COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP

Shaping the Future

RecreationAndOpenSpacePlan2012
Dear Fellow Resident:

The Cranberry Plan – our Township’s 2009 long-range comprehensive plan – included detailed recommendations about many aspects of community life. But it left one important area of municipal activity open to future planning: parks, recreation, and open space. That future has now arrived.

This report is the result of an 18-month planning process which included findings from a survey that went to every household in the Township, as well as input from a diverse 14-member steering committee, guidance from staff, and the work of expert consultants. It projects Cranberry’s open space and recreational requirements through 2030, and it will be revisited at least once every five years to make sure it remains true to evolving local needs.

The recommendations in this report reflect the desires of a genuinely fitness-oriented community. The notion that parks are mostly for youth team sports, we learned, is out of date; our parks and recreational programs need to be assets for people of all ages and interests. This report’s recommendations are designed to assure that every Cranberry resident benefits from them.

We invite you to examine the report’s conclusions, priorities, and proposals as they relate to this important facet of Cranberry’s future. And we welcome your involvement over the coming years in bringing its recommendations to life.

Bruce Mazzoni, Chairman
Cranberry Township Board of Supervisors
The Cranberry Plan, the Township's long-range comprehensive plan, lays the groundwork for the future of Cranberry Township and serves as a guide for how we will grow over the next 20 years. As an outgrowth of The Cranberry Plan, this Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan focuses on how to maintain and enhance the quality of life for Cranberry Township residents, businesses, and institutions. The previous Parks & Recreation Plan articulated the Township’s role to host Community Park opportunities and build a comprehensive system through public/private partnerships. Almost 20 years later, we affirm the fact that Cranberry Township can best serve the people who live and work here with Community Parks. We say this because the Community Parks are large enough to accommodate tot lots, playgrounds, and smaller scale recreational amenities in addition to a large number of sports fields and larger recreation areas. Therefore, the Community Parks provide a critical mass of recreational opportunities. Further by maintaining 5 larger parks (versus hypothetically 15 smaller parks) the maintenance, programming, and administrative costs can be managed to be extremely efficient and effective.

The Plan is comprehensive in its view toward 2030 (and beyond). Yet, much needs to be accomplished over the next 18 years to enhance the current system of green areas of Cranberry Township, and to continue to provide a Cranberry Township that is built for the people that live and work here. Input collected through an online survey, public meetings, and stakeholder interviews helped to paint a clear picture of what Cranberry Township parks and recreation is now and needs to be in the future. This Plan will be reviewed annually and updated every 5 years to ensure that the recommendations and goals established here continue to accommodate the community.
Existing Parks in Cranberry Township

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Unique Features</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Athletic Fields; Sport Courts; Amphitheater; Pavilions; Dog Park; Nature Trail; Playgrounds</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Center</td>
<td>Public Library; Skate Park; Gardening Area; Gazebo; Gymnasium; Senior/Teen Center; Class/Meeting Rooms; Preschool; Indoor Walking within Common Areas</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Boundary Park</td>
<td>Athletic Fields; Playgrounds; Walking/Running Trail; Waterpark; Pavilions</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberry Highlands</td>
<td>18 hole; Par-70; Walking Trail</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Park</td>
<td>Nature Trail; Sports Fields; Paved Walking/Running Trail; Miracle Field</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Community-Driven Process

In the fall of 2011 as part of this Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan, Cranberry Township residents were asked to complete an electronic parks and recreation survey. Every household was sent a postcard explaining the survey process as well as a link to access the survey.

The survey indicated that residents are generally very satisfied with the system of parks, recreation and open space opportunities, and that the majority of residents have used the facilities. Further, residents are supportive of continued investment in parks facilities and recreational programming.

Connecting with Stakeholders

Twenty representatives from not-for-profit organizations, athletic organizations, organized and self-directed recreation users, and frequent program participants took part in stakeholder interviews conducted throughout a four-week period from February 6, 2012 through March 9, 2012.

Goals Identified by The Plan

- Maintain and improve the quality of life in Cranberry Township, as it relates to open space, leisure, and recreation
- Strengthen the position of Cranberry Township as a distinguished leader in the provision of a diverse and attractive park, recreation, and open space system
- Cultivate an appreciation and education of the outdoors and our natural environment

“It’s a refreshing privilege to be part of a group of volunteers and business people working with the local government striving to plan a realistic future development for the parks and public recreation. This aspect of community planning and foresight is what helps Cranberry Township maintain its appeal.”  
Bill Thompson, Recreation and Open Space Plan Citizen’s Advisory Committee; Planning Advisory Commission
Stakeholders Guide the Process

While our corner of Butler County is well positioned to share the park and recreational resources with the Seneca Valley School District, adjoining municipalities, Butler County, neighborhoods, and the private sector, we reached out to various stakeholders to focus on what Cranberry Township offers or could offer. As a result, we believe that several value-added measures merit attention. In order for Cranberry Township to grow sustainably with a balanced “green infrastructure” and strong economy, we believe that it is appropriate to consider the following items:

1. Improve and enhance existing community parks.
2. Expand recreation programs to provide a greater variety of options.
3. Build a comprehensive bike and pedestrian connections network.
4. Consider the needs of all geographic areas of the Township.
5. Provide for new facilities within or near existing parks to better diversify the park and recreation network.
6. Consider the recreational needs for persons of all ages and abilities with an increased focus on adults and seniors.

“We’re outdoors people, but we’re not organized sports people. Trail connections will be beneficial not only to my family but to many others.”

Susan Rusnak, Recreation and Open Space Plan Citizens Advisory Committee; Planning Advisory Commission
7. Balance park and recreation opportunities in sync with demand.

8. Provide for a more enjoyable and complete sequence for navigating the parks and recreation areas.

9. Consider creative ways to fund the proposed parks and recreation improvements.

10. Explore interrelationships between these recreation and open space activities, and other related initiatives in Cranberry Township.

11. Maintain strong partnerships with sports and other related associations to provide programming, organized activities and maintain/build facilities.

12. Provide for additional “creature comforts” such as shade trees, passive open space, better walkways, and pedestrian gathering areas.

“Balance will be important as Cranberry evolves as one of the most vibrant communities in the United States. Maintaining the tranquility of recreational and green spaces will guarantee that our town is a place to both live and work productively... and not just become another commuter destination.” — Fred Peterson, Recreation and Open Space Plan Advisory Committee
Connectivity is Key

Public input received as a part of the Recreation and Open space process suggested increased bicycle and pedestrian connections. Priorities include:

- Connect Parks
- Connect Neighborhoods
- Multi-modal options for all ages and abilities
- Linkages to commercial destinations
BENEFITS OF RECREATION

Nationwide, there are more than 12,000 local park and recreation departments that manage over 105,000 public parks. It is often unrecognized just how important a resource these parks are for their communities.

Parks and recreation departments are one of the leading weapons in the battle against obesity. They benefit local residents’ psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and depression, and increasing resilience and concentration. Parks help young people build necessary life skills and help adults function as part of the social community. Parks improve the local air quality and help the overall environment. Finally, through attendance, tourism, healthcare savings, attracting new businesses, and increased property values, parks add substantially to the local economy.

All these benefits help the bottom line of Cranberry Township. In fact, each of the Community Parks plays a special role in contributing to the quality of life in Cranberry Township as outlined on this page.

Existing Benefits

Community Park - a great place to picnic, play games, relax, and walk the dog.

Graham Park - a great place for field sports and for our children to learn about sportsmanship.

North Boundary Park - a great place to swim and get refreshed, as well as perambulate on an extensive loop trail system.

Municipal Center - a great place to experience our town square, at the “crossroads” of our library, parks department, and administrative offices.

Cranberry Highlands Golf Course – a great place to continue to “learn how to drive”.

PROPOSED Benefits

Community Park - new opportunities on the adjoining Lindner Tract (see Appendix L).

Graham Park - new opportunities in the Phase 2 Recreation Campus (see Appendix G-2).

North Boundary Park - a great place to swim and get refreshed, as well as perambulate on an extensive loop trail system.

Municipal Center - new outdoor opportunities around the perimeter of the building, and new indoor programs.

Cranberry Highlands Golf Course – new opportunities with an expanded Banquet facility, as an important revenue generator.

“My wife and I were walking with the kids around Graham Park the other day, and we both talked about how lucky we were to live in a place with such great parks and recreation.”

Comment posted on www.facebook.com/cranberrytwp
The information shown on the following page expresses the gradation of how parks, recreation, and open space varies from rural to urban environments. The characteristics of each open space type vary depending on the intensity of the land use. For example, a greenway in the T-1 Natural Zone is without structures and it consists of an expansive array of natural features. In contrast, a Square or Plaza in a T-6 Urban Core Zone is paved, intimate in size/scale, and desirable as a pedestrian gathering area.

The Transect properly positions the various types of future open spaces in those places of Cranberry Township that are appropriate for the use (and to deter the positioning of an inappropriate type of open space in a place where it should not go). In addition, the Transect can be used as a visual guide for site selection criteria.

In a botanical sense, one frequently hears about “right plant – right place”. This concept infers that certain plants like more light, or more shade. Other plants prefer warm environments or cool environments. Some plants prefer well drained soils, while others like moist conditions.

In a similar way, we could think about “right park – right place”. It would be completely understandable to walk along an unpaved nature trail in a rural environment, and equally appropriate to use a paved walkway in an urban environment. Community gardens seem plausible in a farm setting, versus tennis courts. Essentially, the character and intensity of most outdoor recreation plans tends to vary in terms of the amount of surfacing that one finds in relation to the extent of structures and level of participation.

Intuitively, we would position a Community Center building in close proximity to the populace served on a site that could absorb significant pavements for parking. In contrast, we already positioned the Cranberry Highlands Golf Course on a rolling, rural site (versus close to the intersection of Routes 19 & 228).

The Open Space Transect will help Cranberry Township decide on appropriateness of different facility types, in the context of the existing landscape types. In addition, Cranberry Township will expect the Private Sector to create and maintain Plazas, Squares, and Village Greens, within the urbanizing portions of Cranberry Township, especially in the central and southern portions of our growing community.
Recreation and Open Space Plan: Transect of Open Space and Greenways

Notes:
1. This Transect depicts the Character Areas and Types of Open Space & Greenways, ranging from more rural to more urban.
2. The Public Sector pertains to Cranberry Township.
3. The Private Sector pertains to private property owners.

Open Space & Greenways:
Areas and Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Zone</td>
<td>Rural Zone</td>
<td>Suburban Zone</td>
<td>General Urban Zone</td>
<td>Urban Center Zone</td>
<td>Urban Core Zone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greenways & Natural Areas

Trails & Pathways

Community Parks

Village Greens

Squares & Plazas

Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ)
The policy of improving existing Community Parks flows from our overall park acreage needs assessment. Population projections indicate that Cranberry Township will be home to 50,000 residents and 32,000 workers by 2030 (compared to 29,000 residents in 2012). The Township will need ample amounts of recreational land to meet the needs of its growing populace. Estimates set forth in this Plan indicate the need for additional facilities such as tennis and basketball courts and picnic shelters. After we performed our needs assessment, a number of questions have been asked and answered in this report, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where should new facilities, like tennis courts be located?</td>
<td>A few can be accommodated in Graham Park, as shown in the Master Plan for Phase 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would any existing parks and recreational areas benefit from an expansion?</td>
<td>Yes, perhaps when opportunities arise to provide additional buffer areas around parks or enable an existing park to better accommodate new recreational facilities as recommended by this Plan.</td>
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<td>Should the private sector step-up to provide urban open space in the southern portion of Cranberry Township, in the form of pedestrian gathering areas, plazas, and the like?</td>
<td>Yes, in ways depicted on pages 10 and 11 in this summary and Sections 7.7.1 - 7.7.2 in the Recreation and Open Space Plan, which describe the various types of recreation spaces, including urban plazas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could additional indoor (non-field) recreational space be “housed” within the Municipal Center?</td>
<td>Yes, in the southwest corner of the building, and in the space currently occupied by the Library if the Library is relocated to another site, as per The Cranberry Plan recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the existing parks and recreational areas should be redesigned to provide for better opportunities and experiences?</td>
<td>Community Park and Graham Park, in particular.</td>
</tr>
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Where could a new indoor recreational facility focusing on indoor sports fields be located? In Graham Park or in North Boundary Park.
These questions and answers are amplified throughout the Cranberry Township Recreation and Open Space Plan.

We hope you enjoy reading all of it, including the Appendices!

“Cranberry Township is fortunate to have residents who volunteer their time to coach the kids, do the physical labor needed to augment the Township’s great maintenance staff and those who help to gather and distill the community’s input, as my fellow committee members did.”

Gary Winterhalter, Recreation and Open Space Plan Citizens Advisory Committee Member
Moving Forward

Now comes the challenging part.

Now we need to determine how to make our dreams come true.

This Plan tells the story of how we view the possibilities and opportunities for parks and recreation system enhancement.

We trust that you agree. We seek your support in assisting us to reach our goals. We believe that Cranberry will be a better place to live, work, and play, if we work together on the greening of the Township!

Citizens Advisory Committee
Jack Cohen  Ann Reale
Brian Kile  Kristine Rombach
George Long  Susan Rusnak
Mike Manipole  David Steed
Erin McClymonds  William Thompson
John Morgan  Gary Winterhalter
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John Skorupan
Dave Root
Richard Hadley

Cranberry Township Staff
Jerry Andree, Township Manager
John K. Trant, Jr., Chief Strategy Officer
Chelsea Puff, Community Projects Administrator

For more information, visit: www.cranberrytownship.org/parksplan