
Introduction: About the Plan

The Manheim Township Recreation, Park, Open Space and Greenways Plan will guide park and recreation improvements in the community over the next ten years. It addresses all aspects of public recreation from facilities to finances, from programs to parks, and from ideas to options.

Community Based Plan

This plan recognizes that Manheim Township has established the foundation of a first class parks and recreation system. The number and variety of facilities is exemplary: 560 acres of parkland in 11 parks; two swimming pools; a public golf course; miniature golf; roller rink; skate park; restaurants; and year round programs and services. Stauffer Mansion and the Overlook Community Campus are iconic as the standard of a first class parks and recreation system. Outstanding customer service is the hallmark of the Recreation Department and Manheim Township overall.

The purpose of this plan is to foster active healthy living, environmental conservation and enhance the senses of community here through parks and recreation. We base our purpose on the community values and input that emerged from the public participation process as follows:

- Manheim Township is a special place in which to live with a quality of life that is second to none.
- Parks, recreation and trails advance Manheim Township's commitment to be a healthy community for all its people, now and in the future.
- Conservation of natural and cultural resources is paramount in sustaining the cultural heritage of Manheim Township.
- Making the best use of all resources in ways that steward the environment, support human and financial resources and provide a legacy for future generations is vital.

By implementing the parks and recreation strategies suggested in this plan, the Manheim Township community will enhance the sense of place here and foster feelings of community that will help attract and retain businesses, residents, and visitors.

The **Manheim Township Recreation, Park, Greenways and Open Space Plan** creates a vision for the future of a green and connected community in which people of all ages continue to enjoy and support the township's beauty, cultural heritage and outstanding recreation opportunities. The recommendations of this plan are based upon an investigative and educational process to identify recreation and conservation initiatives and opportunities that are important to the citizens. This plan is timely. It is driven by a strong community engagement process in which elected and appointed officials came together with citizens in a public conversation about how to improve the community through parks and recreation. Finding ways to provide services and facilities in response to ever increasing public expectations in a climate of fiscal austerity is the major challenge of this plan.

Parks and Recreation:

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

Planning Goals

Manheim Township's Recreation, Park, Greenways and Open Space Plan will continue to guide the Township's actions and decision-making in achieving its mission to *"Provide to all people quality service through the continued maintenance and development of parks, facilities and programs."*

Manheim Township set forth the following planning objectives for this plan:

- Create a new Park, Open Space and Greenway Infrastructure Plan complementing the 1987 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and the 1998 Update.
- Complement the 2007 Lancaster County Growing Together Plan.
- Serve as the statement of Township policy and the functional element for park and recreation under the Manheim Township Comprehensive Plan adopted per the Municipalities' Planning Code, Act 247.
- Establish park and recreational facility guidelines and definitive principles and standards for the required dedication of public recreational land, which is suitable for the recreational uses intended and accessible to the development in the community so that these lands may be acquired in accordance with the Township SALDO (Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance).

- Establish the basis for the Township’s recreational fees to be collected in lieu of the required dedication for recreational purposes in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, Act 247, Section 3(11).

Planning Process

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

- Community recreation needs
- Park land and recreation facilities
- Greenways and trails
- Programs and services
- Administration and operations
- Financing

Public Engagement

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

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this plan a law?

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

What will the plan do?

The **Manheim Township Recreation, Park, Greenways and Open Space Plan** will focus planning on community opportunities and issues that can be addressed through parks and recreation. It provides a common framework for decision-making and sets forth recommendations and strategies to improve the quality of life in the community.

What will the plan *not* do?

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

How will the plan be used?

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

How will the plan be implemented?

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

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

About three out of four citizens use township parks and recreation facilities. And those that don't actually use them report that parks and recreation are important for the Township to have. Parks protect our natural resources and provide clean air and water. Parks and recreation increases property values. Recreation is the chief factor in establishing healthy family bonds, the foundation of our society. Recreation deters substance abuse and crime. Recreation adds years to our lives and life to our years. Recreation helps to build a strong sense of community by connecting citizens through enjoyable hours spent together in the pursuit of happiness and health. Proximity to parks, greenways and trails helps to increase property values¹.

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer², are less in danger from heart disease and stroke³, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer⁴, and have improved chances of

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

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

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

combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma and depression⁵. Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. It contributes to personality development and improves psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and stress. Recreation participation increases sense of well being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others. Recreation plays an important role in promoting a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize, share common interests and being a major driver of community interaction and pride. Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. They provide a social focus for the community and affect people's perception of their neighborhood. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influences how a community looks, feels and functions.

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

Plan Organization

The Manheim Township Recreation, Park, Open Space and Greenways Plan is organized in two parts: the Plan and the Foundation.

The Plan includes the Introduction, Community Profile, Goals and Recommendations and Action Plan. The Foundation presents the background information for the plan including the community profile, inventory and analysis of parks and recreation facilities, greenways and trails, programs and services, operations and management and financing. The appendices include the public opinion survey and full demographic report.

The Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction: About this Plan. Plan goals, process and frequently asked questions.

Chapter 2: Community Profile. Information about the population, public opinion and trends.

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

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

Chapter 3: The Plan. Critical analysis of the parks and recreation system, vision, mission, core values, goals and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Implementation Schedule. Timeframe for the recommendations for 2012- 2021.

The Foundation

Chapter 5: Parks and Recreation Facilities

Chapter 6: Open Space Greenways and Trails

Chapter 7: Recreation Programs and Services

Chapter 8: Organization and Management

Chapter 9: Financing

Appendices

Public Opinion Survey Report