, impermeable coverage, setbacks/ buffers, building density, intensity of land uses, and protection of natural and historic resources.

A Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) determines municipal design standards, procedures, or other requirements that all developments within the Township must adhere to.

Abington Township adopted a revised zoning ordinance in 2017 that was prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission to facilitate municipal planning efforts and their implementation. The following sections of the Abington Township zoning and SALDO ordinances are related to land uses for parks, recreation, open space, and natural resource protection.

Relevant Zoning Regulations

Article XIII: (RC) Recreation Conservation District

§ 1300. INTENT: A.) Protect the Township’s natural resources, such as prime agricultural soils; stream valleys; floodplains; steep slopes; woodlands; and scenic open sites. B.) Encourage, for ecological purposes, environmental conservation; flood water management; ground water recharge; recreation; and other open space conservation purposes. C.) Facilitate the implementation of the Township’s Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Protection Plan (2006), or as amended.

§ 1301. USES SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED: In addition to uses prohibited in the Use Matrix , the following uses are also specifically prohibited: Accessory uses involving business operations, except as permitted herein.

§ 1303. SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS: It is recommended that all uses and building designs be context-sensitive, and compatible with the natural character of the area and the conservation intent of the district.

Article XIV: Floodplain Conservation District

§ 1401. INTENT: The intent of this Ordinance is to protect areas of the floodplain necessary to contain floodwaters, to permit only those uses in the floodplain that are compatible with preserving existing conditions and stream flow, to promote the general health, welfare, and safety of the community by preventing development in areas prone to flooding, and to comply with federal and state floodplain management requirements.



High school cross country trail through woods next to Baederwood Park.



Deal Memorial Park was acquired to protect the Sandy Creek floodplain

§ 1402. APPLICABILITY: The Floodplain Conservation District is defined and established as a district applicable to those areas of the Township subject to inundation by the waters of the one-hundred-year flood as delineated on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania as prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, dated March 2, 2016.

The Floodplain Conservation District shall be deemed an overlay on any zoning district now or hereafter applicable to any lot.

Article XV: Riparian Corridor Conservation District

§ 1501. DEFINITIONS: An overlay district consisting of areas surrounding identified waterways that intercept surface water runoff, wastewater, subsurface flow and/or deep groundwater flows from upland sources and function to remove or buffer the effects of associated nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides or other pollutants prior to entry into surface waters. This area may also provide wildlife habitat, control water temperatures, attenuate flood flow and provide opportunities for passive recreation.

§ 1502. ESTABLISHMENT AND WIDTH DETERMINATION: The following watercourses or waterbodies and their tributaries shall be considered an identified waterway in Abington Township: Pennypack Creek, Sandy Run, Tookany Creek, Baederwood Creek, Jenkintown Creek, Meadow Brook, Robinhood Brook, etc. as identified in Figure 15.2 Approximate Location of Riparian Corridor Conservation District of Abington Township

The Riparian Corridor Conservation District shall extend a minimum of 75 feet from the defined edge of an identified waterway at bankfull flow, or shall equal the extent of the one-hundred-year floodplain, whichever is greater.

Article XVI: Steep Slope Conservation District

§ 1600. INTENT: The purpose of this ordinance is to reduce sedimentation, degradation of water quality, and other damage to streams and wetlands that result from construction, erosion, and stormwater runoff on steep slopes; and to preserve the natural topography, drainage patterns, vegetative cover, wildlife habitats, and scenic views of steeply sloping areas.

§ 1601. DELINEATION: The Steep Slope Conservation District consists of two specially designated steep slope areas defined below. Steep Slope Conservation District calculations are to be based on a site survey by a registered surveyor, on topographic information plotted from a verified aerial survey, or an analysis of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps where the calculated slope category (i.e., prohibitive or precautionary slope, as defined below) exists for an area which spans five contiguous 10-foot contour intervals. The two specially designated steep slope areas are defined as follows: A.) Precautionary Slope: those slopes greater than 15% and less than or equal to 25%, measured over a ten-foot run. B.) Prohibitive Slope: those slopes greater than 25%, measured over a ten-foot run.



Woodlawn stream corridor in Coates Preserve



The eastern part of the Township has the majority of steep slopes such as the rock outcrop in Lorimer Park. Photo Credit: Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Center

Article XVII: Land Preservation District Overlay

§ 1701. QUALIFYING PARCELS: The Land Preservation District shall apply to all tracts with a gross site area of 15 acres or more within the R1 Low-Density Residential District. For tracts of at least ten, but less than fifteen acres within the R1 Low-Density Residential District, the implementation of the Land Preservation District shall be at the option of the developer and/or land owner, subject to conditional use approval by Board of Commissioners and such that the following criteria are met.

Land parcels shall exhibit certain physical features such that standard R1 Low-Density Residential District development would adversely affect these features and that the implementation of this ordinance on the subject land parcel would protect and preserve these features. The physical features to be considered are as follows: Topography; Woodland Areas; Waterways; Wetlands; Natural buffers to neighboring residential parcels.

In addition to the standards pertaining to conditional use approval set forth in this Section and elsewhere in the Ordinance, development of a qualifying parcel pursuant to this Section shall be subject to the following requirements:

- 1. Restricted land areas, primarily woodland areas* within the defined buffer areas shall be permanently preserved on the parcel.
- 2. The applicant is required to submit a development plan for review and comment, as per the standards defined for with Article III: R1 Low-Density Residential District, Dimensional Requirements Table. A portion of the site, the area of which shall be calculated in accordance with Section 1703. Land Preservation Calculation shall be permanently set aside as Open Space and be deed restricted as such. The standard set forth in Section 1806 Conditional Uses must be met.

Relevant SALDO Regulations

Article VI Design Standards

§ 146-27. Sidewalks and curbs. Where required. Sidewalks shall be provided along all streets except where, in the opinion of the Board of Commissioners, they are unnecessary for the public safety and convenience.

§ 146-31. Reserve strips; rights-of-way; easements. 2.) No trees, shrubs, fences, signs, structures of any type or any other obstruction shall be placed, planted, set or put within the area of an easement. The area shall be kept as lawn.



▲ One of the goals of the Land Preservation District is to preserve forest canopy. Photo of mature Canopy and Briar Bush nature Center

§ 146-39. Landscaping. Trees, shrubs and other plantings are required as per the provisions of Article VI of this chapter and of the Zoning Code whenever land is subdivided/developed.

- A. Shade Trees. Shade trees are to be provided along all streets whenever improvements are to be constructed in a subdivision/land development as set forth in Article V of this chapter. The subdivider/land developer shall endeavor to preserve existing shade trees in the development of the property. Shade trees shall be provided by the subdivider/land developer and planted approximately five feet inside the lot lines paralleling the right-of-way line. The trees shall be placed to provide an approximate average spacing of one tree per 50 feet or planted in an alternate arrangement consistent with township policy encouraging the use of shade trees in subdivision/land development. The trees shall be nursery stock compatible with the soils, existing trees and climatic conditions in the subdivision. They shall be symmetrical in growth, free of insects and disease and suitable for street planting. The trees shall have a minimum trunk diameter of two inches measured 12 inches above the ground level. The trees shall be planted, staked and maintained in accordance with acceptable nursery practices.
- B. General Landscaping. Additional landscaping and planting shall be required on each building site or lot. The landscaping requirement shall be based upon land use.

§ 146-40. Recreational areas and community assets. Wherever practicable, provision shall be made by the subdivider/land developer for suitable open space for parks, playgrounds and recreational areas. In commercial areas, provision shall be made for suitable open space for walkways connecting parking facilities with commercial structures, malls, sitting areas, etc. Due consideration shall be given to the preservation of natural features, including large trees, groves, waterways, scenic points, historical spots and other community assets. Subdividers/land developers shall provide land or public space for open space, parks and active or passive recreation areas as required by this section and the Zoning Code37 in accordance with the following standards: [p.64-65 § 146-40).

§ 146-45. Preservation of natural or historic features. Where the applicant is offering for dedication or is required by this chapter to establish a reservation of open space or to preserve an area of scenic or historic importance, a limit of contract, which will confine excavation, earthmoving procedures and other changes to the landscape, will be required to ensure preservation and prevent destruction of the character of the area in open space.



▲ Sidewalk and tree plantings are critical infrastructure to creating inviting communities. Photo of recent development improvements on the parcel adjacent to Hollowell Park.

Additional Regulations

Article III: Stormwater Management

§ 401. General Requirements.

- A. For any of the activities regulated by this Ordinance, unless preparation of a Stormwater Management (SWM) Site Plan is specifically exempted, the preliminary or final approval of subdivision and/or land development plans, the issuance of any building or occupancy permit, the commencement of any earth disturbance activity may not proceed until the Property Owner or Applicant or his/her agent has received written approval from the Municipality of a SWM Site Plan that demonstrates compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance, and a written approval of an adequate Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Plan from the Municipality or County Conservation District when required.
- B. For all regulated earth disturbance activities, E&S control Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be designed, implemented, operated and maintained during the Regulated Earth Disturbance activities (e.g., during construction) to meet the purposes and requirements of this Ordinance and to meet all requirements under Title 25 of the Pennsylvania Code and the Clean Streams Law. DEP regulations require an erosion and sediment control plan for any earth disturbance activity of five thousand (5,000) square feet or more, under 25 Pennsylvania Code§ 102.4(b). In addition, under 25 Pennsylvania Code Chapter 92, a DEP “NPDES Construction Activities” Permit is required for regulated eat1h disturbance activities. A copy of the erosion and sediment control plan and any required permit, as required by DEP regulations, shall be available on the project site at all times. Various BMPs and their design standards are listed in the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program Manual (E&S Manual), No. 363-2134-008 (April 15, 2000), as amended and updated. However, the municipality may require E&S controls for projects with lesser areas of earth disturbance.



A vegetative swale treats stormwater in Roychester Park before flowing into the Sandy Run.

- C. All Regulated Activities shall include such measures as necessary to:
 - 1. Protect health, safety and property;
 - 2. Meet the water quality goals of this Ordinance by implementing measures to:
 - a. Minimize disturbance to floodplains, wetlands, and wooded areas.
 - a. Maintain or extend riparian buffers.
 - a. Avoid erosive flow conditions in natural flow pathways.
 - a. Minimize thermal impacts to waters of this Commonwealth.
 - a. Disconnect impervious surfaces by directing runoff to pervious areas, wherever possible.
 - 3. To the maximum extent practicable, incorporate the techniques for Low Impact Development Practices described in the Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual (BMP Manual).



A rain garden area at Alverthorpe Park helps infiltrate storm water.

Prior Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan 2006 Plan Review

<https://www.abingtonpa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/17179/637822605122470000>

The original Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan was adopted in 1995, to guide future Township decisions on developing parks and preserving open space. In 2003, Montgomery County voters approved a \$150 million bond to continue preserving open space called the Green Fields / Green Towns Program, which made grants available for open space preservation, streetscape improvements, and floodplain restoration, among other activities to those municipalities that updated their open space plans. In 2006, Abington Township adopted its updated Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan to satisfy this requirement.

This plan served the Township for over 15 years, as evolving conditions and demands highlighted the need to eventually update it. This most recent plan update uses relevant information from the 2006 Plan including: a description of existing protected lands and other aspects of the Township parks, recreation and open space system; an assessment of park, recreation and open space needs; and goals and objectives that underscore recommendations and implementation strategy. 2006 Goals and Objective included:

Goal 1: Preserve more open space and natural features

Obj 1.1: Identify candidate sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available

Obj 1.2: Strengthen protection of natural features vulnerable to development

Goal 2: Improve the Township park system

Obj 2.1: Develop selected additional recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to help meet active and other recreation needs

Obj 2.2: Continue addressing needs for new park sites at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels

Goal 3: Develop new trail links

Obj 3.1: Develop a trail system over time that will link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations

Obj 3.2: Identify trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the trail system expands in the future



▲
Rock outcrop in Coates Preserve. The Preserve was acquired based on 2006 plan recommendations.

Goal 4: Continue the green infrastructure improvements

Obj 4.1: Renovate older green infrastructure improvements as needed

Obj 4.2: Extend green infrastructure improvements to community gateways and other locations

Goal 5: Create new recreation program opportunities

Obj 5.1: Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of both genders and all ages

Obj 5.2: Identify additional public and private partners to help plan and provide additional recreation programs

Goal 6: Sustain Abington’s position as a leader in managing, maintaining, funding, and publicizing its park and recreation resources

Obj 6.1: Ensure municipal capital and operating budget allocations remain adequate to meet growing needs

Obj 6.2: Continue looking for additional ways to publicize and promote the Township’s park, recreation and open space services

Following below, is a highlight of key plan recommendation and their status.

The plan had identified a number of parcels for acquisition / conservation easement below is a summary of the status of those acquisitions:

1. Rydal Green HAD Lands (portion) – Not Acquired
2. SPS Technology Fields – Not Acquired / under long term lease
3. Coates Property – Acquired
4. Jackson Property- Acquired
5. Memorial Field -Not acquired / Penn State Abington has developed facilities on site.

The following recommendations were made regarding park facilities:

1. Prepare a park master plan for the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site. – complete
2. Finish surveying park boundaries to help prevent encroachment. – not completed
3. Periodically pursue acquisition of the Ardsley Community Center – still under lease
4. Ensure all Township parks and open spaces have adequate signs – on going task
5. Dedicate part of the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary property for Briar Bush Nature Center – not pursued
6. Construct shade structures at the Township’s summer camp locations and other parks – not pursued.



▲
Meadow at Jackson Park. The Park was acquired based on 2006 plan recommendations.

- 7. Continue investigating the feasibility of replacing wading pools with splash structures – not pursued.
- 8. Improve Tyson Green to create a small pocket park. – not pursued

The following recommendations were made regarding trail development:

- 1. Finalize and implement the Crestmont Trail –completed
- 2. Work with residents to plan and construct the Fairway Trail and the Fox Chase Trail extension – various plans have address this idea.
- 3. Continue to build trails within selected Township Parks – on going.

Inventory

An inventory of parks, recreation, and open space resources within and adjacent to Abington Township was enhanced to update this Plan. Monitoring this inventory during the life of the plan enables Township environmental stewardship and the administration of recreation services to sustain ecological resiliency and adapt to changing quality of life conditions within Abington public places.

This section provides an overview of Abington Township geology & soils; topography & steep slopes; watersheds & hydrology; woodlands & greenways; and civic land uses.

Geology & Soils

The geology and soils in Abington Township are representative of its location within the Piedmont physiographic province, a part of the greater Appalachian region which is categorized in several distinct divisions. Two of those divisions are found in Abington Township – the Piedmont Uplands and the Piedmont Lowlands. The Uplands are characterized primarily by various metamorphic rocks, including Flesic and Mafic gneiss; Chickies quartzite; and Wissahickon schist. The Lowlands are represented by the Chester Valley, which is a narrow “trench” of limestone and dolomite. In addition to carbonate geology, the Chester Valley includes small circular pockets of unconsolidated sand and clay.

Soils in areas of concentrated populations are largely comprised of “man-made” soils, which is soil that has been permanently changed by heavy development and its associated impervious surfaces. Prime agricultural soils classes I through IV are commonly found natural soils in Abington Township, with hydric soils found along many streams and tributaries, especially along Meadow Brook.

Topography & Steep Slopes

The topography of Abington is characterized by the low, rolling foothills that define the transitional piedmont region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic coastal plain. The highest point in Abington can be found at the crest of Edge Hill, which rises 465 feet above sea level.

Steep slopes are found primarily along the banks of the larger waterways, most notably Pennypack Creek, along Edge Hill, and in smaller concentrations throughout the Township. An average slope of 3 to 4% runs southeast through the Township with steeper slopes ranging from 8 to 15+% along the ridge lines.

Watersheds

Abington hydrology is unique in that the headwaters of three important watersheds meet within Township boundaries: the Wissahickon; the Pennypack; and the Tookany-Tacony Frankford (TTF) – tributaries to the Delaware River Basin. The Pennypack and the TTF drain directly into the Delaware River, while the Wissahickon creek drains into the Schuylkill River, which flows into the Delaware.

The geology, soils and topography are distinctly different between the Wissahickon watershed (mostly located west of Route 611) and the Pennypack and TTF watersheds (primarily located east of Route 611). The relatively flatter landforms and soils in the upper Wissahickon around Sandy Run, gave rise to earlier, more dense and more traditional configurations of neighborhood developments. The later, more dispersed and suburban developments in the Pennypack and TTF watersheds have generally less sidewalks, less local recreation, and relate more to the natural stream valleys of those creeks.

Water Quality

The health in the three headwater ecologies within Abington is critical to water quality for every other mile downstream in the three major tributaries. Notable creeks inside the Township include Tookany Creek, Pennypack Creek, Jenkintown Creek, Sandy Run, and Meadow Brook. Nearly all stream segments in Abington are classified as “impaired” due to being prone to flooding; sediment accumulation; and erosion – primarily caused by land development externalities, even at the tops of the watersheds.

Large areas of impervious surfaces from earlier land development disrupt the capability of soils to infiltrate stormwater, while also degrading water quality with runoff saturated with lawn and roadway chemicals. Primary causes for impairment of the Pennypack are stormwater runoff and erosion from variations in water flows which affect both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The TTF watershed suffers from a predominance of soils with low infiltration rates and increasing levels of surrounding impermeable surfaces as water flows downstream.



To address deteriorating health of its waterways, the Township has complied with the federal Clean Water Act to develop Pollution Reduction Plans for its waterways that are not regulated by Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) measures. The waterway in Abington currently under such regulation is the Wissahickon Creek and its tributary, Sandy Run. This TMDL was developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and measures the presence of sediment, nutrients, and phosphorus.

Wetlands & Floodplains

Abington Township contains both forested wetlands and grass wetlands, both of which are important for groundwater discharge, pollutant filtration, and stormwater management, in addition to providing valuable wildlife habitat. Wetlands are commonly found along Meadowbrook heading toward Lower Moreland, the largest of which is the Bethayres Swamp. There are also smaller, isolated wetlands dispersed throughout the Township, such as the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary.

While Abington has limited development in and around floodplain areas to prevent risks associated with flooding, there are still 76 buildings within the 100-year floodplain. There are several floodplains in the Township and some pose larger risks than others. The largest floodplain, found along Meadowbrook and Pennypack Creek, is also the most preserved, as it contains the Karebrook Nature Area, the Boy Scout Game Preserve, and Lorimer Park. The other major floodplains along Sandy Run and Tookany Creek pose a much higher risk, as both contain many residential properties.

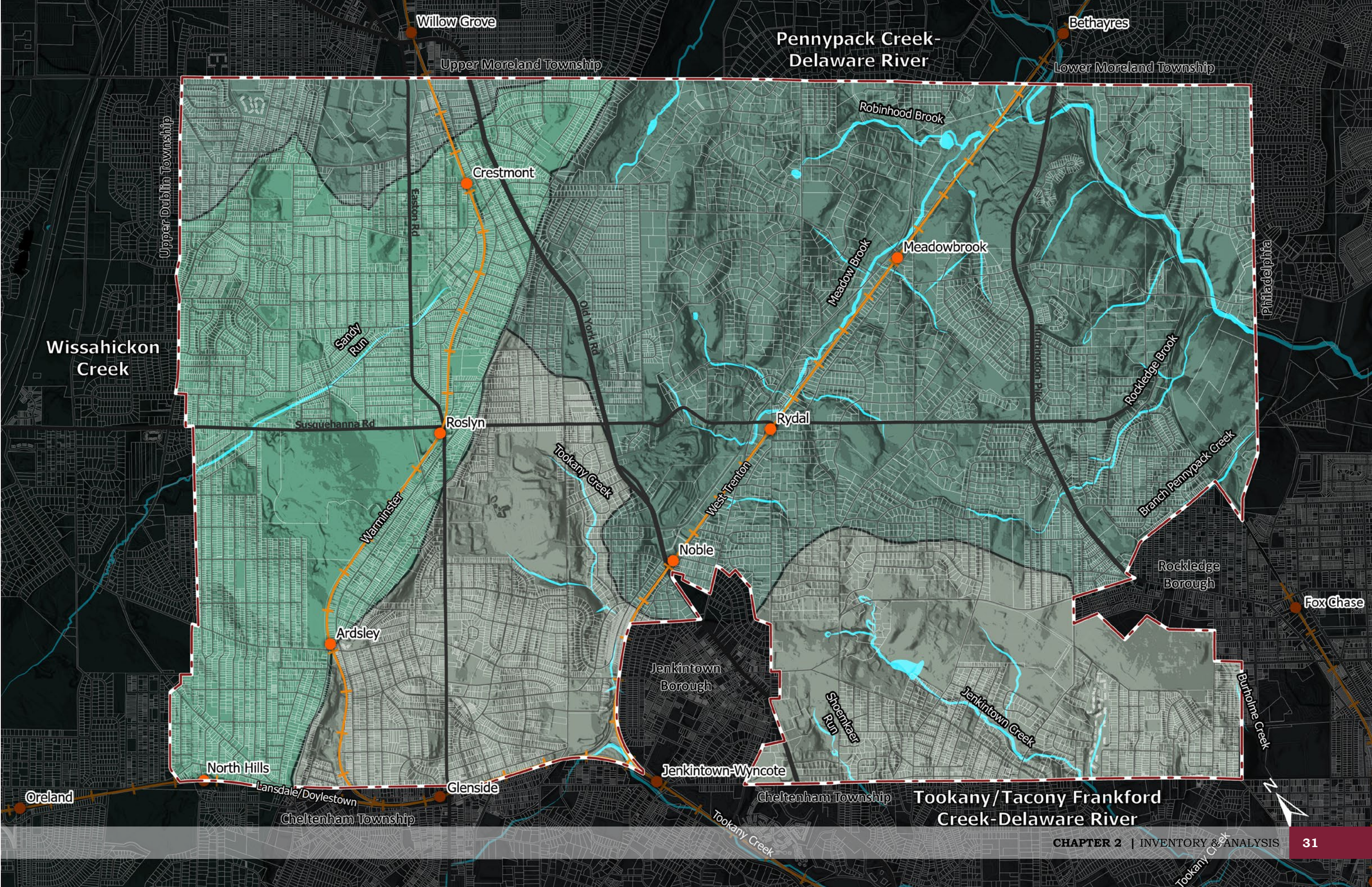
Woodlands & Greenways

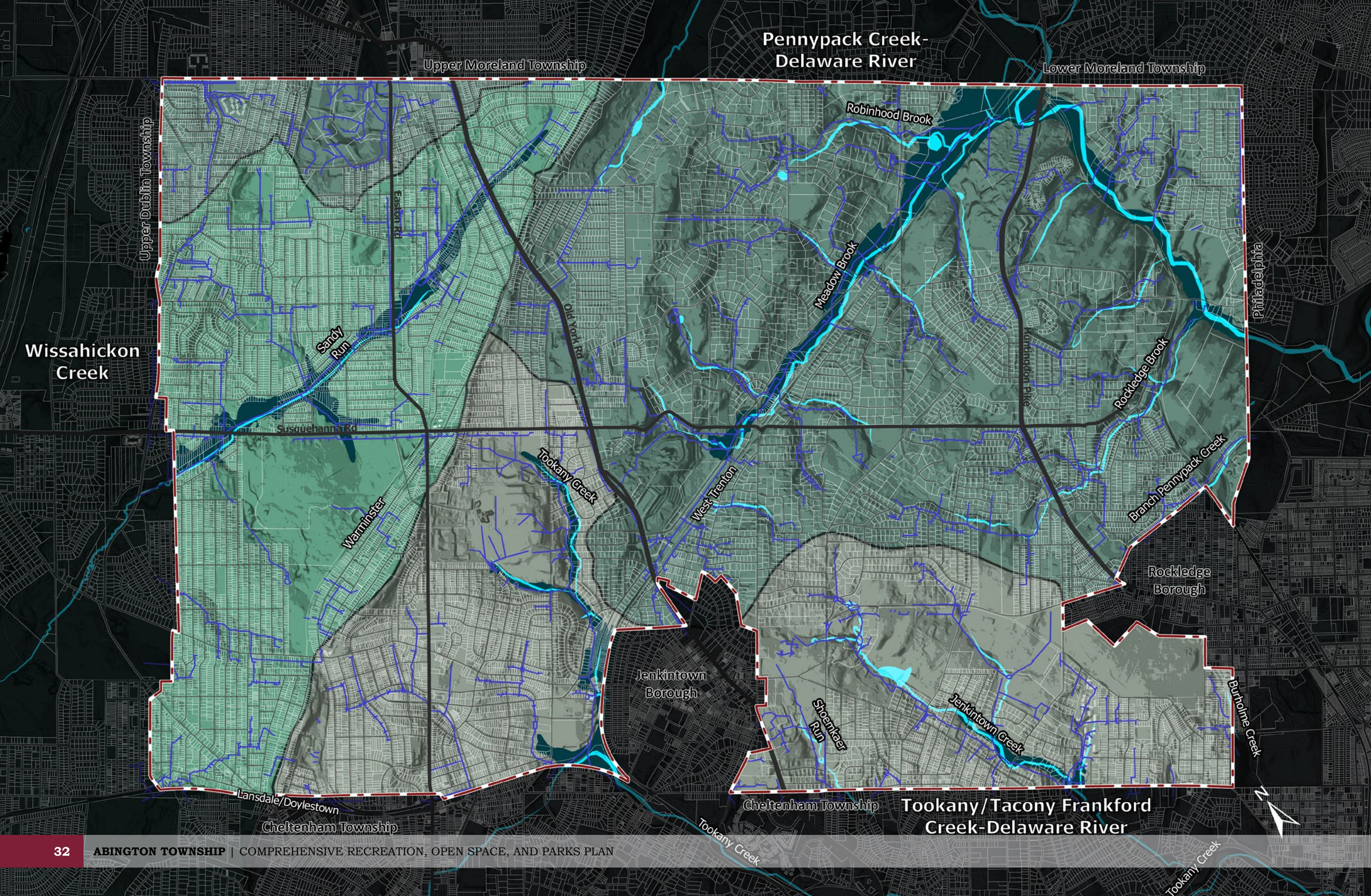
Existing canopy forest within Abington is dramatically lower than when the Township was founded, and reductions of forested areas on public and private lands are increasing due to multiple factors, including: climatic, ecological, maturity of habitat systems, and human land use practices.

Remaining woodlands of value are concentrated in several areas including: around Lorimer Park and Pennypack Creek; Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary; and Alverthorpe Park. Native forest associations include oak, hickory, elm, ash, red maple, and sycamore. Two areas are the focus of recent woodland restoration and regeneration efforts by the Township, in addition to the Boy Scout Game Preserve.

As indicated in Vision2035, an Abington Township Master Tree Plan is the draft stage (as of spring 2023) and is expected to measure and analyze tree canopy changes to determine recommendations that will protect and enhance the present and future state of the Township’s urban forest.

Abington Township Watershed Map





Abington residents can enjoy close proximity to these larger woodlands via regional trails that pass through them, including the Sandy Run Greenway and the Pennypack Trail.

Land Uses

Distribution of various land uses in Abington is representative of its suburban nature, including 63% of its land zoned for residential uses, with only 6% of that subtotal not dedicated to Single-Family Detached housing. As of 2020, 2% of Abington land was “undeveloped,” indicating that the Township is considered fully developed or “built out.” Over time, Abington Township has allocated 8.4% of its land area to public open space uses and 4% to private open space uses, which provides a robust open space network for its residents, and includes municipal parks, recreation areas, and nature preserves – of which Alverthorpe Park and Lorimer Park are notable. Although located just outside the Township boundaries, Abington residents enjoy access to the Pennypack Park / trail system.

Significant Historic and Cultural Resources

Abington Township is home to a rich tapestry of historic and cultural resources based on 300+ year European settlement history, and much older heritage when native American history is acknowledged. Three historic resources are listed on the National Register of Historic Places including: Old Abington Township High School; Fox Chase Farm; and Keswick Theatre.

Currently four other sites are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, including: Abington Branch of the YMCA; Alverthorpe Manor; Friends Orthodox Meetinghouse; and Hollywood Historic District.

Although currently considered ineligible for National Register inclusion, many other historically and culturally significant sites are located within Abington Township, ranging from school buildings and churches to rail stations and farms to historic battlefields. Some of these may qualify for the Pennsylvania Historic Register.

Abington Township Floodplain and Wetlands Map

Parks and Recreation Inventory and Analysis

Recreation, Open Space & Park Lands

Abington’s System of recreation, open space and park lands are comprised of a variety of land types including Publicly Owned Facilities, Privately Owned Facilities, and Institutionally Owned Facilities.

Publicly-owned open space and recreation facilities include various types of municipal, county and state parks, as well as open spaces in multiple shapes, sizes and functions. County and Township recreation, open space and park lands in Abington Township are all classified as permanently protected to preserve their ecological and recreational value. In all there are 611 acres of Publicly Owned park facilities in Abington Township. The only County-owned recreation property in Abington is the 277-acre Lorimer Park, which provides residents with easy access to natural features and over six miles of trails.

Privately-owned open space and recreation facilities include communities with established homeowner associations, or other privately-owned land classified as “open space.” Institutionally Owned Facilities include public and private school open spaces, and large organizations such as Abington Memorial Hospital. HOA lands are classified as permanently protected to preserve their ecological and recreational value. Five Home-Owners Associations (HOAs) maintain a total of 131.6 acres of private open space land including: Rydal Green (37.8 acres); Walnut Hill (33.8 acres); Tall Trees (33.5 acres); Village of Valley Glen (15 acres); and Rydal Waters (11.5 acres). Non HOA privately-owned open space properties are more likely to be considered for redevelopment than those that enjoy permanent municipal protection, they are classified as temporarily protected and include uses such as country clubs, churches, cemeteries, hospitals or school grounds, among others.

Abington Existing Park & Open Space Summary

Currently Abington operates 37 parks and open space sites. These sites fall into three categories of facilities: Neighborhood Facilities, Community Facilities, and Regional Facilities.

Neighborhood Facilities		Area served by one elementary school; with in walking distance	
	Playlot	Playground intended for pre-school age children; may be part of a larger park	Block - 1/8 mile
	Neighborhood Playground	Playground for 5-12 with other recreation opportunities; family-oriented recreation	1/4 mile
	Neighborhood Park / Open Space	Place for passive recreation for people of all ages. Often developed in conjunction with playground	1/2 mile
Community Facilities		Serves multiple neighborhoods	
	Play Field	All ages active recreation center for multiple neighborhoods	Central location
	Community Park	Serve several neighborhoods. Focused on recreation for young people and adults. Accessible by public transportation; has ample off-street parking facilities.	Central location
Regional Facilities		Serve larger section of population. Can be geared toward specific recreation needs such as golf	
	County Park	Due to size offer unique recreational opportunities serving a larger population of people; serves all age groups	Regional location

 Summary Chart of the Types of Parks.

Neighborhood Facilities

Neighborhood Facilities are comprised of Playlots, Neighborhood Playgrounds, and Neighborhood Park/Open Space. These facilities tend to be smaller in size and within walking distance of the targeted user group. The following is a list of Abington’s Neighborhood Facilities:

Evergreen Manor Park Playlot is a playlot located in the Crestmont neighborhood and is adjacent to Willow Hill School. Acquired in 1962 via condemnation, the total park is 5.62 acres in size and is largely undeveloped. The majority of the site is forested and has mown access right-of-way for sewer utilities. A Playlot is located at the corner of Phipps Ave and Osborne Ave. Playground equipment appears to have been upgraded in the past 5 years and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The two play areas are surrounded by mature shade trees and open lawn. The site has sidewalks along the road but no walkways connecting to play facilities.

Rockwell Park is a playground located in the Crestmont neighborhood and was acquired in 1962. The total park is 1.22 acres and includes a little league field and playground. Playground equipment appears to be in the 5–10-year age range and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by timber edging. The play area is surrounded by an open lawn with a few trees. The site has sidewalks along Rockwell Road but no sidewalks along Stratford Ave and no walkways connecting to play facilities.

Franklin Tot Lot is a playlot located in the Crestmont neighborhood and was acquired in 2003. The total park is 0.28 acres in size and includes a swing set and two picnic benches on an open lawn. The swings appear to have been upgraded in the past 5 years. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The play areas are surrounded by open lawn with mature shade trees. There are no sidewalks or walkways connecting to play facilities.

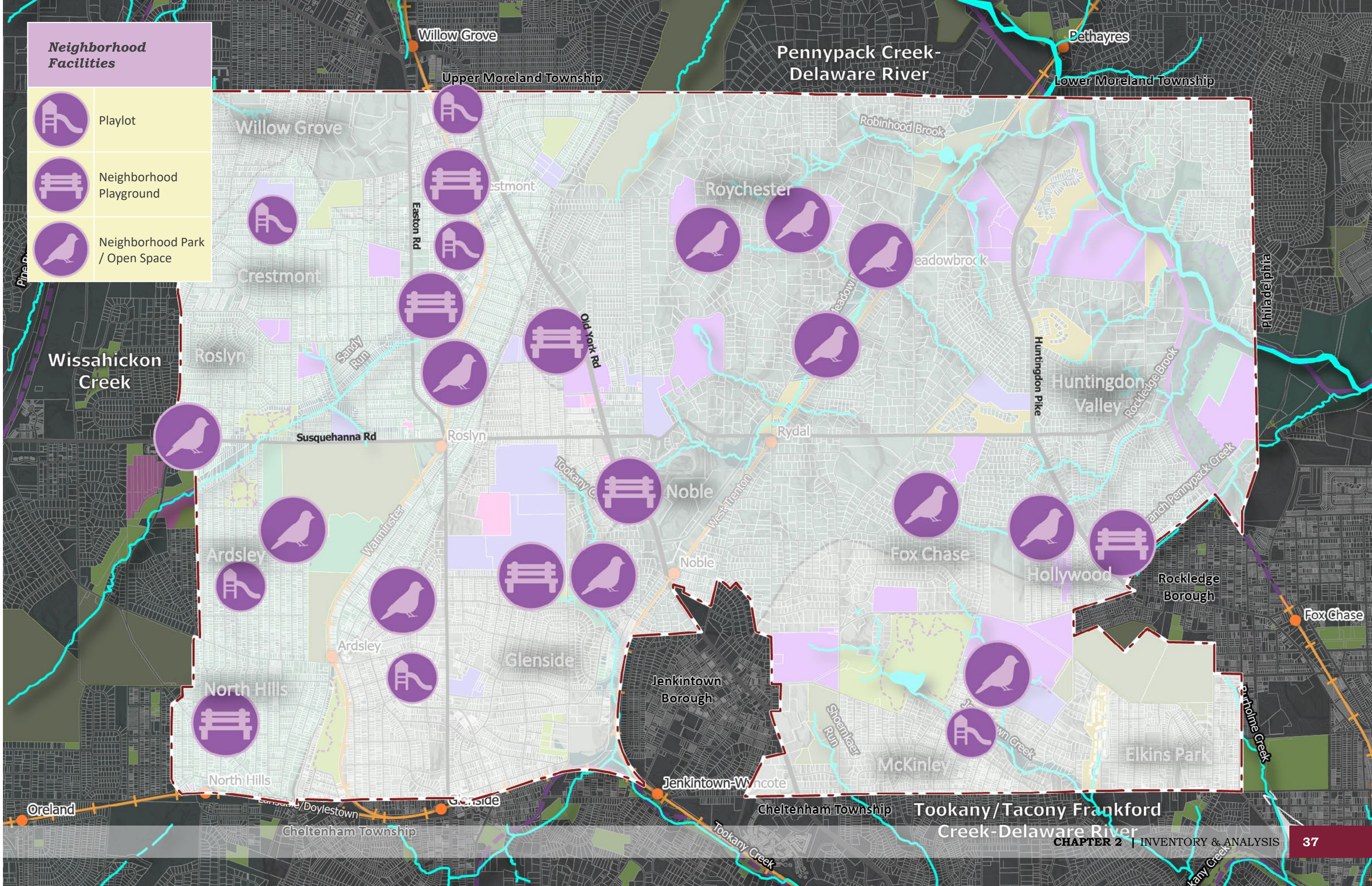
Ardasley Community Center is a playground located in the Ardsley neighborhood. The site is leased by Abington Township from Abington School District and is 3.19 acres in size. The site includes a community center building (former school building), playground, basketball court, and 2 little league fields. Playground equipment appears older in the 10-year age range and includes equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The play area is surrounded by mature shade trees and open lawn. The site has sidewalks along the road with limited walkways connecting to play facilities. The community center is home to Park and Recreation classrooms and offices as well as an independently run day care center.



Under 5 play ground at Evergreen Manor Park



Playground at Ardsley Community Center



Elk Street Tot Lot is a playlot located in the Glenside neighborhood and was acquired in 1967. The total park is 0.23 acres in size and includes a playlot. Playground equipment appears to be in the 5–10-year age range and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The three play areas are surrounded by an open lawn with a mature shade tree. The site also includes an open drainage swale. The site has no sidewalks and no walkways connecting to play facilities.



▲
Elk Street Tot Lot Play Equipment

Ethel Jordan Memorial Park is a playground located in the McKinley neighborhood and was acquired in 2000. The total park is 3.67 acres in size and includes a playground, 2 basketball courts, and a little league field. The playground was upgraded in 2023 and includes swings, and equipment for ages under 5. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The play area is surrounded by an open lawn and a significant slope separates the Cadwalader Ave area from Osceola Ave. The eastern portion of the park is forested and includes a portion of the Jenkintown Creek. Tookany-Tacony Frankford (TTF) recently restored a riparian buffer/meadow area along the forested edge. The site has sidewalks along Jenkintown Road but no sidewalks along Osceola Ave or Cadwalader Ave and no walkways connecting to play facilities.



▲
Basketball Court at Ethel Jordan Memorial Park

Rubicam Park is a neighborhood park located in the Crestmont neighborhood adjacent to the Crestmont SEPTA Regional Rail Station and was acquired in 1961. The total park is 2.3 acres in size and includes a playground, basketball court, walkways, lighting, and open lawn. Playground equipment appears to have been upgraded in the past 5 years and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. Large open lawns serve as a popular neighborhood gathering area and portions of the park have mature tree canopy. There are no sidewalk facilities along Rubican Ave, however it is a designated share full lane bike route and the park trails connect to the parking area and roadway. The Township is currently planning to improve sidewalk connections to Crestmont Rail Station along Rubican Ave.



▲
Sandy Run in Grove Park

Grove Park is a neighborhood open space located in the Roslyn neighborhood. The majority of the park was acquired in 1977 with additional parcels acquired around 2010. Sandy Creek runs through the center of the site and the open space area is a mix of open lawn and mature forest. The historic Grove House is located along the Easton Road frontage of the site and is currently not being used. Recreation facilities include a dog park and limited walking trails. Some trails connect to local streets but are older in age and deteriorating. The Army Corps are currently undertaking stream improvement projects for the section of Sandy Run within Grove Park.

Tyson Green is a neighborhood open space/pocket park located in the Abington neighborhood adjacent to Jefferson Abington Hospital. The park is 1.0 acre in size and was acquired in 1982. The park includes sitting benches and a memorial plaque set in open lawn with mature shade and ornamental trees. There is a sidewalk along Highland Ave but not Keith Rd and no walkways within the park.

Baederwood Park is a neighborhood park located in the Abington neighborhood adjacent to Abington High School. Acquired in 1929, the 24.4 acres park is the oldest Township Park. The park is home to the headwaters of Tookany Creek and is dominated by mature forest canopy with some open lawn areas. Facilities include playground for ages 5 and under, gazebo, ice skating rink, dirt trails, picnic tables and grills, and parking. Playground equipment appears 5 to 10 years in age and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The main connection from the parking area to the playground is a former gravel driveway with steep slopes. The high school uses the park for their cross-country course.



▲
Gazebo at Baederwood Park

North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park is a neighborhood park located in the North Hills neighborhood of the township and was acquired in 1981. The park is 3.17 acres in size and is comprised of two parcels separated by Tennis Ave. Facilities include a playground, gazebo, two little league fields, and parking. Playground equipment is fenced and appears older than 10 years in age and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. There are sidewalks along all edges of the park, but no walkway facilities within the park. The playground area sits above Central Ave and a staircase from the sidewalk is the only provided access up the slope creating a difficult connection for people with disabilities or mothers with strollers.



▲
Playground at North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park

Scott Park is a neighborhood open space/pocket park located in the Huntingdon Valley neighborhood and was acquired in 1958. The park is 0.5 acres in size and has no improvements. The area is open lawn with shrubs and mature shade trees. The site has sidewalks and connects to the Huntingdon Valley Shopping Center located behind the park.



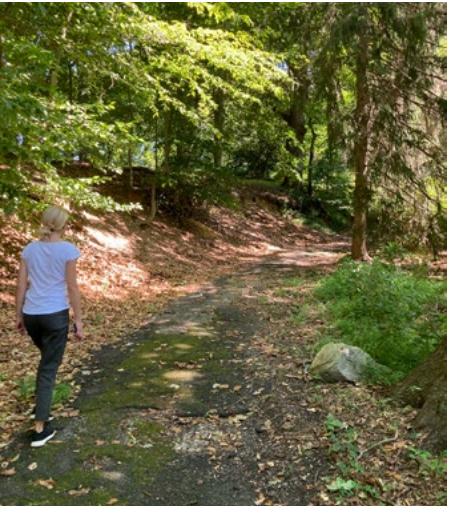
▲
ADA nature trail in Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary

Deal Memorial Park is neighborhood open space located in the Ardsley neighborhood along the Sandy Run. 1.9 Acres is size the lands were acquired by the Township in 1998 through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) buyout program. The area is adjacent to 7 acres of Upper Dublin Township open space. There are no improvements within the open space. The area is open lawn with mature shade trees. There are sidewalks along the open space frontage.

Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary is neighborhood open space located in the Ardsley neighborhood located between Hillside and Ardsley Cemeteries. The 26.9-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 1996. A master plan and stewardship plan for the sanctuary was completed in 2015 and phase one of improvements and restoration were completed

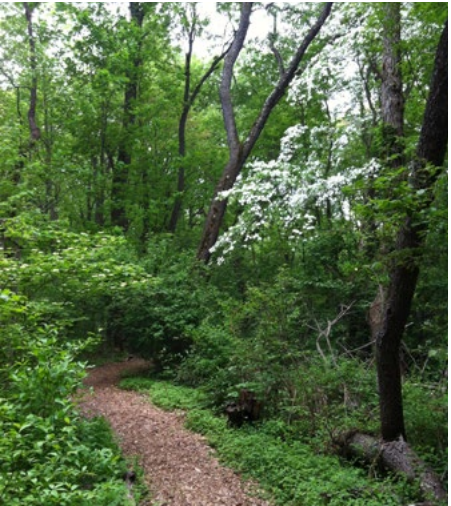
in 2018. Sanctuary facilities included ADA parking, ADA interpretive nature path, and hiking trails. The main entrance is from Maple Ave across from Ardsley Park in the form of a gravel driveway, additional trail entrances existing from local streets. The trail network is not blazed or signed and can be difficult to navigate.

Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary is a neighborhood open space located in the Ardsley neighborhood formerly known as the Bracken Estate. The 9.9-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in the early 2000's. The site is located at a regional high point along the Edge Hill ridge and has access from Roslyn Ave at the top of the hill and Pleasant Ave at the bottom of the hill. The Roslyn Ave entrance lacks signage and is difficult to locate. The trail entrance and signage are set back from and lawn area that blends with neighboring residential lawns making the area seem like private property. A hiking trail connects from the Pleasant Ave sidewalk to an old asphalt driveway that traverses the hillside. The sanctuary is dominated by mature forest canopy, but areas are in decline and giving way to invasive vegetation.



▲
Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary paved trail

Briar Bush Nature Center is located in the Abington neighborhood and was donated to the Township in 1962. The 26.9-acre open space area serves as the Township Nature Center and has its own Board of Directors and staff. The site is a wooded slope with mature forest canopy and woodland understory. The site includes a nature center, bird feeder station with an observation house, pond, nature base playground, hiking trails, and parking. The site trails can be accessed from multiple ends of local roads.



▲
Briar Bush Nature Center trail

Coates Preserve is a neighborhood open space located in the Abington neighborhood across from Baederwood Park. The 10.3-acre open space area was acquired by the Township around 2010. There are no official trails, however a series of informal cultural trails have developed over time. The open space area is dominated by mature forest canopy and is traversed by a Tookany Creek tributary. Areas of forest are in decline and giving way to invasive vegetation. There are no sidewalk facilities connecting to the preserve from Highland Road but a former asphalt road provides access from Highland Road. Preserve users often cross Highland Road to get into Baederwood Park, however there are no pedestrian crossing facilities and the sightlines are poor. Sidewalks exist along the Baeder Road frontage however trail entrances and signage are set back far into a large open lawn. The lawn areas blend with neighboring residential lawns making the area appear to be private property.

Jackson Park is a neighborhood open space located in the Meadowbrook neighborhood. The 10.6-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 2007. A master plan and stewardship plan for the sanctuary was completed in 2009. Sanctuary facilities included a former asphalt driveway and mown trails. The open space area is dominated by mature forest canopy with areas of open meadow, but areas are in decline and giving way to invasive vegetation.



▲
Forest edge at Jackson Park

Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary is a neighborhood open space located in the Meadowbrook neighborhood directly across from Meadowbrook Farms. The 1.2-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 1979 and current improvements were implemented in 2002. Sanctuary facilities included stone dust walking paths, residential garden scale habitat plantings geared towards songbird habitat, artwork, seating areas, and a garden shed. There are no sidewalks in the area and no parking for the facility.

Boy Scout Game Preserve is a neighborhood open space located in the Meadowbrook neighborhood directly across from the Meadowbrook SEPTA Regional Rail Station. The 13.9-acre open space area was donated to the Township by Alice Herkness in 1947 to be used “solely as a wildlife sanctuary”. There are no recreational facilities on site, however a Township pump station with a gravel access drive was constructed at the southwest corner of the Preserve with the family’s permission. The open space area is traversed by Meadow Brook. Due to the decline of forest health, in 2020 the Shade Tree Commission implemented a forest restoration plan for the Preserve.

Karebrook Nature Area is a neighborhood open space located in the Meadowbrook neighborhood. The 17.3-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 1938 and is a linear parcel located between the Septa Regional West Trenton Rail Line and Valley Road. There are no recreational facilities on site, and no access to the site accepting a Township pump station with driveway. The open space area is dominated by mature forest canopy and is traversed by Meadow Brook. Areas of forest are in decline and giving way to invasive vegetation.




Entrance to Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary

Manor Woods Park is a neighborhood open space located in the Fox Chase neighborhood across from Alverthorpe Park. The 5.3-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 2008 and a master plan was completed in 2012. The area is a mature forest canopy. There are no recreational facilities on site, however the master plan proposes a small parking area and walking trails. There are no sidewalk facilities along the Manor Woods frontage of Forest Ave, though they are proposed in the master plan.

Fox Chase Manor Park is a neighborhood open space located in the Fox Chase neighborhood next to the former Saint Basil School Site. The 14.35-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 1962 and has no planned facilities. The area is a mature forest canopy with areas of steep terrain and a tributary to Pennypack Creek. There are a series of informal cultural trails that have developed over time. There are multiple access points into the area from the ends of neighborhood streets.

Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary is a neighborhood open space located in the Fox Chase neighborhood. The 14.35-acre open space area was acquired by the Township in 2018. The preserve was originally donated to the National Audubon Society in 1956 and 1959 by a small group of local residents. The site was maintained by Wyncote Audubon Society and Friends of Crosswicks for decades. The area is a mature forest canopy with headwaters areas for a tributary to Pennypack Creek. A series of rustic hiking trails connect into the ends of local neighborhood streets.



Trail at Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary



*April 26, 2020 Shade Tree
Commission visit to the Boy Scout
Game Preserve to review progress
of the January 2020 tree planting.
Photos by STC*

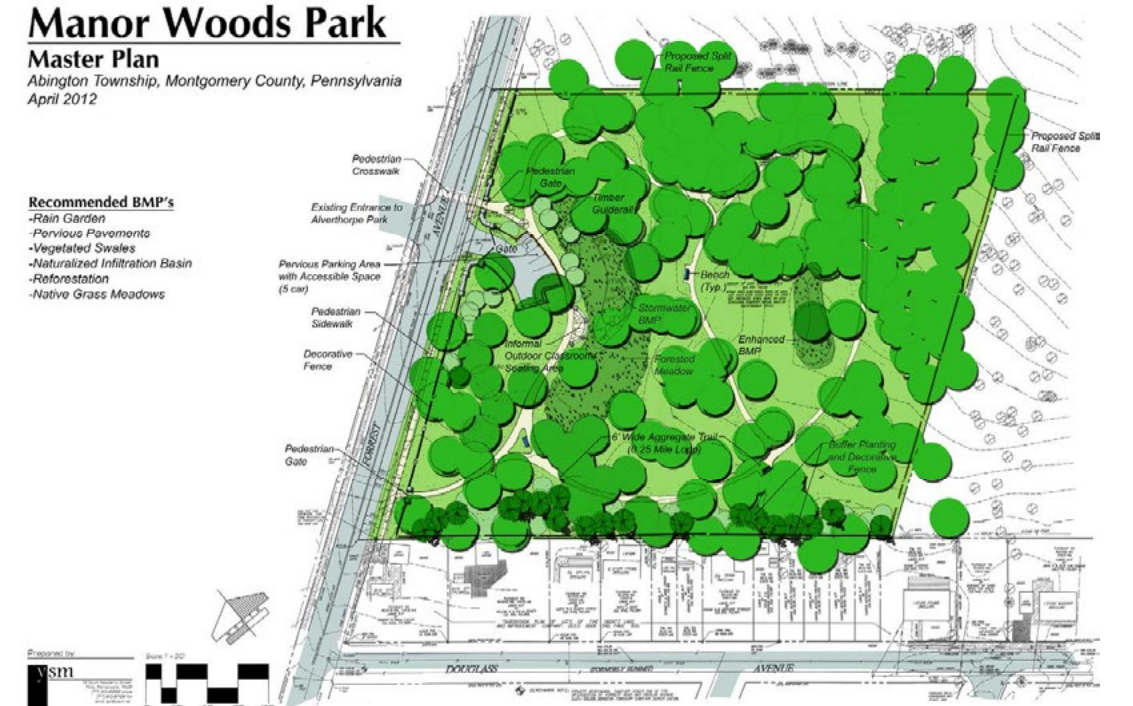


Manor Woods Park

Master Plan
Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
April 2012

Recommended BMP's

- Rain Garden
- Pervious Pavements
- Vegetated Swales
- Naturalized Infiltration Basins
- Reforestation
- Native Grass Meadows



Manor Woods Park
Master Site Plan

Community Facilities

Neighborhood Facilities are comprised of Play Fields, and Community Parks. These facilities tend to be larger in size and serve multiple user groups. The following is a list of Abington’s Community Facilities:

Conway Park is a play field facility located in Upper Dublin Township but is accessed from the Ardsley Neighborhood. The 3.76-acre park has little league fields and soccer fields that overlay each other, field lighting, the Ardsley North Hills Athletic Association (ANHAA) Clubhouse, and parking. The park site is part of the larger Township waste transfer station parcel. To the north of the park an area of forest creates a contiguous open space area that includes Upper Dublin Open Space and Deal Memorial Park. Jefferson Ave has sidewalk facilities that end at the park, G Avenue has no sidewalk facilities. There are no pedestrian walkways within the park.

Hallowell Park is a play field facility located in the Glenside Neighborhood across from the SPS Technologies factory. The 6.54-acre park has little league fields and soccer fields that overlay each other. The township has a long-term lease with SPS for southwest parcel of the park. Some soccer fields are layout out on a privately owned parcel adjacent to the park along Kenmore Ave, the use is through an informal agreement with the landowner. There are sidewalks along the Highland Road frontage of the park and the private parcel on Kenmore Ave has sidewalks. The park is home to Tacony Creek Headwaters and the southwest fields are flooded often.

Ardsley Park is a community park located in the Ardsley neighborhood that was acquired in 1935 and developed in 1962. The 11.4-acre park has open lawn areas, natural areas, basketball court, little league fields, a soccer field, playground, walking trail, seating areas, and parking. Fields overlay each other and the grading of the soccer field drops off in the eastern corner. Playground equipment is fenced in and appears older than 10 years in age and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. Sidewalks connect into the park walkway system and to facilities. However, areas of steep slopes or single steps create access barriers. The local athletic club is coordinating with the Parks Department to develop the former roller hockey area into a box soccer facility.

Abington Township
Community Parks Map



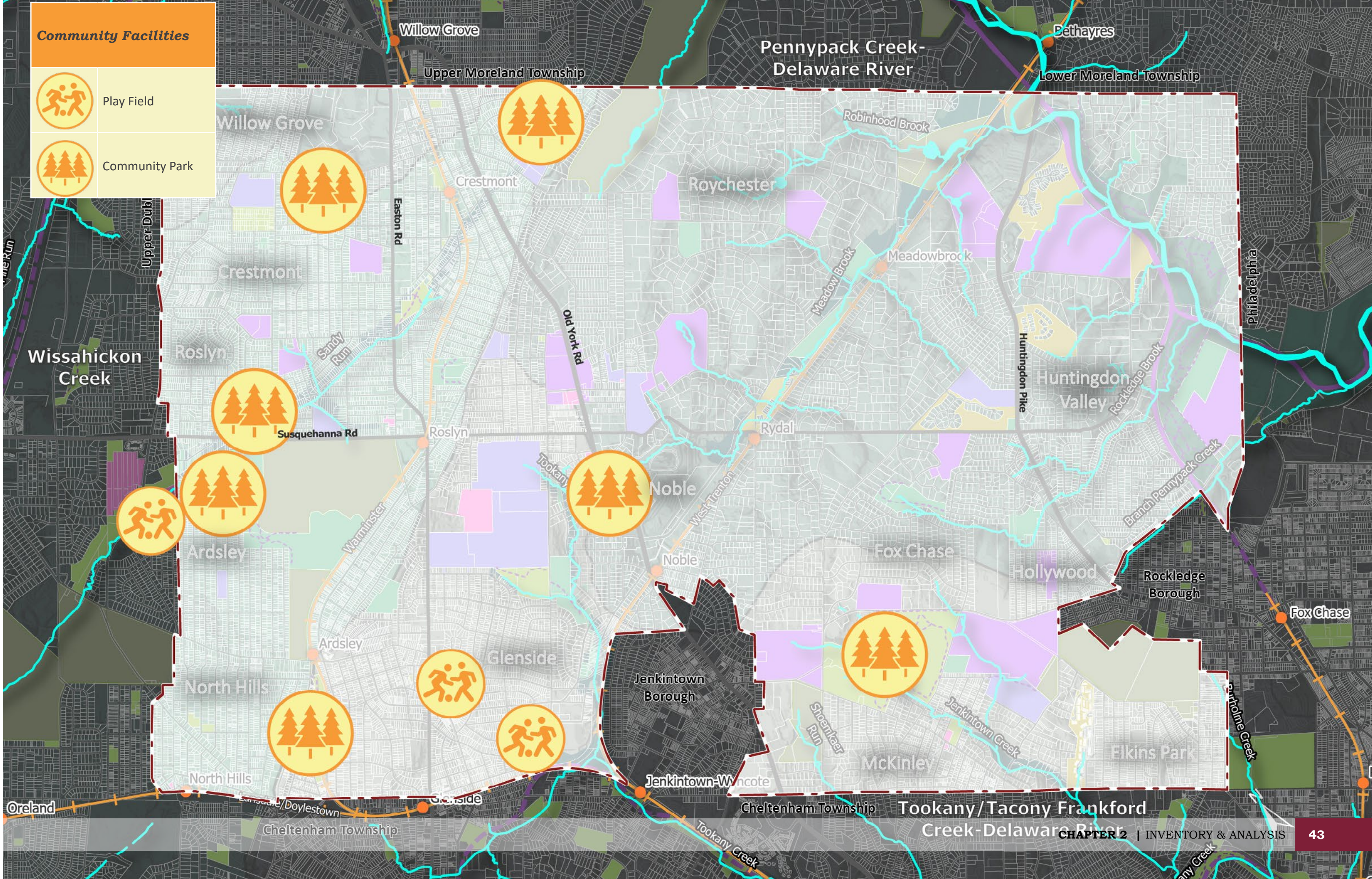
Little league field and picnic table
at Conway Park



Little league fields Hallowell Park



Playground at Ardsley Park



Roslyn Park is a community park located in the Roslyn neighborhood that was acquired and developed in 1962. The 10.2-acre park has open lawn areas, natural areas, basketball court, little league fields, soccer fields, playground, Patrick Kerr Memorial Skate Park, walking trail, field lighting restrooms, and parking. Fields overlay each other and, in the past, also served as a football field. The Marsden Field is dedicated to soccer. Playground equipment appears older than 10 years in age and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. Sidewalks connect into the park walkway system and to facilities. Sandy Run bisects the park and three bridges connect into the trail system. Much of the development in the park is within the riparian zone, where many play fields are affected by regular flooding during storm events and stream banks are significantly eroded.

Crestmont Park & Pool is a community park located in the Crestmont neighborhood that was acquired in 1935 and developed in 1962. The 19.4-acre park has open lawn areas, natural areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, a 90-foot Baseball field, a soccer field, playground, swimming pool, ice rink, field lighting, parking and is home to the Crestmont Clubhouse. Fields overlay each and lighting is not adequate for either sport. Playground equipment appears 5-10 years in age and includes swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. The two play areas are separated by the park driveway and parking area. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. A large portion of the park is undeveloped mature forest canopy with low laying areas. A pool feasibility study was performed in 2018 that recommended the replacement of the pool facility that dates back to the 1960's.

There are no sidewalk facilities along the park. Walkway facilities are limited to connections between parking and pool entrance and clubhouse entrance. A multi-use trail corridor connects the two segments of Rubican Ave's share full lane bike route through the forested portion of the park.



▲
Bridge and playground at Roslyn Park.

Penbryn Park & Pool is a community park located in the North Hills neighborhood that was acquired in 1935 and developed in 1962. The 24.2-acre park has open lawn areas, natural areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, a 90-foot baseball field, little league fields, soccer fields, synthetic turf soccer field, playground, swimming pool, ice rink, field lighting, parking and is home to the Hunt Soccer Club Clubhouse. Fields overlay each other limiting use times as well as seasons. The synthetic turf field was installed through Hunt Soccer Club funds and is primarily used by the club but is open to public use when it is not programed. The Clubhouse has an exterior restroom for park use but it is not reliably open. Playground equipment appears 5-10 years in age and includes tot swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by wood edging.

The eastern portion of the park is forested hillside, areas of the forest are heavily populated with invasive plants. The park driveway often serves as a cut through for local traffic. The number of open parking spaces are limited when multiple events are going on between the swim club, soccer, and baseball. A pool feasibility study was performed in 2018; that recommended the replacement of the pool facility that dates back to the 1960's. A park master plan update was completed in 2018 however improvements made since then in the synthetic turf field greatly impact the master plan recommendations.

There are sidewalks along all park frontages and a trail connects the Edge Hill Road area to the Pool. Walkway facilities are limited to connections between parking and pool entrance. There is an additional road right-of-way that connects the pool area to Edgehill Rd however the steps have deteriorated over time and there is no walkway leading to them.



▲
Multi-use trail in Penbryn Park



▲
Multi-use trail in Penbryn Park

Roychester Park is a community park located in the Roychester neighborhood that was acquired in 1935 in 1938 adjacent to Overlook Elementary School. The 13.9-acre park has open lawn areas, natural areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, 70-foot baseball field, little league fields, soccer fields, playground, ice rink, field lighting, parking and is home to the Roychester Community Building. Fields overlay each other limiting use, and park open areas are also used as a football practice area. Lighting is limited to the baseball field, and basketball courts. Playground equipment appears approaching 10 years in age and includes tot swings, equipment for ages under 5, and equipment for ages 5-12. Play surface is wood chip held in place by edging. The Roychester Civic Association has an agreement with the Township to manage and rent the community building.

There is a central forested slope within the park with a mature tree canopy. The headwaters of the Sandy Run originate at the eastern end of the park near Corinthian Ave and traverse through the forested area. A portion of the slope is mown lawn and the stream passes through a culvert in this area and is a popular spot for neighborhood sledding. Wissahickon Trails has been an active partner in working with the Township to establish meadow areas and stormwater BMP in the park with the goal of protecting the headwaters. The township is currently in the planning stages to rehabilitate the playground area into an inclusive playground.

There are no sidewalks along all park frontages and no walkway facilities within the park.



▲
Roychester Park community building



▲
Rain garden meadow at Roychester Park

Newly resurfaced tennis courts at Crestmont Park ▶



Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial is a community memorial plaza located in the Abington neighborhood within the York Rd island right-of-way adjacent to the Penn State Lions Gate Apartments. The plaza space is divided into three areas by low walls and garden plantings. Memorial walls, statues, and flag poles are sited throughout the plaza spaces. The plaza is surrounded by open lawn with mature canopy trees. The memorial plaza is a tribute and space for veterans, families, neighbors and friends to gather and reflect on the sacrifice and perseverance of our service members.

Memorial Park was originally dedicated in 2019 and was named for local veteran Ed Micciolo during a Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 11, 2021. Micciolo (1948-2020) was a former U.S. Marine who served in the Vietnam War. He was a community leader serving the Roslyn Boys and Girls Club for 40 years, and as President of the Roslyn Business Association. He was a long-time Abington Public Works employee and was instrumental in the visioning and development of the memorial park.

Alverthorpe Park is 116.4-acre park located in the Fox Chase neighborhood. The park was donated to the Township in two separate gifts by Lessing J. and Edith Rosenwald. The original 54 acres park was dedicated on May 15, 1962. The dedication made national news and was attended by former president Dwight Eisenhower. It is estimated that 12,000 people visited the park in the first week. The Rosenwald's donated an additional 75-acres to the park later in 1962 following the park opening.

Today, Alverthorpe Park is home to a mix of active and passive recreational activities. The Park includes: paved walking trails; a central pond; a 9-hole, par 3 golf course; tennis / pickle ball courts; basketball courts; overnight camping facilities; archery range; miniature golf course; playgrounds; wading pool; tike bike loop; little league fields; football field; 90-foot baseball field; picnic pavilions; parking; and maintenance yard. The little league and football fields are overlaid on one another, and the 90-foot baseball field was installed and is maintained by Penn State Abington. Much of the site is mature forested canopy with hilly terrain. The Jenkintown Creek headwaters are north of the park and flow into the central park pond.

Facilities are well maintained, and the park is a popular destination. Golf, tennis, and pickleball courts can be used for a modest fee. Pavilions are reserved for fees. Some facilities are relics of the original park design and are underused such as the boat house that formerly serves as a boat rental facility, and miniature golf course that is showing its age. TTF has partnered with the Township in the past couple of years to implement a series of vegetated infiltration swales and rain gardens to address runoff from parking areas. The Township is currently working with TTF on an improvement project in the maintenance yard area to limit runoff into the pond area. Additional studies have been conducted to improve water quality in the pond.



▲
Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial



▲
Golf course at Alverthorpe Park



▲
Woodlawn multi use trail at Alverthorpe Park.

Alverthorpe Park is completely fenced in, and access is limited to Abington residents and their guests. There is a guard house at the main entrance where park users are required to show proof of residency and check-in. Due to the current policy, opportunities to pursue public funding for park improvements are not supported by agencies such as DCNR.

There is a multi-use trail that runs around the outside of the perimeter fence along Fox Chase Rd from Forrest Ave to Pondview Road and along Jenkintown Road from Meeting House Road to the Little Abington Meetinghouse entrance. Sidewalks connect to the park and trail along the full length of Forrest Ave, along Meetinghouse Road from the Alverthorpe Manor to Jenkintown Rd, and along Jenkintown Road from Forrest Ave to the park campground entrance.

Alverthorpe Manor was the estate home of Lessing J. and Edith Rosenwald and was donated to the Abington Community on Dec 25, 1969. Today, the three wings of the manor house serve the Parks and Recreation as offices and classroom space, the Abington Art Center, and Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center. The building sits on a 10.2-acre site. The majority of the site is forested and includes headwaters of the Jenkintown Creek that feed into the pond at Alverthorpe Park. Areas of the forest canopy are in decline, mainly at the edges where invasive vines are dominating the trees.

In 2016 the Abington Art Center received funding to improve their gallery, classroom, and outdoor space. The improvements included an outdoor art park and development of a stage area. Abington Art Center uses the open lawn that in the rear of the manor house overlooks the stage for festivals and a summer concert series. A paved trail system connects to the Meeting House Road sidewalk and traverses the woods connecting to the Abington Little Meeting House. ADA parking is located throughout the site to ensure all amenities are accessible. There is fencing between Alverthorpe park and Alverthorpe Manor and no connecting trails between the two sites.

Little Abington Meetinghouse is a historic Quaker meeting house acquired by the Township in 2000. The 0.5-acre site has a small parking area and trail connections to Alverthorpe Manor. Originally built in 1836 the structure sat vacant since the 1970's and had fallen into disrepair. In early 2000's community partners came together to renovate the structure. Today the building serves as additional Abington Arts activities and community meetings.



▲
New infiltration swale at Alverthorpe Park



▲
Stage area at Alverthorpe Manor.



▲
Little Abington Meetinghouse

Regional Facilities

Regional Facilities serve multiple communities and often are operated by counties, cities, or states. These facilities tend to be larger naturalized areas focused on outdoor passive recreation such as hiking, biking, and water sports. Often people will drive greater distances to take advantage of regional facilities.

Lorimer Park is operated by Montgomery County and is located in the eastern portion of Abington. The park is defined by the Pennypack Valley that runs through the central part of the park. Dominated by mature forest canopy, the 200+ acre park offers hiking trails and picnic pavilions. The park is part of a greater open space network through a system of trails that connect the adjacent Fox Chase Farm to the east, an educational facility owned by Philadelphia School District, to Pennypack Park, a 1600-acre City of Philadelphia Park that extends from Pine Road at the County border to the Delaware River.

Abington School District

The Abington School District (ASD) is its own governing entity. They own and operate 9 school campuses throughout the township including the High School, Junior High School, and 7 elementary schools. The elementary schools are located through the Township is each neighborhood each includes playground equipment, game court areas, basketball court(s), and open multi-purpose fields. As long as it does not conflict with school programs the ASD allows community youth sports groups to use their fields free of charge.

The High School and Junior High School are centrally located in the Abington neighborhood and share a single campus. The campus hosts a number of dedicated athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-purpose fields, and a football stadium with track. Facilities are generally open to the public and youth sports groups. Recently revised policies have been developed to ensure that field facilities have proper rest time and have affected the availability of fields to some extent.

ASD also allows organized community group access to classroom and gym space. In these situations, organizations are charged a fee to cover the cost of staff for the building during the time.

Weldon School is an ASD property that served as an elementary school for the Glenside neighborhood until it was closed when Cooper Beech Elementary opened in 2002. The building was torn down in 2013. Today, through an agreement with ASD, Glenside Athletic Association operates a majority of their sports programs within the open fields of the property. Additionally, the open lawn area of the former building site serves as important green space to the Glenside / Keswick Community.

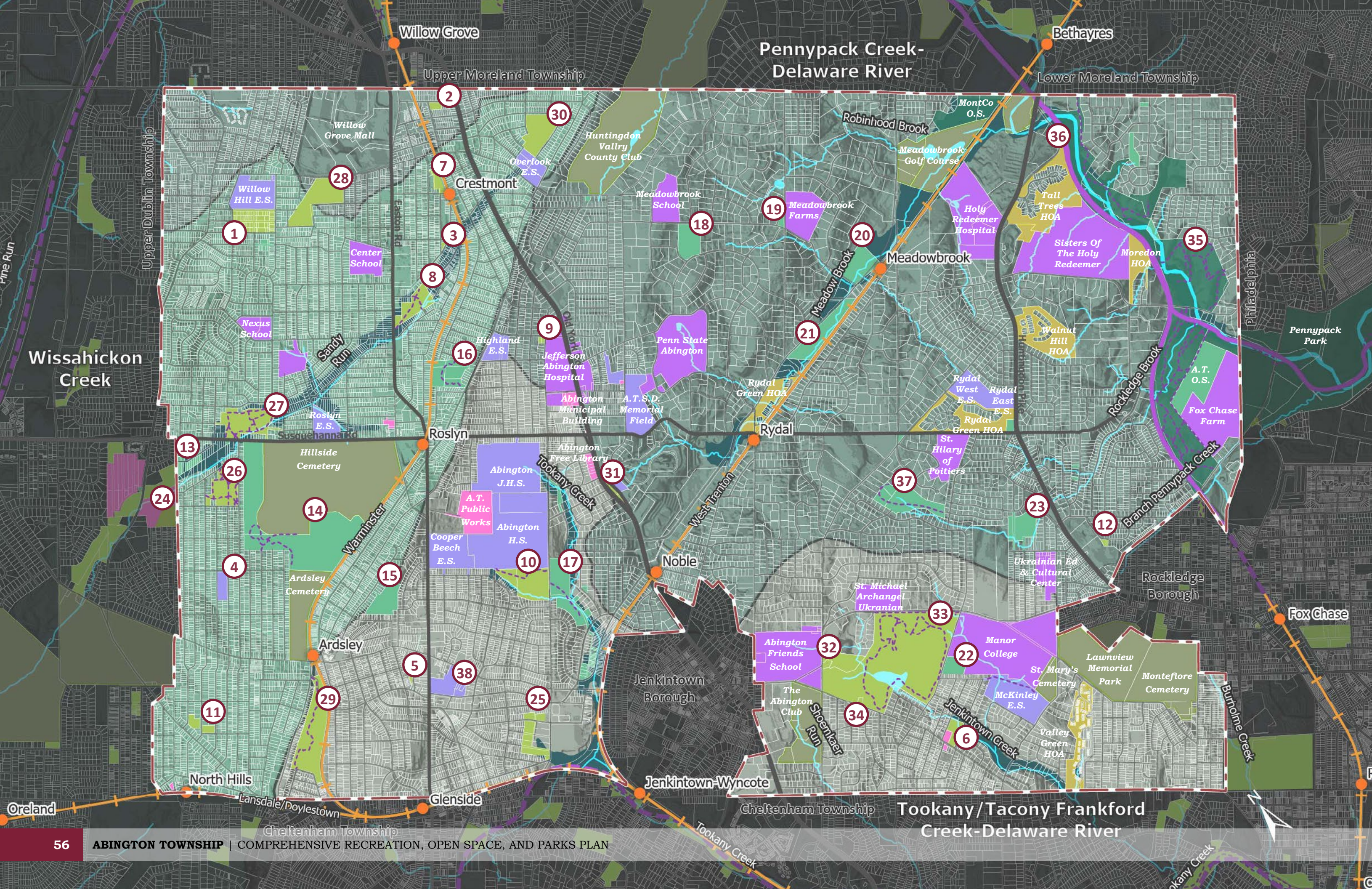
Abington Township Regional Parks Map



Plan Key	Park	Park Class	Size (acres)	Trails (miles)	Venues / Buildings	Parking	Visitor Senter	Restrooms	Playground >5	Playground 5-12	Picnic Pavilion	Fishing	Dog Park	Skate Park	Biking	Horseback Riding	Wildlife Viewing	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	90' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	90' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	Soccer	Multi-Purpose Fields	Synthetic Turf Field	Volleyball	Golf	Mini Golf	Camp Sites	Pool	Wading Pool	Skating Rink	
1	Evergreen Manor Park	Neighborhood Playground / PlayLot	5.62			0			1																												
2	Rockwell Park	Neighborhood Playground / PlayLot	1.22			0				1															1												
3	Franklin Tot Lot	PlayLot	0.279			0				1																											
4	Ardsley Community Center	Neighborhood Playground / PlayLot	3.186		Indoor Gym / Classrooms	52			1	1								1/2								2		1									
5	Elk Street Tot Lot	PlayLot	0.23			0			1	1																											
6	Ethel Jordan Memorial Park	Neighborhood Playground / PlayLot	3.67			0				1								1								1											
7	Rubicam Park	Neighborhood Park / Playlot	2.26	0.14		15				1								1																			
8	Grove Park	Neighborhood Park	8.86		Grove House	16							1																								
9	Tyson Green	Neighborhood Green	1.04			0																															
10	Baederwood Park	Neighborhood Park / Playlot	24.44	X		20				1	1																										1
11	North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park	Neighborhood Park / Playlot	3.17			14				1	1														2												
12	Scott Park	Neighborhood Green	0.47			0																															
13	Deal Memorial Park	Neighborhood Open Space	1.85			0																															
14	Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary	Neighborhood Open Space	26.92	X		0											X																				
15	Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary	Neighborhood Open Space	9.91	X		0																															
16	Briar Bush Nature Center	Neighborhood Open Space	3.53	~1	Nature Center	18		X									X																				

Plan Key	Park	Park Class	Size (acres)	Trails (miles)	Venues / Buildings	Parking	Visitor Senter	Restrooms	Playground >5	Playground 5-12	Picnic Pavilion	Fishing	Dog Park	Skate Park	Biking	Horseback Riding	Wildlife Viewing	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	90' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	90' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	Soccer	Multi-Purpose Fields	Synthetic Turf Field	Volleyball	Golf	Mini Golf	Camp Sites	Pool	Wading Pool	Skating Rink	
17	Coates Preserve	Neighborhood Open Space	10.3	X		0																															
18	Jackson Park	Neighborhood Open Space	10.62			0																															
19	Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary	Neighborhood Open Space	1.19	X		0											X																				
20	Boy Scout Game Preserve	Neighborhood Open Space	13.94			0																															
21	Karebrook Nature Area	Neighborhood Open Space	17.3			0																															
22	Manor Woods Park	Neighborhood Open Space	5.3			0																															
23	Fox Chase Manor Park	Neighborhood Open Space	14.35			0																															
24	Conway Park	Communty Play Field	3.76			35																	2				3										
25	Hallowell Park	Communty Play Field	6.54			0																		2		1	1										
26	Ardsley Park	Communty Play Field	11.4	X		30			1	1								1	2		1					1	1										
27	Roslyn Park	Community Park	10.21	X	Patrick Kerr Memorial Skate Park	120		X						1				1			1		1			1	2	1	1								
28	Crestmont Park	Community Park	19.41		Crestmont Clubhouse	118	1	X		1								2	2							1	1								1		1
29	Penbryn Park & Pool	Community Park	24.22	X	Hunter Clubhouse	144		X		1								2	2		1		1			1	8		1						1		1
30	Roychester Park	Community Park	13.92		Roychester Community House	34		X		1								2	3			1				1											1
31	Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial	Neighborhood Green	1.03			0																															
32	Alverthorpe Manor	Community Park	10.22	X		44		X																													

Plan Key	Park	Park Class	Size (acres)	Trails (miles)	Venues / Buildings	Parking	Visitor Senter	Restrooms	Playground >5	Playground 5-12	Picnic Pavilion	Fishing	Dog Park	Skate Park	Biking	Horseback Riding	Wildlife Viewing	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	90' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	90' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	70' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Grass Infield)	60' Ball Field (Skinned Infield)	Soccer	Multi-Purpose Fields	Synthetic Turf Field	Volleyball	Golf	Mini Golf	Camp Sites	Pool	Wading Pool	Skating Rink
33	Alverthorpe Park	Community Park	116.41	1.7		200		2?		1	3	1						2.5	4		1				2	1		1?			1	1	X		1	
34	Little Abington Meetinghouse	Community Park	0.47		Parks & Rec Office / Little Abington Meetinghouse	X		X																												
35	Lorimer Park	Regional Park	201.78	3.0		102		X			X	X			X	X	X																X			
36	Pennypack Trail	Reginal Park		6.2		0									X		X																			
37	Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary	Neighborhood Open Space	13.14	X		0																														
38	Glenside Weldon Park	Community Park	10.42			48				1								1						1	3											



Connections

Connectivity between destinations is a significant factor in determining levels and frequencies of uses for parks and open spaces and residential and commercial areas within the Township. Abington can be characterized as having a strong road network that is well supported in specific areas by sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure. Several existing trails offer great potential linkages to increase connections with Abington and larger off-road regional trail networks.

Trails

The Pennypack Trail currently serves as Abington’s primary connection to The Circuit Trail and Montgomery County trail networks. Several local trails are dispersed throughout the municipal park system, most notably at Alverthorpe Park; Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary; and Briar Bush Nature Center. The Tookany Creek Trail is currently in the planning phase and will ultimately be accessible to Abington residents as another connection to The Circuit Trail system.

Sidewalks

Despite an extensive pedestrian network, missing gaps in the municipal sidewalk system exist within Abington, particularly in the Rydal/ Meadowbrook/Huntington Valley areas. Several important destinations within these areas may grow demand for improving pedestrian facilities, such as Penn State Abington; several parks; and both Rydal and Meadowbrook SEPTA stations. Other destinations that lack satisfactory sidewalks include Briar Bush Nature Center; Crestmont SEPTA station / Crestmont Park; and Copper Beach/Willow Hill Elementary Schools.

1	Evergreen Manor Park	20	Boy Scout Game Preserve
2	Rockwell Park	21	Karebrook Nature Area
3	Franklin Tot Lot	22	Manor Woods Park
4	Ardsley Community Center	23	Fox Chase Manor Park
5	Elk Street Tot Lot	24	Conway Park
6	Ethel Jordan Memorial Park	25	Hallowell Park
7	Rubicam Park	26	Ardsley Park
8	Grove Park	27	Roslyn Park
9	Tyson Green	28	Crestmont Park
10	Baederwood Park	29	Penbryn Park & Pool
11	North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park	30	Roychester Park
12	Scott Park	31	Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial
13	Deal Memorial Park	32	Alverthorpe Manor
14	Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary	33	Alverthorpe Park
15	Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary	34	Little Abington Meetinghouse
16	Briar Bush nature Center	35	Lorimer Park
17	Coates Preserve	36	Pennypack Trail
18	Jackson Park	37	Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary
19	Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary	38	Glenside Weldon Park

Abington Township
Existing Parks Map

Athletic Organizations

Abington Township has an extensive network of youth and adult athletic organizations that use Township park facilities to offer access to organized baseball, softball, soccer, and football programs. The following chart is a list of organizations and the parks their leagues use.

Athletic Club	Alverthorpe Park	Ardsley Community Center	Ardsley Park	Conway Park	Crestmont Park	Hallowell Park	North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park	Penbryn Park	Roslyn Park	Roychester Park	Abington Junior High School	Weldon Elementary School (former site)
AC United Soccer Club			X	X	X				X			
Abington Raiders Football & Cheerleading	X									X	X	
Abington-Roychester Baseball										X		
Ardsley - North Hills Athletic Association (ANHAA)		X	X	X				X				
Crestmont Community Summer Basketball League					X							
Glenside Youth Athletic Club						X						X
Hunter Soccer Club								X				
Roslyn Boys & Girls Club									X			
Abington Area Womens Softball League						X		X				

Abington Township as compared to National Averages

The Nation Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides information from over 1,000 park and recreation departments across the Unites States. The information provided by NRPA should be used as guidance only by each community. Data is broken out by population size as guidelines only.

Each community must evaluate its own specific needs. If a community is a strong youth sport community, that community may require more fields than averages suggest. All information found below is derived from the NRPA 2022 Agency Performance Review report and other NRPA reports. A comparison of national averages for communities between 20,000 to 49,999 and from 50,000 – 99,999 populations is reviewed below.

	Abington Township 55,000 (+/-) Residents	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 20,000- 49,999 Residents	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 50,000- 99,999 Residents	Comments
Median Number of Residents per Park Facility	1,486	1,941	2,516	Abington has more parks available as compared to like sized communities
Median Number of Park Acres per 1000 Residents	7.44 acres / 1000 residents or 11 acres w/ the county park	10.6 acres / 1000 residents	9.2 acres / 1000 residents	Abington has 409 acres of parkland. However, a large county park is contained within Abington (201 additional acres).
Park & Recreation Agency Full Time Employee (FTE) Equivalent Staff Levels	Abington Parks and Recreation has 22 FTE’s and 28 FTE equivalent	19.3 FTE equivalent / 250-acres of parkland		A deficiency of 2.75 FTE equivalent is found in Abington as compare to NRPA averages
Annual Operating Expense	\$3,633,700	\$3,500,000	\$7,330,336	Abington Township is within NRPA averages for operational budget
Percent of Revenue Generation vs. Operation Budget	19.8%	25.0%	26.6%	Opportunities exist to receive additional revenue streams and enhancements to fee structure
Operating Expense per Acre	\$8,972	\$9,817	\$9,642	Abington spends less per acre than the NRPA average; however, parks and maintained well.

Number of Residents per Outdoor Park & Recreation Facilities

▼

Facility	Abington Township 55,000 (+/-) Residents	Abington Township with School District Facilities 55,000 (+/-) Residents	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 20,000- 49,999 Residents	National Park & Recreation Average for Communities of 50,000- 99,999 Residents
Playgrounds	3,929	2,500	3,111	3,807
Basketball courts	4,074	2,340	6,839	8,477
Diamond fields: baseball – youth	3,235	2,200	4,858	8,095
Tennis courts	4,231	2,115	5,000	6,413
Rectangular fields: multipurpose		18,333	7,674	13,151
Dog parks	55,000	55,000	28,000	56,084
Diamond fields: softball fields – adult	27,500	27,500	11,232	17,228
Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	5,500	2,500	8,509	11,688
Diamond fields: baseball – adult	55,000	55,000	19,000	25,097
Swimming pools	27,500	18,333	26,281	40,264
Community gardens			24,500	49,351
Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	3,438	1,618	5,011	8,224
Multiuse courts: basketball, volleyball			14,807	23,735
Tot lots	13,750	5,500	10,756	16,112
Rectangular fields: soccer field – adult			10,547	16,231
Skate parks	55,000	55,000	32,335	65,000
Rectangular fields: football field	55,000	13,750	19,351	30,599
Regulation 18-hole courses	110,000		33,800	71,870
Driving range stations			23,238	9,267
Multipurpose synthetic fields	55,000	27,500	24,665	34,104
Ice rinks	13,750	13,750	13,123	28,000
Pickleball courts	13,750	13,750	8,143	11,999

Abington Outdoor Park & Recreation Facilities Compared to Peer Municipalities

▼

	Playground	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer	Football	Basketball	Tennis	Volleyball	Bocce	Handball/Tennis Wall	Picnic Pavilion	Fishing	Dog Park	Skate Park	Golf	Ice Skating Rink	Mini Golf	Disc Golf	Swimming Pool	Splash Pad	Community Rec. Building
Abington Township Parks	18	29	16	1	13	13	0	0	0	6	2	1	1	1	4	1	0	2	0	
Peer Average	19	11	2	1	14	11	2.2	1.4	1	5.6	1	0	0.4	0	1.8	0	0	1	0.4	
White Plains, NY	16	4	1	0	9	10	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	X
Piscataway Twp, NJ	23	19	2	0	21	26	4	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	1	X
Haverford Twp, PA	23	16	0	0	15	8	2	0	0	10	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	X
Parsippany-Troy Hills Twp, NJ	17	6	4	2	11	6	5	5	2	6	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	X
Union Twp, NJ	15	8	4	1	11	5	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	X

Recreation Programming Analysis

Recreational program opportunities are considered abundant in Abington, where the Township Parks and Recreation Department provides many recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of township residents. Non-residents are afforded many of the same opportunities for most programs. Recreation programs and community events are well received and attended by the community and may include educational, environmental, sports, wellness, and hobby programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Examples of program offerings include: healthy lifestyles classes, summer camps, summer concerts, swimming pools, movies in the park, and numerous special events throughout the year. The Department continually assesses additional recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Abington recreation programs receive 1,810 registrations on average annually for the organized programs offered (Note: 2020 and 2021 registration were lower due to the pandemic.) Recreation programming in 2022, generated a gross annual revenue of \$728,164.

Thousands more people annually visit the Abington park system on their own for self-directed recreational pursuits. Abington parks provide spontaneous recreational opportunities for individuals, families, church groups, business groups, youth and other organizations – who picnic under large shelters for gatherings; explore open spaces and observe nature; play golf; and seek areas for solace within the park system. The Abington pools provide recreational opportunities for individuals and families.

Youth sport leagues are abundant in Abington. Youth organizations provide sporting opportunities for Abington youngsters and their families. These organizations are active partners with Abington Township to utilize and help maintain park facilities for a majority of their sports offerings. The historic partnerships enable the Township to provide sport fields and fundamental maintenance and the organizations to pay for field usage, and assist with field maintenance

Many programs in the Abington parks system are provided by third party service contractors, a common partnership practice within municipal recreation departments. These service providers enable residents to enjoy program-specific recreational opportunities and deliver services that the Parks and Recreation Department may otherwise not have the in-house capability to provide.

Multiple private recreation providers offer services within Abington Township, including: gyms, private ballfields, senior housing recreational developments, trail systems, and other privately maintained recreational opportunities, usually available for a fee to all Abington residents.

All Township-provided recreational opportunities are open and available to all Abington residents, regardless of age or economic background. Residents are encouraged to participate in all events through a variety of advertisements including social media, Township website, store front posters, and flyers distributed or posted throughout the community. Use of Alverthorpe Park has historically been limited to Abington Township residents only.

Program fees determination

The consultant reviewed the current program fees and found that existing structures and procedures for determining program fees is a well-conceived process. Specifically, program fees are determined by adding all program costs (supplies, instructor payments, facility rentals, etc.), then adding a percentage of “administrative” costs and small additional fee to establish the total cost for each program. Each fee is then set to attempt to recover some portion of the total program costs.

Some programs offer one single fee, while other programs offer two fees (resident and non-resident). Programs often cannot be offered without the inclusion assistance of non-residents, to meet the minimum number of participants to be able to offer the program.

Taking the opportunity to formalize the fees determination process in written form will enable the Parks and Recreation staff to be transparent in its consistent efforts to be fair is setting program fees. A policy set by the Board of Commissioners to determine a non-resident fee provides important direction to the department. Currently, when a non-resident fee is available, the increase in fee is \$10, no matter the cost to the residents. If the cost of the program is \$45 for residents and a non-resident rate is offered, that rate is \$55. Likewise; if the cost of a program is \$225 for residents and a non-resident fee is available, that fee is \$235. While the \$10 addition is a consistent increase across all programs, it is not a consistent increase as a percentage. Many parks and recreation departments have a percentage increase for non-resident fees for programs and facility rentals.

A metric for a non-resident fee increase may be considered at 30% additional cost for a recreational program, and a 50%-100% increase for facility rentals.

Administration Analysis

The office of the Parks and Recreation Department serves as the central administrative and contact point for residents, businesses, and community groups of Abington Township to register for programs, reserve facilities, and purchase memberships. The Department is responsible for administering field allocations: issuing swimming pool memberships; accounting for golf course revenues; administering the nature center; issuing maintenance work orders, overseeing daily staff activities; and responding to inquiries from community members.

All of these operations function at high levels in Abington Township. Residents are able to easily and efficiently locate information pertaining to recreational programs, park facilities, pool complexes, community centers, and other information to meet their needs. Staff respond quickly and accurately to inquiries by residents and direct proper work orders to resolve park concerns.

Staffing Positions

Administration full time staff consists of (1) Director of Parks and Recreation; (1) Recreation Superintendent; (1) Receptionist; and (2) Recreation Supervisors. There are (11) full-time maintenance employees; and (6) full-time staff at Brian Bush Nature Center. Seasonal and part-time staff consists of (80) part-time pool staff, (16) part-time summer camp staff, (2) evening park attendants, (25) guards / park attendants, custodians, (6) part-time staff at Brian Bush Nature Center, other various program leaders, and contract service providers.

Full-time staff members are tasked to deliver all administrative functions of the department. Administrative tasks include: overseeing all functions of the department; providing recreational opportunities for all Abington residents through various organized offerings; administering recreation centers; pool complexes; golf course; nature center; responding to resident queries and providing information through a variety of communication opportunities; and reporting to the Township Manager through the Director of Parks and Recreation

Seasonal staff performs work as directed by the full-time staff. Seasonal employees lead many of the programs offered and perform as front line, direct communicators with participants through the programs.

Recreation software

Abington Township utilizes Active Network to accept registrations, pool memberships, and facility reservations. This software allows the Department to maintain all historical data regarding registration, memberships, reservations, and other valuable information. The Department is able to communicate directly with all who register through this system. Global text blasts and email blasts; as well as program- specific communications are possible through this software system.

Policy evaluation

The Department currently has multiple policies in place to communicate effectively with residents, including: refund policies, facility rental policies, membership policies. Additional and/or re-crafted policies may enhance Department performance by delivering written, easily identifiable information for all residents and the many allied organizations to access directly. Policies adopted by the Board of Commissioners provide important guidance to the Department.

Partnerships

After review of current administrative partnerships related to recreation services, the consultant team found few formal written partnership agreements. Verbal partnerships have served the Township and its partners over many years; however, written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) provide clear details of partner responsibilities and are the basis for smart modern partnerships. For example: an agreement might specify that the Township will provide basic maintenance services for all fields (mowing, weed whacking, field dragging...) and a user group(s) may agree to provide ballfield lining, sports equipment, registrations.

Marketing Efforts

The current level of public relations and marketing efforts performed by the Parks and Recreation Department to promote services is adequate. The Township utilizes its website, Facebook, flyers, brochures, newspapers, posters and signage, and other means to promote recreational services as well as park facilities.

Administrative Recordkeeping

A complete system of recordkeeping is maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. Computer tracking of registrations, reservations, memberships, as well as paper filing systems exist in Abington and Township staff are dedicated to maintaining proper recordkeeping of historical information for future reference. This current system allows the Department to be consistent and predictable, which

directly benefits residents. BY continuing its accurate recordkeeping, the Department is able to be transparent and fair in its interactions with all residents, user groups, civic organizations, and others.

Current recordkeeping practices for recording issues are called in by residents is adequate and is easily trackable. Work orders are prepared and forwarded to park maintenance employees for action. Once completed, the maintenance records and executed work order are retained by the Township.

Daily park maintenance is recorded by the Parks Foreman and Landscape Foreman and both keep daily activity sheets of work performed with limited technology assistance. This system does allow task tracking but may not meet current technology standards. Task tracking is essential to inform planning future labor and annual budget strategies, by documenting how long specific tasks take to complete; staff hours and resources required for specific tasks.

Maintenance Analysis

The Abington Township department that maintains and manages parks and open space currently functions at a high level with the staffing available. Eleven full-time employees are dedicated to park maintenance and are supplemented with six seasonal maintenance workers during the spring, summer, and fall seasons.

Additionally, Public Works personnel are also available for larger park projects or when emergencies arise. The Township sometimes contracts out work to assist with overall park maintenance. Community youth program provider organizations assist the Township with ballfield maintenance during their in-season sports activities.

A thorough review of maintenance practices was conducted for the entire park system, and for specific individual parks by the consultant team. Analyses included: reviews of current maintenance practices; staff assignments/hours; risk management concerns; accessibility opportunities; facility sizes; park amenities; natural areas; waterways; available equipment; current play structure conditions; and other aspects of operation and maintenance.

Information was also assembled from public meetings; key person interviews; focus groups responses; direct discussions with staff and administration; and survey results. All information was analyzed and relevant data was compiled to prepare this report and its recommendations.

Each community approaches park maintenance practices differently, based on physical facilities; programs; and operational resources. A single standard does not apply to any two municipalities and some comparisons are useful but are relative to many factors. Determinations were made based on Abington Township current practices and

estimated future needs, and then compared to National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) industry standards. The NRPA comparison is included in this report.

Review of Abington’s current park maintenance program reveals that parks are maintained to a basic level, and in some areas, high level of service. Staff regularly perform multiple basic tasks daily to maintain the parks, including: trash removal; rest room cleaning; removal of dangerous conditions (downed branches, broken benches); grass maintenance; and similar projects. Based on several visits to the Abington parks system on multiple dates over the course of several months, the parks were observed to be maintained to the level afforded by the Township with the staff hours available. Many advanced / technical maintenance tasks are also provided as needed by the department by utilizing the skill-specific capabilities of many staff members.

Equipment care, vehicle maintenance, record-keeping, and community responses to needs are tasks that are considered to all function well within the Township budget and staff capabilities. Contracted services are also used by Abington to provide specific maintenance for Township properties, such as: large tree removal; large hardscape projects; and other tasks that cannot be performed in-house due to resources, work hours, equipment needs, or specialized technical skills.

The Consultant team visits to Abington parks over several months included evaluations of: current conditions (most visits were conducted in the cooler season and winter); maintenance practices; possible future uses; recreational program opportunities; and risk analyses at locations.

Standards for maintenance and accessibility are based on Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines for playground safety; the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws, park maintenance best practices, and comparisons to industry standards. CPSC standards are guidelines, not laws. Courts have held that failure to comply with these guidelines usually results in a judgment for the plaintiff. The ADA regulations are federal law and compliance is mandatory.

Over the course of the project, during each visit, park property maintenance has been observed as adequate. Trash removal, downed branches, lawn care – all received passing evaluations. Abington staff are noted for pride in their services to provide safe, usable, and aesthetic parks. Items of concern generally are the results of finite staff hours and aging parks facilities that will likely require replacement versus repairs – because most existing park resources in Abington were created many years ago and do not meet many current regulations for safety, accessibility, economy, or technological advancements (lighting, irrigation, and drainage).

A review of tasks that are currently performed by Township maintenance staff and the labor hours necessary to complete those current assignments reveals that additional seasonal or full-time employees may be considered at this time, and should be budgeted for future recreation and open space improvements that may result from the opportunities identified in this plan that are determined to meet the future needs of the Abington community.

Abington Township encourages and provides opportunities for staff to attend a variety of professional seminars, workshops, and knowledge-based programs in a continued effort to support the workforce and to provide them with tools necessary to be successful. Continuing education opportunities for staff includes: training seminars, workshops, and conferences for staff to learn, observe, and share knowledge with other professionals and industry leaders. Seminars include: storm water management best practices; environmental best management practices; human resource information; ballfield maintenance, playground standards of care, and turf management. Those staff who attend training sessions share information learned with other Township staff and their public and organizational partners.

Equipment

Care and maintenance of all Township equipment is a high priority within the Parks Maintenance Department because a high level of service extends the life of equipment and is a prudent expense to help reduce capital budget expenses. However, much of the Abington Township maintenance equipment is now considered older and a replacement schedule should be instituted. A 5-year replacement schedule will aid the Township in budgeting for future capital improvements.

Equipment is currently adequate for park maintenance, though some additional equipment is needed. The new equipment and the newer technologies do present larger initial capital costs, however new equipment allows staff to perform more work, more efficiently, within the same time period. Current Abington Township park maintenance equipment includes trucks, backhoe, tractors, skid steers, woodchippers, saws, and other small tools.

Risk Management

Risk management concerns are perpetual throughout any park system. Several laws, best practices, play equipment guidelines, and safety issues are considered of primary concern to be addressed.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requires accessible areas for people with disabilities. All areas include where patrons may visit while inside the park system need to be assessed for capabilities to be compliant, and those facilities that are not ADA-compliant, but can become complaint need to be included in an improvement program for the facility.

Trails, walkways, benches, play equipment, sport fields, hard courts, pools, pavilions, rest facilities, water fountains, parking access, are all elements that include ADA access. Abington currently provides some ADA-complaint access to specific areas – however, the overall municipal park system needs to address those areas within and connecting to each park site that do not meet standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Specific areas of “inaccessibly” are currently found in existing play areas, bench locations, trails, ballfield access, hardcourt access, picnic pavilions, and among other facilities. The need to upgrade ADA non-compliant facilities is not uncommon for communities, especially older urbanized municipalities like Abington with legacy parks.

Communities must meet all ADA requirements for all or most new public park and recreation features – within each new facility or each phased improvement project. This process usually includes a master site development plan for each park site which identifies the universal accessibility improvements that can be collectively implemented, most likely over multiple phases.

Visitors with mobility issues may experience some difficulties accessing specific areas within a certain park. Several playgrounds do not enable access, or if access is provided, some play equipment may not be ADA-compliant. Depending upon specific locations and the equipment available, specific percentages of various facilities must be available for disabled or mobility-challenged people. A thorough ADA compliance review for the entire park system is a priority for the Township.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides guidelines for park play equipment, which includes: structures, play apparatus, geometries, and safety surfacing. While the CPSC guidelines are not law, they are best practices for communities to follow. Failure to follow the guidelines often results in negative results for the community if issues arise.

The consultant team observed some play structures that fail to meet current CPSC guidelines in several areas. Deficiencies included: play structures, safety surfacing dimensions and depth, safe distances between equipment, obstructions, fall height surfacing, and other items. Similar to ADA concerns, Abington can plan and strive to reduce priority risk areas.

The Delaware Valley Property and Liability Trust (DVILT) performs annual audits of the Abington park system and a report is prepared for the Director and the Township. Annual play equipment audits provide communities with a detailed report noting areas of concern. A Certified Playground Safety Inspector, details specific areas that require attention. Concerns are ranked as risk exposures for the Township. Once the report is received, an action plan is developed to address those concerns, starting with the highest exposure areas.

Adequacy of Maintenance

Abington has a large park system. The level of service provided though current maintenance practices within available staff hours provides for basic park maintenance services and minor park improvements. The park system provides recreation opportunities with community, neighborhood, and pocket parks enabling most residents with opportunities to enjoy a park near to their home. Most areas of Abington are within walking distance to a park, although a few “park deserts” exist within Abington. A park desert is considered an area with no nearby parks, meaning, residents cannot easily access a park by walking.

This report discusses specific access issues. Larger community parks provide opportunities for those traveling from further distances whether an Abington resident or not. Abington is recognized for its delivery of park and recreation opportunities for all residents across a history of administrations and elected boards.

Capital improvements are coupled with a commitment to future maintenance. Budgeting adequately for annual operations, maintenance and security costs is the key to extending longevity of capital investments in parks and recreation facilities. Basic levels of park maintenance now need to be reimagined as a part of life cycle costs. This will be achieved through a cooperative effort between maintenance staff, management, and elected officials.

Accessibility issues and playground conditions were observed and noted to help ensure future access for all and reduce potential exposures to injury. The project survey reveals current community desires for additional park amenities within the large and abundant Abington park system. Relative to other local communities, Abington provides similar or higher levels in terms of parks areas and distribution; play structures; ballfields; hardcourts; trails; and many other park attributes. The project survey, the focus groups, and the key person interviews identified several community recommendations that should be considered for future capital improvements – including: inclusive playground; drainage improvements and upgraded lighting at sport fields; trail maintenance; wayfinding signage; swimming pool improvements; and other improvements noted in this plan.

Budget Analysis

Budget information

The Department of Parks and Recreation had a 2022 annual operational budget of \$3,633,700, which represents 7.8% of the total Township budget (\$46,516,230). The Department brings in an additional \$728,164 in revenues through program registration fees, pool, and other memberships, facility rentals, golf revenues, and other fees charged, with the remainder of the budget supplemented through the townships general fund.

A review of neighboring community budgets and similar sized community is shown in a table format for comparison.



Community Name	Population	2023 Total Budget	Parks & Recreation Budget	Percentage of Overall Budget
Abington Township	58,502	\$46,516,230	\$3,633,700	7.8%
Upper Dublin Township	26,511	\$44,552,842	\$2,841,064	6.4%
Whitpain Township	26,416	\$25,887,501	\$1,792,251	6.9%
Cheltenham Township	37,219	\$40,725,964	\$1,885,305	4.6%
Upper Moreland Township	25,863	\$24,233,416	\$1,704,288	7.0%
Haverford Township	50,425	\$49,855,037	\$4,127,120	8.3%
Middletown Township	46,007	\$38,856,018	\$1,676,150	4.3%
Lower Paxton	53,454	\$27,745,361	\$2,108,676	7.6%

Note: Information obtained in this table was taken from community websites and / or discussions with Parks and Recreation Directors.

Note: Each community prepares its budget in its own ways, so some parks and recreation budgets are formulated by reviewing the overall budget and adding costs for recreation and maintenance that may be found in separate line items other in other departments (public works for example). Operational budgets are noted below. Capital improvement budgets vary greatly from year to year and are not part of this comparison.

RECOMMENDATIONS 3



Action Plan Matrix

Plan Recommendations are organized into an Action Plan Matrix. The Action Plan summarizes each goal with corresponding narratives; objectives; and recommended actions to achieve that goal.

Recommendations are assigned priorities; partners; and potential funding sources. The Action Plan will serve the Township as a living document that is easily referenced and periodically updated by municipal partners to track progress on achieving goals.

V I S I O N	1 . 0	2 . 0		3 . 0	4 . 0	5 . 0
	Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources	Steward Park Resources		Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities	Create New Recreation Facility and Programs Opportunities	Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System
G O A L	Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.	Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.		Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.	Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming.	Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park and recreation resources.
O B J E C T I V E S	Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.	Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.		Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.	Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all abilities, genders and ages.	Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
	Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.	Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.		Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.	Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all abilities, genders and ages.	
	Strengthen protections of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.	Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.		Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.	Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.	Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township's parks, recreation programs and open space services.
				Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.	Ensure equity in access to programming.	
R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	1.1 Negotiate with private landowners to preserve open space lands via land conservation easements	2.1 Develop park/preserve stewardship plans		3.1 Identify trail corridors on Official Map	4.1 Develop additional neighborhood playground opportunities	5.1 Organize / consolidate local knowledge base to develop stewardship department
	1.2 Work with private landowners to develop, strengthen, and protect riparian corridors	2.2 Identify parcels for acquisition to meet future recreation and open space needs on Official Map		3.2 Plan for future trail initiatives	4.2 Convert Alverthorpe wading pool into splash pad	5.2 Assess staff parks and rec resources to meet department needs
	1.3 Identify remaining properties for FEMA/PEMA buyout on official map	2.3 Acquire/secure long-term lease for existing “park” land not owned by Township		3.3 Access improvements to and within parks	4.3 Redevelop pool facilities	5.3 Develop and implement annual improvement schedules
	1.4 Define park sites as "Active Recreation" and "Passive Preserves"	2.4 Develop / update park master plans		3.4 Provide ADA accessibility to all park features and amenities	4.4 Develop community building feasibility study	5.4 Upgrade parks and recreation programing software
	1.5 Coordinate park branding with watershed education	2.5 Modernize park lighting to be efficient; limit spill over; and dark skies friendly where feasible		3.5 Provide ADA surface trail loop systems in larger parks	4.5 Field programming and usage	5.5 Coordinate website and social media to publicize programs
		2.6 Strive to remove underused impervious surfaces		3.6 Resurface existing walkways	4.6 Formalize and communicate policies	5.6 Appoint an open space advisory committee to coordinate/ prioritize plan implementation with park and recreation staff
		2.7 Incorporate natural areas into all parks		3.7 Develop inclusive playgrounds	4.7 Continue to foster relationship with library	5.7 Formalize maintenance partnerships with youth sports groups
				3.8 Standardized park/preserve signage	4.8 Incorporate new facilities and programs based on recreational trends	



VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

Overview

Natural systems include our waters, soils, tree canopy, and vegetative habitats. The health of these systems has a direct impact on our daily lives by providing economic, environmental, and health benefits to communities. The Montgomery County Return on Environment Report of March 2022 estimates that, within Montgomery County, home values increase \$11,300 when located within ½ mile of protected open space; \$31.6M is saved annually through environmental “services” delivered by open space; and residents directly benefit from \$219M in recreation values annually.

Abington Township is an established “first ring” suburb of Philadelphia, that is nearly fully developed. This condition offers different opportunities and tools to preserve, restore, and steward natural resources within the municipality.

Recommendations identify strategies to continue preserving open spaces within Abington Township.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Negotiate with private landowners to preserve open space lands via land conservation easements
- 1.2 Work with private landowners to develop, strengthen, and protect riparian corridors.
- 1.3 Identify remaining properties for FEMA/PEMA buyout on official map
- 1.4 Define park sites as "Active Recreation" and "Passive Preserves"
- 1.5 Coordinate park branding with watershed education

VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Negotiate with Private Landowners to Preserve Open Space Lands via Land Conservation Easements

Criteria for identifying priority lands include:

- Proximity to preserved open space.
- Size of parcels and / or contiguous parcel of the same landowner.
- Natural resources of the parcel.

Narrative

The Township can reach out to identified landowners to inquire if they might consider placing a conservation easement on their property, and/ or explore the idea further. Communications should be documented for future reference. The Township may coordinate with local land trust(s) to explore various conservation easement tools that might work to best to serve all vested parties.

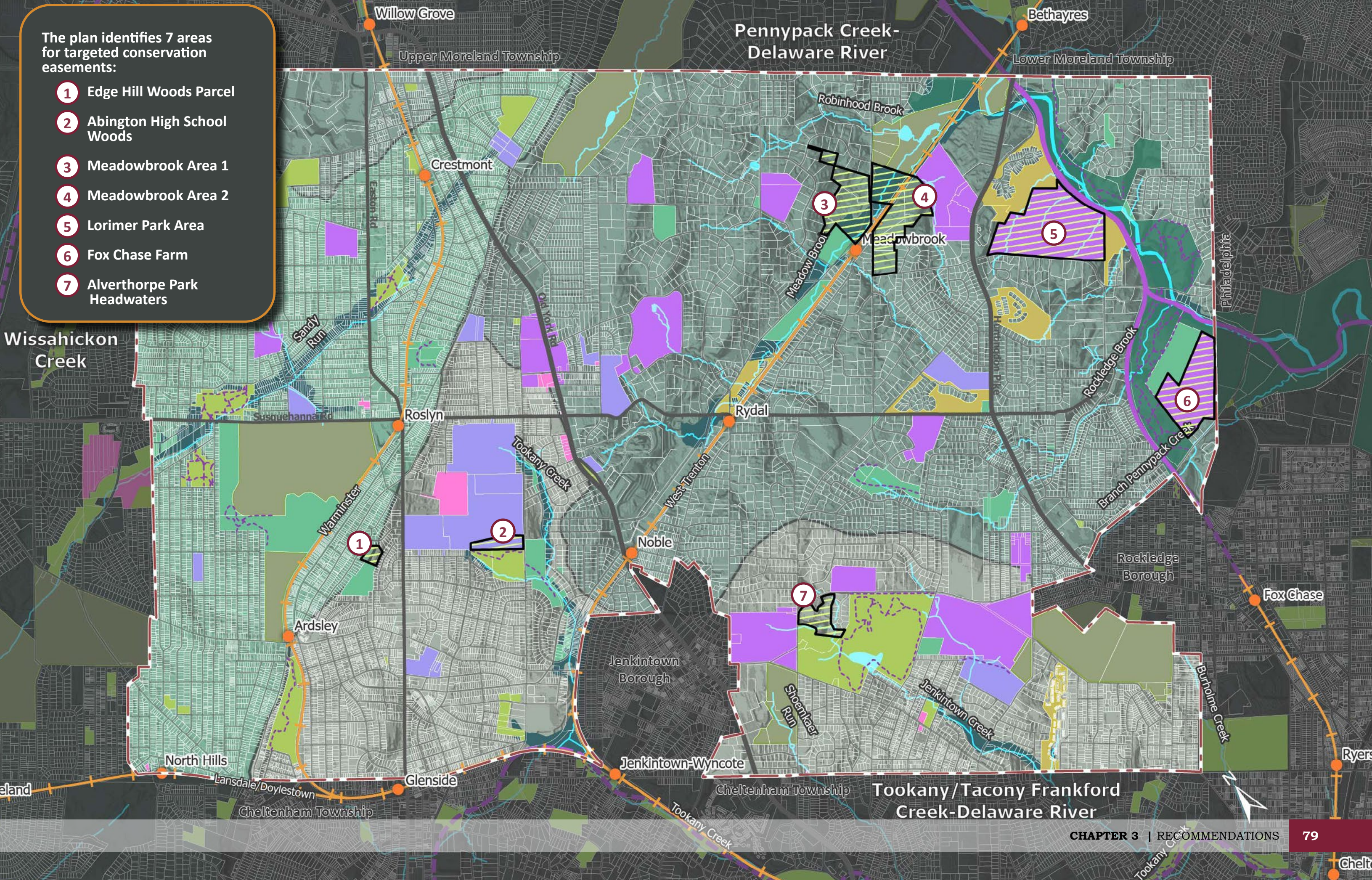
Preserving open space and natural resources does not require the Township to own land outright. Landowners that wish to see the natural systems of their lands preserved for future generations can please a conservation easement over all or a portion of their lands.

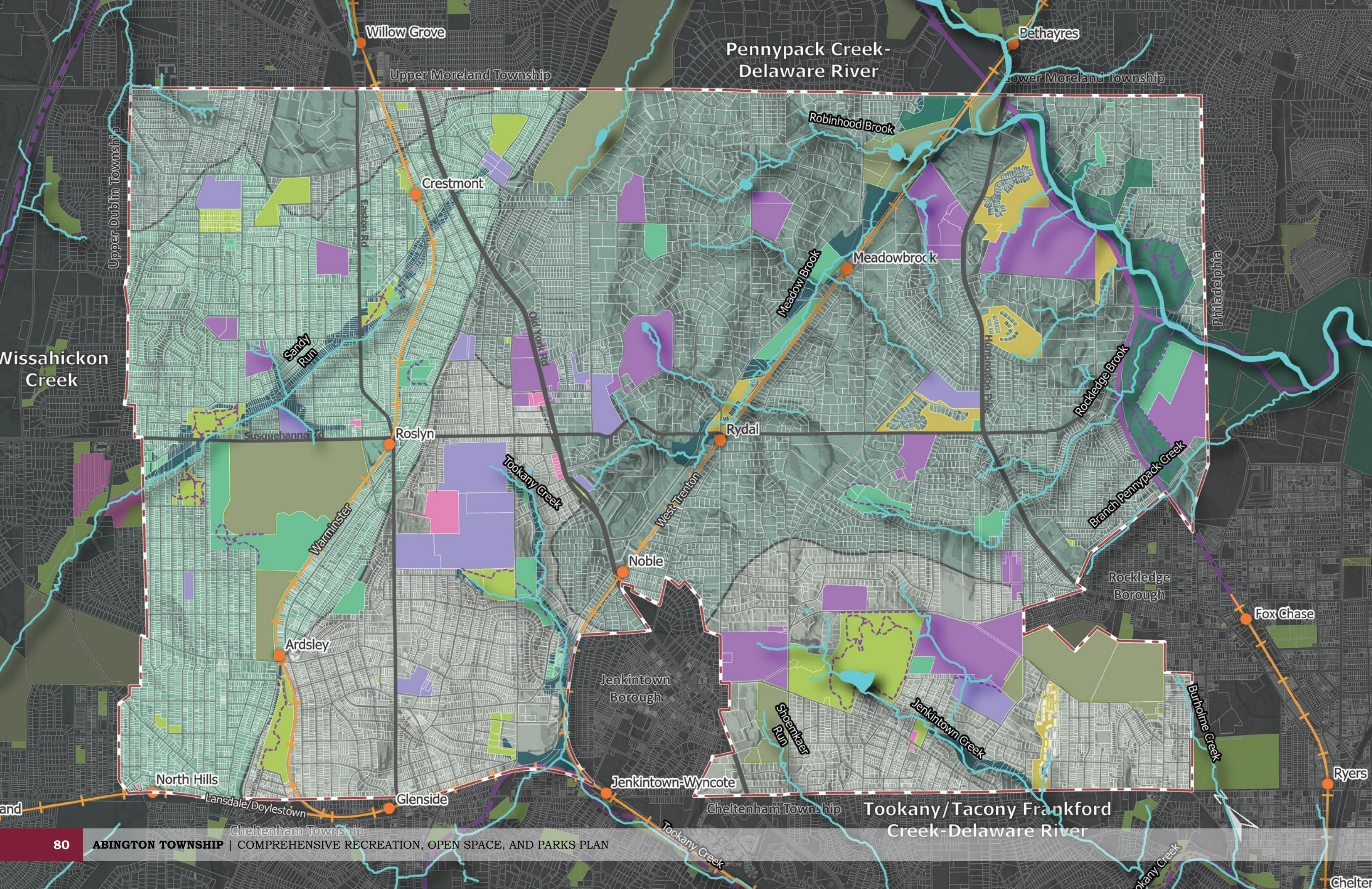
A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement between the landowner and a land trust or government agency. An easement becomes part of the legal description in the deed of a property and is tied to the land in perpetuity. Placing a conservation easement on land may provide valuable tax benefits. While a conservation easement works to preserve natural resources and limit development, it doesn’t automatically provide for natural lands to be open to public access.

Within the Abington region these land trusts operate to secure conservation easements:

- Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT)
- Wissahickon Trails (Formally Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association)

Recommended Land Conservation Easements Map





VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- *Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.*
- *Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.*
- *Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.*

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Work with Private Landowners to Develop, Strengthen, and Protect Riparian Corridors

Develop programing to educate properties owners about the importance of riparian corridors with a target on the Meadowbrook and Pennypack Creek tributaries. Education should focus on the importance of maintaining tree canopy coverage, removal of invasives and limiting mowing up to stream edges.

The Township can:

- Partner with associated watershed groups in coordinated efforts.
- Develop public understanding of local tributaries within the township
- Target property owner educational sessions around specific tributaries.
- Formally name tributaries to promote the effort.

Narrative

There are 28.95 miles of streams within Abington Township. This is equal to the distance along Interstate 95 from the Turnpike (I-276) interchange in Bucks County to the Philadelphia Airport. Of that total stream mileage, 2.67 miles are in the Sandy Creek watershed, 6.97 miles are in the Tookany Watershed, and 19.31 miles are within the Pennypack Watershed.

Within the Pennypack watershed Meadowbrook accounts for almost half of the total mileage with 9.27 stream miles. Large portions of the Pennypack Creek traverse open space land with the majority of its tributary’s and headwaters located on private properties.

Stream Corridor Map

VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

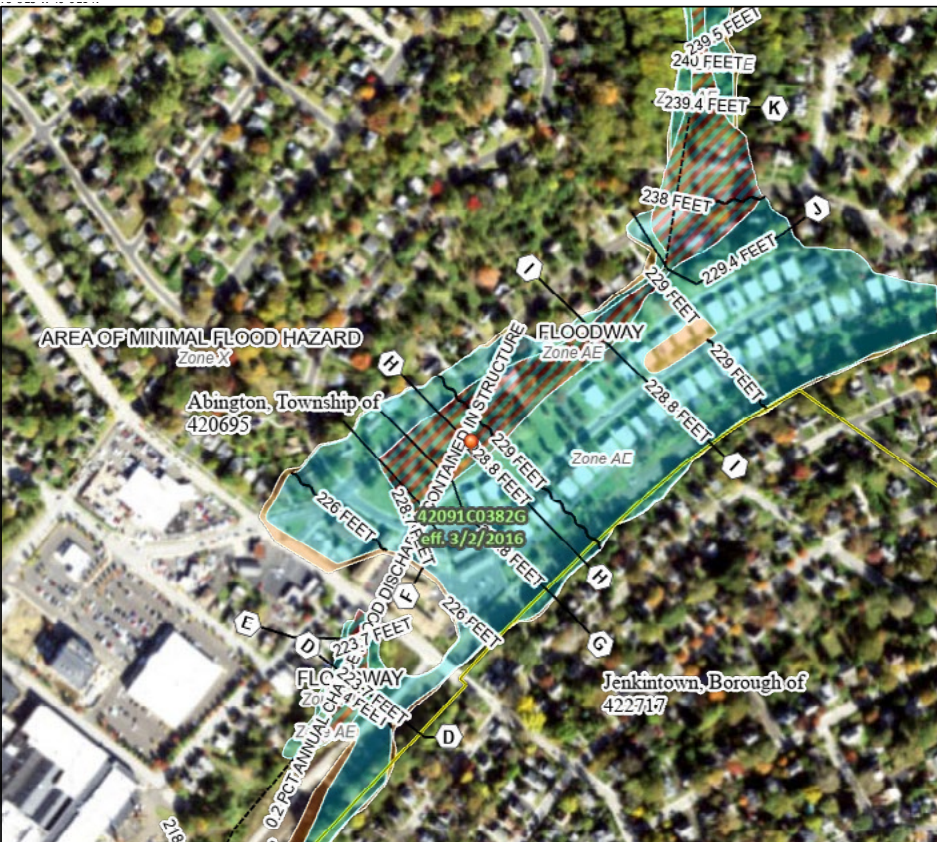
Identify Remaining Properties for FEMA/PEMA Buyout on Official Map

- Place remaining FEMA/PEMA buyout parcels on official map for future open space acquisition.
- Naturalize floodplain Areas.
- Identify appropriate recreational uses in areas.

Narrative

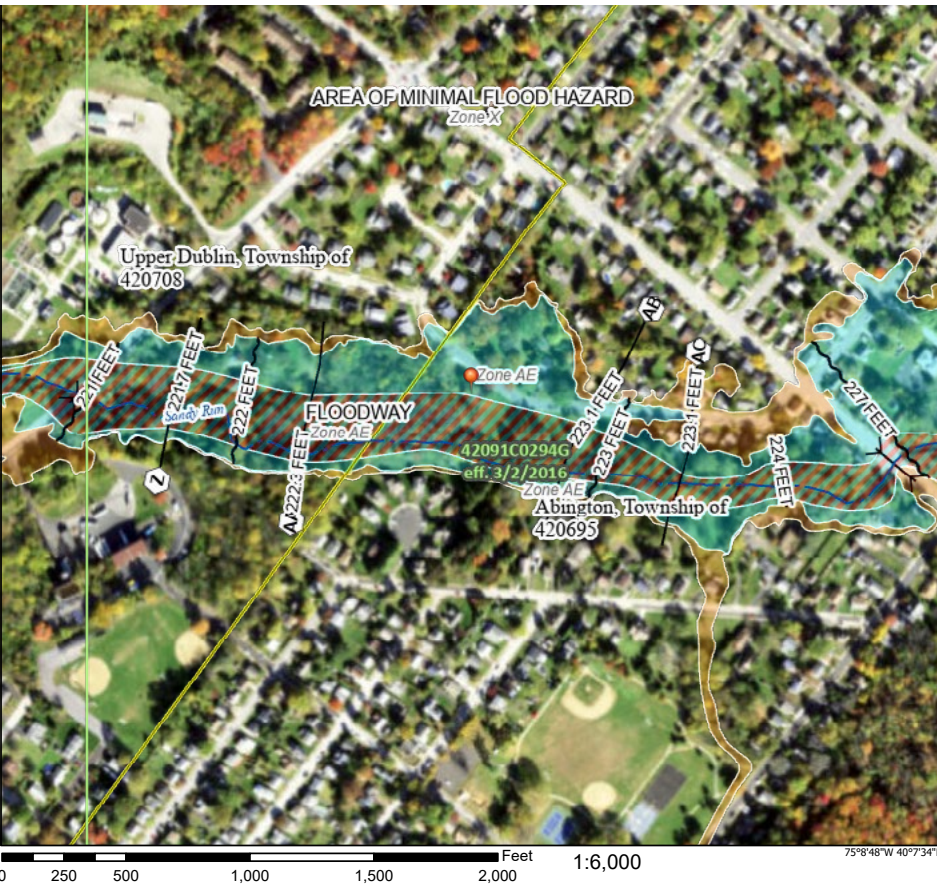
Relocating residences and businesses at risk to outside of a floodplain is a critical community goal for the safety and welfare of residents. Properties that fall within floodplain areas are available for funding that assists residents to relocate via a buyout through the FEMA/PEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency / Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The HMGP buyout program is a voluntary partnership between willing homeowners and local communities with the goal of permanently removing people and structures from the floodplain.

Periodically due to development, growth and climate conditions it is necessary to remap floodplain boundaries to identify new risk within communities. Abington Township remapped its floodplains in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s to identify structures located within the floodways and floodplains, and those parcels eligible for HMGP funding. In 2003, the Township purchased dozens of homes in floodplain areas and converted the lands into open space areas by leveraging \$7M of FEMA funds with \$1M of Township funds. Some affected owners elected not to relocate. Identifying these remaining properties on the Township Official Map will help to keep these properties on the radar for buyout by the Township when owners are ready to sell.



FEMA Flood Hazard Map for Baeder Road

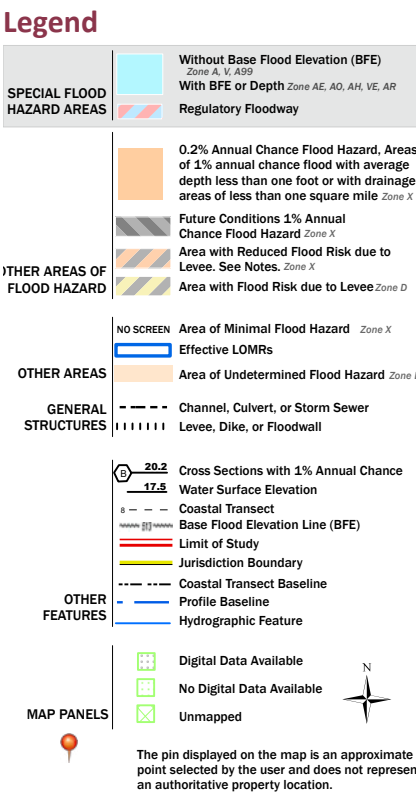
FEMA Flood Hazard Map for Deal Memorial Park Area



Floodway - The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Communities regulate development in these floodways to ensure there are no increases in upstream flood elevations.

Floodplain - Any land area that FEMA has determined has at least a one percent chance in any given year of being inundated by floodwaters from any source.

Flood Hazard Areas - FEMA defines Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). SFHA are defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood.



VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance Environmental Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore function to Township’s natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

Define Park/Open Space Sites as “Active Recreation” and “Passive Preserves”

- Clearly define these types of Township open space classifications within the Township ordinance.
- The Township may adopt terms clearly defining active recreation and passive recreation.
- Facilities may be clearly branded as active recreation parks and passive preserves within the township parks recreation and open space system.

Narrative

Defining “active” and “passive” recreation is unique to every community. In general, parks that are focused on active recreation refer to areas of programmed sports / activities that require dedicated spaces. Such activities may include basketball, softball, soccer, football, tennis, pickleball, lacrosse and cricket, etc.

Passive recreation refers to non-rigorous activities that do not require prepared facilities and have low impact on the surrounding environment. These activities may include walking, hiking, birdwatching, fishing, and picnicking.

Some activities may have both active and passive components that blur the lines between definitions. These might include community gathering/event areas; some trail uses such as horseback riding, mountain-biking, or orienteering; or facilities such as disc golf or picnic pavilions may sometimes be classified as either. Every activity does not fit neatly into the active/passive definitions.

For Abington, it is recommended that Active Recreation Parks should be places focused on community gatherings, organized sports, and developed recreational facilities. Preserves should focus on stewardship of ecological resources, development of trails for public access and education, and where appropriate, may include low impact recreation facilities such as small-scale playgrounds or pavilions. Based on the nature of some of Abington’s passive Open Space areas, a third category may be considered that denotes a preserve that does not offer public access by design.

PARKS		PRESERVES	
Active Parks: Areas designated shall be usable for such activities as sports, ballfields, hockey fields, exercise courses, walking, biking, jogging, playgrounds and similar open air recreation activities.	Size (acres)	Passive Open Space: Areas for such activities as picnic groves and walking paths. Areas left in a natural state and shall include woodlands, wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, floodplains.	Size (acres)
Alverthorpe Park	116.4	Alverthorpe Manor	10.2
Ardsley Community Center	3.2	Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary	26.9
Ardsley Park	11.4	Baederwood Park	24.4
Conway Park	3.8	Boy Scout Game Preserve	13.9
Crestmont Park	19.4	Briar Bush Nature Center	3.5
Elk Street Tot Lot	0.2	Coates Preserve	10.3
Ethel Jordan Memorial Park	3.7	Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary	13.1
Franklin Tot Lot	0.3	Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary	9.9
Glenside Weldon Park	10.4	Edmund R. Micciolo Park at War Memorial	1.0
Hallowell Park	6.5	Evergreen Manor Park	5.6
Lorimer Park	201.8	Fox Chase Manor Park	14.4
North Hills / Dennis Dougherty Park	3.2	Grove Park	8.9
Penbryn Park	24.2	Jackson Park	10.6
Rockwell Park	1.2	Karebrook Nature Area	17.3
Roslyn Park	10.2	Little Abington Meetinghouse	0.5
Roychester Park	13.9	Manor Woods Park	5.3
Rubicam Park	2.3	Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary	1.2
Scott Park	0.5	Tyson Green	1.0



Ardsley Park playground.

VISION 1.0

Preserve and Enhance
Environmental
Resources

Goal

Identify strategies to restore
function to Township’s
natural systems.

Objectives

- Identify priority open space sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
- Identify previously developed sites that critically impair natural functions and acquire them for restoration as funds are available.
- Strengthen protection of existing natural features that are vulnerable to development.

RECOMMENDATION 1.5

Coordinate Park and Open Space Branding with Watershed Education

- Coordinate to create clear watershed identities within the township, with the three watershed association: Wissahickon Trails, Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, and Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership.
- Structure the branding of parks, open space, and trails around the watersheds.
- Tie branding into MS-4 restoration projects as part of public education and outreach on stormwater impacts.

Narrative

Our streams and stormwater flows do not follow municipal boundaries, but instead follow watershed boundaries. A watershed is a geographic area of land that channels rainfall towards creeks, streams, and rivers until reaching an outflow point such as a bay or ocean.

For example, the watershed of the pond at Alverthorpe Park includes both the spring-fed stream that enters into the pond as well as the surrounding forested land and open fields that drain into the stream and the pond.

On a larger scale, the entirety of Montgomery County lies within the Delaware River Basin/Watershed. The Delaware River originates in New York state’s Catskill Mountains and flows south into Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Abington Township is at a unique headwater location – a the top of the watershed for three major Delaware River tributaries.

Watershed planning and management is critical to the health of communities and protecting life and property. In Montgomery County, there are 17 defined sub-watersheds that flow into the Delaware River, and each has a stormwater management plan also known In Pennsylvania as an Act 167 plan. These plans include inventories of the watersheds features; an assessment of the watershed health; and proposed recommendations to improve waterways and water quality. The plans are enforced through the adoption of stormwater regulations at the municipal level that comply with the federal Clean Streams Act. The improved health of a waterway can be measured by both its water quality and its improved capacity to handle stormwater flows during a rain event.

PA DEP (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection) is tasked by the federal EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) with

improving the health of impaired Commonwealth streams. The primary tool used to implement practices to improve water quality is the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. At the property owner level, any construction project that disturbs over one-acre of land for construction requires an approved NPDES permit. These permit plans are divided into two (2) parts. The Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control plans (ESPC) are to be implemented by the contractor throughout construction activities until the site is stabilized by permanent plant growth. The Post Construction Stormwater Control Plans (PCSC) document Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are to be constructed during the project and be maintained by the site owner for the life of the project. DEP publishes the Pennsylvania Handbook of Best Management Practices for Developing Areas, which outlines numerous solutions and guidelines for handling on-site stormwater.

On a larger scale, municipalities must obtain NPDES permit coverage for discharges of stormwater from their municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4). Throughout the state the majority of MS4 communities are not in compliance with the federal Clean Water Act and the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. To maintain MS4 discharge permits, communities “must develop, implement, and enforce a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the MS4 [permit holder] to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements” (PA DEP). A municipal MS-4 SWMP plan consist of 6 key components:

1. Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
2. Public Involvement/Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDandE)
4. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM)
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

Municipal permits are required to be renewed every five years. Abington Township was conducting its permit renewal process during 2023. A link to the Township MS4 Plan (as of May 2023) can be found at: <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/6003/636295122415170000>





VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

Overview

Parks serve as essential green infrastructure that provide physical, spiritual and health benefits. They are a critical piece of local government and often are the primary way residents interact with their municipality. Park resources include recreational facilities, natural systems, and staff. Strategic planning for each of these elements is critical to a successful park system and is key to making a community attractive to residents and businesses.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Develop park/preserve stewardship plans
- 2.2 Identify parcels for acquisition to meet future recreation and open space needs on Official Map
- 2.3 Acquire/secure long-term lease for existing “park” land not owned by Township
- 2.4 Develop/update park master plans
- 2.5 Modernize park lighting to be efficient; limit spill over; and dark skies friendly where feasible
- 2.6 Strive to remove underused impervious surfaces
- 2.7 Incorporate natural areas into all parks

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

Develop Stewardship Plans for Parks / Preserves

- Develop stewardship plans for township parks, preserves and open spaces.
- Plans should inventory existing habitat and vegetation and recommend strategies to restore and maintain natural resources.
- Ensure maintenance staff has training to implement/maintain long term plans.

Narrative

Much of Abington’s natural resources have been fragmented through its history of development. The Township has been successful in preserving open space – however, the days of labeling a forest stand as a “preserve” and leaving it untended for future generations to enjoy have passed. Like much of the natural areas of southeast Pennsylvania, Abington’s preserved lands struggle to be functional ecologically as regenerative landscapes due to extreme pressures from deer browsing, invasive plant species, stormwater run-off, and extreme weather events.

Stewardship Plans function as a maintenance plan for our natural areas. They provide the Township with an understanding of the resources that are required to ensure that the past investment made in open space continues to serve the community. Stewardship Plans should provide the Township with site-specific routine maintenance guidelines, integrated with longer term restoration projects. Stewardship restoration projects should be viewed as capital improvements in our parks, preserves, and open spaces. Rarely are they completed in one year. A successful restoration project may be implemented over 1 to 2 construction seasons. Annual inspection and routine maintenance of the landscape is required for many years to address and reduce pressures from deer and invasive plants.

Each year of routine inspection and maintenance at the front end of a successful restoration project will translate into less management demands over time. The goal of a successful restoration project is a functioning natural resource that adds to the resiliency of the Abington community.

Recommended Parks/Preserves to develop a Stewardship Plan for:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Coates Preserve / Baederwood Park | • Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary | • Grove Park |
| • Crosswicks Bird Sanctuary | • Evergreen Manor Park | • Jackson Park |
| • Deal Memorial Park | • Fox Chase Manor Park | • Karebrook Nature Area |
| | | • Manor Woods Park |



Existing conditions of the stream at Baederwood Park



Entrance at the Deal Memorial Park



Existing trail path in Edge Hill Woods Wildlife Sanctuary

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

Identify Parcels for Acquisition on the Official Map to Meet Future Recreation and Open Space Needs

Criteria for identifying parcels for acquisition include sites that have historically served the community’s recreational needs, parcel size, and location.

Narrative

Due to the limited availability of undeveloped lands in the Township these lands include private institutional and recreational facilities, as well as developed commercial areas. It is understood that it is unlikely that some of these lands would become available and the intent is not for the Township to acquire all of these lands. However, identifying them on an Official Map provides the Township a seat at the negotiation table should the lands ever be redeveloped.

The Official Map for a municipality can be an important tool for implementing the goals and community vision as described in its Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan. An Official Map is essentially a map and ordinance combined. Official Maps indicate the locations of planned future open space, public lands, and trails (as well as roads, schools, and stormwater management facilities) and expresses a municipality’s interest in possibly acquiring this land in the future. The Official Map allows Abington to focus its resources and is an important negotiation tool to ensure that future development is compatible and supportive of the Township’s visions and goals.

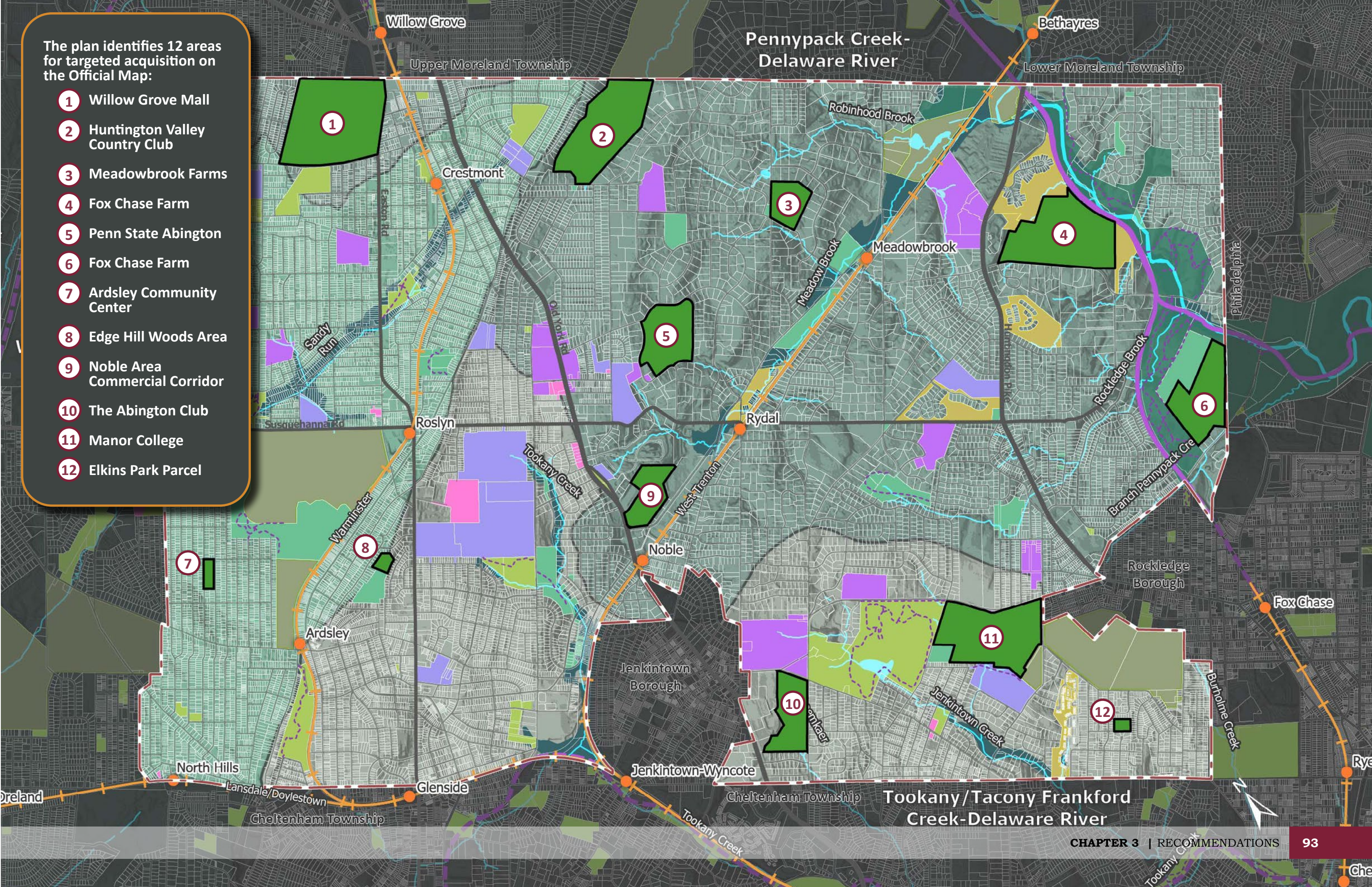
Provisions of an Official Map are triggered when a property owner or developer notifies the municipality (typically through the submission of a subdivision or land development application) of their intention to develop or subdivide an identified parcel of land. In Pennsylvania, the municipality then has up to one year to act in some manner. This could include negotiation or acquisition of the land or a portion of it for the use indicated on the Official Map. The municipality can also decide to take no action.

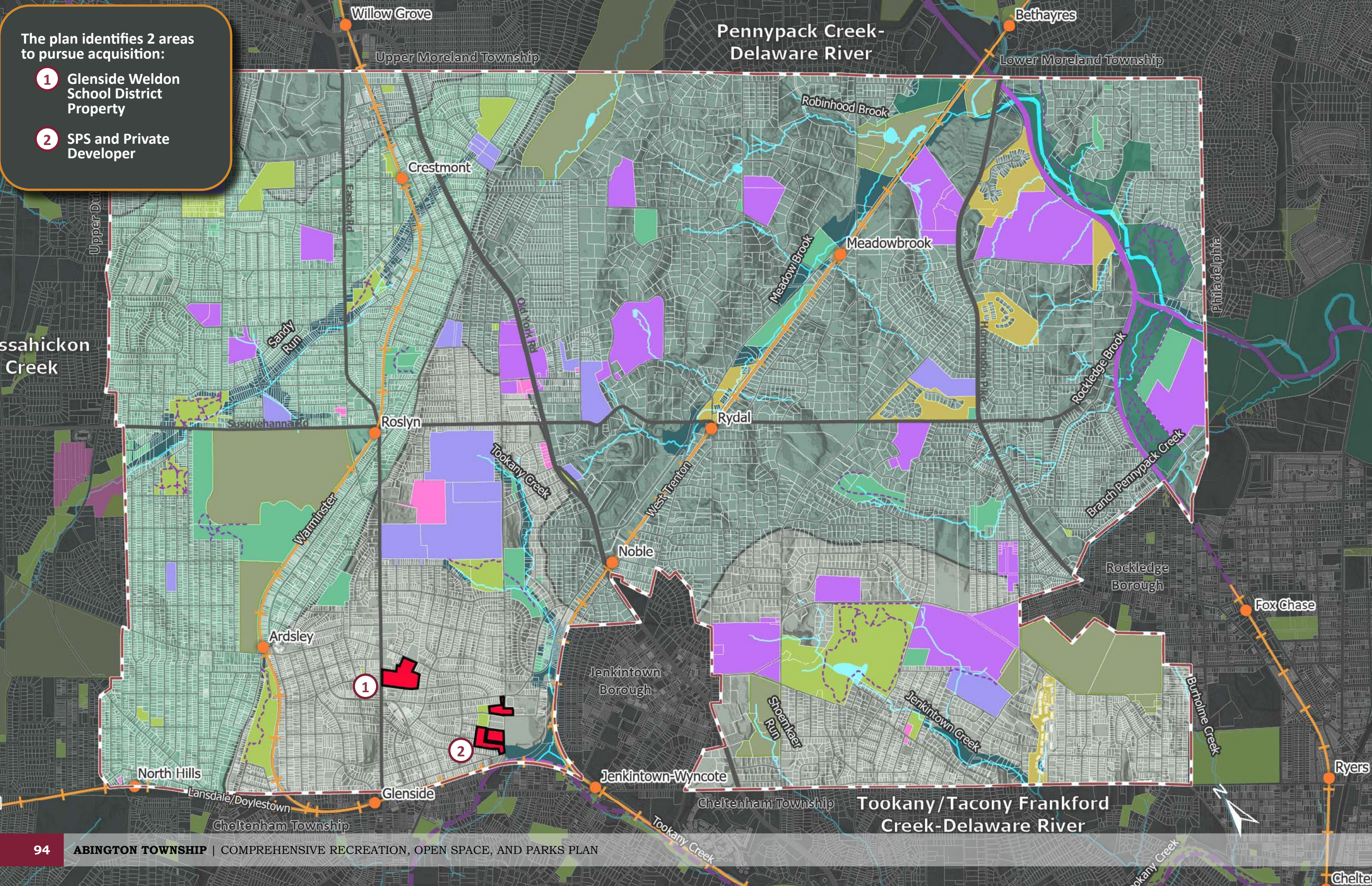
Often an Official Map can serve as a roadmap for developers to deliver desirable amenities such as parks and trail systems within their land development.

Recommended Open Space Acquisition Parcels to be Identified on an Official Map

The plan identifies 12 areas for targeted acquisition on the Official Map:

- Willow Grove Mall
- Huntington Valley Country Club
- Meadowbrook Farms
- Fox Chase Farm
- Penn State Abington
- Fox Chase Farm
- Ardsley Community Center
- Edge Hill Woods Area
- Noble Area Commercial Corridor
- The Abington Club
- Manor College
- Elkins Park Parcel





- The plan identifies 2 areas to pursue acquisition:
- 1 Glenside Weldon School District Property
 - 2 SPS and Private Developer

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3

Acquire/Secure Long-Term Lease for Existing “Park” Land Not Owned by Township

- Continue collaborations with the Abington School District to obtain a long-term lease or acquisition of the Weldon School site.
- Formalize use agreements and/or pursue acquisition for lands surrounding Hallowell Park.

Narrative

Currently, the majority of the Township recreational and open space needs are met on lands owned by the Township. There are some Township lands that have long term leases and others that are being used to meet community needs through less format arrangements. In the Glenside neighborhood two of the community’s major recreational resources are on lands not owned by the Township.

Weldon School adjacent to Keswick Village serves as the primary softball and baseball fields for Glenside Youth Athletic Club (GYAC). This site is centrally located in the Glenside neighborhood, and serves as a pseudo municipal park for the community within walking distance of many residences. Though GYAC has implemented some improvements including a new playground, the potential to plan and implement public park facilities that serve the greater community is limited.

Hallowell Park is a mix of Township-owned lands, long term leased lands, and private undeveloped lands adjacent to Standard Steel Press (SPS). The park serves the needs of GYAC softball and soccer programs and has an active friends group that is advocating for additional park improvements. The Township can be active in securing these lands for recreational uses and improvements.

Recommended Priority Acquisition Parcels map

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4

Develop/Update Park Master Plans

Master site plans / updates are priorities for the these parks:

- Crestmont Park / Evergreen Manor Park
- Penbryn Park
- Roslyn Park
- Ardsley Park
- Baederwood Park / Coates Preserve
- Alverthorpe Park
- Tyson Green
- Scott Park

Master plans can be undertaken in conjunction with recommended stewardship plans in some cases.

Narrative

A master site plan is a tool to guide the Township over a 10 to 20 year period – by helping to direct decision-making on facilities improvements; preserving open spaces; enhancing recreational programs; and sustaining optimum maintenance and staffing. Township recreation facilities may be the most visible component of local government. Residents interact with their Township through parks and recreation more than any other facility/ program. Given the prominent history of its parks system, it is essential that Abington Township have a clear vision and plan for both new and existing park facilities. After this Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Plan sets the community vision for the overall park system, Master Site Plans are used to set the site-specific visions for individual priority parks.

Many of the parks identified for master site planning in the next phases were developed between 1930 and 1970. Improvements have been implemented since their creations, but often incrementally without an overall guiding plan. Master Site Plans can be funded in partnership with DCNR, and are required by DCNR when grant funding is sought from the agency to help build the actual park improvements.

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.5

Modernize Park Lighting to be Efficient; Limit Spill Over; and be Dark Skies Friendly where Feasible

Modern lighting improvements should be implemented in the following parks:

- Crestmont Park
- Roslyn Park
- Alverthorpe Park
- Conway Fields
- Penbryn Park

Set standards for lighting across all facilities to simplify maintenance demands.

Narrative

Great strides have been made in the lighting of athletic facilities over the past 20 years. Development of LED lighting technology provides precisely directed lighting as well as high efficiency and low maintenance systems. Proper modern lighting of athletic facilities can extend the usable hours of a facility, keeping cost down, and limit / negate impacts on neighboring properties.

In addition to field lighting, parks with lighted facilities usually require additional lighting to safely deliver users to the facility. In tandem with upgrades to facility lighting, planning for upgrades to parking area lighting and pathway / wayfinding lighting should be considered.



Example of modernized lighting that produces minimal light pollution by MUSCO

VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6

Strive to Remove Underused Impervious Surfaces

- Review park facilities and plan for the removal of underused or deteriorated facilities.
- Explore removal of any degraded or outdated facilities with local residents and plan for site restoration prior to demolition.
- Determine if the full parking area Hallowell Park works with adjacent landowner, SPS, to meet the current and future needs of the company. Look to recapture part of the parking area into the park.
- Integrate pavement removal projects with restoration and stormwater BMP projects to meet MS4 plan goals.

Narrative

As facilities age or recreational trends change, underused areas of pavement have remained in the Abington park system. Underused pavements have a twofold effect of increasing stormwater runoff and taking up potential green space within a park. Some of these pavements are obvious, such as the court area in Ardsley Park where others may be less obvious. This plan begins to identify areas where the removal of pavement should be explored within the framework of a Park Master Site Plan with community input to ensure the engagement of park users.

Removing underused facilities can free up park land to meet other needs and new program elements. Projects should be envisioned as new improvements and not merely demolition projects – which will enable the Township to pursue partnership funding.



▲ A creative conversion of the concrete court areas at Alverthorpe Park into a dynamic multi-use court area is possible to meet the recreation needs while providing opportunities to eliminate portions of impervious pavement.

▼ Deteriorated court area at Ardsley Park offers opportunities for new facilities and /or elimination of impervious surfaces.



VISION 2.0

Steward Park Resources

Goal

Ensure that the Township park system meets current and future community needs addressing all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Develop select recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to meet active and other recreation needs.
- Address needs for new park facilities at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.
- Strive to include naturalized areas in all Township parks.

RECOMMENDATION 2.7

Incorporate Natural Areas into All Parks

Include natural areas within active recreational parks. Priority implementations may include:

- Strategic conversion of lawn to meadow areas
- Parking area tree planting
- Riparian corridor buffers
- Stream bank restoration vegetation

Develop sister parks where active parks are planned with adjacent passive parks. Potential sister parks and open space areas include:

- Crestmont Park and Evergreen Manor Park
- Baederwood Park and Coates Preserve
- Ardsley Park and Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary
- Conway Park and Deal Memorial Park

Narrative

As the Township evolves, its park system must continue to meet both the active recreational needs as well as offering passive places for residents to be in nature. The inclusion of trees, plantings, and meadows within parks not only addresses stormwater issues but create small pockets of habitat and nature even within small park areas.

Conversion of lawn to meadow can offer mid to long-term cost savings on maintenance as well as providing bird and pollinator habitat. A mature tree helps to intercept and slow down rainwater as well as provide shade and multiple levels of habitat within our parks. Focusing tree planting in parking areas and at the edges of athletic facilities and playgrounds can also offer essential shade amenities and help reduce heat island impacts on park microclimates.

Adding natural areas within active parks must be done strategically so that both maintenance staff and neighbors understand what the improvements are, how they work and their benefits. Aesthetics are an important key to the success of planting improvements. Safety is also a critical consideration. For example, warm season meadow grasses reaching 4-6 feet high may not be appropriate in a smaller park. However, areas of low mow turf with native perennial flowers that

appeal to pollinators can offer some of the benefits of a fully-functioning meadow while being an appropriate scale for a neighborhood park.

In some of the larger Township parks where other areas of adjacent opens spaces are close to the park, signage, wayfinding and branding of the facilities should be coordinated to convey to the public the recreational amenities/opportunities offered at each resource.



Naturalized area located in Coates Preserve.



View of the entrance of Coates Preserve from the entrance of Baederwood Park.



VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout the Township park system.

Overview

Ensuring safe connections to and within Township park facilities is a major consideration of a Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan. In a developed community like Abington, overcoming existing barriers to provide safe and universal access is not always easy.

A vision with strategic goals is critical to secure funding for priority safety and access improvements as opportunities arise. This plan considers how to incorporate universal access within parks and open space facilities, and build upon the prior bike connectivity plan for advance priority multi-modal improvements between park and open space facilities – and multiple other destinations in and around Abington.

Recommendations

- 3.1 Identify trail corridors on Official Map
- 3.2 Plan for future trail initiatives
- 3.3 Access improvements to and within parks
- 3.4 Provide ADA accessibility to all park features and amenities
- 3.5 Provide ADA surface trail loop systems in larger parks
- 3.6 Resurface existing walkways
- 3.7 Develop inclusive playgrounds
- 3.8 Standardized park/preserve signage

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

- Objectives
- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
 - Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
 - Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
 - Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Identify Trail Corridors on Official Map

- Place priority multimodal corridors on the official map. These include:
- Noble / Meadowbrook To Pennypack Trail connection
 - Noble / Alverthorpe To Pennypack Trail connection
 - York Road side path
 - Noble To Tookany Creek Greenway

Narrative

Trails identified for potential development or improvements within Abington are focused on several “corridors” conceived to capitalize on suitable topography and existing transportation routes to improve non-motorized connections between areas of population densities and popular destinations and regional trail and transit systems. The strategy is integrated with other multi-modal improvements envisioned for Abington, and combines recreation infrastructure with safer and more accessible mobility throughout the Township.

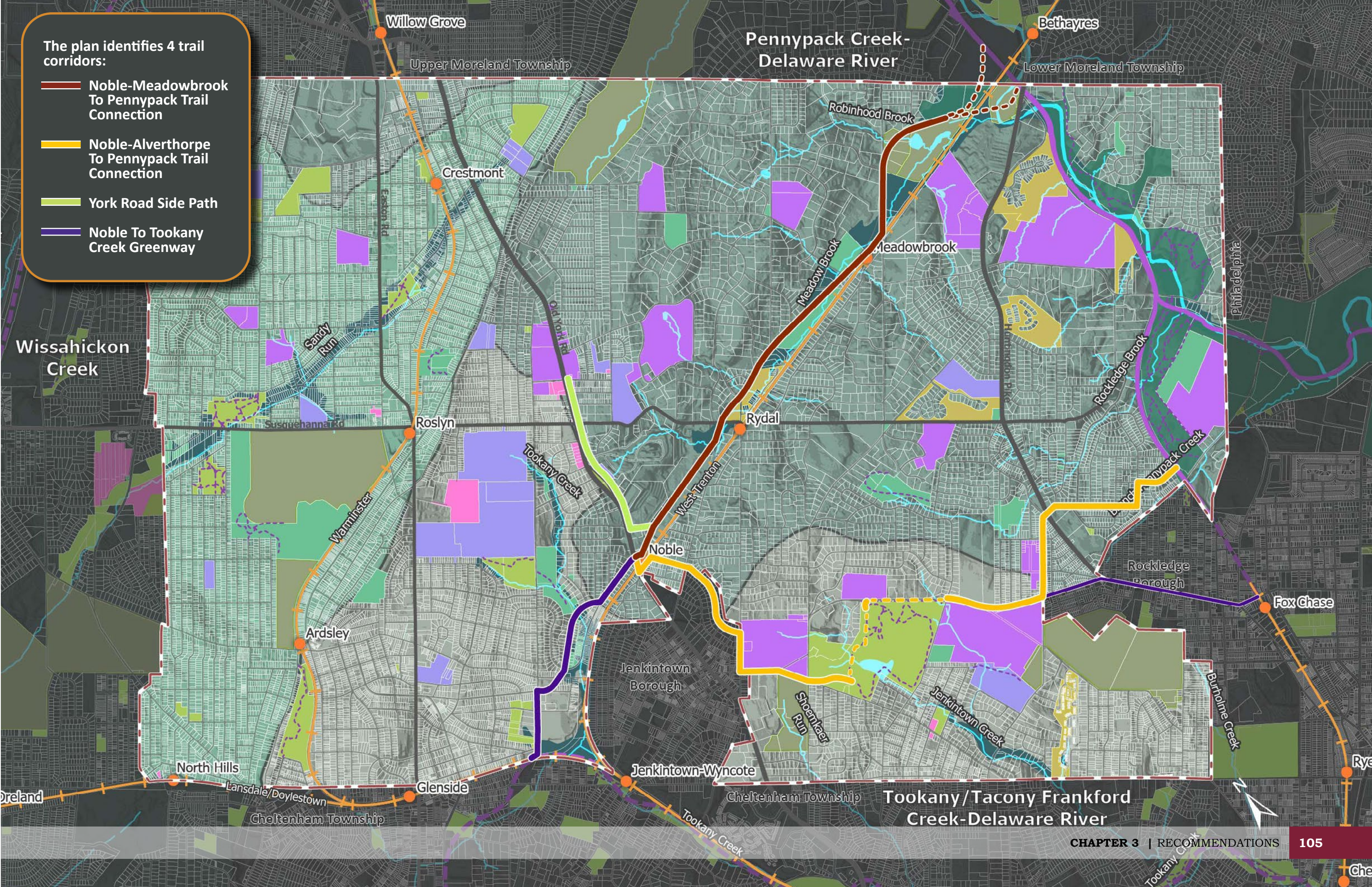
The corridors identified include proposed new connections from Abington Township to existing and proposed segments of the regional Circuit Trail System. The “Circuit” is a network of 800 miles of regional trails in various stages of planning and implementation, promoted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). Three direct Circuit Trail spurs are possible to create and improve direct linkages into the hearts of Abington Township neighborhoods:

- The existing Pennypack Trail is located in the eastern part of the Township.
- The Cross County Trail located in Upper Dublin and Upper Moreland Township that will connect the Schuylkill River Trail to the Pennypack Trail is in various stages of planning.
- The Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Trail located in Cheltenham and Philadelphia County that will connect the East Coast Greenway to the Cross County Trail is in various stages of planning.

Potential trail routes focus on connecting to the Pennypack Trail and Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Trail, within two of the three Township watersheds.

Recommended Priority Trail Corridors Map

(Text Continued on Back of Map)



Path users include, but are not limited to:

- Bicyclists of all types.
- Inline and roller skaters, and skateboarders.
- Kick scooter users.
- Pedestrians.

Creating a Noble-Alverthorpe to the Pennypack Trail connection and a Noble-Meadowbrook to Pennypack Trail connection, makes a “loop” trail route possible that piggybacks on the existing regional Pennypack Trail.

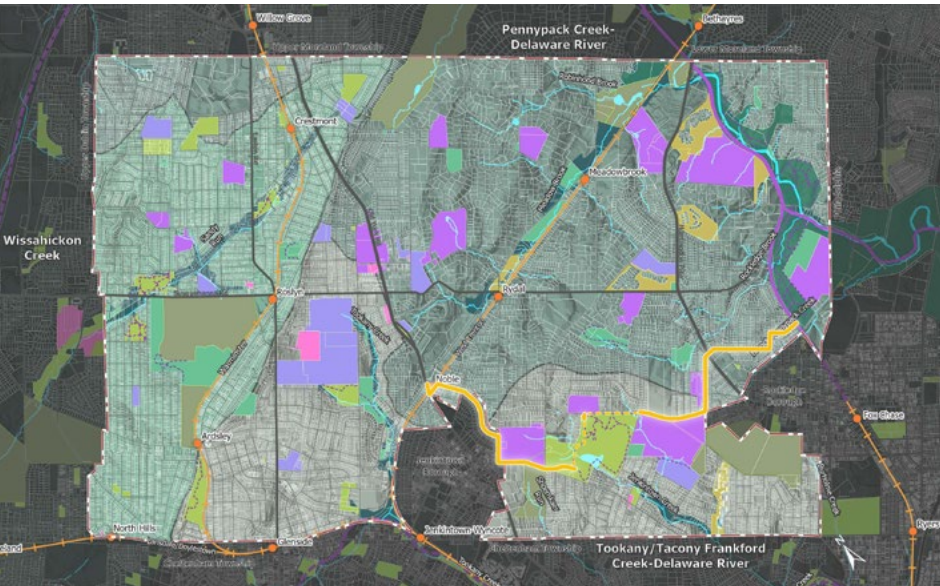
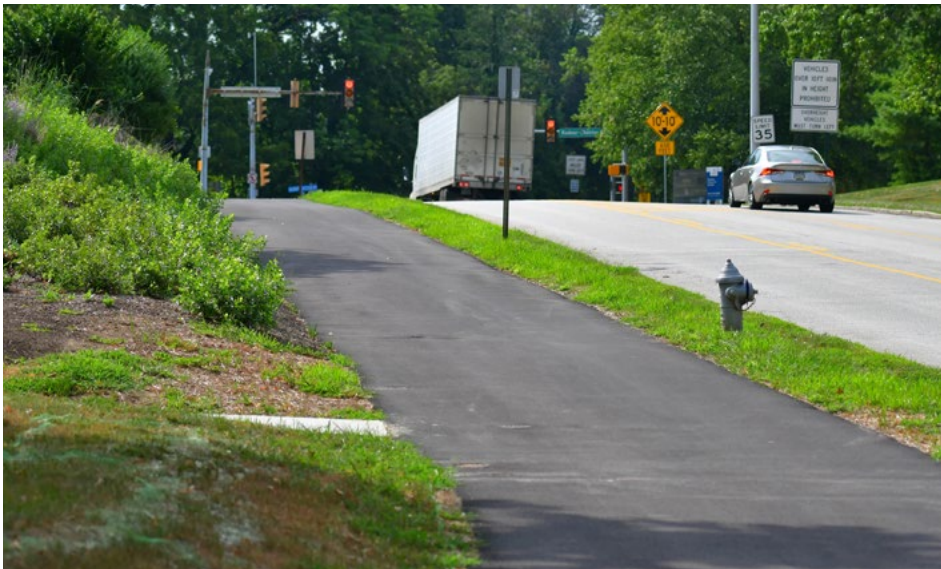
A Noble to Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Trail segment can extend connectivity between those two proposed DVRPC circuit trails.

A York Roadside Path has the potential to connect the Township Government Services campus to the Noble “Hub.”

Trail corridor priority improvements focus on corridors in the central and eastern part of the Township where park facilities are fewer and farther apart, and pedestrian facilities are not as common in neighborhoods – a combination of factors that limits non-motorized travel access to public trail and recreation facilities.

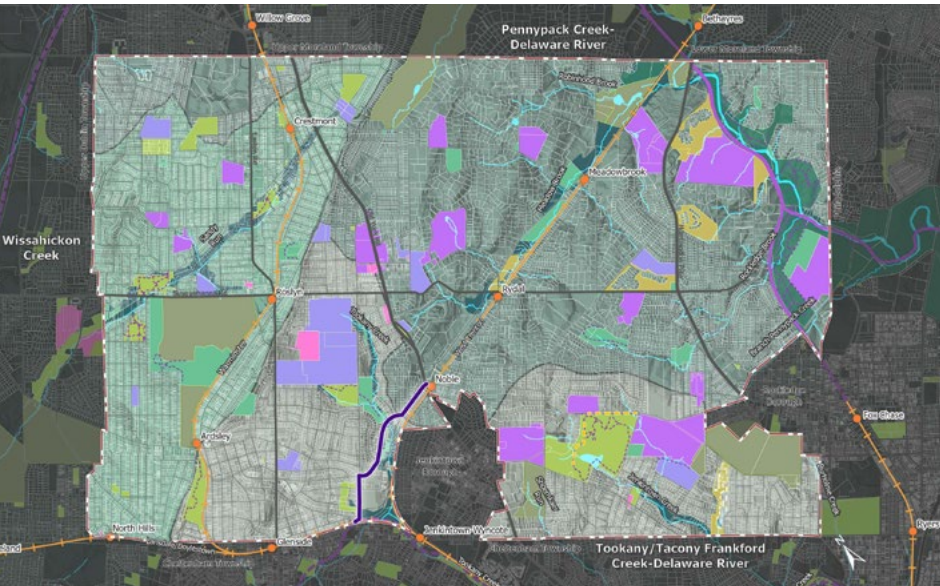
Where feasible, an ideal type of trail facility along existing roadways is the development of a side path. Side paths or ‘shared use’ pathways are pedestrian/bike facilities that are physically separated from the vehicular cartway by a barrier or open space. Side paths are typically 10 to 14-feet-wide with a minimum horizontal separation between the road and trail of five feet.

In many areas a side path will not be feasible, due to right of way limits, topography, vegetation, utilities or previous development. Along these portions of the corridor other traffic calming and bike facilities can be explored, including marked shared lanes, bike lanes, or contra-flow bike lanes. Pedestrian sidewalk facilities should be accommodated when feasible in areas where a side path is not possible. Pennsylvania law does not prohibit sidewalks being used for bicycle use. Municipalities may explore exceptions such as in central business districts.



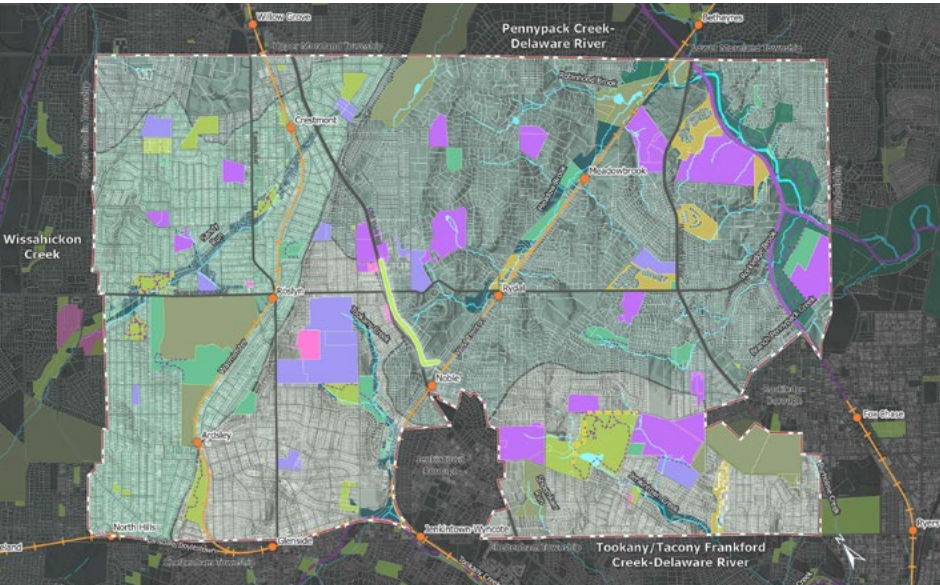
Noble-Alverthorpe to Pennypack Trail Connection:

- York Road to Rodman Avenue
- Upland Avenue
- Newbold Road
- Abington Friends School
- Connect to existing Alverthorpe Park Trails
- Fox Chase Road
- Cedar Road
- Rockledge Avenue
- Sherman Avenue
- Mankin Avenue
- Connect to Pennypack Trail



Noble to Tookany-Tacony-Frankford (TTF) Trail Connection:

- The Fairway
- Baeder Road
- Highland Avenue Side Trail
- Connection to planned TTF circuit trail



York Road Side Path:

- The Fairway
- York Road
- Connection to commercial area

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- *Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.*
- *Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.*
- *Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.*
- *Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.*

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Plan for Future Trail Initiatives

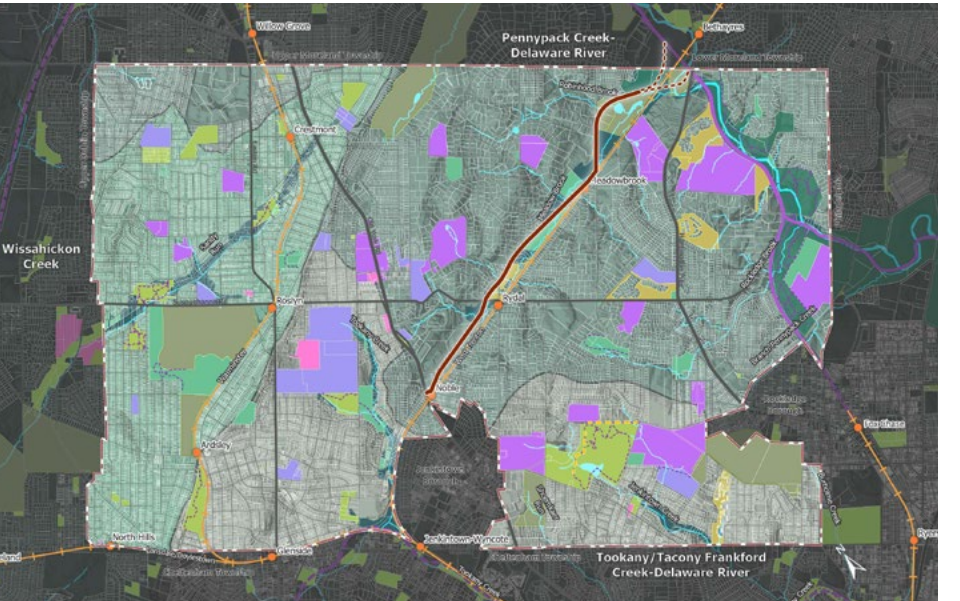
Conduct a feasibility study for the Noble-Meadowbrook to Pennypack Connector Trail.

Narrative

Popularity of the Pennypack Trail has grown since its completion and a potential connector trail from Noble along the Valley Road is a priority trail feasibility study to define options, costs, and funding partners for a recreation and multi-modal linkage between the most urbanized nexus in Abington and the regional riparian trail network on the eastern edge of the Township.

Segments of Valley Road do include bike lanes, however those facilities are geared toward level of comfort for more experienced bikers due to narrow lanes, drainage inlets, and wide traffic lanes that encourage high speed traffic.

Based on the width of the Valley Road right of way and the amount of open space land along the corridor, the feasibility of creating a side trail should be explored as a priority. A feasibility study will assess the best options for trail alignments or improved facilities; explore how best to navigate the many stream crossing along the Valley Road corridor; identify multi-modal and accessibility improvements to SEPTA and neighborhoods; and determine if and where easements might be needed for a through route.



Noble-Meadowbrook to Pennypack Trail Connection

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

Improve Access To and Within Parks

Ensure a system-wide focus on safe crossings into parks, and a modal hierarchy that favors pedestrians over cars within parks and open space facilities.

Narrative

The Township can coordinate efforts between Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments to prioritize sidewalks, walkways, and crosswalks that deliver people into parks – to ensure those facilities meet current safety and ADA standards. These types of improvements are legal requirements for any new features.

Priority can be given to upgrading sidewalks and crosswalks at main entry points and routes that connect parks, trails, and open spaces to other civic, commercial, schools facilities, and adjacent neighborhoods.

In locations where pedestrians are forced to use existing vehicular driveways to enter parks, a clearly defined separate pedestrian sidewalk is a priority remedy. The sidewalk should be separated by a fence, curb, or 5-foot width of green space.



▲ Curb extension



▲ Raised crosswalk



▲ Rectangular rapid flashing beacon

Curb extension – Curb extension / bump-outs are where sidewalks and curb cuts are extended to the striped shoulder line or to the width of on-street parking bays – with corresponding extended curbing – which creates greater refuge for the area at one or both ends of the crosswalk, and effectively reduces the crossing distance and time for pedestrians to be in the roadway from curb to curb.

The curb extension also improves the line-of-sight for pedestrians; makes pedestrians more visible to oncoming traffic; slows traffic using the “calming” technique of reducing the visible width of the vehicular cartway; and can help slow vehicles making right turns by reducing the curb radius.

Curb extensions are identified by PennDOT as a tool with moderate effect at reducing vehicular speed and pedestrian / vehicular conflict reduction and minimal to no effect on volume reduction and emergency response.

Design of curb extensions must account for roadway drainage and snow removal. In some cases, curb extensions can help create opportunities for stormwater quality best management practices (BMPs).

Raised crosswalks – A raised crosswalk is elevated 6-inches above street grade to be flush with the curbs on either side.

A raised crosswalk that is designed to function as a speed hump and is 22 total feet in length, with 6-foot approach ramps on either end of a 10-foot wide crosswalk deck. The table is designed to allow for car maximum speeds of 25-30 mph. Raised crosswalks help improve pedestrian visibility to motorists by defining the crossing areas in three dimensions. Raised crosswalks must meet all ADA requirements, width for roadway drainage and snow removal. Raised crosswalks are identified by PennDOT as offering a moderate effect at volume reduction and pedestrian-vehicular conflict reduction; having a significant effect on speed reduction; and possibly impacting emergency response times. Recommended spacing for speed humps are 250 to 600 feet apart.

Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) – Installation of new crosswalks without some form of traffic control device is not recommended for pedestrian safety. Stop signs and traffic lights are examples of a typical control device.

When no traffic light or stop sign exists for a pedestrian crosswalk, a pedestrian-actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) can be used. RRFBs accompany a pedestrian warning sign and consist of two, rectangular- shaped yellow indications, each with a LED-array-based light source that flash with an alternating high frequency when activated by a pedestrian. RRFB can help enhance pedestrian conspicuity and increase driver awareness at uncontrolled, marked crosswalks. RRFB can increase motorist yielding rates up to 98% and reduce crashes involving pedestrians up to 47%.

Mid-block crosswalks are not the preferred locations, but if required, traffic control devices are needed for pedestrian safety.

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4

Provide ADA Accessibility to All Park Features and Amenities

- Incorporate accessible design principles systematically into all park and open space improvements.
- Identify barriers and prioritize removal / remedies.

Narrative

Many Abington Township park facilities were constructed prior to the adoption of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There have been many improvements since the law was passed such as new playground facilities meet ADA standards; but access to and through many Township parks and open spaces still remains difficult or not possible. Primary consideration should be given to ensure that a universal ADA compliance is achieved, including: walkways and accessible routes to park facilities; seating and multiple facilities to accommodate a variety of abilities; as well as appropriate signage. These system-wide improvements can be planned and programmed comprehensively and implemented incrementally with every new or rehabilitation project opportunity.

As per the Federal Bureau of Transportation statistics, “25.5 million Americans age 5 and older have self-reported travel-limiting disabilities. 13.4 million are age 18 to 64 and 11.2 million are age 65 and older.” This accounts for 8.5 percent of the total population. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design is the national baseline standard for public accessibility in the United States. These are standards mandated by federal statute. Public recreation improvements must be designed following the most recent edition of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, which can be accessed at: <http://www.ada.gov>.

Additional guidelines have been developed to provide guidance for outdoor recreation facilities including trails – which allow for longer runs at higher gradients between landing areas. For example, a slope of 8.3% can extend for 200 linear feet before a resting area is provided. The full guidelines can be found at: <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/#trails>.

While ADA standards work to address many of the issues faced by disabled populations, its focus is primarily on mobility.

“Universal Design” looks to expand upon ADA to ensure that the full array of disabilities which face our communities today are addressed. Universal Design (UD) is defined as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University). Universal design is meant to be adaptable to various building types, learning environments, and communities. UD is driven by seven core principles:

Equitable Use The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. For example, a website that is designed to be accessible to everyone, including people who are blind and use screen reader technology, employs this principle.

Flexibility in Use The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. An example is a museum that allows visitors to choose to read or listen to the description of the contents of a display case.

Simple and Intuitive Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Science lab equipment with clear and intuitive control buttons is an application of this principle.

Perceptible Information The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities. An example of this principle is captioned television programming projected in a noisy sports bar.

Tolerance for Error The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. An example of a product applying this principle is software applications that provide guidance when the user makes an inappropriate selection.

Low Physical Effort The design can be used efficiently, comfortably and with minimum fatigue. Doors that open automatically for people with a wide variety of physical characteristics demonstrate the application of this principle.

Size and Space for Approach and Use Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of the user’s body size, posture, or mobility. A flexible work area designed for use by employees who are left- or right-handed and have a variety of other physical characteristics and abilities is an example of applying this principle.



▲ Photo example of an ADA curb cut and detectable warning surface at Ardsley Park

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5

Provide ADA Surface Trail Loop Systems in Larger Parks

- Provide close to home opportunities for residents to get out and walk safely in their communities.
- Consider emphasizing “loop” trails in these parks:
 - Crestmont Park
 - Penbryn Park
 - Roychester Park
 - Hallowell Park

Narrative

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural resources regularly updates its Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). For over a decade, walking/ running and hiking consistently rank as the most popular recreational activities in communities across the Commonwealth. This preference was echoed in the results of the public survey conducted for this Abington Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Many of Abington’s larger parks offer a network of walking pathways. However, opportunities should be explored to incorporate more walking options within the parks. Walking trail facilities should be minimum 5-feet-wide and of a level stable surface such as asphalt, or concrete. Stone Dust surface may be feasible for some trails however only in areas with slopes under 3-percent to avoid erosion of the surface.



Segment of trail leading into Penbryn Park.



Roychester Park playground with no walkway surrounding or leading to the equipment.

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.6

Resurface Existing Walkways

Explore new surface types for the Ardsley and Roslyn Park trail systems to limit regular maintenance demands.

Narrative

Ardsley and Roslyn Parks both have stone dust paths that provide walking opportunities throughout the park.

Stone dust paths are a low cost walkway surfaces that can be designed and installed to meet ADA guidelines, however the lower capital cost usually requires additional operations costs to maintain an accessible surface. Over time the stone dust material will migrate and/or vegetation will grow into the walkway, requiring the need for maintenance and additional stone dust material. Over the life of a trail this routine maintenance can end up being more costly than a more durable trail surface.

Stone dust pathways are not recommended for walkways that exceed 3 percent gradient. Sections of steep trail in Ardsley Park are paved with asphalt to protect against erosion. Walkway surface transitions from stone dust to asphalt are locations where low spots and tripping hazards may occur. Stone dust or gravel paving is not recommended near streams or in flood plains because the material will migrate into the waterway and leave an alignment non-functional.

Ultimately, the trail networks in each park can be upgraded to asphalt or similar solid surface pavement to reduce maintenance.



Ardsley Park existing trail conditions.



Roslyn Park existing trail conditions.

VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.7

Develop Inclusive Playgrounds

- Advance recommendations of master plan for at inclusive play playground.
- Incorporate inclusive play design principal in playground upgrades system-wide.

Narrative

At the time of this recreation and open space planning project, the Township began a master planning project to develop an inclusive playground at Roychester Park. The vision for this project was advocated and initiated by a number of parents in Abington Township and the Township continues to support their vision.

Similar types of improvements may be possible at other Abington park sites, as Township playgrounds are slated for upgrades, the design of play areas can be considered if feasible to incorporate inclusive play principles.

Inclusive play is more than meeting ADA requirements. An inclusive playground encourages children and care givers of all abilities to be part of the play together with their peers. Play fosters an environment where children can develop physically as well as cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Inclusive play design often references the seven Universal Design Principles:

1. Equitable Use.
2. Flexibility in Use.
3. Simple and Intuitive Use.
4. Perceptible Information.
5. Tolerance for Error.
6. Low Physical Effort.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use.

An inclusive playground will consider both the experience of play and the components of safety, comfort and access. Considerations include fencing, intuitive wayfinding features, shade, seating, and unitary play surfaces.



Precedent images of an inclusive design playground called Harper’s Playground, located in Portland.



VISION 3.0

Improve Multi-modal and Universal Access to Park and Recreation Amenities

Goal

Improve access to parks to ensure that the Township park system meets community needs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Connect neighborhoods to County trail system.
- Develop a trails and greenway plan; identify strategies to link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.
- Collaborate with trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the system expands in the future.
- Plan for universal accessibility throughout Township park system.

RECOMMENDATION 3.8

Standardize Signage for Parks and Preserves

- Provide site orientation and wayfinding signage system wide.
- Create scaled trail and facility maps for larger parks.

Narrative

Clear and easy to use signage is a key component to ensuring that a park is accessible. A good understanding of our public spaces makes everyone more comfortable. The reality that most of us will experience a disability within our lifetime, makes all of us members of the “temporarily-abled” body population. Adequate wayfinding signage can play a key role in creating an accessible park experience for all spectrums of disability – including physical, sensory, and neurocognitive disabilities.

In smaller parks, signage may be as simple as a clear entry signage and an informational kiosk with a park map locating amenities and noting accessible routes.

In larger parks, additional information such as trail lengths, and difficulties can be clearly displayed at key locations. Trails should be clearly marked, and if there are multiple trails a color/symbol blazing system should be implemented. Access to park information and maps should be provided in print and digital formats to help people plan outings.



The graphic above is an example of cohesive wayfinding signage completed for Delaware County Parks



Photo collage demonstrating the varying park signage and wayfinding throughout the Township.



VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program

Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

Overview

The Township offers a wide array of recreational activities and programs to meet the needs of the population. Offerings are on par with those of the Township’s peers and national averages. Township parks and recreation facilities are the most visible component of local government. Residents interact with their Township through parks and recreation more than any other facility/ program. Ensuring that recreation facilities and programs are current and relevant is a key component to maintaining a community attractive to residents and businesses.

A vision to commit to the periodic review of facilities and programs is critical to ensuring that the Township’s recreation, open space, parks facilities and programs continue to serve the community to the fullest extent possible. This plan considers how to address any gaps in service and incorporate new recreational trends into the Township facilities.

Recommendations

4.1 Develop additional neighborhood playground opportunities

4.2 Convert Alverthorpe wading pool into splash pad

4.3 Redevelop pool facilities

4.4 Develop community building feasibility study

4.5 Field programming and usage

4.6 Formalize and communicate policies

4.7 Continue to foster relationship with library

4.8 Incorporate new facilities and programs based on recreational trends

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Develop Additional Neighborhood Playground Opportunities

Explore options to include neighborhood play opportunities at:

- Jackson Preserve nature-based play area
- Scott Park tot lot

Narrative

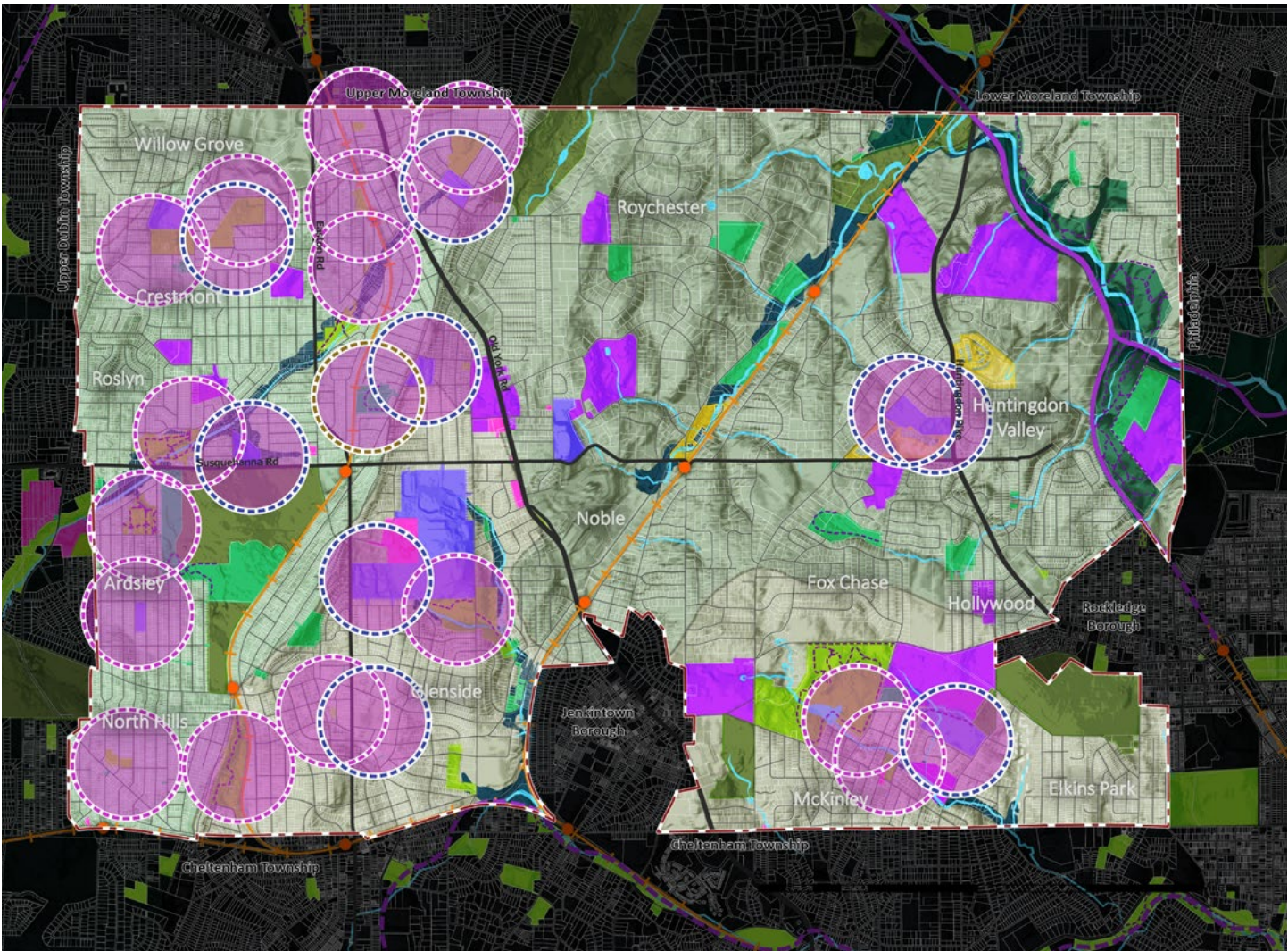
The distribution of playground resources is concentrated in the western part of the Township – due to development history and differences in topography. Opportunities to include playgrounds in the eastern part of the Township should be explored for both traditional and nature-based play opportunities.

Scott Park is located behind the Huntingdon Valley Shopping center located in a dense residential neighborhood with sidewalks but no improvements in the park. A sidewalk connection exists from the shopping center at the northern edge of the park, and additional connections from the park into the shopping center could be explored with the neighborhood

Based on its proximity and access to a walkable neighborhood, the a new playground use should be explored here.

A Jackson Preserve master site plan was completed in 2009 – which proposes a series of paved and mown trails paired with habitat restoration. A nature-based playground would be appropriate in this location with the preserve identity conserved and a carefully integrated opportunity for children’s play within the Meadowbrook neighborhood where the concentration of parks and open space is lower.

The nature-based playground at Briar Bush Preserve is a model for the type of nature-based play activities in a preserve setting.



▲ Playground Service Area Map. The graphic above highlights the services areas around each neighborhood park to exemplify the playground gaps throughout the Township.

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

Convert Alverthorpe Wading Pool into Splash Pad

- Advance the conversion of the wading pool into a splash pad to create a more inclusive play experience.
- Explore options to incorporate winter ice skating into splash pad facility.

Narrative

The existing wading pool at Alverthorpe operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day. However, during 2022, staffing challenges at the facility created difficulties is keeping regular hours of operation. During the “young family” stakeholder interview one mother noted that it is difficult to plan a trip to the wading pool because it is often not open. Based on the infrastructure already in place, a conversion of the Alverthorpe wading pool to a recirculating splash pad is considered feasible.

Splash pad areas are an economical solution to providing non-fee and safe water play opportunities within communities. A splash play or zero-depth water play area is a plaza with water play elements that can be both artful and playful. Water does not pool or accumulate on the ground in zero depth water play features so the need for qualified lifeguards is eliminated. Since this facility type is not staff-dependent, seasons can be extended, to make this form of water-based recreation desirable for climates such as eastern Pennsylvania.

Systems can be designed as water pass-thru or recirculating and filtered systems. Pass-thru systems are less expensive to install and maintain, however there are higher costs associated with operations due to water costs and sewer costs. There are also environmental costs for exhaustive water use.

A recirculating system collects water via drain inlets, filters, treats, and recirculates it in a closed system through a series of pumps. This system has higher initial costs and requires regular maintenance. However, the long-term cost of operating the system is much less. In a recirculating system, water chemistry is maintained to meet the safety standards for public pools. With modern single source systems, the treatment and testing of water is automated and staff demands are limited to maintaining water quality logs.

Splash play systems can be user-actuated and programed to save electricity and water. The plaza surface can be pavers or colored concrete installed in a range of colors and designs. The area can operate as a seating plaza when not in use. The spray play facility needs to be served by electric, water, and sanitary sewer access.

New trends in splash pad development look to extend the use of a splash pad area into all seasons by incorporating ice skating. Current freezing technologies allow an ice sheet to remain frozen even as daytime temperatures approach 50-degrees. This means an ice sheet can be functional from late November to early March. The use of removable water-play features or simply the use of programmable vertical spray elements within the water-spray zone make the surface suitable for flooding and freezing. This option enables the possibilities for a summer-only water play area to be useful beyond a single season.

Consideration may be given to possibly consolidating the existing four Township ice skating facilities that are currently weather-dependent into one or more weather-independent winter season recreation and programing opportunities.



Alverthorpe Park existing wading pool

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

Redevelop Pool Facilities

- Pursue next steps for Penbryn Park Pool renovations.
- Pursue next steps for Crestmont Park Pool renovations.

Narrative

The 2018 Facilities Analysis and Feasibility Study for Penbryn and Crestmont Pools recommended the replacement of both these Abington Township pool facilities. The studies reviewed the existing conditions of the pools and considered three options for the Township:

Option 1: Do Nothing,

Option 2: Renovate the Pools and Buildings,

Option 3: Replace Pools, Buildings, and Site Amenities.

Based on findings in the report analysis, Option 1: Do Nothing is not a viable option.

Option 2: Renovate the Pools and Buildings, though possible to pursue, is not recommended due to the age of the pool shells.

Option 3: Replace Pools, Buildings, and Site Amenities was recommended, and though considered the most expensive option, it represents the best long-term solution for the future of the municipal pools.

Redevelopment of the Township pools allows for the installation of modern and efficient pool facilities that reflect current recreational aquatic trends, meet modern standards, and might potentially open additional programming opportunities.

The Township should pursue Park Master Plans Updates for each park and pool facility to determine the local neighborhood priorities for each and further refine strategies for redevelopment within a Township-wide context.



Crestmont Park Pool



Penbryn Park Pool

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4

Develop Community Building Feasibility Study

- Explore neighborhood community center model vs central community center.
- Explore location options.
- Identify programming and facilities.
- Look at market analysis / fee structure.

Narrative

The Township currently operates Ardsley Community Center, Crestmont Clubhouse and provides classroom space at Alverthorpe Manor. These spaces work well for classroom-oriented programing. The Ardsley Center also features a cafeteria/gym space that works well for informal games, but not for youth league recreation.

As reflected in the 2023 Online Opinion Survey, many residents feel they have lost a community center with the relocation of the YMCA. The public desire for a larger central community center is one that faces many municipalities similar to Abington. Facilities within community centers are often geared towards individual and group fitness and may include gymnasium, fitness room, indoor track, multi-purpose surface studio, classroom(s), multi-purpose community room(s) along with support offices and spaces.

The first step in exploring options for a new community center is to undertake a feasibility study, which will identify current programing spaces within the Township and evaluate the effectiveness of their use and identify deficiencies in these existing spaces. Feasibility study tasks will include exploring gym space within the Township to determine if additional gym space is required for youth and adult programming. The study will assess potential sites for new and retrofitted community facilities and deliver a market analysis and recommended fee structure for a new Township Community Center.

A feasibility study may show that some minor changes or renovations to the current uses of existing facilities can meet the needs of the community, or that the Township should pursue the development of a new facility to eliminate gaps in the demand for indoor recreational facilities.



Ardsley Community Center



Crestmont Community Building

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5

Refine Programming and Usage

- Continue to look for additional space to meet growing athletic sports needs.
- Explore feasibility for additional synthetic turf facilities.

Narrative

Youth sport leagues are abundant in Abington. Youth organizations provide sporting opportunities for Abington youngsters and their families. These organizations are active partners with Abington Township and utilize and help maintain park facilities for a majority of their sports offerings. These historic partnerships enable the Township to provide sport fields and fundamental maintenance and the organizations to pay for field usage and assist with field maintenance.

Over the past 20-30 years, the needs of youth sports programs have evolved from when the athletic facilities were first developed in Abington. Previously, different sports each had very defined seasons and catered to narrower age groups. This past regimen allowed for facilities for baseball, soccer or football to overlap or use the same field space at different times of the year.

Today, many youth sports have longer or multiple seasons throughout the year and cater to a wider range of ages. This increase in demands on finite field space has stressed the conditions of every field in the Township. The Township should explore opportunities to create new and more resilient athletic facilities, which may include:

- Improving underdrains for stormwater management to help fields recover faster after storms.
- Exploring the conversion of existing fields into synthetic turf fields that can be programed in all seasons, and do not require recovery time following storm events.
- Identifying previously developed lands that could be acquired and converted into recreational park facilities. This may include commercial areas in the Crestmont, Willow Grove, and/or Noble areas of the Township. Tradeoffs in converting commercial properties into park facilities will need to demonstrate the benefits that these open spaces could provide a built-out community, that can be achieved in no other way.

FIELD STANDARDS REVIEW											
Park	Field	Year Round Sport No Conflicts with Other Fields	North Northeast Orientation (-1 for West to North Facing)	25ft Safety Zone	Sufficient Back Stop Distance	No Baseball Outfield Overlap	Has Lighting	Lighting Designed for Field	Township Owned Land	No Drainage Issues / Grading	Total Score
Glenside Weldon Park	50' Grass -Quick ball field	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Roychester Park	60' Grass Infield	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Roychester Park	60' Grass Infield	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5
Roychester Park	60' Grass Infield	1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Glenside Weldon Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Glenside Weldon Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Glenside Weldon Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	-1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Glenside Weldon Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Alverthorpe Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Alverthorpe Park	60' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	0	-1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	4
Roslyn Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	6
Roslyn Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	-1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	4
Crestmont Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
Hallowell	60' Skinned Infield	0	-1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ardsley Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Penbryn Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	6
Penbryn Park	60' Skinned Infield	0	-1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Roychester Park	60' Skinned Infield	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
Alverthorpe Park	60' Skinned Infield	1	-1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
Hallowell	70' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4
Hallowell	70' Grass Infield / Skinned Basepath	1	-1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Roychester Park	70' Skinned Infield	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
Conway Park	70' Skinned Infield	0	-1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	5
Conway Park	70' Skinned Infield	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	7
Ardsley Park	90' Ball Field	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Roslyn Park	90' Ball Field	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	7
Penbryn Park	90' Ball Field	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
Alverthorpe Park	90' Ball Field	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	7
<p>Rating System: NO = 0, YES = 1</p> <p><i>An initial analysis for each Township owned athletic field was performed to rank field conditions against one another on a scale of 0 to 9. A high score reflects a field in good condition that does not require major improvements. Low scores reflect fields that will benefit from improvements. The scores should not be used as an absolute, but as a tool to help prioritize field improvements.</i></p>											

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6

Review, Formalize and Communicate Program Fee Policies

- Adopt department policies by the Board of Commissioners.
- Clearly communicate department policies for the benefit of staff and township residents.
- Develop a policy to determine who may qualify for program scholarships or reduction in program fees.
- Evaluate non-resident user fee structure.

Narrative

The Department currently has multiple policies in place to communicate effectively with residents, including: refund policies, facility rental policies, membership policies. Additional and/or re-crafted policies may enhance Department performance by delivering written, easily identifiable information for all residents and the many allied organizations to access directly. Policies adopted by the Board of Commissioners provide important guidance to the Department.

The continuation of policy development and refinement is encouraged. Policies assist the Department by providing clear direction to Departmental administration and staff. Additionally, residents can make informed decisions after reviewing all policy information pertaining to their specific needs. Policies remove case-by-case decision-making that in cases are currently required by the Department, in several instances. Clear and transparent policies enable fair and equitable actions that benefit all.

The Recreation Department can be advised by a Board of Commissioners policy and administration guidance to develop a transparent policy for how to determine who may qualify for program scholarships or reductions in program fees. The current system of review on case-by-case basis, might appear subjective and be difficult for the Department staff to manage questions that may arise under what might appear to be an arbitrary system for reducing a fee. A written public policy will provide guidance for Department staff and applicants.

Some program ideas included in the report may not generate revenues to cover all program costs, and each will need to be evaluated to determine if the existing general budget can accommodate them or a percentage that can be offset by less than full revenue generation. Other strategies may require capital investments to enable them.

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.7

Continue to Foster Relationship with Township Partners Such as Briar Bush and Abington Free Library

- Look to further partnership and program opportunities.
- Further coordinate marketing of program opportunities.

Narrative

Both the Abington Free Library and Briar Bush Nature Center have dedicated staff and boards that over see their operations, and both cooperate as key partners with Parks and Recreation through programming functions.

Parks and Recreation should look to further programming opportunities with both partners. Additional activity packs might be developed with Abington Free Library. Currently, the Library offers a birding pack and pickle ball packs that residents can check out. Additional packs may include geocaching kits, history walking kits, or disc golf kits. Additional partnerships might include expansion of story time and storying book walks throughout the park system. Storybook walks may serve as a way to invite families into Township open space trails that are currently under-used.

Briar Bush serves as the Township’s Nature Center. The majority of the Center programing takes place at Briar Bush; however, it does facilitate programs throughout the Township park and open space system. Avenues to expand additional programing focused on environmental education and stewardship for all ages should be explored that might include activities offered throughout the Township system. Ideas include volunteer days that focus on invasive species removals and trash clean ups in Township Open Space.

VISION 4.0

Create New Recreation Facility and Program Opportunities

Goal

Sustain and expand municipal recreation facilities and programming

Objectives

- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of all genders and ages.
- Expand and improve recreation facilities for people of all genders and ages.
- Collaborate with public and private partners and educational institutions to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.
- Ensure equity in access to programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.8

Incorporate New Facilities and Programs Based On Recreational Trends

Continue to explore new recreational trends when pursuing capital improvements in the parks system.

Narrative

The recommendation considers how newer recreational trends may fit within the Parks systems, including:

- Pickleball
- Walking trails / connectivity
- Shade Structure
- Outdoor Fitness Equipment
- Destination Playground
- Disc Golf
- Full Season Ice skating
- Community gathering space / amphitheater
- Close to home vacation opportunities such as camping, boating, and biking
- Ropes Courses / Tree walk

The Township has been successful in identifying new recreational facilities, and recently the tennis courts in Alverthorpe Park were converted to hybrid courts to meet the growing demand for pickleball. Other recreational trends are reflected in specific recommendations within this report such as creating more walking trails throughout the Township Parks and looking to connect residents with recreational opportunities.

Some trends are simple improvements such as incorporating more shade near key park facilities such as playgrounds and athletic fields. Other trends such as adding outdoor fitness equipment “rooms” are popular since they appeal to a range of ages, from teenagers to seniors who are often under-served by recreational facilities. These facilities may be included in multiple community-level parks.

Demands for the improvements that are larger in scale might be met at a single facility. Destination playgrounds have become very popular with young families, and during the young family focus group, one parent identified many areas across the Township where their kids specifically recall and request to re-visit Modern destination playgrounds can be key in community building and education.

RECOMMENDATION 4.8
(Continued)

*Incorporate New
Facilities And Programs
Based On Recreational
Trends*



Photo example of walking trails.



Photo example of disc golf.

Disc golf is a sport growing in popularity due to the limited needs for equipment, facility infrastructure and its ability to easily accommodate the sport within natural areas. Disc golf rules are similar to golf, where players throw a disc at a basket target, attempting to reach the basket in a set number of throws to achieve “par.” The sport is enjoyed by both individuals and groups. Most disc golf courses use natural elements to provide a challenging and unique course, and these routes can double as trail systems through a natural area.

Winter sports are an important aspect for all communities, and many can be difficult to accommodate. Abington has a long history of outdoor ice skating, with four rinks currently located in Baederwood, Crestmont, Penbryn, and Royersford Parks that are all dependent on the below-freezing weather for operation. Where large open mow lawn areas are used, these places often retain water and are attractive to geese when not frozen. Long-term consideration should be given to the viability of these existing facilities to operate in the future and consideration should be given to developing one central community facility that would operate for a full winter season.

For both established and growing communities the need to establish and reinforce a sense of community is a historic goal. For smaller communities it might be linked to a common space – such as a Town Square where festivals are hosted throughout the year, such as Jenkintown. For larger communities such as Abington, it can be harder to establish one place that becomes the center to congregate with your neighbors. Many communities create this space through the development of a civic amphitheater. In some ways this need is currently filled by the Abington Arts Center amphitheater. The Township may want to explore this partnership to see if there are more ways that this space can serve the community through additional programming. A secondary approach would look to identify a significant new civic gathering space within the redevelopment planning for the Noble Transit Oriented Development area.

The Township should consider improvements to Alverthorpe campgrounds to provide a more accessible and family friendly environment for close to home camping. Other additions at Alverthorpe such as a rope course/ tree walk, and greater opportunities for boating, fishing or archery programs could create additional opportunities for families looking for affordable close to home vacation activities.



Photo example of an outdoor amphitheater/ community gathering space.



Photo example of a destination playground mixed with nature-based play.



Photo example of a tree walk/ ropes course.



VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

Overview

The Township Park and Recreation administrative staff and maintenance staff are diligent in the operating the Township’s recreation, open space, and park facilities and programs with the resources allocated to them. A successful Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space, and Park plan should examine how those resources are allocated and make recommendations on where there may be gaps in resources to meet demands of park facilities and programs. The Township budget for parks and recreation is in keeping with their peers and national averages.

A vision to commit to the periodic review of administrative procedures is critical to ensuring that the Township’s recreation, open space, parks facilities and programs continue to serve the community to the fullest extent possible. This plan considers how to address any gaps in administration or funding to insure Township facilities are adequately maintained.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Organize/consolidate local knowledge base to develop stewardship department
- 5.2 Assess staff parks and rec resources to meet department needs
- 5.3 Develop and implement annual improvement schedules
- 5.4 Upgrade parks and recreation programing software
- 5.5 Coordinate website and social media to publicize programs
- 5.6 Appoint an open space advisory committee to coordinate/prioritize plan implementation with park and rec staff
- 5.7 Formalize maintenance partnerships with youth sports groups

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1

Organize/Consolidate Local Knowledge Base to Develop Stewardship Department

Formalize Township efforts towards stewardship with formal staff training and implementation of recommended stewardship plans.

Narrative

Of the total 409 acres of Township-owned parks and open space lands, 126 acres are maintained areas that support active recreation, and the remaining 283 acres are open space lands, comprised mostly of forest and stream corridors. Except for specifically targeted projects, these lands are left unmanaged.

Unfortunately, due to the pressure of surrounding development; increased frequency and severity of storm events; deer populations; and exotic invasive species – these lands cannot naturally regenerate without human management and stewardship. As the Township’s canopy coverage approaches an average 100-year mark, many areas of the mature canopy will start to decline rapidly., Without proper forest regeneration leadership by the Township the lack forest floor seedlings will not thrive to offer the next generation of trees.

Examples of these stressors can be clearly seen in Coates Preserve. A combination of utility work and serve storms brought down large trees representing a significant portion of the canopy. With the introduction of new sunlight apertures to the forest floor, significant invasive species growth took place. Combined with deer over browsing the forest floor lacked a healthy understory, in its place invasive the tree of heaven (host to lantern flies) and Japanese stilt grass has taken root. Efforts have been made to replant shade trees in the areas of fallen trees, however, their success is significantly limited by the demands of outperforming surrounding invasive plants.

With the transition from a mature forest canopy to a matrix of invasive plant species, the environmental services once delivered by forest cover are now severely limited. Less rainwater is being intercepted by a mature tree canopy. Monocultural short, rooted Japanese stilt grass cannot protect the forest floor from erosion; and critical habitat for wildlife is lost. This decline and loss in the Township’s forest has a direct cost to the overall management of Township stormwater as well as indirect cost in the loss of recreational values.

However, what is happening at Coates Preserve does not need to be the model for the future forest in Abington. The Township has a wealth of stewardship expertise within its staff and partner groups. The Township can continue to deepen its partnerships with three major watershed groups, and work with the stewardship staff at Briar Bush to develop a plan for combined stewardship training for Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff.

Over time, the Township should strive towards development of a municipal stewardship department that works in tandem with Parks and Recreation maintenance staff and Public Works staff to oversee the stewardship of the Township’s natural open space lands along with naturalized areas within its active parks.

Current Township departments and partners that would be critical to the success of a Stewardship Department include:

- Parks Maintenance
- Public Works
- Briar Bush Staff
- Engineering Department
- Shade Tree Commission
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT)
- Wissahickon Trails (WT)
- Tookany Tacony Frankford Watershed Association (TTF)



Coates Preserve naturalized area.

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2

Evaluate Staff Parks and Recreation Resources to Meet Department Needs

- Consider the addition of a full-time recreation coordinator position to allow for additional new programing.
- Assess park maintenance positions to determine if additional staff is needed in keeping with NRPA standards.
- Assess current and future equipment needs.

Narrative

At current funding/staffing levels, additional programming is not considered possible, as all staff resources are currently deployed to their full extents. Abington Township may consider strategic changes/ additions to provide some programs identified by the residents during the public participation in this process. Additional staffing and/or outsourcing to private providers will be required to expand programs as expressed within this report.

Consideration should be given to adding a recreation coordinator to the full-time staff. Such a position will increase the overall functionality of the Department. Currently, staff is highly dedicated to the success of the Department; however, the work required to manage the many programs offered has reached limits of staff resources and availability. To maintain the high level of service and the continued resident expectations for new and exciting programs, an additional staff position will help the Township continue to meet its goals. Current recreation staff levels do not meet the National Parks Recreation and Park Association standard for a township of this size. NRPA standards are discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

The Township should re-examine its park maintenance positions operations to determine if additional maintenance staff are required. The number of acres of recreation and open space in Abington that the Township provides to residents requires additional staff hours to maintain parks to the level expected by residents. Abington Township currently is below recommended staffing levels compared to national standards for a community of this size. NRPA Standards are discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

Care and maintenance of all Township equipment is a high priority within the Parks Maintenance Department, because a high level of service extends the life of equipment and is a prudent expense to help reduce capital budget expenses. However, much of the Abington Township maintenance equipment is now considered older and a replacement schedule should be instituted. A 5-year replacement schedule will aid the Township in budgeting future capital improvements.

Equipment is currently adequate for park maintenance, though some additional equipment is needed. The new equipment and the newer technologies does present larger initial capital costs, however new equipment allows staff to perform more work, more efficiently, within the same time period. Current Abington Township park maintenance equipment includes: trucks, backhoe, tractors, skid steers, wood chippers, saws, and other small tools.



Briar Bush Nature Center Museum Building

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3

Develop and Implement Annual Improvement Schedules

- Formalize evaluation and future scheduling of capital projects annually for playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts and parking areas.
- Formalize system for tracking and addressing complaints.

Narrative

Due to the age and size of Abington Township recreation facilities it is important to strategically plan for repair and replacement of facilities. For example, playground equipment has a limited lifespan due to the constant exposure to the elements, and the physical stress of children playing on it. Playground industry standards estimate that high quality manufactured play equipment has a life span of about 15 years. Similarly, other facilities within parks such as athletic fields, playing courts, and parking surfacing require periodic renovations to keep them safe and serving the community. Currently, the Parks and Recreation staff anticipates these needs and plans for them appropriately in their annual budget.

A formal system for tracking park renovations and improvements should be developed to document this process. Options range from dedicated software or the development of an excel spreadsheet. By tracking this information the Township will be able to better anticipate and plan for the cost of park renovations.

Recordkeeping of addressed complaints is equally important. In 2022, the Township launched an online Abington Township Citizen Service Request website that allows general public to submit NON-EMERGENCY issues or requests for service in the Abington Township community. A section is dedicated to reporting request for service in Parks and Recreation Facilities. During the early stages of implementation staff should be diligent in still addressing requests that are not submitted through the system. Consideration should be given to manually entering requests submitted via other avenues to ensure that all requests are addressed universally. Documentation of complaints will assist in tracking where issues occur, such as if they are concentrated in one local area. This data will assist the Department in the decision-making process, such as helping to determine if more resources are

needed in specific areas, and/or is a more intensive police presence needed. Also, tracking this data is useful when applying for certain grants. Consideration should be given to tracking park renovations and improvements within this system as well.



Roslyn Park playground is an example of a possible improvement project to ensure equipment and surfacing are up to current safety standards.



Alverthorpe Park ball field is an example of a recreation area that should be considered for scheduling annual maintenance.

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4

Upgrade Parks and Recreation Programing Software

Explore opportunities to upgrade recreation software to a user-friendly system for both township staff and end users.

Narrative

Abington Township utilizes Active Network to accept registrations, pool memberships, and facility reservations. This software allows the Department to maintain all historical data regarding registration, memberships, reservations, and other valuable information. The Department is able to communicate directly with all who register through this system. Global text blasts and email blasts; as well as program- specific communications are possible through this software system.

Active Network is more expensive annually than some other software, and it is more difficult to exit the annual contract than other providers. Abington Township has the opportunity to review the service/ products of other providers (MyRec is one example) which may reduce annual costs, while providing the client with equal or better experiences. Township staff are knowledgeable about the limitations of the current software on the “staff” side and can be helpful to advise which other software products make the information input easier for administration.

All software systems include: registration, reservations, memberships, and community correspondence via email or text messaging. All software is remote, server-based, and an annual “subscription” is required. In most cases, data does not transfer from one provider to another, which may result in a loss of program registration history or a fee to transfer the data.

As a peer example, Upper Moreland Township used the Active Network system for four years and considered it difficult to use; with poor support. By switching to a new provider with software that performed better to deliver an equivalent end user experience, \$2,300 in annual savings was achieved. There is no cost to the Township to investigate alternative providers/products.

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5

Coordinate Website and Social Media to Publicize Programs

Stay current with new social media trends and evaluate media opportunities.

Narrative

The current level of public relations and marketing efforts performed by the Parks and Recreation Department to promote services is adequate. The Township utilizes its website, Facebook, flyers, brochures, newspapers, posters and signage, and other means to promote recreational services as well as park facilities.

The Department should continue to seek new and creative means to effectively communicate with residents. When new social media opportunities are present, the Department should continue to evaluate if and how those new media opportunities might benefit the residents of Abington Township.

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.6

Appoint an Open Space Advisory Committee to Coordinate/Prioritize Plan Implementation with Park and Recreation Staff

Work with the township staff and board of commissioners to continue the appointment of an open space advisory committee.

Narrative

The Township should be commended on forming a passionate Open Space Advisory Committee with diverse expertise, which has collectively been instrumental in guiding the Comprehensive Recreational and Open Space Plan process.

The Committee recognizes that its work does not end with the plan completion in 2023. The Committee consensus was to create an aspirational plan, that is coupled with smart and realistic implementation strategies. Many decisions will need to be made in the coming years concerning plan priorities. Therefore, this plan was structured to serve as a living tool to help guide the Township in making future decisions as well as to track progress.

Continuing an active Open Space Advisory Board is recognized as a critical step to ensure that the plan priorities crafted in 2023 are constantly assessed to meet the evolving needs of the Township. The advisory board may serve as a bridge between Township administrative staff, the Parks and Recreation staff, and the Board of Commissioners to recommend and help oversee recreational and open space improvements. One of the internal tasks of the advisory board should be to recruit, educate and engage future board members.

VISION 5.0

Refine Administrative Procedures for the Township Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Goal

Identify sustainable management maintenance, funding, and communications about park, and recreation resources.

Objectives

- Explore strategies to ensure municipal capital and operating budgets can build and maintain resources to meet growing needs.
- Investigate all venues to publicize and promote the Township’s parks, recreation programs and open space services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.7

Formalize Maintenance Partnerships with Youth Sports Groups

- Memorialize memorandums of understanding with each sport organization.
- Develop written partnership agreements with school district and other recreational providers.

Narrative

After review of current administrative partnerships related to recreation services, the consultant team found few formal written partnership agreements. Verbal partnerships have served the Township and its partners over many years, however, written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) provide clear details of partner responsibilities and are the basis for smart modern partnerships. For example: an agreement might specify that the Township will provide basic maintenance services for all fields (mowing, weed whacking, field dragging, etc.) and a user group(s) may agree to provide ballfield lining, sports equipment, registrations.

Written partnership agreements, or Memorandums of Understanding, will assist the overall effort of the Township to define which organizations are responsible for which activities and which tasks. Written agreements also provide fair and balanced metrics, so each user group is assessed equally.

Written partnerships with the school district and other recreational providers can benefit the community and enable the Township to offer future programs that meet community requests – by defining important details such as schedules of availability for community uses. The District recently made policy changes that may affect District-owned field availability.



Park Case Studies

Toolbox of Recommendation Improvements

As identified by the consultant, the Abington Township ‘Community Parks’ are defined as larger park facilities that serve multiple neighborhoods and are focused on recreation for all ages. These parks are typically the most used, sought after, and loved throughout the Township.

The community parks were reviewed more in-depth to provide high-level recommendations as guidance to improve the parks. Based on the inventory and analysis process of these parks, a ‘Toolbox of Recommendation Improvements’ formed out of the needs identified within the parks.

The ‘Toolbox’ – which can be found in the legend below – are the consultant’s compiled list of fundamental tools suggested to improve the parks. Each of these tools were reviewed and strategically applied to each of the community parks. The ‘Toolbox’ is intended to be used as a comprehensive list of ideas for Township personnel to review and apply where they see fit as park budgeting and priorities are evaluated.

Improvement Plans for:

- Alverthorpe Park
- Ardsley Park
- Crestmont Park
- Hallowell Park
- Penbryn Park
- Roslyn Park
- Roychester Park

Compiled Toolbox Legend

	ADA Accessibility		Redesign Area		Open Access Point
	Resurface/ New Walkways		Conservation Easement		Sidewalk to Park Connection
	ROW Walkways		Improve Drainage		Speed Bump
	Water Body Improvements		Canopy Trees in Parking Lot		Revegetate (as woodland or meadow)
	Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation		Invasive Species Removal		Pavilion
	Re-Evaluate Area for Other Use		Best Management Practices		Lighting
	Crosswalk				
	Mid-block Crosswalk (bump outs, raised crossing, rapid flashing beacons)				

Alverthorpe Park

Most of the recommendations for Alverthorpe Park focus on opening up the park to non-Abington residents and presenting opportunities for safer and equitable pedestrian access to and around the park. These ‘tools’ would include:

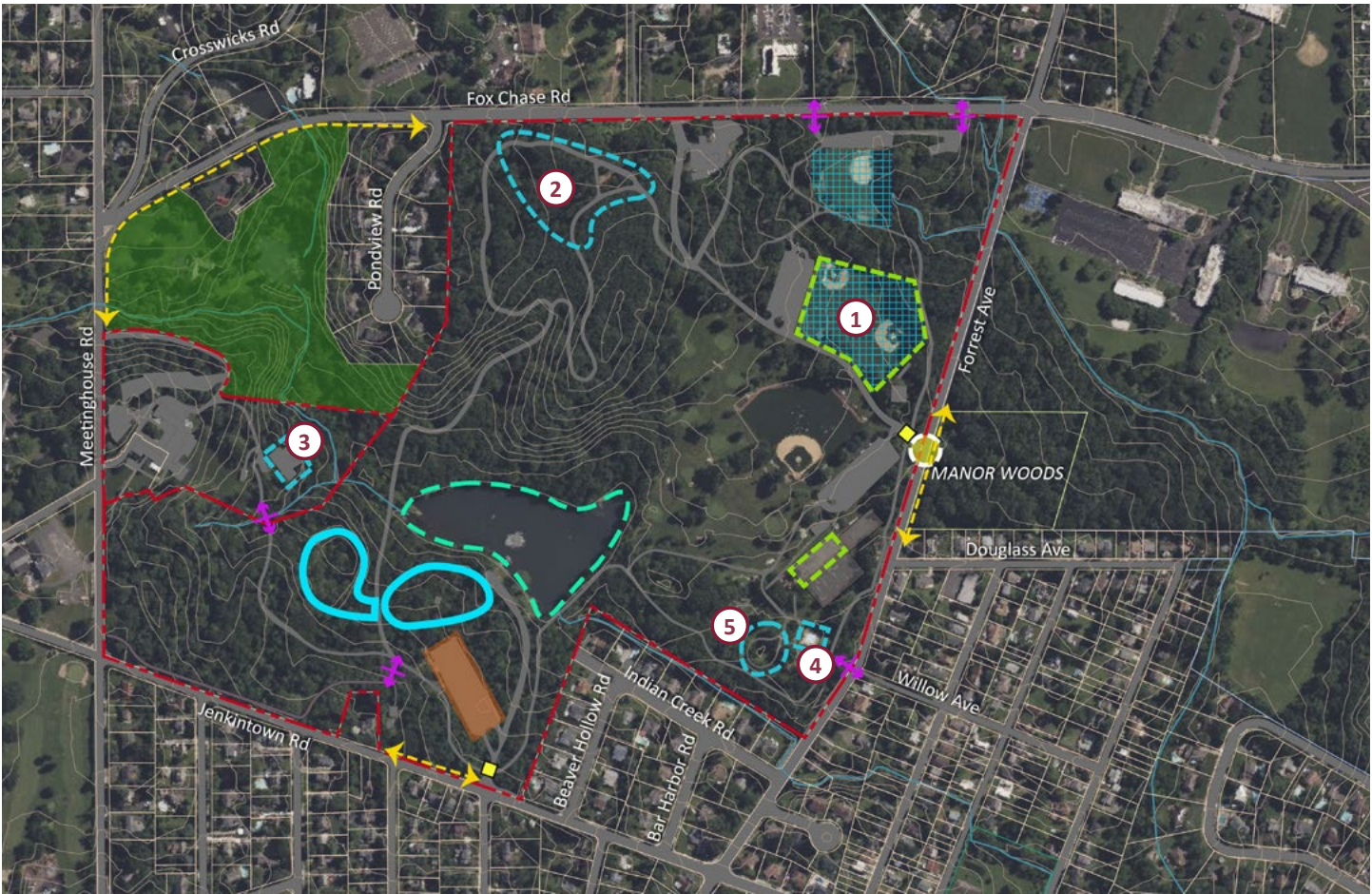
- Opening access points through the park perimeter fence.
- Opening access points from the Little Abington Meeting House into the park.
- Completing sidewalk gaps through adding Right-of-Way walkways.
- Creating a midblock crossing at the main entrance of the park for users to safely connect over to Manor Woods.
- Adding speed tables at the intersections of internal park driveways and trails.

Also, as one of the Township’s main recreational hubs, the park recommendations consider additional recreational trends; such as, a ropes course within the a section of the canopy and a splash pad in place of the wading pool that could double as an ice skating rink.

There is very limited room for additional development within the park. Public consensus is for the existing amenities within the park to remain and be enhanced through drainage, water quality, and/or stormwater management improvements. If the Township has interest in the future to expand the park, the plan recommends obtaining a conservation easement on the large adjacent property located near the intersection of Fox Chase Road and Meetinghouse Road.



Alverthorpe Park pond is recommended to be remediated to reduce the algae and improve habitat.



Park Improvements Legend

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| | Mid-block Crosswalks | | Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation |
| | Open Access Points | ① | 60' Fields / Football |
| | Internal Walkways | | Re-Evaluate Area for Other Use |
| | ROW Walkways | ② | Possible Ropes Course |
| | Remediate Pond | ③ | Remove Old Pool |
| | ADA Accessibility | ④ | Convert Wading Pool to Splash Pad/ Ice Skating |
| | Speed Tables | ⑤ | Revamp Tyke Bike Route |
| | Conservation Easement | | |
| | Acquire Land/ Conservation Easement | | |
| | Improve Drainage | | |

Ardsley Park

Through the committee and public meetings, the most recurring need identified for Ardsley Park is safer and accessible connections to and throughout the park. To achieve this, recommendations would include crosswalks and midblock crossings, curb cuts with ADA ramps, and a resurfaced walkway.

The close proximity to Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary supports the recommendation to provide a clear connection between the frontages of each park. The intent for this would be for each park to support one another in passive and active activities.

Also, based on community feedback, the recreational areas should be re-evaluated for improvements and updates or for new uses. The recommendations provide guidance to:

- Improve the playground through updated surfaces and equipment
- Improve the field surface conditions of the soccer field, or consider the area for different recreational uses
- Consider another recreational use for the existing asphalt area

Other supporting recommendations for the park include:










- Incorporating best management practices
- Revegetating mown area with native species
- Adding canopy trees to the parking lot
- Pavilion and restroom area



Mown grass areas in Ardsley Park are recommended to be meadowed areas to reduce maintenance and improve habitat.



Park Improvements Legend

	Crosswalks		Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation
	Mid-block Crosswalk	①	Improve play surface/ prioritize fields
	ADA Accessibility	②	Possible Soccer Facility with “Wall Boards”
	Resurface Walkways	③	Update Playground
	Pavilion/Restroom Area		
	Canopy Trees in Parking Lot		
	Best Management Practice		
	Revegetate		

Crestmont Park

The main recommendation for Crestmont Park is to strengthen the pedestrian walkway network. These tools include:

- Adding internal walkways to provide better connections to all the amenities,
- Adding a crosswalk where the internal driveway intersects with a proposed walkway
- Including sidewalks along the rights-of-ways to better connect people to the park and to the adjacent park, Evergreen Manor Park.
- Adding crosswalks to safely connect users on the ROW sidewalk to Evergreen Manor Park.

Regarding the pool in the park, the plan recommends incorporating those recommendations in the 2018 Pool Feasibility Study, which essentially suggests updating the pool facilities to meet the needs of the Township and current ADA standards. For example, removing the tot pools and replacing them with splash pads.

Other recommendations consist of:

- Revegetating mown areas with native species
- Adding canopy trees in the largest parking lot, and in the median of the parking lot adjacent to the community center building.




Based on the extent of the ‘tools’ incorporated, a Master Plan process is recommended to better develop the site’s potential.



View of the entrance to the wooded area of Crestmont Park from Rubicam Road, which is recommended to add new hiking trails and/or disc golf.



Park Improvements Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Crosswalk |  | Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation |
|  | Internal Walkways | ① | Possible Football Field |
|  | ROW Walkways | ② | New Hiking Trails / Disc Golf |
|  | Canopy Trees in Parking Lot |  | Follow Up with Pool Feasibility Study |
|  | Revegetate | | |

Hallowell Park

The recommendations for Hallowell Park are focused on stormwater management and hydrological enhancements. For the fields to be most playable, field drainage must be improved, and the greater issue of the adjacent stream erosion needs to be addressed. There is currently minimal space for augmentations to the stream; therefore, the Township should explore acquiring parcels from the neighboring commercial owner, SPS Technologies, for stormwater management and ecological enhancements.

The plan recommends the use of mid-block crossings, curb cut ADA ramps, and an internal walkway to connect the northern and southern parts of the park together, as well as, providing distinct connections and access to the park from the adjacent neighborhoods.

Also, the type of recreation used within the space should be re-evaluated as possible different uses. For example, it is recommended that the Township explore using this park for a football field.



Mid-block crossings are recommended along Kenmore Avenue (photographed to the left) to safely connect the divided parcels of Hallowell Park.



Park Improvements Legend

- Crosswalks
- Mid-block Crosswalk
- Internal Walkways
- ROW Walkways
- Sidewalk to Park Connection
- Water Quality and Access Improvements
- Revegetate
- Redesign of Parking Lot for Stormwater Management
- Improve Drainage
- Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation
- Possible locations for a football field

Penbryn Park

The key recommendation tools used to re-envision an enhanced Penbryn Park focus on adding parking, a redesigned program and recreational areas, and enhancements to the existing natural and built environments.

Parking recommendations include:

- Adding parking spots along the entrance drive from Edge Hill Road
- Adding parking spots along Houston Avenue in the park
- Formalizing the small parking lot in the south west corner of the park

Environmental recommendations include:

- Invasive species removal throughout the entire site
- Adding canopy trees in the parking lot adjacent to the 70’ ballfield
- Revegetating or adding evergreens the mown area between the adjacent residents and the park to provide homeowners privacy.

Recommendations for recreation areas includes:














- Following up with the 2018 Pool Feasibility Study Recommendations
- Prioritizing the 90’ field
- Adding an internal loop walkway throughout the park to connect to all amenities.
- Creating a plaza area adjacent to the pool area by cutting off the through traffic in the park. A master plan is recommended to comprehensively address all challenges and opportunities at this site, so that funding can be justified for major improvements.



Photograph of the existing, overgrown and invasive vegetation at Penbryn Park that is recommended to be removed and maintained.



Park Improvements Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Crosswalks |  | Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation |
|  | Mid-block Crosswalk |  | Prioritize 90’ Field |
|  | Open Access Point |  | Re-Evaluate Area for Other Use |
|  | Internal Walkways |  | Possible Parking Lot(s) |
|  | Canopy Trees in Parking Lot |  | Follow Up with Pool Feasibility Study |
|  | Revegetate | | |
|  | Invasive Species Removal | | |
|  | Redesign Area – | | |
| | • No Thru Traffic | | |
| | • Plaza Area | | |

Roslyn Park

The tools recommended for Roslyn Park are for hydrological and environmental enhancements within the park. Specifically, these tools include drainage improvements, streambank restoration, invasive species removal and management, and additional canopy coverage in the parking lots and throughout the park.

Other tools are applied for circulation efforts, such as:

- Adding a segment of internal walkway to connect around the proposed pavilion;
- Adding sidewalk connections from adjacent neighborhood streets to the park;
- Adding crosswalks at intersections surrounding the park.

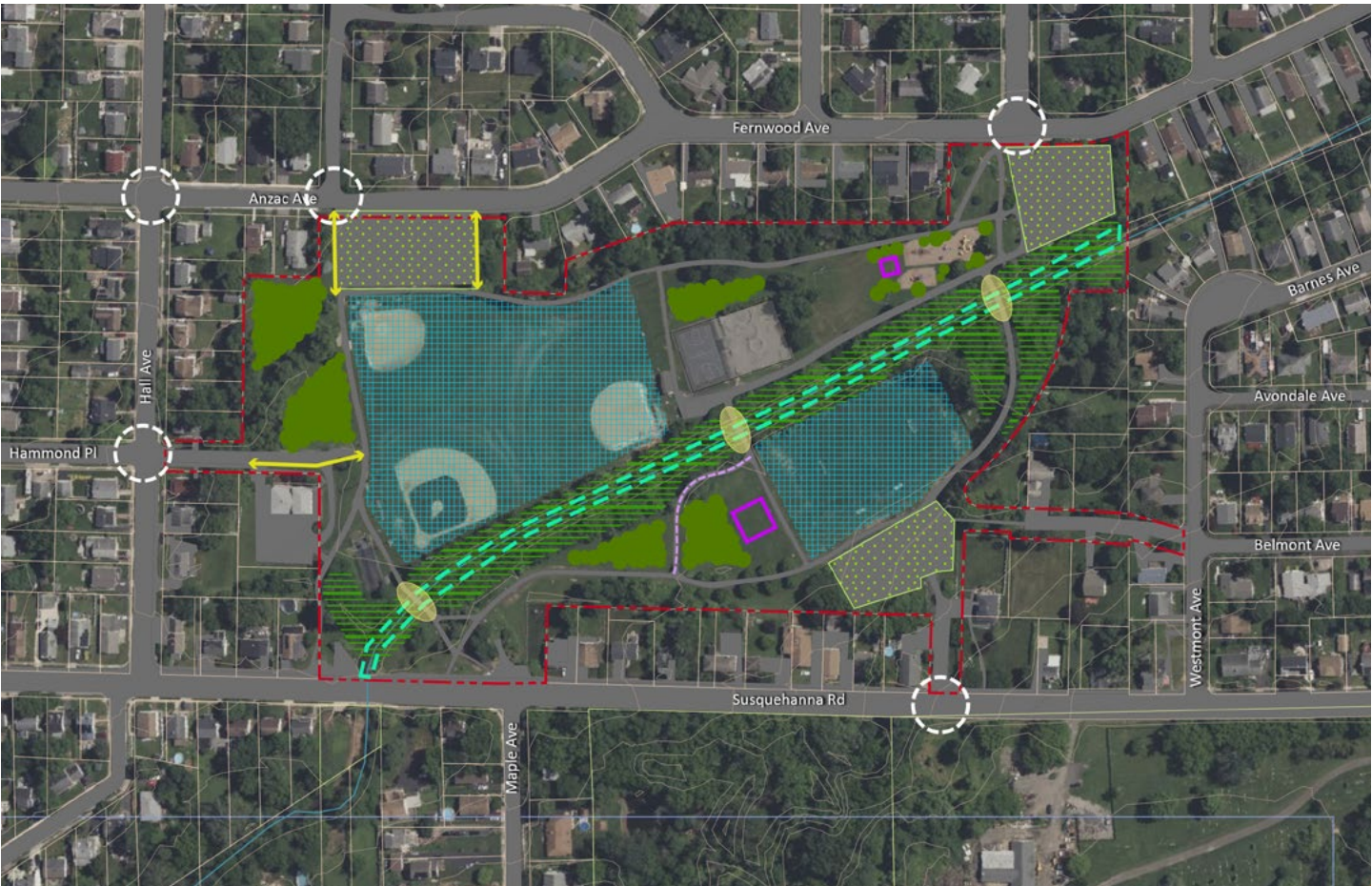
More park-specific tools applied to the park are lighting for across the bridge and pavilion areas for users to escape from the sun.



The bridges at Roslyn Park are recommended to have pedestrian lighting to improve safety.



The parking lots at Roslyn Park are currently marked asphalt in good condition; however, to reduce the heat-island effect and promote canopy coverage, trees are recommended for all parking lots at this Park.



Park Improvements Legend

	Crosswalks		Invasive Species Removal
	Resurface Walkways		Streambank Restoration
	Sidewalk to Park Connection		Improve Drainage
	Canopy Trees in Parking Lot		Add Lighting
	Revegetate		Pavilion Area

Roychester Park

Through a separate planning process the development of an inclusive playground in Roychester Park is being proposed. Recommendations for additional facilities that would compliment the playground as well as the adjacent school include a park restroom and an outdoor classroom. The restroom should be located near the proposed playground.

Army Corps and Wissahickon Trails have recently been working on projects to better control stormwater runoff and stream restoration efforts within the park. The outdoor classroom could serve as both an informal place to sit as well as classroom place to teach about the importance of watershed health.

The township should continue to build upon the work of its partners through park stewardship. Recommendations for enhancements to the natural environment include:

- Removing Invasive species and management around the existing stream;
- Revegetating mown areas with native species;
- Evaluating impervious surfaces and managing stormwater runoff.

Currently, park courts are located in two separate areas, with three tennis courts at the corner of Cleveland Ave and Corinthian Ave and two basketball courts at the base of the hillside along Cleveland Ave. Both areas are well used and they serve more uses then the single intended sport. For example the tennis courts are a popular location for young children to ride their bikes. It is recommended to not eliminate the courts entirely, but to provide one court that more efficiently provides for multiple sports.

The multi-court area should accommodate a series of court games. Nearby benches with shade should be included in the area for participants to watch. The court area could look to accommodate basketball, tennis, pickleball, pick up deck hockey and informal court games such as four square. Strategic layout and the use of portable nets for tennis and pickleball can achieve a safe, dynamic court area.

Any changes to the currently court configurations should be undertaken through a public planning process to determine the level of need for each potential activity as well as the best configuration.



Existing basketball at Rochester Park, located at the bottom of a popular sledding hill.



Existing tennis courts at Rochester Park are often used for tennis as well as a place for young children to ride bikes.

Other recommendations for creating better circulation to and through the site include:

- Crosswalks with curb cut ADA ramps (where needed) that border the park;
- A loop trail that connects all the park amenities together;
- A walkway that provides a clear route from the parking lot to the inclusive playground;
- Perimeter sidewalks and additional sidewalk connections from the neighborhood streets to provide access to the park.



Park Improvements Legend

	Crosswalks		Revegetate		Re-Evaluate Area for Recreation
	ADA accessibility		Invasive species removal		Evaluate expanding basketball area options for a consolidated multi-use court area
	Internal walkways		Explore options to reduce impervious coverage		Re-Evaluate Area for Other Use
	ROW walkways		Planned area for inclusive playground		Outdoor classroom
	Sidewalk to park connection				Restroom (inside building or adjacent to new inclusive playground)

IMPLEMENTATION 4



Making Improvements in Phases, with Partners

Almost all public projects are funded and built in phases, and usually with multiple partners.

For example, the collection of improvements identified by Abington residents for Alverthorpe Park alone will require multiple phases to achieve, and for this park in particular, this reality suggests revisiting the current rule that limits park users to Abington residents only. Most partners will not help fund these types of restricted public uses.

If successful in re-imagining this historic limit to general public use of Alverthorpe Park, Abington Township will exponentially expand its possible recreation funding partnerships for improvements to that crown jewel park.

Trail and greenway improvements are types of projects that are almost always funded and built through partnerships.

To create a safe and accessible trail spur that emanates from a transit-commercial-highway hub at Noble – to connect to the Philadelphia Circuit Trail network at Pennypack Trail, Abington Township will need to negotiate multiple transportation funding partnerships to advance that project through planning, design and construction phases.

It is essential for Abington to build multiple strategic partnerships that match specific types of projects with those mission-aligned funding partners. More than one project may be advanced simultaneously – depending on project types, funding sources available during specific periods, and the sources of matching funds that the Township can raise internally or by leveraging partners.



◀ Little Abington Meetinghouse

Recreation is a Common Element within Many Public Projects

Straightforward “recreation” improvements such as within discrete park sites may be conceived and treated as standalone public projects, however, recreation elements are very often integral with at least four other generalized types of public projects, including:

- Environmental
- Civic
- Transportation
- Institutional

Examples of different types of “recreation-related” improvement projects that were identified during the public process of the 2023 recreation, parks and open space plan update, include:

Environmental projects – such as: acquisition of new public open spaces (especially within a built-out municipality where building structures currently exist in riparian flood zones); ecological habitat management of existing park sites and open spaces; adding stormwater BMPs; converting mowed areas to meadows; planting new canopy trees; managing existing woodlands; riparian buffers through degraded stream corridors; habitat sustainability; climate buffering; and wetland restorations on public sites.

Civic projects – such as: areas where existing or new civic spaces may be created, like in neighborhood nodes at Noble and Willow Grove. In these locations, improvements in the forms of 21st Century public plazas must be designed beyond the ceremonial public greens of the past – to integrate high levels of recreation amenities with ecological improvements; traffic safety; transit access; and multi-use public congregation areas. Smart civic re-imagining of the Noble area, for instance, is capable of attracting diverse funding partners with interests in every project “type.”

Transportation projects – such as: most trail improvements should be conceived as “transportation” projects, especially the connector trails identified to link village areas of the Township to regional trail alignments in the Pennypack, Tacony, and Wissahickon watersheds. An important metric for discerning a “transportation” trail is a clear travel route between destinations. Many trails may deliver facilities that serve both transportation and recreation functions, but an example a loop trail within a park interior is not considered as “transportation” improvement and would not qualify for any sources of transportation partnership funding. Sidewalks, paths, crosswalks – especially along routes to schools, parks, and transit are transportation improvements that may also qualify for a percentage of recreation improvement funding – depending on what recreation purposes are served or amenities are created as part of the project.

Institutional projects – such as: locations where recreation, open space, and trail connections are shared between the public and private and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – including “recreation / open space improvements, like trail links or ecological maintenance through business campuses, hospitals, schools, and non-profit museum sites.

Partners

Partnerships are possible between various local, county, regional, state and federal agencies – as well as with for-profit and non-profit businesses.

In some cases, Abington Township may be able to “match” funds from one partner to meet the requirements of another – a strategy that, when possible, helps stretch finite local dollars farther.

A list of potential partners, with overview narratives about their funding programs is included in this section.

Forming a clear understanding of which “type” of project is to be advanced will help greatly toward defining which funding formula options are realistic to develop into matching partnership applications that are capable of advancing a clearly achievable phase of a very specific priority project.

A close review of the potential partner funding programs that are described in this chapter will identify which partners will fund what types of projects – as well as what “phases” of projects they will fund, such as planning, design/engineering, and/or construction.

Note – Abington Township has an enviable record of securing multiple sources of project funding for various planning and implementation projects over many years. The consultant team remains ready to assist and answer questions from the community about funding strategies.



Entrance to Briar Bush Nature Center

Prioritizing projects

Questions arose during the public participation process, asking how Abington Township can prioritize which projects to pursue, and when to apply for funding assistance.

These decisions are ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners, however there are several criteria listed below that can help inform that decision-making process.

What type of project is it?

- Recreation-only,
- Transportation,
- Civic,
- Environmental,
- Institutional

What phase of project development is needed?

- Planning,
- Technical studies,
- Design,
- Construction

What partner funding sources will have applications open during the preferred project period?

What partner matches are capable of leveraging others during that preferred period?

What is the estimated maximum total funding realistically possible from all sources?

How much can that total budget buy?

- As one single phase or
- Perhaps a multi-phased project

Which projects may advance applications simultaneously and not compete for the same funds?

Applying these basic criteria can help decision-makers logically winnow application options based on clear limits of available funding. Where two of the same “type” of project may have apparently equal priorities, multiple other rational criteria may be applied, such as simple assessments of BCA (benefit-cost analyses) that can be very helpful.

Potential Funding Formulas

Potential partners have been initially identified for each recommendation under each of the five major project “Visions.” Potential partners represent a starting place to begin mutual negotiations, and do not indicate commitments or the limit of possible partnerships to achieve a specific recommendation.

Vision 1 Partnerships

1.1 Pursue preservation of privately-owned open space through land conservation easements

Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, Wissahickon Trails

1.2 Engage private landowners with riparian corridor protection

Briar Bush Nature Center, Pennypack Environmental Center, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership

1.5 Consistency between park and open space branding and watershed education

Wissahickon Trails, PERT, TTF Watershed Partnership

Vision 2 Partnerships

2.1 Develop stewardship plans for parks and preserves

Watershed Associations, DCNR

2.3 Acquisition of Weldon School Site from Abington School District

Abington School District

2.4 Develop or update park master plans

Consultants, DCNR

2.5 Improve street lighting efficiency

DCNR, Sports Groups

2.6 Remove underused impervious surfaces

DCNR, DCED

2.7 Incorporate natural areas into all parks

Shade Tree Commission, Watershed Associations, TreeVitalize, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, DCNR, Abington Environmental Advisory Council, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Lands, SE Montgomery County Trout Unlimited Chapter (#468)



▲
Loop trail in Alverthorpe Park

Vision 3 Partnerships

3.1 Identify trail corridors on official township map

Pennypack Greenway Partnership, DVRPC

3.2 Plan for future trail initiatives

Pennypack Greenway Partnership, DVRPC

3.3 Improve accessibility to/within parks

PennDOT, DCNR, DCED

3.4 ADA accessibility at all park features and amenities

PennDOT, Holy Redeemer Hospital, Jefferson Abington Hospital

3.5 ADA surface trail loop systems in larger parks

PennDOT, Holy Redeemer Hospital, Jefferson Abington Hospital

3.6 Resurface existing walkways

DCED, PennDOT, DCNR

3.7 Develop inclusive playgrounds

Community Groups, DCNR

3.8 Standardized park and preserve signage

DCNR



▲
Signage at trail entrance of Coates Preserve

Vision 4 Partnerships

- 4.1 Develop additional neighborhood playgrounds**
DCNR
- 4.2 Convert Alverthorpe wading pool into a splash pad**
DCNR
- 4.3 Redevelop pool facilities**
DCNR
- 4.7 Continue building relationships with township partners**
Abington Public Library, Briar Bush Nature Center

Vision 5 Partnerships

- 5.1 Develop formal stewardship department**
Parks Maintenance Crews, Public Works, Briar Bush Staff, Engineering Staff, Shade Tree Commission, EAC, PERT, Wissahickon Trails, TTF Watershed Association
- 5.2 Evaluate staff parks/rec resources to meet departmental needs**
Parks and Recreation Staff
- 5.6 Establish open space advisory committee to coordinate implementation with parks and rec staff**
Parks and Recreation Staff, Environmental Advisory Committee
- 5.7 Formalize maintenance partnerships with youth sports groups**
US Sports Institute, i9, Skateboarding Academy of Philadelphia, Jump Start Sports



Patrick Kerr Memorial Skate park at Roslyn Park

Funding Sources

This section provides summary information about various partner programs that are likely to be capable of assisting Abington Township to fund various portions of planning, design and construction of multiple types of recreation-related projects.

Federal Sources

US Department of Transportation (DOT) (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP)

Starting in 2022, \$1 billion over 5 years in planning and capital construction grants are available to fund projects that restore community connectivity by retrofitting, removing, or mitigating barriers imposed by transportation infrastructure, including roads, highways, and rail lines, among others. Applications from economically-disadvantaged communities are given priority and state DOTs must provide them with technical assistance through the Reconnecting Communities Institute.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Starting in 2022, \$5 billion over 5 years in funding is available for planning and implementation projects that improve roadway safety by preventing deaths and serious injuries. SS4A grants do not “require” municipalities to have completed an Action Plan if the metropolitan planning organization (DVRPC) or a (Montgomery) county has completed or is in the process of completing an Action Plan. However, it is recommended that municipalities consider completing their own Action Plans to ensure that the Action Plan features detailed community-specific data, which otherwise may not be addressed in a larger county or region-wide plan that cover much broader areas and are more general in nature. Eligible activities include roadway safety treatments, development of multimodal improvements, and installing pedestrian safety enhancements, among many others.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

Healthy Streets Program

\$500 million over 5 years with a 20% match to reduce flooding, improve air quality, and mitigate the urban heat island effect in disadvantaged communities. The program will fund porous/cool sidewalk pavement and street trees. There is no official website yet as the program has been authorized but not yet funded as of May, 2023.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.montcopa.org/4340/Transportation-IIJA-Programs>

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program

\$1 billion over 5 years to fund planning, design, and construction of safe and connected active transportation projects. Eligible projects include trails, sidewalks, and protected bike lanes. The matching share is set at 20%, except for areas with poverty rates over 40% are set at 0% match. Similar to Healthy Streets, this program has been authorized but not yet funded in May, 2003.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF)

The Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund was launched in 2018 to conserve and restore natural areas, corridors and waterways on public and private lands that support native fish, wildlife and plants, and to contribute to the vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed. Priority strategies for on-the-ground implementation include sustaining and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat; improving and maintaining water quality for fish, wildlife, and people; sustaining and enhancing water management to benefit fish and wildlife; and improving outdoor recreational opportunities within the Delaware River watershed.

Delaware River Restoration Fund

The Delaware River Restoration Fund was launched in late 2013 to help community-based nonprofits and government agencies work together to clean up and restore polluted waters and improve habitat for target species, including eastern brook trout and river herring.

The Fund awards at least \$2 million per year in competitive grants, geographically focused on three priority strategies: (1) stewardship of working lands; (2) restoration of wetlands, floodplains and stream corridors; and (3) promoting the adoption of green infrastructure in urban/suburban landscapes.

Since 2014, the Delaware River Restoration Fund has awarded 90 grants totaling roughly \$14.7 million. These investments leveraged more than \$23.36 million in grantee matching funds to fund agriculture conservation, green stormwater infrastructure and innovative projects to improve the water quality of the Delaware River. To date, the fund has implemented more than 23,500 acres of best management practices to improve water quality, and restored more than 190 acres of wetlands and 60 miles of riparian habitat.

The Delaware River Restoration Fund is administered by NFWF in cooperation with the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, with major funding from the William Penn Foundation.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.montcopa.org/4340/Transportation-IIJA-Programs>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program>

For more information, visit:
Visit: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program>

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program focuses on the stewardship and restoration of coastal, wetland and riparian ecosystems across the country. Its goal is to meet the conservation needs of important species and habitats, providing measurable and meaningful conservation and educational outcomes. The program requires the establishment and/ or enhancement of diverse partnerships and an education/outreach component that will help shape and sustain behavior to achieve conservation goals.

More than \$18 million in grants has leveraged more than \$67 million in other funds or donated services.

The Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI)

The William Penn Foundation launched the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI) in 2014 to address four primary threats to clean water in the river basin: stormwater, runoff from agricultural fields, forest loss, and groundwater depletion. The DRWI coordinates and aligns the work of over 50 organizations funded by the William Penn Foundation, with a goal of creating a critical mass of land preservation and restoration work in targeted sub-watersheds where they can demonstrate significant, durable water quality improvements. Through a combination of high-level coordination and on-the-ground work, the DRWI mitigates threats to water quality through strategic, science-informed land protection and restoration.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.nfwf.org/programs/five-star-and-urban-watersrestoration-grant-program>

For more information, visit:
<https://4states1source.org/>

State Sources

PA Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED), Commonwealth Financing Agency (CFA)

Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP)

The Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP) is administered through the DCED, and provides funding for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects. The program awards up to \$250,000 per project to eligible applicants and requires a local match of 15% of the total project cost. (GTRP funding for “sidewalk” connections will likely need to be eligible as “multi-use trails.”

For more information, visit:
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp>

Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF)

The DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) is administered through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and provides grants to encourage economic development by ensuring that a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system is available to the residents of the Commonwealth. Funds may be used for preliminary engineering tasks, as well as development, rehabilitation, and enhancement of transportation assets within existing communities – such as: streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development.

For more information, visit:
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/multimodaltransportation-fund/>

MTF grants are available for projects with a total cost of \$100,000 or more, and grants shall not exceed \$3,000,000 for any project. The CFA will consider grant requests over \$3,000,000 for projects that will significantly impact the CFA’s goal to leverage private investment and create jobs in the Commonwealth. Financial assistance under the Multimodal Transportation Fund shall be matched by local funding in an amount not less than 30% of the non-federal share of the project costs.

Keystone Communities Program (KCP)

The Keystone Communities (KC) program is designed to encourage the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors that jointly support local initiatives such as the growth and stability of neighborhoods and communities; social and economic diversity; and a strong and secure quality of life. The program allows communities to tailor the assistance to meet the needs of its specific revitalization effort. Communities may wish to consider designation through the KC program as a Keystone Main Street, Keystone Elm Street, Keystone Enterprise Zone, or Keystone Community. Designation is an opportunity for targeted investment and development including the identification of specific needs for investment and/ or development and the design and implementation of a strategy to address those needs.

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)

C2P2 provides funding to municipalities and authorized nonprofit organizations for recreation, park, trail and conservation projects. Eligible projects include: feasibility planning studies; trail studies; conservation plans; master site development plans; comprehensive recreation park and open space and greenway plans; land acquisition for active or passive parks, trails and conservation purposes; and new development and rehabilitation of parks, trails, Riparian Forest Buffers, and recreation facilities.

Most of these RCP-funded projects require a 50% match, which can include a combination of cash and/or non-cash values. Funding from DCNR for “sidewalk” connections is not usually granted unless these facilities are eligible as multi-use trails.

Conservation Landscapes

The Conservation Landscapes initiative (CL) is driven by a partnership approach to accomplish conservation, recreation and revitalization goals at regional levels. As formulated, this DCNR initiative assists local entities with small grants for visioning, planning and implementing projects that will advance resource conservation and community revitalization. Engaging community leaders, other state agencies, local governments, businesses, philanthropies and nonprofits around a common goal – and motivated by a sense of place – is the CL program

For more information, visit:
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/keystonecommunities-program-kcp/>

For more information, visit:
<https://brcgrants.dcnr.pa.gov/>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/ConservationLandscapes/Pages/default.aspx>
<https://www.schuylkillhighlands.org/mini-grants/>

strategy to tackle land use planning, investment, citizen involvement and revitalization. DCNR administers the CL program through local partners to fund communities and non-profits taking on issues such as: creating sustainable developments; protecting greenways, creating walking and biking trails, protecting habitats, planning conservation land acquisitions, reducing forest fragmentation, and conservation education. Conservation Landscapes also includes the Schuylkill Highlands Mini-Grant Program, which funds projects that connect residents/visitors to the outdoors, encourage sustainable regional development, protect natural and cultural resources, and promote the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape. Awards are administered by Natural Lands with amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program, established in 1965, is a federal source of funding distributed to all states by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The program provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. DCNR administers the LWCF Program for Pennsylvania.

Wild Resources Conservation Program

Each year, these funds support the survey, research, management, and conservation of wild resources through the DCNR Wild Resource Conservation Program (WRCP). WRCP identifies research and conservation needs on the Commonwealth’s native flora and non-game wildlife. The program provides grants and facilitates the flow of information between researchers, conservationists, and educators.

DCNR Forest Buffer Program

The PA DCNR Riparian Forest Buffer Program provides funding for organizations to implement a variety of forest buffers including conventional riparian forest buffers and multi-functional buffers. Pennsylvania has a goal of planting 95,000 acres of riparian buffers by 2025 to improve state waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. No match is required to be eligible for this grant. Grant applications are usually accepted October to late December. DCNR has provided funding to County Conservation Offices. Grants awards are made by the local conservation office for the planting of multi-functional buffers.

PennDOT

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program

PennDOT administers the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Transportation Alternatives - TA Set-Aside Program under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) for community-based “non-traditional” projects that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation’s intermodal transportation system. The program seeks to provide funding for construction of on-

For more information, visit:
<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/Biodiversity/WildResourceConservationProgram/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/Water/RiparianBuffers/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/Transportation%20Alternatives%20Set-Aside%20-%20Surface%20Trans.%20Block%20Grant%20Program.aspx>

road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation. Non-motorized forms of transportation include sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. There is a minimum award of \$50,000 for construction projects and a maximum award of \$1,000,000, although higher awards can be justified for “exceptional” projects. No applicant match is required, but all engineering and environmental clearances must be completed with non-FHWA funds to enable the TA funds to be used for construction and construction inspections.

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

The SRTS program is administered by PennDOT through the federal TA Set-Aside program. SRTS is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and healthy opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to school. By getting more children to walk and bicycle to school, communities are helping children be healthier, they are reducing fuel consumption, alleviating traffic congestion, and improving air quality. SRTS programs are built on collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, city planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates. Eligible activities include new or reconstructed sidewalks or walkways, pedestrian and bicycle signs or signals, transportation projects that achieve ADA compliance, such as curb ramps, bike parking facilities or bus bike racks, shared use paths, side paths, trails that serve a transportation purpose, crossing improvements, and traffic realignments, road diets, or intersection changes.

Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF)

PennDOT administers Federal Highway Administration funds as a state Multimodal Transportation Fund program to provide grants that ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available directly to the communities and residents of the Commonwealth. The program is intended to provide financial assistance to municipalities, councils of governments, businesses, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, rail freight, passenger rail, and ports to improve transportation assets that enhance communities, pedestrian safety, and transit revitalization. Grants are available for projects with a total cost of \$100,000 or more. Grants shall normally not exceed \$3,000,000 for any project. The PennDOT Office of Multimodal Transportation will consider grant requests over \$3,000,000 for projects that will significantly impact PennDOT’s goal to leverage private investment and create jobs in the Commonwealth. Financial assistance under the Multimodal Transportation Fund shall be matched by local funding in an amount not less than 30% of the amount awarded. These federal funds cannot be matched by other federal funding.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.penndot.gov/TravelInPA/Safety/SchoolResourcesAndPrograms/SafeRoutesToSchool/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/pages/default.aspx>

PennVEST (Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority)

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

The PENNVEST Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides affordable financing for wastewater and certain other projects throughout Pennsylvania for the construction, improvement, extension, expansion, repair or rehabilitation of wastewater collection, treatment or disposal facilities, stormwater management, nonpoint source pollution controls including but not limited to agricultural best management practices and watershed and estuary management.

The program offers low interest loans with flexible terms and principal forgiveness funds where applicable and available. PENNVEST performs similarly to a bank for the CWSRF program in Pennsylvania and manages the financial aspects of the fund, while the Department of Environmental Protection is the technical arm for the program. The seed money for the CWSRF has been distributed to states annually under Congressional authorization pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1987. The funds and the program are administered nationally by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Growing Greener Watershed Protection Program

DEP funds local projects through the state Growing Greener Environment Stewardship Funds Program. , Applications should be targeted toward clean-up of non-point source pollution. The grant will fund local watershed-based conservation projects with average awards totaling \$150,000, and requires a 15% match from a non-DEP fund source. Applications are typically due in January.

DEP Non-Point Source Implementation Programs Grant

Provides funding assistance for projects aimed at implementing Pennsylvania’s Non-point Source Management Program. Targeted projects include control of urban runoff, and natural channel design/ stream bank stabilization projects. The grant will fund local projects with the average award being \$200,000. Applications are typically due in July.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/Clean-Water-State-Revolving-Fund.aspx>

For more information, visit:
<http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/GrantsLoansRebates/Growing-Greener/Pages/default.aspx>

For more information, visit:
[Visit:http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/NonpointSource/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/NonpointSource/Pages/default.aspx)

Regional Sources

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Regional Trails Program (RTP)

The Regional Trails Program provides trail developers – including: counties, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations with technical assistance and funding opportunities to plan and implement trails that will contribute to The Circuit, the greater Philadelphia 800+ mile trail network.

Schuylkill River

Schuylkill River Restoration Fund

This program offers implementation assistance grants for land transactions and open space preservation projects. Matching funds of up to \$4,000 per project are available to protect lands and improve the water quality within the Schuylkill River Watershed.

Delaware Valley Property and Liability Trust

Opportunities exist for grant applications through liability insurance carriers. Delaware Valley Property and Liability Trust (DVPLT) is Abington’s property and liability insurance provider and offers annual grants to assist in specific areas to reduce liability risk in the parks and / or employee safety. Examples of grant funding opportunities include: automatic tail lift gates, playground safety surface, high visible employee vests, tractor cabins, and more. These grants are available annually to the Township and applications may be made directly to the insurance carrier. Award amounts vary from community to community and are based on previous year liability claims. Typically, these are smaller grants, \$10,000 +/-, they do not require a match. A simple grant application can be completed and returned to DVPLT for their consideration. DVPLT grants are reimbursable grants. Once the township is approved for the grant, the township purchases the item(s), then submits a request for reimbursement.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.dvrpc.org/trails/regionaltrailsprogram/>

For more information, visit:
<https://schuylkillriver.org/conservation/therestoration-fund/>

For more information, visit:
<https://dvtrusts.com/coverage/property-liability-trust/>

County Sources

Montgomery County

Montco 2040: Implementation Grant Program

This County grant program assists municipalities in making physical improvements that achieve progress toward the goals of the Montco 2040: A Shared Vision Plan. Primary focus categories include: Adaption and Resiliency (which targets projects addressing floodplain mitigation, streambank restoration, adding BMPs to municipal or School District property); Green Streets; Community Gardens, and Open Space Preservation. Open Space Preservation projects require a minimum 50% local match that can come from any combination of municipal or outside funding sources. The maximum grant award is \$200K, but the average award is closer to \$100K. Applications are typically due in March.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/37240/Implementation-Grant-Program-2023-Brochure>

Implementation Schedule

The Township Commissioners may elect eligible projects to advance through design and construction – based on multiple considerations, including: available funding; matching sources, scale of project, and public priorities.

Multiple specific “planning phase” projects have been identified in this update.

Major maintenance projects, such as ecological restoration actions require formal designs and usually permitting, and no projects of this type were identified as ready to go in summer 2023.

Most grant program application deadlines, at all levels, are usually clustered in the first half of the federal fiscal year. Abington Township considered options for a 2023 PA DCNR grant application early in the year. Other program applications will open and close between May and October 2023.

Abington Township retains all strategic options to submit multiple grant applications in both 2023 and 2024 - depending on multiple factors.



Wading pool area in Alverthorpe Park.

Order of Magnitude Cost

Order of magnitude cost have been provided for budgeting and planning. Costs provided cover a range of project types including planning, facilities, stewardship and connectivity improvements. Planning costs are based on budgets for similar project scopes and grant funding opportunities. Construction costs are based on projects of similar scope and scale; they reflect prevailing wage rates that are required for publicly bid construction projects; and reflect 2023 dollars. Standard escalation rates should be applied as appropriate when budgeting for construction of improvements.

Magnitude of Costs			
Items	Qty. Units	Estimated Cost Range	
Fields and Courts			
Ballfield, 275' centerfield, renovations	1 EA	\$19,000 –	\$24,000
Ballfield, 275' centerfield	1 EA	\$35,000 –	\$38,000
Ballfield, 300' centerfield, renovations	1 EA	\$22,000 –	\$28,000
Ballfield, 300' centerfield	1 EA	\$38,000 –	\$42,000
Multipurpose field (150' x 300') renovations	1 EA	\$36,000 –	\$40,000
Multipurpose field (150' x 300')	1 EA	\$82,000 –	\$85,000
Synthetic turf field (58,000 SF)	1 EA	\$655,000 –	\$800,000
Synthetic turf field with underground stormwater basin (58,000 SF)	1 EA	\$707,400 –	\$864,000
Site Furnishings			
Interpretive signs	1 EA	\$300 –	\$600
Kiosks (map of park)	1 EA	\$2,000 –	\$2,000
Entrance signs	1 EA	\$1,600 –	\$4,200
LED baseball/softball field lighting retrofit	1 LS	\$55,000 –	\$165,000
LED soccer field lighting retrofit	1 LS	\$75,000 –	\$165,000
New field lighting	1 LS	\$140,000 –	\$350,000
Facilities and Programs			
Outdoor classroom (20' diameter)	1 EA	\$900 –	\$2,000
Nature based playgrounds w/ enginnered mulch surface (about 1500 SF)	1 LS	\$126,000 –	\$300,000
Ropes course/tree walk	1 LS	\$299,000 –	\$500,000
Inclusive playgrounds w/ poured-in-place safety surface (about 6,000 SF)	1 LS	\$428,000 –	\$1,000,000
Pool constuction (from 2018 study)	1 EA	\$7,000,000 –	\$9,000,000
Full season hybrid ice skating rink/splash pad	1 LS	\$1,000,000 –	\$2,000,000
Community building	1 LS	\$2,000,000 –	\$10,000,000

Magnitude of Costs		
Items	Qty. Units	Estimated Cost Range
Hardscape		
Stone dust walkways - 5' wide	1 LF	\$2 – \$4
Concrete walkways - 5' wide	1 LF	\$25 – \$40
Asphalt walkways - 5' wide	1 LF	\$32 – \$40
Asphalt miltipurpose trail - 10' wide	1 LF	\$64 – \$80
Impervious removal and vegetative restoration	1 SY	\$72 – \$100
Restrip crosswalks	1 EA	\$2,200 – \$3,000
Pedestrian crosswalk (paint, signage, ada landing w/ dws and no curb cuts)	1 EA	\$4,100 – \$5,000
Pedestrian crosswalk (paint, signage, ada landing w/ dws and curb cuts)	1 EA	\$8,000 – \$10,000
Tabled Pedestrian crosswalk	1 EA	\$10,400 – \$12,000
Stewardship Improvements		
Deer fencing	1 LF	\$7 – \$18
Naturalized BMP	1 SY	\$55 – \$80
Structural BMP	1 CY	\$100 – \$160
Trees in parking lot	1 EA	\$700 – \$900
Meadow (drill seed, new meadow sp, maintain after for 3 yrs)	1 AC	\$3,600 – \$5,000
Invasive speices removal / meadow establishment (maintain after for 5 yrs)	1 AC	\$5,900 – \$9,000
Reforestation (maintained for 4 years)	1 AC	\$10,300 – \$12,000
Stream stabilization / Riparian buffer (maintain for 4 years)	1 AC	\$45,500 – \$60,000
Professional Services		
Official map	1 EA	\$8,500 – \$10,000
Playground design	1 EA	\$8,000 – \$20,000
Rebranding/graphics	1 EA	\$27,000 – \$50,000
Park master plan	1 EA	\$30,000 – \$60,000
Park and pool master plan	1 EA	\$50,000 – \$70,000
Trail feasibility study	1 EA	\$75,000 – \$90,000