

Recommendations

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



The following recommendations emerged from the planning process rooted in the rigorous public participation process, the reality of the current economic conditions and fiscal challenges, and the Township's desire to establish a vision and plan of action on how to sustain and enhance parks, recreation, greenways and trails for our citizens today and for many generations yet to come. By having a plan in place, citizens, community organizations, township management and staff, and elected and appointed officials will have one common set of goals and recommendations to work toward as the Township achieves its visions as a healthy community for all its people, now into the future.

Parks and Recreation: Potential for Excellence

Throughout the citizen participation process, the pride of the citizens living in Manheim Township was evident. Parks, recreation, scenic beauty and rural character, and trails contribute to citizen's pride and the Township's renown as a great place to live. Manheim Township has a premier park and recreation system.

There is a great deal of interest in this community in what can make the difference in this park system in moving it from good to excellent. Manheim Township has the potential to be competitive in the National Recreation and Park Association's Gold Medal Awards Program. A Gold Medal Award is a prestigious award similar to an "Oscar" which no Pennsylvania community has ever won. This would be a worthy goal for Manheim Township as a first class township with a first class park and recreation system. To that end, the Township can follow the path to achieve the characteristics that define an excellent park system. Research conducted by the Trust

for Public Land found that there are seven factors that define excellence in public park systems¹. They include the following:

1. **A clear expression of purpose.** Manheim Township has established clear expressions of mission, vision and purpose as a “A Healthy Community”. It is clear here that enhancing the quality of life in Manheim Township is the core purpose of all township functions.
2. **Ongoing planning and community involvement.** Community involvement is a hallmark of the Recreation Department. Committees include the Park and Recreation Board, Habitat MT, Boettcher House, and the Pathways Committee. Planning is another matter. To be successful, a park system needs a thoughtful orchestrated planning process for all major improvements and ongoing operations. A plan is more than an intention. It is a document that is built upon a process, demonstrating specific actions, professional expertise, research, and a clear final outcome with specific factors defined. It should be rooted in public participation. Every plan should spell out the implications for the long term management, maintenance and operation of the improvement including staff and financial support including alternative methods of support to tradition township resources. Good planning builds public support and ensures the likelihood that the Township can successfully afford to operate the project in the future.
3. **Sufficient assets in land, staffing and equipment to meet the systems’ goals.** While the Manheim Township park and recreation system is expansive, additional land and facilities are needed to serve present and future generations. Every park and recreation system should have a formalized plan to manage all of its resources sustainably for proper staffing and equipment levels. This requires the tracking of data about workload, costs of tasks and facilities, program participation and trends, and so forth. This information should be written and published in an annual report so that managers, staff, and elected and appointed officials can make informed decisions and allocate resources. Numbers, documentation and information on a timely basis are essential for effective and efficient management; the importance of this cannot be overstated.
4. **Equitable Access.** An excellent park and recreation system is accessible to all residents regardless of place of residence, physical ability or financial circumstances. Increasing architectural accessibility in the parks will be an important challenge in meeting ADA requirements. Assuring opportunities for low-income residents will be important as the Township moves into complete cost recovery for programs and increased fees and charges. Continuing to work with the school district in identifying children in need and providing a means to serve them will be important over the next ten years.
5. **User satisfaction.** By definition, an excellent park system is well used. High usership validates that the system is meeting people’s needs. Manheim Township can track paying users but not informal use of facilities. While it is not possible to have exact counts of all park visitation, selective counts of specific facilities over time can provide the Township with some meaningful data about facility use. This

¹ Harnik, Peter. **The Excellent City Park System: What Makes It Great and How to Get There.** Washington, D.C.: Trust for Public Land. 2003.

will help managers to know their customers and understand and anticipate their needs to plan for effective public service. The public opinion survey for this plan indicated a relatively high level of customer satisfaction regarding parks and recreation.

6. **Safety from Physical Hazards and Crime.** The Public Works eliminates and prevents hazardous conditions in township parks. Crime and anti-social behavior has been an issue in township parks. Prime examples include user conflicts between golfers and skaterboarders at Overlook and the trimming of trees in the parks as a way to curb drug use and citizen concerns about illicit behavior. Recreation programs, good design and effective management are the three legs of helping people, especially younger citizens, to stay out of trouble.
7. **Benefits For the Municipality Beyond the Borders of the Parks.** The value of Manheim Township’s park and recreation system extends well beyond the park boundaries. Good parks have been shown to increase property values, cleans the air and water, reduces health care costs, attracts and retains businesses and residents, reduces the isolation of the elderly, and improves learning opportunities for people of all ages through experience in the great outdoors. Documenting and collecting information about the benefits of the Manheim Township park system would strengthen the importance of parks and recreation as an essential public service in which financial support is an investment rather than a cost. Over the next ten years as economic challenges magnify, this information will be vital in making the case for Manheim Township’s public park and recreation system.

Core Values, Vision, Mission and Goals

The following core values, vision, mission, goals and recommendation’s upon implementation will advance Manheim Township’s potential to be recognized as an excellent public park system thereby further enhancing the quality of life here for present and future generations of citizens.

Core Values

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

- **Community** – Manheim Township is a special place in which to live. Strengthening the sense of community here through parks and recreation is important.
- **Sustainability** – 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.

- **Health** – The health and wellness of citizens of all ages is paramount. Recreation fosters active healthy lifestyles through facilities, programs and services that benefit individuals and the community.
- **Community Character and Scenic Beauty** – Manheim Township’s rural foundation, scenic beauty and distinctive way of life need to be preserved and protected.

Vision Statement

Manheim Township’s first class parks and recreation system enriches the community through the conservation of natural resources, recreation opportunities that support active healthy lifestyles, and community connections that bring together people, places and our heritage.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to help our citizens engage in active healthy lifestyles, enrich lifelong learning and to conserve our natural resources. We do this by providing public service that is friendly, convenient, accountable, and exceeds community expectations and by working in collaboration with public and private partners.

Goals

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

- **Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as community destinations where residents can have fun, experience nature, socialize and exercise in harmony with nature and environmental conservation.**
- **Goal 2: Connect our community through a system of greenways and trails.**
- **Goal 3: Engage the citizens in recreation opportunities to enrich their lives.**
- **Goal 4: Provide operational excellence and financial sustainability that will garner widespread public support for parks and recreation.**

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

Overview

Manheim Township has 568 acres of parkland located in 16 parks distributed community wide. Manheim Township has shown a commitment to parks and recreation facilities through parkland acquisition and investment in recreation facilities. Based on the current township standard of 16 acres of parkland per thousand residents, Manheim Township currently has sufficient land for parks designated as community parks which are larger parks with at least 25 acres. There is a need for additional neighborhood parks, which are smaller parks of approximately five to 15 acres. However, neighborhood parkland needs can be offset by the five elementary schools. Long-term there will be a need for additional parkland to keep pace with the expanding population.

Central to the park and recreation system in Manheim Township is the Overlook Complex. At a combined 287 acres, the Overlook Complex is the hub of community activity. The variety and extent of recreation facilities in the Overlook Complex provide something for everyone, and in doing so, creates a setting that brings the community together. In addition to the Overlook Community Campus, Manheim Township has four community parks, two neighborhood parks, two mini parks, two natural areas, a sports complex, and over 16-miles of trails. The system of parks offers traditional and special use facilities to meet the need and interests of the broad community. The challenges associated with the Manheim Township park and recreation system can be viewed as tweaks to a solid system of recreation opportunities. The challenge is to take the good system of parks and facilities to the next level – to create a premier system.

Significant Issues

- While a shortfall of 181.6 acres of parkland is anticipated by 2030, parkland acquisition is not a township priority given the recent acquisition of the Weaver Road property and the current state of the economy. An opportunity-based strategy is recommended for the acquisition of additional parkland.
- The parks are well developed with facilities but require thoughtful planning to integrate upgrades and amenities to create premier parks that address user needs.
- The residents desire additional open space and natural resource areas. Currently there are only two natural resource parks in the municipality and small natural areas in a few of the other parks.
- The Township does not have an indoor recreation facility although there are several buildings in the parks that host specific indoor recreation uses.

Objective 1**Provide adequate parkland for present and future residents.**

Recommendations

1. Contact key large landowners to express the long-term need for additional parkland and the township's desire to acquire land for recreation purposes. Define the landowner benefits and explore if lands might be available for future purchase.
2. Acquire parkland through the mandatory dedication process when new residential developments are proposed.
3. Secure parkland for the protection of important open space and natural resources through acquisition and conservation and access easements.
4. Expand existing park sites through acquisition of contiguous acreage where possible.

Objective 2**Modify the Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance to provide for the future parks and recreation needs of Manheim Township.**

Recommendations

Section 809 of the Manheim Township SALDO contains provisions for mandatory dedication of parkland or payment of fees-in-lieu of dedication. The provisions apply to both residential and non-residential development. For residential development, the ordinance requires a dedication of 0.0383 acres of land per lot. For non-residential development of 25,000 square feet or more, the ordinance requires an open space set aside of at least 10% of the gross land area of the site. The fee-in-lieu of dedication is \$1000 per unit, as of the time of this report. This fee is established by resolution by the Board of Commissioners. The characteristics of the dedicated land are also stipulated in the SLDO, and require that the land is accessible, contiguous to adjoining open space and parkland, and that its use is not constrained by environmental features.

1. Increase the parkland acreage requirement per dwelling unit and strive to secure parkland through the land development process. When new development occurs, Manheim Township should accept a parkland dedication rather than a fee-in-lieu so that new residents have close to home parks, perhaps within walking distance to their homes, and to enable the formation of a network of contiguous land for active and passive recreational pursuits. The park needs assessment (Chapter 5) projects a 181.6-acre deficit of parkland by 2030. With demand at 16 acres per 1,000 persons, the mandatory dedication standard equates to 0.03904 acres per dwelling unit (the Township's current standard set in the SALDO is 0.03803 acres

per lot). The Township should consider increasing the ordinance requirement to 0.039 acres and the requirement should apply to dwelling units to account for multi-family development where there may be multiple units on one lot.

2. Base the fee-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland on the market value of land. If a fee in lieu of parkland is collected, the fee should be determined at the time a subdivision or land development application is filed and should be based on an appraisal of the land at that time. This ensures that the fee will reflect the land's market value at the time of development and is more accurate than one based on average land values and set in an annual fee schedule.
3. Continue to apply Section 810 of the SALDO to new subdivisions and land developments in order to establish a network of trails and greenways. This ordinance provides for the dedication or improvement non-motorized paths and the dedication or reservation of greenways, which may be credited against the mandatory dedication of parkland requirement.
4. Create greenways of undisturbed open space by strengthening the natural resource protection standards in the Manheim Township Zoning Ordinance. Such standard that would place limits of disturbance on steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains, and establish riparian buffers on surface waters. In addition, consider strengthening the tree protection standards in SALDO.
5. Consider use of the Open Space Lands Act (Act 153 of 1996) to finance the acquisition of open space. This Act provides for financing and purchase of open space and parkland subject to a number of conditions and procedural requirements.
6. Continue to use the Transferable Development Rights ordinance to preserve farmland and open space located in the Township's Designated Agricultural Area.

Objective 3

Maximize existing parks to address needs and interests of citizens and improve function and convenience.

Recommendations

1. Complete master plans for Jaycee Park, Municipal Park, Manheim Township Athletic Complex, and Overlook Park and Campus (or key portions) to address issues, define improvements, achieve the objectives outlined in this plan.
2. Provide areas for passive recreation. Undertake improvements to Perelman Park and promote the park to citizens who may not know about it. Enhance natural areas in other parks through partnership with Habitat MT.
3. Evaluate the potential to add non-motorized boat rental facilities at Perlman Park. This would be an important strategy to combat a major block to engagement in participation in the great outdoors: the lack of equipment. Finding a partner for this arrangement would be a sound strategy. This could be a conservation

- organization or other group as a fund-raising venture. Consider bicycle rentals here as well.
4. Provide walking and bicycling trails within parks and to park sites, as possible.
 5. Enhance the parks to be comfortable and convenient to use by adding benches, drinking fountains, grills, restrooms, and other convenience facilities. Provide shade near playgrounds and other activity areas.
 6. Incorporate field and court lighting in park sites as appropriate to maximize the use of existing facilities.
 7. Add unique facilities to broaden the appeal and use of the parks. Explore community interest in a spray park/splash pad play area, in-line hockey rink, sand volleyball courts developed for league play, or other facility.
 8. Undertake a study to explore the feasibility of expanding the Overlook Activity Center for indoor recreation use. Include the exploration of the potential to cover the pool for year round use. An enlarged facility could provide a teen gathering area, host birthday parties, and provide a location for summer camps and other recreation programs.
 9. Consider the needs of senior adults in park design and enhancements. Make facilities pedestrian friendly and convenient to use. Develop shaded sitting areas and provide benches along trails.
 10. Evaluate the “Carry-in Carry-out” policy on trash. Consider the cost savings, park conditions regarding trash and public sentiment about having trash cans or this policy in place. Include consideration of providing pet waste disposal bags and trash receptacles for the bags along trails.

Objective 4
Create great public spaces.

Recommendations

1. Establish design guidelines that provide unified principles, concepts, furnishings, materials, and colors for all township parks. Establish policies for review, design, development and management of facilities offered by community organizations and/or individuals. Strive to achieve a high quality consistent design for the parks. Work with professional park planners and landscape architects versed in park design.
2. Undertake improvement to the parks that are holistic.
3. Provide support and accessory facilities that create premier recreation facilities and enhanced leisure experiences.

4. Enhance park sites with landscaping for color and interest and trees for shade.
5. Create an “Art in the Parks” program to establish public art in the parks on a permanent and rotating basis. Work with the regional artists’ community in developing this program featuring public art that evokes the local heritage as well as provides new and inspiring themes.
6. Plan and develop great playgrounds that promote fun, socialization, learning, and creativity. Consider planning a playground that is a “Nature Playground”.
7. Design parks with consideration of safety and security of users.
8. Establish a readily identifiable image in the community for Manheim Township parks through a unified signage system, park design standards, street trees and attractive landscaping.
9. Manage the public lands for natural resource conservation not just for public use.

Objective 5**Conserve natural resources and design parks with nature.**

Recommendations

1. Protect and enhance natural resources of park sites.
2. Provide buffer areas around sensitive natural resources.
3. Protect water resources and enhance water quality. Establish riparian buffers, and stabilize damaged stream banks.
4. Consider wind, solar orientation, soils, geology, depth of ground water and other natural features when locating facilities.
5. Prioritize the use of native plants and identify and remove non-native, invasive species. Partner with Habitat MT to establish and maintain native plantings and address invasive species.
6. Use low impact development techniques and Best Management Practices for erosion control and storm water management to develop park sites.
7. Provide interpretative sign and demonstration projects to communicate important environmental messages. Partner with Habitat MT to facilitate these initiatives.

Objective 6**Evaluate, design and upgrade parks with consideration of safety and security of users.**

Recommendations

1. Follow the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) including the following recommendations. Work with Township police on this effort.
2. Maintain clear sight lines into the parks from public streets and sidewalks. Avoid locating facilities in isolated areas to promote safe recreation environments.
3. Locate recreation facilities for safety. Provide safety zones, separation and physical barriers between parking and roadways, and avoid conflicts between park users and pedestrians and vehicles.
4. Provide physical barriers between adjacent roadways and parking areas.
5. Limit vehicle penetration into park sites, as possible to avoid pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and safety issues.
6. Provide trails of adequate width for the intended users.
7. Provide adequate safety zones surrounding ball fields. Do not locate trails, playgrounds, and other facilities in foul ball zones of the softball and baseball fields. Separate spectator seating from ball fields with fencing.
8. Continue to work towards meeting Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines for Public Playground Safety in all playgrounds. Provide play equipment that meets the safety and age-segregation criteria. Develop play areas with safety surfacing that is contained in edging to ensure the proper depth of safety surface material is maintained. Maintain a phased implementation schedule for bringing all play areas into compliance with the CPSC.

Objective 7**Provide accessible trails, viewing areas, and other accommodations to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Recommendations

1. Develop trails within all parks to provide accessible routes from parking areas and sidewalks to recreation and support facilities.
2. Provide stabilized handicapped parking spaces in each parking area.

3. Provide accessible viewing areas adjacent to activity areas that are connected to an accessible route. Ball fields must have accessible viewing areas.
4. Consider the needs of the athlete with disabilities. Provide clear openings at gates and along fence lines. Provide other accommodations to enable use of recreation facilities by persons with disabilities.
5. Provide accessible parking spaces and an accessible trail in Jaycee Park.
6. Develop playgrounds with play equipment that offers play options for children who are physically challenged.
7. Offer site amenities that accommodate persons with disabilities. Provide picnic tables that area ADA compliant. Develop benches along trails with a stabilized space for wheelchair adjacent to the bench. Offer ADA compliant drinking fountains.

Goal 2: Conserve natural resources and connect our community through a system of greenways and trails.

Overview

The majority of Manheim Township is densely developed with a heavily traveled network of roadways and extensive residential neighborhoods. Parks, schools, and other community destinations are dispersed throughout the municipality and walking and bicycling connections are limited. The Pathways Committee has provided important momentum to creating a comprehensive trail network. Trail segments exist and the challenge is to complete the missing links and expand the system throughout the community.

Conserving open space and natural resources is a high priority of municipal residents. Natural stream corridors provide important green corridors in the community but are not protected and many are degraded with severe erosion.

Significant Issues

- The densely developed nature of the municipality presents significant challenges for creating a connected community.
- Public educational programs about the benefits of trails and greenways are important.
- Cooperation of private landowners is necessary to complete a comprehensive system of greenways and trails in Manheim Township.
- The Manheim Township Pathways Committee and Habitat MT are two important volunteer groups that can help achieve open space, greenway, and trail goals.

Objective 1

Promote the protection and conservation of open space and green resources throughout the municipality.

Recommendations

1. Communicate with and support the land conservation efforts of Lancaster County, the Lancaster County Conservancy, and others.

2. Expand environmental protection provisions within municipal ordinances.
3. Promote outreach and public education of landowners regarding opportunities and benefits of environmental conservation.
 - Partner with volunteer organizations to improve natural resource areas of parks as conservation demonstration sites.
 - Demonstrate native plantings suitable for use in Manheim Township, best management practices, and resource protection initiatives.
 - Incorporate interpretative signs in demonstration areas to communicate conservation messages.
 - Use the Township newsletter, as well as the newsletters of other related community organizations, and municipal website as outreach tools.
4. Verify annually that the Manheim Township mandatory dedication provisions align with the fair market value of property in the municipality.
5. Coordinate conservation opportunities and initiatives with Habitat MT, the Lancaster County Conservation District, the Lancaster County Conservancy, adjacent municipalities, and others as appropriate.
6. Enhance stream corridors within parks (Perelman Park, Landis Woods, Overlook Complex, and Jaycee Park) with riparian buffer plantings and stream bank stabilization.
7. Seek conservation easements to protect and buffer important natural resource areas.
8. Practice environmentally sound resource management of municipal parks.
 - Conserve and protect natural areas and resources.
 - Develop parkland for public use to avoid fragmentation and retain masses and corridors of green infrastructure.
 - Plant native species and remove invasive species.
 - Enhance riparian buffer plantings.

Objective 2

Plan and develop a comprehensive network of greenways and trails throughout the municipality to link residential, schools, parkland, and other community destinations.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support the efforts of the Pathways Committee.

2. Continue to expand the trail network through the subdivision and land development plan review process.
 - Require sidewalks in new residential and commercial areas be extended to nearby sidewalks and trails.
 - Require sidewalks in new residential and commercial development.
 - Seek easements for trail links.
3. Develop a comprehensive network of trails in Manheim Township.
 - Continue to support the efforts of the Pathways Committee.
 - Prioritize development of “missing links” to maximize connectivity.
 - Develop trail loops where possible.
 - Promote awareness and use of the trails with obvious trailhead presence and pathway signage.
 - Prioritize trail segments with a high likelihood of success. Promote the success as a pilot project.
4. Complete feasibility studies/master plans for proposed trail and bicycle routes, as appropriate. Use a public process to seek input from citizens. Include evaluation of local roads to integrate bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities.
5. Work with PennDOT and the Township Public Works Department to provide trail and mobility initiatives and integrate pedestrian and trail improvements and accommodations into new/renovated bridge, roadway and traffic signal projects.
6. Communicate with adjacent municipalities and Lancaster County regarding regional greenway and trail opportunities and initiatives.
7. Promote expanded public awareness of greenways, trails and bikeways. Work with the Manheim Township Pathways Committee.
 - Raise public awareness of the benefits of greenways and trails.
 - Expand public awareness of trail and bike lane options in the community. Post information on the Manheim Township website and utilize public education, media, and other communication tools.
 - Share information about safe biking practices and bicycle education.
 - Share options for non-motorized commuting.
 - Share information with landowners about the benefits of trails and greenways and the purpose and mechanics of access and conservation easements.
 - Share greenway and trail success stories.

8. Develop trails within parks. Prioritize development of additional trails to form loops on the Overlook Community Campus and trails throughout Municipal Park.
9. Provide convenience facilities for bicyclists in parks such as bike racks, bike parking areas, and water fountains.
10. Communicate with Lancaster County Planning Commission and adjacent municipalities regarding trail and greenway initiatives.
11. Seek conservation easements to protect and buffer natural resources along greenway corridors.

Goal 3: Engage the citizens in recreation to enrich their lives.

Overview

Public recreation services introduce citizens to a variety of recreation opportunities. Municipal recreation is the foundation for building lifelong active healthy lives. The Manheim Township Recreation Department offers nearly 500 sessions of interesting and fulfilling recreation programs for just about every interest and age group. The strategy here is to expand and enhance the services over the next ten years through encouragement of self-directed opportunities in the parks and recreation facilities, enhancing services to families, and focusing on nature, wellness and the arts. The most effective thing to do is to start with the best customers, children and families and branch out from there, building upon success.

Significant Issues

- Service is the hallmark of Manheim Township’s Recreation Department.
- Finding ways for various recreation service providers to work together on increasing public recreation opportunities is important. The providers include the Recreation Department, the Manheim Township Library and Overlook Golf Course.
- Effective coordination of maintenance planning and tasks to ensure that facilities are ready for programs will support excellent participant experiences and ensure that appropriate staff is scheduled in a timely manner.
- Future directions in recreation opportunities can move into the self –directed realm of recreation facilities where citizens can enjoy their recreation at their own discretion. This would include paths for walking and bicycling, scenic areas for enjoying nature, and gathering places for families and friends.
- Volunteer organizations provide major public services in programming such as Habitat MT, the sports associations, Lighten Up Lancaster and Boettcher House Nature Museum.
- Collaboration with the Manheim Township School District will continue to be important to this community in which the Township and the School District share the identical service area.
- Increasing public awareness about recreation opportunities is an ongoing function.
- Continuing to include people with special needs in all aspects of parks and recreation is crucial. Finding news and better ways to serve citizens of all abilities is an important direction for the future.

Objective 1
Develop a program management plan.

Recommendations

1. Establish a three-year program management plan. This plan would be similar to a park master plan and enable the Department to take a step back from pressing day-to-day responsibilities in order to examine and plan for programs in a systematic fashion and with respect to the implementation of the Recreation, Park, Greenways and Open Space Plan. The program management plan should include a mix of organized programs and self-directed recreation opportunities. For the organized programs, set goals for desired outcomes for the participants as well as the number and types of programs to be offered. Develop a municipal revenue policy with guidelines for fees and charges that are reasonable and attainable. Take into consideration the program type, facilities, and staff resources. Continue the goal of cost recovery based upon this policy. Typically such a goal reflects the percentage of the operating budget that is supported with non-tax dollars generated through fees and charges, donations, and other means.
 - Focus on effective customer service rather than on a “cafeteria-style” menu of programs.
 - Determine goals and parameters for contracting with commercial recreation providers for public recreation programs.
 - Adopt a formula of 50 percent repeat programs, 30 percent seasonal programs and 20 percent new programs annually.
2. Broaden the perspective on service delivery from organized scheduled programs to providing opportunities for self-directed recreation. This will enable the community to expand recreation opportunities without increasing demands on staff time.
3. Include the role of “information broker” in which the recreation staff presents ideas for how people can spend their leisure time on their own. This could be a feature on the Recreation Department’s WEB site, in the activity guide and in brochures for “cross-marketing.”

Objective 2
Develop and implement an advertising program to enhance and increase community awareness about parks and recreation.

Recommendations

1. Build on the pride of people living in Manheim Township as the “brand” for parks and recreation. Position the advertising and outreach in a way that showcases this community as the special place it is recognized to be.

2. Continue to use the Township's tag line of "A Healthy Community". Use the logo on all possible surfaces.
3. Continue to offer the program activity guide through direct mail to households. This is the single most effective tool the for advertising parks and recreation now.
4. Create a customer database. Information about customers is informal and general now. Use RecTrac to create the database to develop a targeted outreach and advertising program. Develop information about customer preferences, interests, and demographic characteristics. Knowing who the customers are and their characteristics is essential to expand and position services effectively. This can be done through registration, program evaluations, focus groups, and intercept surveys in the parks, special events or programs.
5. Strive to make direct contacts with the best customers of the Recreation Department throughout the year. Set a goal of 12 direct contacts with the departments' "best customers". This is the method by which the Township will expand services to a larger group of citizens.

Objective 3

Develop and implement a marketing strategy for parks and recreation

Recommendations

1. Recognize that needs assessment is ongoing. It need not be expensive or complex. Obtain public input from a variety of means including:
 - A community-wide needs survey every three years. Build upon the recent community survey conducted for this. Use this plan as the basis for the next survey.
 - Letters and telephone calls from residents. Suggestion boxes. The WEB site(s) for parks and recreation.
 - Focus groups. Community boards and organizations including the sports groups, service organizations, people with special needs, and others.
 - Periodic interviews in parks with park visitors.
2. Participate in community advisory groups and organizations as a liaison to parks and recreation.
3. Evaluate programs, services, and facilities on an on-going basis to determine public preferences. This should be a formalized process instituted for the programs overall. Target both leaders and participants for the evaluations. Ask for testimonials and permission to use the testimonials in advertising. Include evaluations during programs for mid-course improvements and upon completion.

Objective 4**Build upon community nature based recreation opportunities over time.**

Recommendations

1. Focus on creating self-directed nature based recreation experiences in the community. Continue to use community volunteers.
2. Advertise these areas and opportunities to the public. Promote recreational experiences that people can enjoy at their own discretion for relaxation, nature study, photography, bird and wildlife watching year round.
3. Encourage group use of environmental areas of the parks. Work with groups such as scouts, school groups, day care centers, senior centers, and other community organizations to conduct their own self-directed programs and experiences.
4. Plan for nature and environmental education as a program area. Start with existing programs such as the summer playground programs and camps. Add a nature activity each week into each of these programs in order to foster stewardship of the outdoors. Only move into this if sufficient staff time and resources can be dedicated to developing and implementing it.

Objective 5**Continue to provide and promote recreation opportunities aimed at improving lifelong fitness and wellness.**

Recommendations

1. Adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes facilities, services, promotion, and partnerships.
2. Promote and advertise facilities such as pathways, year-round recreation, and scenic natural areas to entice people to participate.
3. Promote the need for an active lifestyle, its role in disease prevention, and how Parks and Recreation can help citizens to lead healthy lifestyles.

Objective 6**Take a leadership role in providing a forum and encouraging cooperation among community sports organizations.**

Recommendations

1. Hold an annual forum or semi-annual meetings for community sports organizations. Invite all organizations to the forums to discuss topics of common interest such as fields, scheduling, permitting, common issues and opportunities, potential areas of collaboration and other topics that may emerge. Determine an action plan to foster future collaborative efforts.

2. Continue to set the standard for positive experiences among those engaged in community sports. Use the approach the Department developed through a national program to provide the framework by which youth sports are planned and implemented.

Objective 7**Continue to help facilitate community recreation services by other providers.**

Recommendations

1. Supporting community recreation efforts such league sports and community special events offered by other groups requires dedicated staff time of the Recreation Department. Assess the availability of staff time and the estimated time requirements of a proposed project or program when a community organization needs assistance and use that information to determine if the Township has the capacity to support that effort. Determine the present workload in serving community organizations and assess the potential to modify services so that the Department can prioritize staff time and resources.
2. Monitor and evaluate public/private partnerships with commercial recreation providers in offering public recreation opportunities. This provides an important public service as well as operates as a feeder program to strengthen local recreation type businesses. The important thing to do is to make sure that the level of service and staff time accomplishing this supports departmental goals.
3. Continue to provide support and advertisement in the program activity guide for community groups with their contact numbers.
4. Monitor trends to determine how services can be enhanced or rejuvenated.

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

Overview

Effective management is the key to a successful parks and recreation system. While it is relatively easier to obtain funding for capital improvement projects than to get the resources needed to support the improvements. Over the lifetime of a park, three out of every four dollars goes to maintenance and operations. In Manheim Township, the management of parks and recreation is distributed among three departments: Recreation, Public Works, and the Overlook Golf Course. The level of investment in Manheim Township's extensive parks and recreation system with its wide ranging and diverse facilities merits an outstanding management support system that effectively plans, directs, controls and evaluates operations effectively and efficiently. The Township is fortunate in having a staff that is passionate about parks and recreation and committed to organizational excellence.

Significant Issues

- The size and complexity of the parks and recreation system requires unique and diverse knowledge, skills and expertise to manage all of its functions. These include natural resource management sports turf maintenance, historic preservation, customer service, financial and personnel management, effective communication, marketing and many other management practices.
- Cost savings, efficiency and effectiveness from moving Parks to Public Works have not been realized. Parks and recreation is split among three departments.
- Communication tends to be fragmented and complicated resulting in management challenges.
- No formal written park maintenance management system is in place.
- Park Planning is not a designated function with defined parameters and requirements.
- Role of the Parks and Recreation Board is unclear since the re-organization of the parks and recreation functions.
- Communication tends to be fragmented and disjointed among Recreation, Public Works, elected and appointed officials and citizens.
- Program planning is distributed among several program managers without an overall plan for the Department.

Objective 1
Unify parks and recreation.

Recommendations

1. Transfer parks back to the Recreation Department and re-establish the Manheim Township Parks and Recreation Department. Assess the availability of staff time and make that information known to municipal managers and officials.
2. *At a minimum*, place the responsibility for Park Planning in the Recreation Department making it the Department of Recreation and Park Planning. Develop an official written process for park planning that specifies the steps involved including public participation, key stakeholder involvement, services from appropriate design professionals, and planning for the long term maintenance and management of the improvement or project during the planning process to identify future Township financial and human resource commitments and alternatives to traditional Township support.

Objective 2
Develop a written formalized maintenance management system.

Recommendations

1. Develop quality standards for the parks and recreation facilities.
2. Develop a workload cost tracking system.
3. Use the TRIMS program. Track resources and generate reports on maintenance related cost centers, activities and services.
4. Develop a formal, written maintenance plan. Include planning, directing, controlling and evaluating park and recreation system maintenance.
5. Use the information generated from the workload cost tracking to make decisions about park planning, resource allocation, fees and charges, staffing and other important functions.
6. Incorporate maintenance planning in all major capital improvement projects. Use the Management Impact Statement Tool shown in Figure 9-2 for this purpose.

Objective 3**Develop a five to ten year plan for Overlook Golf Course to ensure that it remains a thriving Township public recreation facility.**

Recommendations

1. Consider retaining a golf course management consultant to work with the Golf Course Director and Superintendent and key stakeholders from the Township on preparing a five-year plan for golf course operations and the operation of the concessions. The goal is to ensure that the golf course remains a thriving public asset for the community and that future generations of golfers learn the love of the game here.
2. Establish an advisory committee for Overlook Golf Course as a sub-committee of the Parks & Recreation Board.

Objective 4**Reposition staff for management efficiency improvements.**

Recommendations

1. Transfer the Public Relations and Special Events Coordinator into the Recreation Department. Add the function of Professional Development Coordinator as a responsibility of this position. Strive to use this position to generate partnerships and financial support for parks and recreation. Long term, this position should generate revenues.
2. Reclassify the Administrative Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator position as an Administrative Services Coordinator. Designate this position to serve as the Acting Director in the absence of the Recreation Director for limited periods of time of up to two weeks. The purpose of this is to provide information, respond to questions and direct inquiries to the correct Township staff person. Outline the duties of this function as supporting and sustain defined policies and procedures and communication systems. Longer term absences of the Director would require the appointment of an Interim Director by the Parks and Recreation Board.
3. Direct staff time toward outcomes and goals. Align duties and performance goals with outcomes, community benefits, and advancement to the goals set forth in this plan. Develop annual performance goals that provide a framework for making the best use of the human resources available.

Objective 5**Develop an annual report for parks and recreation.**

Recommendations

1. Use RecTrac and TRIMS to generate information. Develop annual reports for Parks, Recreation, Greenways and Open Space. Include documentation of the benefits and outcomes of investment in parks and recreation.
2. Incorporate ongoing needs assessment and services evaluation system into reporting. Ensure that reporting emphasizes outcomes, benefits and quality standards as well as the facts and figures of the numbers for participation, revenues and expenditures.
3. Distribute this report widely. Use it strategically to make the case for how important parks and recreation is to Manheim Township including the benefits to this community.

Objective 6**Establish a five-year employee development program.**

Recommendations

1. Undertake an assessment to determine the skills and expertise the parks and recreation system will need in the future. Include development of skills such as natural resource management, use of township computer software for workload and cost tracking, programming, maintenance, and other functions to be identified in the assessment. Involve staff in the assessment to include their interests and professional development as part of this program.
2. Develop a five-year employee development program. Include a mix of strategies and methods such as conferences, seminars, training programs, school classes, WEB- based programs, networking and visiting other departments, brown bag lunches, a speaker series and others.
3. Target one to two percent of the operating budget for the Employee Development Program.

Objective 7**Establish an effective internal and external communication system for parks and recreation.**

Recommendations

1. Establish a Task Force for communication. Include key management, staff and board members to address communication in an organized, formal manner.
2. Identify the issues related to communication. Incorporate a segment of addressing communication with the public by involving citizens in a discussion about how to make communication with the public more effective, convenient and easy to navigate.
3. Target specific actions that could be used to increase effective communication.
4. Specify roles, responsibilities and points of contact to ensure that the right people get the right information at the right time.

Objective 8**Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Parks and Recreation Board.**

Recommendations

1. Hold a retreat for the Parks and Recreation Board. With the adoption of this plan, take a fresh look at the roles, responsibilities, functions and relationships to other organizations. If an outside facilitator would help, consider applying for a RecTAP grant to obtain a facilitator to help with this process. RecTAP is a \$2500 grant to retain an outside professional to work with a municipal parks and recreation department on a defined issue or opportunity. It does not require a match.
2. Identify the issues and potential solutions for enhancing board effectiveness.
3. Consider future directions for the Board including managing changes in the Board as terms expire. This should include identifying desirable skills or qualifications of future board members and board member training, both for new members and on-going training for continuing board members.
4. Consider adding a youth as a board member. This could be done as a special position in order to conform to the First Class Township Code.

Objective 9**Continue to support parks and recreation through a mix of public and private funding.**

Recommendations

1. Continue to support parks and recreation through a mix of public and private resources. This should be at a level commensurate with the Township's status of having a premiere public recreation system.
2. Strive to maintain the investment in parks and recreation at the current budget ratio of 15 percent of the operating budget.
3. Establish a fees and charges policy. Although the Township sets forth an annual fee schedule, establish this policy would include cost recovery measures for administrative, facility and advertising costs in addition to direct costs of instructors, materials and supplies. Make provisions for citizens in need of financial assistance.
4. Use the position of the Public Relations/Special Events Coordinator to begin to address the potential for Professional Development of outside funding for parks and recreation.
5. Develop a gifts catalog for parks and recreation.
6. Develop a gifts and donations policy. This will support Township practices and responsibilities regarding the long-term nature of gifts and donations.
7. For major revenue sources, develop a management plan with a formalized evaluation process. Continue to ensure that the resources are maximized for Township benefit. This would cover contracted out services such as the restaurants in Township parks as well as enterprises such as the Overlook Golf Course, mini-golf, and the swimming pools. At key points such as before contracts are negotiated, when opportunities emerge, or trends are identified that could have a long-term impact on Manheim Township, undertake an assessment and develop a plan of action based on the findings. Use outside reviewers to ensure an objective assessment and direction.
8. Consider a bond or loan for major recreation improvements suggested in this plan. Use the Township's expertise in financial planning to determine the best methods and appropriate amount to improve parks and recreation facilities over the next ten years.

Figure 9-2
MIS
Management Impact Statement

Purpose

1. To assess the impact of a significant proposed project or a major program considering the capital and operating costs including human resources and the effect on other parks and recreation facilities and services.
2. To use the assessment to make an informed decision about feasibility and viability of the proposed project.

Method

Determine:

1. Capital cost of the proposed project.
2. Operating costs of the proposed project. Include:
 - Number of staff hours required
 - Cost of the staff hours
 - Cost of materials and supplies
 - Miscellaneous costs
 - Volunteer support over the long term
3. Impact on other facilities and programs with the implementation of the proposed project.
 - Will the project/service require funds needed for other facilities/programs?
 - Will the project/service require staff time needed for other services/programs?
 - How will the project impact the quality of service in Manheim Township?
 - Will the project require resources from the community and are they available?
4. Revenue Sources
 - Grants
 - Donations
 - Municipal funds – additional appropriation
 - Municipal funds – within current budget
 - Non-tax funds to be generated from the project/program

Decision-Making

Based upon the above information, does Manheim Township have the resources to move ahead with this project?

