

Comprehensive Plan Addendum: Recreation Plan

Marple Township - Delaware County, PA

8/12/2015

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Why undertake a Comprehensive Plan Addendum?

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy tool intended to guide decision making and provide a vision for a community's future, particularly in regards to land use and development. Marple Township's current Comprehensive Plan dates to 2007. Whereas the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires review of the Comprehensive Plan every ten years, the pace of growth or an unforeseen turn of events may lead a community to reevaluate its policies at other intervals.

The Township's 2007 Comprehensive Plan assumed that the bustling community was effectively built out and that any remaining development would be small scale infill and

redevelopment. However, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's sale of more than 200 acres in the Lawrence Park area of the Township has turned this assumption on its head.

The purpose of this Addendum is to allow the Township to review current policies and update its Recreation Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance.

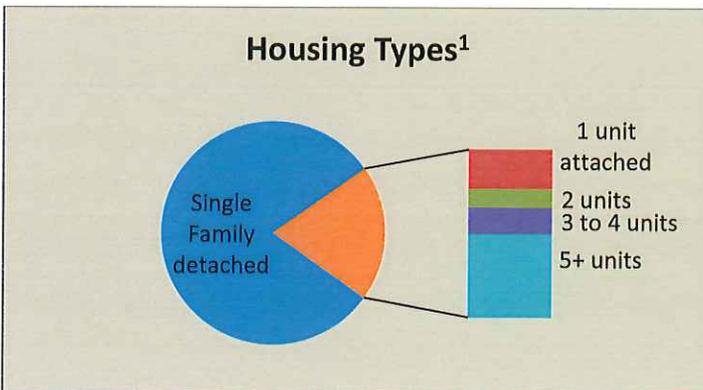
Demographic Summary

Marple Township Population & Housing

	Population	Housing Units
Actual¹		
1980	22,661	7,833
1990	23,123	8,433
2000	23,735	8,797
2010	23,428	8,940
Projected²		
2020	23,382	8,957
Revised Projected³		
2020	24,187	9,267

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census
2. Per the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) Projections.
3. This revision is based upon the DVRPC projections plus the as-of-right development (309 dwelling units) permitted within the Mixed-Use Growth Areas under current Zoning.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN MARPLE TOWNSHIP DECREASED FROM 2.73 PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD IN 2000, TO 2.63 PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD IN 2010.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that a Plan for Community Facilities include open space and recreation. Established communities typically have limited opportunities to add and enhance to their open space network.

As municipalities grow, natural resources are invariably threatened or compromised, while demand for recreational opportunities rises. An open space and recreation element is a blueprint for balancing the benefits of development with valued environmental assets and a community's basic need for recreation and leisure opportunities.

This chapter provides an overview of the existing Marple Township Open Space and Recreational facilities by providing an inventory of facilities and amenities. These facilities are classified according to a framework developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). Additional NRPA standards are used to evaluate the Township Park System in terms of:

- Parkland provided by type (Neighborhood Park, Community Park, etc);
- Adequate Parkland provided per 1,000 persons of population; and
- Distribution of parkland geographically.

The Chapter concludes with a Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations.

NRPA Guidelines and Existing Township Facilities

The NRPA recommends standards and a classifications system for local governments to use in planning and evaluating their open space and recreation networks and services. This classification includes the following categories of parks and open space: Mini-Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Special Use Park, Greenways/trails, and Natural Resource Area/Preserve. The typical attributes of these park classifications, in terms of intent, size and service area, and appropriate amenities are described in Table 5-1.

Marple Township currently owns and operates 12 parks, totaling 183.5 acres, (excluding the Paxon Hollow Golf Club). Additionally, the Hildacy Farm Preserve adds another 66 acres of permanently preserved land that is open to the public. These are inventoried in Table 5-2 and shown on the Open Space, Parks and Recreation Map on page 17. To categorize Township park facilities by NRPA categories, each park was evaluated in terms of its overall characteristics and amenities, and not solely on acreage. This is especially true as many parks contain substantial amounts of natural resource areas. Such areas add value to the Township in terms of its beauty and character, as well as playing critical roles in water and air quality, biodiversity, etc. However, in terms of recreational pursuits, these areas may not be suitable unless trails are provided. On Table 5-2 provides total acreage and "useable acreage" for each park as a way of gaining some perspective on the amount of open area.

Table 5-1. NRPA Parks Classification

Park Type and Intent	Size/Service Area	Amenities
Mini-Park: Addresses targeted or isolated recreational needs close to home	< 1 acre Serves a small (1/4 mile or less), secluded area or neighborhood	Playground equipment, benches
Neighborhood Park: Provides a variety of “close to home” recreational activities; typically serving the need of a single neighborhood; contributes to neighborhood identity and sense of community	5 to 15 acres in size Serves up to a ½ mile radius	Play areas Sports fields/courts Picnic areas Community Gardens Walking trails/pathways
Community/Regional Park: Provides a variety of passive and active activities for multiple neighborhoods; accommodates large groups; easily accessible	20 to 50 acres in size Serves a 1 to 2 mile radius	Same as Neighborhood Park + Organized sports facilities Pavilions Permanent restrooms Lighting Parking Amphitheater
School Park: Expands the recreational opportunities for an area within the community	Variable	Play areas Youth oriented sports fields/courts Seating Track Lighting/Parking
Special Use Park: Facility for a single purpose	Variable	Variable
Greenways and Trails: Connects open spaces, parks, and other community destinations into a single network	Variable	Multi-purpose pathways Trailheads Signage
Nature Preserves: Preserved areas for the protection and management of natural resources	Variable	Trails Signage

Table 5-2 Marple Township Parks and Recreation Inventory

Park	Total Acreage/Active Recreation Land	Park Type	Amenities	Notes/Condition
Municipal Parkland				
Green Bank Farm	32.94/32.94	Nature Preserve	Natural Areas, Trails; Horse Stables	Location of Delaware County Historical Society Office; Contiguous to Hildacy Farm Preserve
Highland Ave Park	5.33/5.33	Neighborhood	Basketball court Roller hockey rink Tennis backboard	Adjacent to Worrall Elementary School
Kent Park	27.43/15.94	Neighborhood with Natural Resource Area	Children's Play Area Dog-Friendly Picnic Area with grills Gazebo Walking Path Tennis Courts	Newly renovated stream crossing; Trail is in fair condition
Malin Road Tot Lot	1.49/1.49	Mini-Park	Children's Play Area Picnic Area Open Space Play Area	
Marple Gardens Park	4.91/4.91	Neighborhood	Children's Play Area Picnic Area Basketball court Baseball fields	
New Ardmore Ave Park	14.98/4.71	Neighborhood with Natural Resource Area	Children's Play Area Picnic Area Basketball court Open Space Play Area	
Old Marple School Park	9.55/7.74	Neighborhood with Natural Resource Area	Children's Play Area Picnic area Walking Trail Sledding Hill	
Paxon Hollow Golf Club		Special Use	18-hole Golf Course Clubhouse	
South Marple Little League	34.48/8.74	Neighborhood	Baseball fields Basketball Court	

			Tennis Court Snack bar	
Thomas Ball Fields	17.98/7.01	Neighborhood	Youth Baseball fields Children's Play Area Snack bar	
Veterans Park	25.03/7.21	Community Park/Natural Resource Area	Children's Play Area Walking circuit Gazebo Bocce Court (new)	Planned Master Plan Update in 2015; Location of Community-wide events
Total				
School Facilities	Total Acreage/Active Recreation Land	Park Type	Amenities	Notes/Condition
Cardinal O'Hara High School	103.36	School	Tennis Courts Multi-purpose fields Ball fields Track	Not open to the public on a regular basis
DE County Community College	122.14	School	Ballfield Basketball Court Multipurpose Field Tennis Courts	
Loomis Elementary	12.33	School	Play Equipment Ball Fields	Contiguous with South Marple Little League
Paxon Hollow Middle School	37.37	School	Multi-purpose Fields Tennis Courts	
Russell Elementary	13.52	School	Play Equipment Ball Fields	
Worrall Elementary	5.00	School/Neighborhood	Play Equipment	See Highland Ave. Park
Other Public Recreation Areas				
Broomall Fields	9.34/4.88	Special Use	Baseball Fields Snack Bar	Owned by the adjacent sites, but maintained by the Township under a long term agreement
Hildacy Farm Preserve	65.58	Nature Preserve		

Marple Township's parkland primarily falls into the Neighborhood and School categories, providing a wide variety of facilities and playgrounds at the local level. While several Township parks meet the overall size guideline for a community park, the areas constrained by natural resources or inaccessible are taken into account. With this in mind, Veterans Park is the primary facility which could meet the combination of usable open space and accessibility necessary to serve several neighborhoods. Veterans Park is also the location of Township-wide events and celebrations, including the Easter Egg Hunt, Special Olympics, and Santa's Arrival.

South Marple Little League, which shares space with Loomis Elementary in the geographic center of the Lawrence Park neighborhood meets the overall size of a Community Park, but functions more as a Neighborhood Park. The diverse array of facilities, share very limited parking with the adjoining Loomis Elementary school. The remainder of the park acreage is steeply sloped and heavily wooded along a small tributary. Additionally it is landlocked by adjoining residences, giving it a very intimate, neighborly feel. Kent Park also contains a significant acreage that could be considered Community Park, but is limited in parking and amenities.

Marple Township is fortunate in its cooperative partnership with the Marple Newtown School District. While school facilities are an asset to the community, they are not typically available when school is in session and receive heavy usage for school events. Also, these facilities should not be relied upon as permanent links in the open space network, since particularly for private schools and facilities, conditions and needs may change over time.

Parkland Service Areas

The Parkland Service Area Map on page 18 depicts the service areas of each of the Township parks. This type of analysis helps highlight areas that may be underserved, especially at the neighborhood level. This map shows that there are areas of the Township that do not have sufficient access to local recreational opportunities. These are located:

- Along the Northern border with Haverford Township;
- To the north of DE Community College; and
- Most visibly in the southern portion of the Township, to the north and west of the Saint Peter and Paul cemetery.

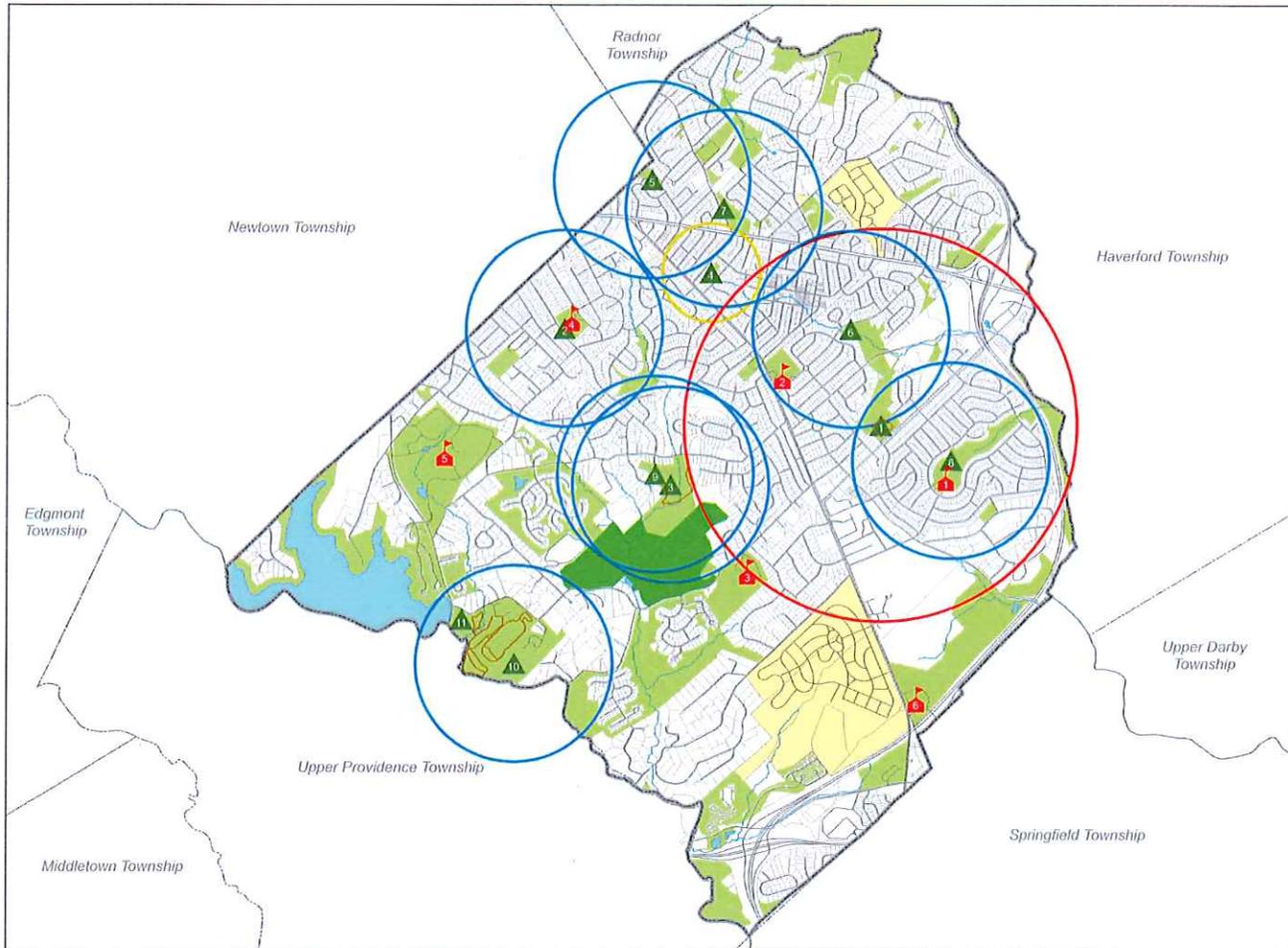
Parkland and the Mixed-Use Growth Areas

The Core Areas included in the Comprehensive Plan provide opportunities to enhance the Township's network of Open Space and Recreational Opportunities. The Langford Run Road Core area is currently served by both the New Ardmore Avenue Neighborhood Park and by Veterans Park. However, development of the Lawrence Park as well as any redevelopment of the Marple Crossroads Core should be strongly encouraged to include park resources in order to better serve adjoining areas with recreational opportunities that are available to the public in perpetuity. Facilities and programs provided within these areas should reflect neighborhood needs and desires.

OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND RECREATION MAP



PARK SERVICE AREA MAP



Marple Township
 Delaware County
 Pennsylvania

Legend

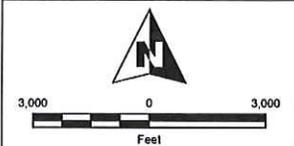
- Roads
- Streams
- Water Bodies
- Parcels
- Township Boundary
- Adjacent Municipalities
- Existing Trails
- Open Space (Public & Private)
- Golf Courses (Public & Private)
- Cemetery
- Parks
- Schools

Parks Service Area

- Mini Park (1/4 mile)
- Neighborhood Park (1/2 mile)
- Community Park (1 mile)

Park List:

1 Veterans Memorial Park	1 Loomis Elementary
2 Highland Ave. Park	2 Russell Elementary
3 Kent Park	3 Parson Hollow Middle School
4 Main Road Tot Lot	4 Vonnell Elementary
5 Marple Gardens Park	5 DE County Community College
6 New Ardmore Ave. Park	6 Cardinal O'Hara High School
7 Old Marple School Park	
8 South Marple Little League	
9 Thomas Ball Fields	
10 Green Bark Farm	
11 Hildsey Farm Preserve (NLT)	



Data Sources:
 Base Data - Existing Trails, Open Space /
 Recreational Land, Parks - Marple Township;
 Parcels - Marple Township, 2005;
 Adjacent Municipalities - U.S. Census Bureau, 2014;
 Draft: March 25, 2015;
 Revised April 22, 2015; May 12, 2015



GOAL: Ensure the adequacy of land and facilities for both passive and active recreational activities that appeal to all ages and abilities, including but not limited to parks, sports fields, natural areas with trails, and playgrounds.

OBJECTIVE: Provide park, open space and/or recreational opportunities within the Core Areas that will ensure adequacy of recreational opportunities to existing and future residents and employees and to adjoining neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVE: Plan for an on and off-road trail system that will connect users to community institutions, facilities and destinations, as well as the planned Delaware County Greenway and its connection to regional recreational assets and destinations.

Recreation Fee-in-lieu

The Township currently has a Recreation Fee-in-lieu Ordinance as enabled under the Municipalities Planning Code, Section 503(11). This ordinance allows the Township to assess a fee on developers who are not able to provide appropriate open space as part of the land development process. This fee is escrowed into a specific account designated for capital improvements to existing Township parks and acquisition of additional parkland, but not for operating costs. As this chapter has explored, there is a need for both of renovation to existing parkland and acquisition of parkland to better serve underserved areas.

The fee is based upon an estimated cost for recreational needs, now and in the future, proportionately divided into expected residential and nonresidential populations. A table showing this calculations and a proposed recreation fee-in-lieu can be found in Appendix 1. This fee should be evaluated on an annual or biannual basis and increased with inflation.

Key Findings and Recommendations

- Marple Township's existing open space resources generally meet the needs of the recreational needs of the population, falling into the categories of neighborhood park or school park. However, a large proportion of Township parkland is constrained, natural resource land that does not contribute to active recreation. In addition, many of the parks and facilities are in need of wholesale renovation and equipment upgrades.
- The NRPA guidelines would indicate a need for additional active recreational lands and trails, especially as the Township population grows, ages, and becomes more ethnically diverse.
- There are several areas of the Township that appear to have insufficient access to local recreational opportunities. These areas include the southernmost portion of the Township, along the Haverford Township border to the north, and small areas along the Newtown Township border.
- Development and redevelopment within the Core Areas should serve as opportunities to enhance the existing open space network, provide better opportunities in the

underserved areas of the Township, and provide pedestrian and natural resource links to adjoining neighborhoods and their recreational resources, including any planned regional trails.

- The Township should update its recreation fee-in-lieu ordinance to address both residential and nonresidential development and raise the fee to match the current conditions and needs of the municipal parkland explained in this Chapter.

Appendix 1

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADDENDUM:
RECREATION PLAN – FACT SHEET**
Marple Township, Delaware County, PA

1. Population: Current and proposed

	2010	2020 ¹	2030 ¹	2030 (Revised) ²
Population	23,428	23,382	23,221	24,034

2. Household Size
- a. 2010: 2.61
3. Proposed Dwelling Units/Pop Not accounted for in current forecast:
- a. 2015 Proposed dwelling units (conservative): 309
- b. Total estimated population in 2030: (309 * 2.61)= 24,034
4. Existing Park & Recreation Land:
- a. Public, protected, active: 174.16 ac, excluding Golf Course
- b. Other public recreation land: 149 acres for PHGC
5. Park & Recreation Area Needs:
- a. NRPA Standards
- i. Recommended: 10-12.5 acres of active recreation land/1,000 residents
- ii. 2010 recommendation: 234- 293 acres
- iii. 2030 recommendation: 240-300 acres
- iv. Several underserved areas are recognized
- b. Rehabilitation and renovation of Park and Recreation Facilities:\$70,000 per ac of active recreation; \$30,000 per ac of passive recreation
- c. Rehabilitation and renovation of Other Public Recreation at \$50,000 per ac
6. Total Cost for Recreation Area Needs:
- a. Acquisition and improvement of 10 ac of new parkland: 10 acres at \$170,000 per acre = \$1,700,000
- b. Rehabilitation and renovation (active): \$7,700,000
- c. Rehab and renovation (PHGC): \$7,450,000
- d. Rehab and Renovation (passive/natural): \$1,811,100
- e. Total: \$18,661,100
7. Total Cost per Unit for Cash Contribution in Lieu of Recreation Area:
- a. 90%/10% breakdown residential/nonresidential per Future Land Use
- b. Residential: (\$18,661,100 ÷ 9,267) * .90 = \$1,812/dwelling unit
- c. Nonresidential (10%): \$1,100.00 per 2,500 Square Feet Gross Floor Area

Notes:

1. Per U.S. Census Bureau and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission population forecasts
2. Revised to account for potential development, including the recent sale of the Archdiocese property.
3. The current recreation fee-in-lieu is set as \$1,500 per dwelling unit. There is currently no fee for nonresidential development.