

# Upper Frederick Township Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan Update

May 2015



**Upper Frederick Township,  
Montgomery County, PA**

# UPPER FREDERICK TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

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Jackie Tallon

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### **UPDATE PREPARED BY:**

**Tackett Planning Services\***

\*Portions of 2006 Open Space Plan incorporated into this update prepared by CHPlanning Limited.

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**\*Maps from the 2006 Open Space Plan prepared by CHPlanning**

### **Glossary of Acronyms**

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Agricultural Security Area (ASA)
- Boyertown Area School District District-Wide Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study)*
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
- Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program (Program)
- Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation (Bureau)
- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED)
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT)
- Transportation Enhancements (TE)
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Upper Frederick Township Board of Parks and Recreation (Board)
- Upper Frederick Township Board of Supervisors (BOS)

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The 2015 Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (Plan) reflects an update to the 2006 Upper Frederick Township Open Space Plan (2006 Plan). This update builds upon the work completed in the 2006 Plan with a particular emphasis on updating Township demographic information, inventorying the current recreation, park and open space facilities, identifying needed facilities for the existing population and establishing a level of service to be achieved and maintained for existing and future residents and employees. The Township continues to prioritize preservation of agricultural uses and maintaining the rural setting of the Township, but also recognizes that park and recreational opportunities play a valuable role in the community. Those portions of the 2006 Open Space Plan prepared by CHPlanning Limited that remain applicable have been incorporated into this Plan update.

This Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan Update is developed in accordance with Section 503 of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requirements to support the potential implementation of park dedication standards. Because the population of Upper Frederick Township is less than 5,000 residents, the Township is eligible to adopt a mini-recreation and park plan to be used as the basis for park dedication standards. This Plan meets the requirements of the mini-recreation and park plan.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS

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Upper Frederick Township is located in the northwestern section of Montgomery County, approximately 30 miles from Philadelphia and approximately seven miles from Pottstown, PA. The Township is bounded to the north by Green Lane Park and the Perkiomen Trail and to the south by Swamp Creek.

The Township remains predominantly agricultural and has generally maintained this rural setting despite the close proximity of suburban development in neighboring municipalities. A relatively high amount of residential development occurred in the Township during the 1990's and early 2000's, primarily along Big Road (Route 73) and Route 29, with the exception of a 330 unit townhome community that was constructed on Faust Road. The Big Road corridor, together with the Route 29 corridor, links the Township to surrounding employment and commercial centers. In response to development pressures, the corridor along Big Road has been identified as the future growth area for the Township and the Township has focused efforts on supporting higher density development in this corridor while discouraging higher density development in the rural parts of the Township.

Following the recession of 2007/2008 new development in the Township came to a halt and has been slow to rebound. The Township has used this period to evaluate the priorities of the community and ensure that planning documents and the implementing codes reflect these priorities.

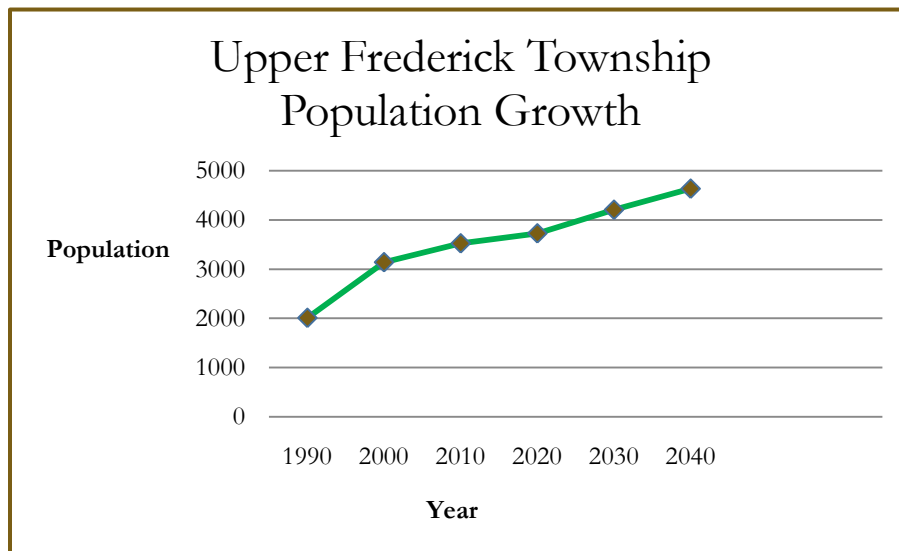
### Population

Upper Frederick experienced relatively fast-paced residential growth in the 1990's and into the 2000's, with expectations that this growth trend would continue into the foreseeable future. However, the 2007/2008 recession quickly slowed the rate of population growth within Upper Frederick Township and the updated population projections reflect this slowdown.

The 2010 U.S. Census identifies the 2010 population of Upper Frederick Township at 3,523, representing a 12 percent growth rate from 2000 to 2010, approximately one-half the pre-recession growth rate projection of 23 percent for 2000 to

Upper Frederick Township Montgomery County, PA	
Year	Population*
2000	3,140
2010	3,523
2015	3,576
2020	3,726
2025	3,966
2030	4,206
2035	4,431
Absolute Change (2010=2040): 1,111	
Percent Change (2010-2040): 31.5%	
*Projections prepared by DVRPC	

2010. The following chart reflects the high growth rate from 1990 to 2000 (45 percent), which then leveled off and is now projected to increase at a steady pace after 2020. According to the 2012 population projections prepared by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), Upper Frederick Township is now estimated to have a population of 3,726 in 2020, representing a growth rate of 6 percent from 2010 to 2020.



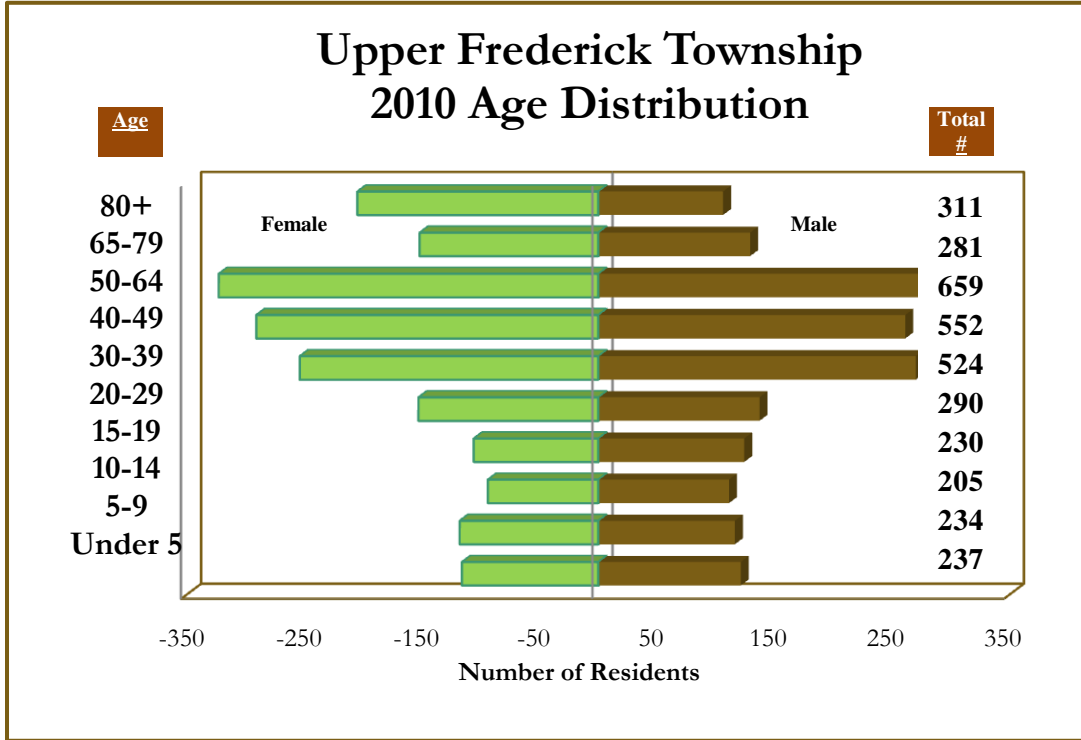
Upper Frederick Township is part of the Central Perkiomen Valley, which includes Collegeville, Trappe and Schwenksville Boroughs, and Lower Frederick and Perkiomen Townships. From 2000-2010 Upper Frederick experienced a growth rate of 12.2 percent, which was slightly slower than the regional average growth rate of 13.6 percent for the same time period. According to the 2014 Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan, the region is estimated to see an average growth rate of 2.6 percent from 2010 to 2020, which is slightly less than one-half the rate projected for Upper Frederick Township and significantly lower than the growth rate of 13.6 percent from 2000 to 2010 and 49.5 percent between 1990 and 2000.

According to the U.S. Census, 26 percent of the 2010 population is between 0 and 19 years of age, which is approximately three percent (3%) less than the portion of the population 19 years and younger in 2000. The population 65 years and over is now 17 percent of the population as compared to 14 percent of the 2000 population being 65 and older. Of the 3,523 residents, 49 percent are between the ages of 30 and 64, which is just slightly more than the 48 percent of residents identified in this age category in 2000. Overall, the Township population is aging which is consistent with national trends as the baby-boomer generation begins to retire. An additional factor in the higher proportion of population 65 and older is likely the presence of



the Frederick Living Continuing Care Retirement Community, which received approval in 2014 to construct an additional 55 independent living dwelling units.

The following table shows the 2010 age distribution as reported by the U.S. Census.



## Education

Upper Frederick Township is located within the Boyertown School District and is the only municipality within the Central Perkiomen Valley Region that is not included in the Perkiomen Valley School District. In 2012 the Boyertown School District undertook a district-wide feasibility study to be used as a tool in evaluating the Boyertown Area School District’s current and future facility needs and expenditures, as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The August 21, 2012 *Boyertown Area School District District-Wide Feasibility Study* (Feasibility Study) was prepared by EI Associates and includes the following conclusions:

- elementary schools were estimated to reach 100 percent capacity by 2013-2014
- elementary capacity is not adequate for the projected student growth
- junior high (7-9) capacity should be adequate for the projected student growth
- senior high school (10-12) is at 95 percent capacity (dependent on use) and capacity should be adequate for the projected 10-year growth

According to the Feasibility Study, the Boyertown Area School District student population has continued to increase since the 1990's as outlined in the following table.

According to the Feasibility Study, there has been an increase in both the total population and total housing units; however, the number of persons per household and students per household has decreased. The percentage of students per total housing units in the Boyertown Area School District was 0.52 in 2000 and 0.45 in 2010, which appears to be consistent with the reduction in population below 19 years of age in Upper Frederick Township and with the general aging of the population. The feasibility study indicated the elementary schools in the Boyertown School District were estimated to reach 100 percent capacity by the 2013-2014 school year.

Student Population Attending Boyertown Area School District Schools*	
School Year	K-12 Enrollment
1990-1991	6,880
Mid 2000's	7,000
2010-2011	7,099
2020-2021 (projected)	7,574
* August 12, 2012 <i>Boyertown Area School District District-Wide Feasibility Study</i> prepared by EI Associates (page 4)	

School district representatives reported that as of the 2014/2015 school year the elementary schools had reached the student levels predicted in the feasibility study, but that conversion of non-classroom space to classroom space has allowed the school district to meet the needs of the student populations and that the use of temporary classrooms may be implemented in the future, if needed, until construction of the high school expansion and renovation is completed in 2017. School district representatives reported that once the high school renovation and expansion is completed the ninth grade will move to the high school and the sixth grade will be moved to the junior high to allow for increased capacity at the elementary schools. At that time the capacity needs of the school district will be reevaluated.

Educational attainment in Upper Frederick Township has increased since 2000. According to the American 2012 Community Survey, 91.7 percent of the population 25 years and older have at least a high school diploma compared with 86.8 percent in 2000 and 26.5 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 20.3 percent in 2000.

## Housing

According to the U.S. Census data, as of 2010, there were 1,450 housing units in Upper Frederick Township of which 1,379 (95.1%) were occupied. Of the occupied units, 1,116 (80.9%) were owner occupied housing units while 263 (19.1%) were renter-occupied housing units. The average household size decreased from

Housing Characteristics 2000 & 2010			
	2000	2010	Change
Housing Units	1,088	1,450	+362
-Occupied	1,045	1,379	+334
Owner-Occupied			
-number of units	949	1,116	+167
-average household size	2.82	2.72	-0.10
Renter-Occupied			
-number of units	96	263	+167
-average household size	2.48	1.63	-0.85
Average Household Size	2.79	2.51	-0.28

2.79 in 2000 to 2.51 in 2010, representing a 10 percent decrease with the renter-occupied average household size decreasing most significantly from 2.48 to 1.63, or 34 percent. The table above shows the comparison of housing characteristics from 2000 to 2010 based on the U.S. Census data.

Data relating to housing unit type is from the U.S. Census American 2012 Community Survey, which differs from the 2010 U.S. Census data, but is provided for general comparative purposes. According to the American 2012 Community Survey, Upper Frederick Township continues to be predominantly characterized by single-family detached housing units. Of the 1,365 housing units in the Township, 840 (61.5%) are identified as single family detached housing units and 441 (32.3%) are single-family attached units, with the remaining 84 units identified as multi-family units or mobile homes. The American 2012 Community Survey indicates that 253 of the housing units were built between 2000 and 2009, representing a change of 19 percent, which is a decrease from the 358 new housing units built between 1990 and March 2000. In the Central Perkiomen Valley the change of housing units from 2000 to 2010 was 12 percent and in Montgomery County the change was 7.6 percent for the same timeframe. So, while the rate of growth declined from the 1990's, the rate of growth from 2000 to 2010 was still higher than in the Central Perkiomen Valley region and Montgomery County.

According to the American 2012 Community Survey, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in the Township was \$249,100, while the median value for the County was \$296,000. The median value for owner occupied housing units in 2000 was \$141,600 compared to the County's median housing price of \$160,700. The median value of owner occupied housing units was approximately 88 percent of the County value in 2000 and is now

approximately 84 percent of the County value in 2012, resulting in a slight increase in the gap between housing values.

The median gross rent in the Township was \$1,638, up from \$748 in 2000. Montgomery County median rent according to the 2012 Community Survey was \$1,102. Therefore, median gross rents in the Township have gone from being slightly below the County average to being above the median gross rents of Montgomery County.

### **Employment & Income**

According to the American 2012 Community Survey, the Upper Frederick Township employed population 16 years and over was 1,922 as of 2012 representing approximately 51 percent of the Township population, which is a decrease from the 2000 estimate of 66 percent.

The top employment category in 2000 was manufacturing representing 19.3 percent of the total employment at that time. By 2010, the total number of manufacturing jobs decreased only slightly, but the percentage dropped to 14 percent of total employment in 2010. The top employment category in 2010 in the Township is now educational services, health care, and social assistance representing 21 percent of the total 2010 employment, and jobs in the professional industries increased by 2010 to 14 percent of the Township employment, nearly identical to the manufacturing jobs. This appears to represent a shifting of employment toward professional work, which appears to be supported by the higher average household income and increase in educational attainment. It is noted that employment in the agricultural, forestry, fishing and mining industry grew from one (1) percent in 2000 to three (3) percent of the employed population in 2010.

The overall percentage of the population employed has decreased by 15 percent from 2000 to 2012 based on the U.S. Census estimates, which may be influenced by a combination of a higher percentage of retirees and continued high unemployment rates as a result of the 2007/2008 recession.

Approximately 90 percent of residents in the labor force are commuting to work by car, truck or van with an average travel time of 30 minutes. The following table summarizes the major industry employment categories and the proportion of the employed population in each category compared with the 2000 estimate.

Employment Summary		
Employment Category	2000 Census	2008-2012 Estimate
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining	17 (1%)	59 (3%)
Construction	197 (13%)	175 (9%)
Manufacturing	293 (19.3%)	284 (14%)
Wholesale Trade	52 (3.4%)	10 (.05%)
Retail Trade	201 (13.2%)	202 (10%)
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	52 (3.4%)	102 (5%)
Information	29 (2%)	22 (1%)
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	97 (6.4%)	198 (10%)
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	142 (9.3%)	275 (14%)
Educational services and health care and social assistance	237 (15.6%)	417 (21%)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	104 (7%)	86 (4%)
Other services, except public administration	80 (5.3%)	102 (5%)
Public administration	20 (1.3%)	36 (2%)
<b>Total Employed Population</b>	<b>1,574 (66%)</b>	<b>1,968 (51%)</b>

According to American 2012 Community Survey the median household income in Upper Frederick Township was \$85,494 and the per capita income was \$33,967, while the Montgomery County median household income was \$78,984 with a per capita income of \$41,330 for the same time period. According to the 2000 census both the per capita and the household income in Upper Frederick Township were lower than the County. However, by 2010 the Township median household income was greater than the County while the per capita income remained below the County per capita income. The continuation of the lower per capita income may partially be due to the large population of single occupancy households at Frederick Living Continuing Care Retirement Community living on a fixed income.

## CHAPTER 3: INVENTORY OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

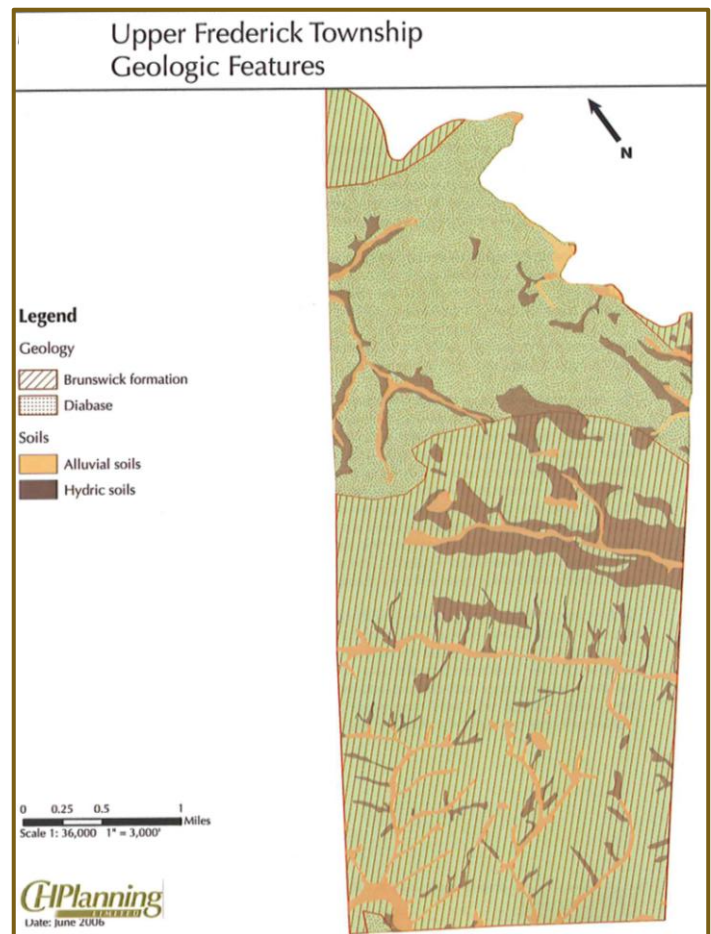
The Township is rich in both natural and cultural resources and prioritizes the preservation of these resources to maintain the community character and preserve vulnerable environments. Contained in Chapter 2 of the Upper Frederick Township Comprehensive Plan is an inventory and a detailed analysis of Township natural and cultural features, including geology, soils, steep slopes, hydrology, woodlands, agricultural lands, and cultural assets, which are summarized as follows.

### Natural Resources

#### Geology

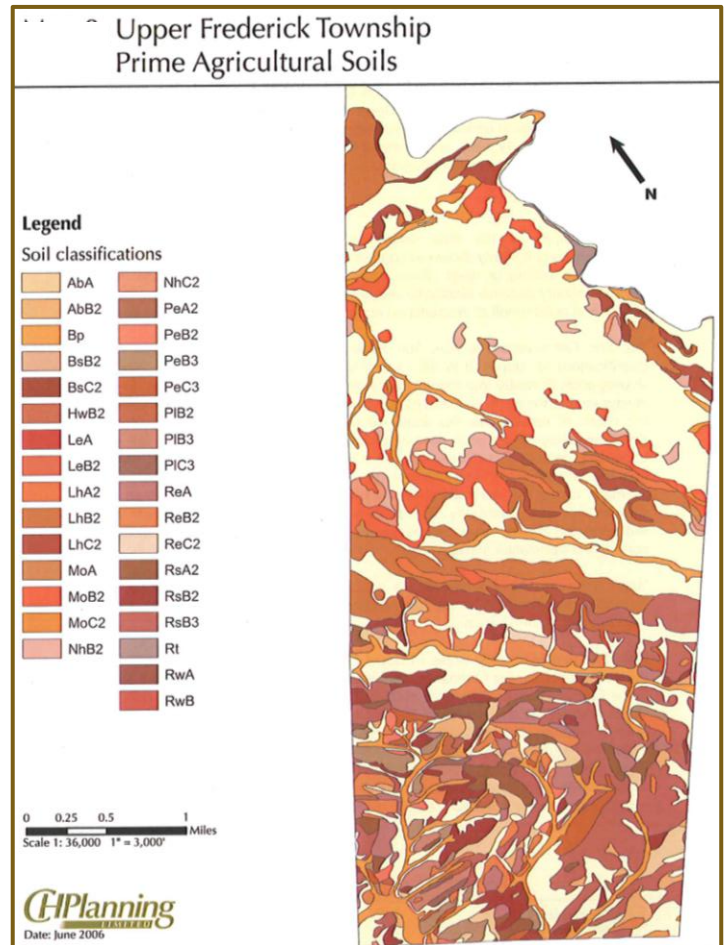
The lower portion of Upper Frederick Township is predominantly underlain by the Brunswick geology formation, referred to as Brunswick formation, which is comprised of reddish-brown shale, mudstone, and siltstone. The Brunswick formation is responsible for the gently rolling hills and stable slopes that dominate the lower portion of the Township. The Brunswick formation yields an average of around 60 gallons per minutes of moderately mineralized and hard water, which is considered a good yield. However, flow can vary depending on the extent and location of rock joints and fractures.

The upper portion and southeastern corner of the Township is underlain by the Diabase formation. Diabase is very resistant to erosion, weathering, water infiltration, and groundwater movement. The Diabase formation tends to result in hilly, wooded and rocky terrain. The Diabase formation areas typically experience poor absorption of water into the ground, low well yields, and difficult excavation. There areas are not typically suited for extensive development.



## Soils

The soils that are of most concern from an environmental policy standpoint are those referred to as hydric and alluvial and those that are well suited to farming. Hydric soils are routinely wet with poor drainage and are indicators of shallow water tables and the presence of wetlands. Alluvial soils are commonly wet soils as they are deposited by floodwaters. These soils are most often found in and indicated the extent of floodplains. Alluvial soils are distributed throughout Upper Frederick Township in isolated areas and in corridors that coincide with streambeds and their floodplains.



Besides the environmentally sensitive soils noted above, soils that are categorized as prime farmland and of statewide importance are commonly identified in open space plans due to their value to agriculture. These soils are productive, and because of their characteristics are also often suitable for development. Prime farmland includes deep, well-drained and moderately sloped soils that can support high yields of crops with little management. Farmlands of statewide importance include soils that can support cultivation but require careful crop management.

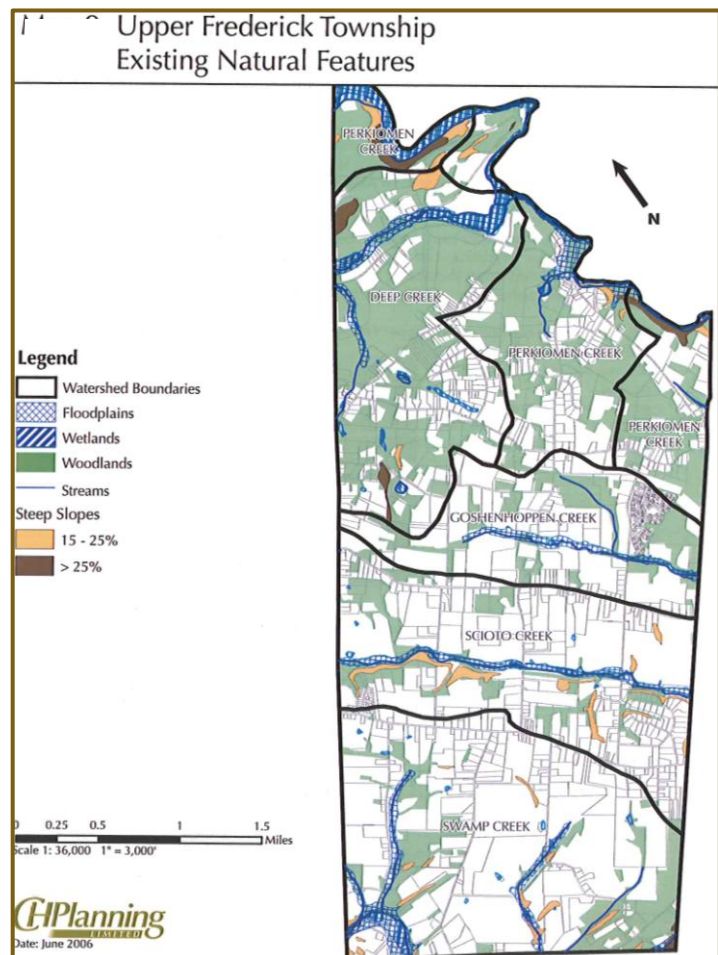
Much of Upper Frederick Township is underlain by prime farmland soils and even more is underlain by soils of statewide importance. Consequently, based on soil capability, farming is viable in the majority of Upper Frederick. From a policy standpoint, having soils with good agricultural capability is a prerequisite for the establishment of agricultural security areas, and therefore is a prerequisite for participation in the County's Farmland Preservation Program.

## Steep Slopes

Steep slopes in Upper Frederick are concentrated in the upper portion of the Township, along Scioto Creek, and near the Swamp Creek tributaries in the southern part of the Township.

Those areas that are steep are among the most environmentally sensitive landforms and when disturbed, can increase the erosion of soils and rapid runoff of precipitation and consequential flooding down slope. Increase runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes require increased public expenditure for flood control and stormwater management.

The development of steep slopes in Upper Frederick is controlled by provisions in the Township's zoning ordinance. Specifically, the ordinance establishes a Steep Slope Conservation overlay district. The SSC district limits use by right on slopes with grades



## Hydrology

All of Upper Frederick is located within the Perkiomen Watershed, which consists of minor basins and sub-basins. Upper Frederick has five sub-watersheds: Perkiomen Creek Watershed, Deep Creek Watershed, Goschenhoppen Creek Watershed, Scioto Creek Watershed, and Swamp Creek Watershed. The most visible components of Upper Frederick's hydrology are the streams and creeks that drain the landscape. Streams are fed by two natural sources, direct runoff and groundwater. The major streams flowing through Upper Frederick include the Perkiomen Creek, Deep Creek, Goschenhoppen Creek, Scioto Creek and Swamp Creek, each of which have floodways and floodplains associated with them.



Wetlands are also found throughout the Township. According to the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, most of the wetlands in Upper Frederick are found along streambeds. Additional wetlands may exist in Upper Frederick because the NWI offers only a broad based generalized overview of wetlands.

Conservation efforts by local watershed groups, such as the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy, are being pursued to improve the quality of surface waters and better manage the impact of development on them.

The Floodplain Conservation District delineated in the Township Zoning Ordinance prohibits development within the 100-year floodplain boundary due to the potential reduction in the carrying capacity resulting in increased height and destructive ability of floodwater. Only uses such as open space, orchards, required yards, water supply, and utility transmission lines are permitted in the floodplain.

### **Woodlands**

The presence of woodlands, especially in larger tracts, is important in Upper Frederick for both functional and aesthetic reasons. Woodlands enhance the quality of the environment as they protect against erosion, sustain high water quality and quantity, provide wildlife habitat, improve air quality, moderate temperatures, provide visual and physical buffers, and offer a varied aesthetic and visual relief from developed land.

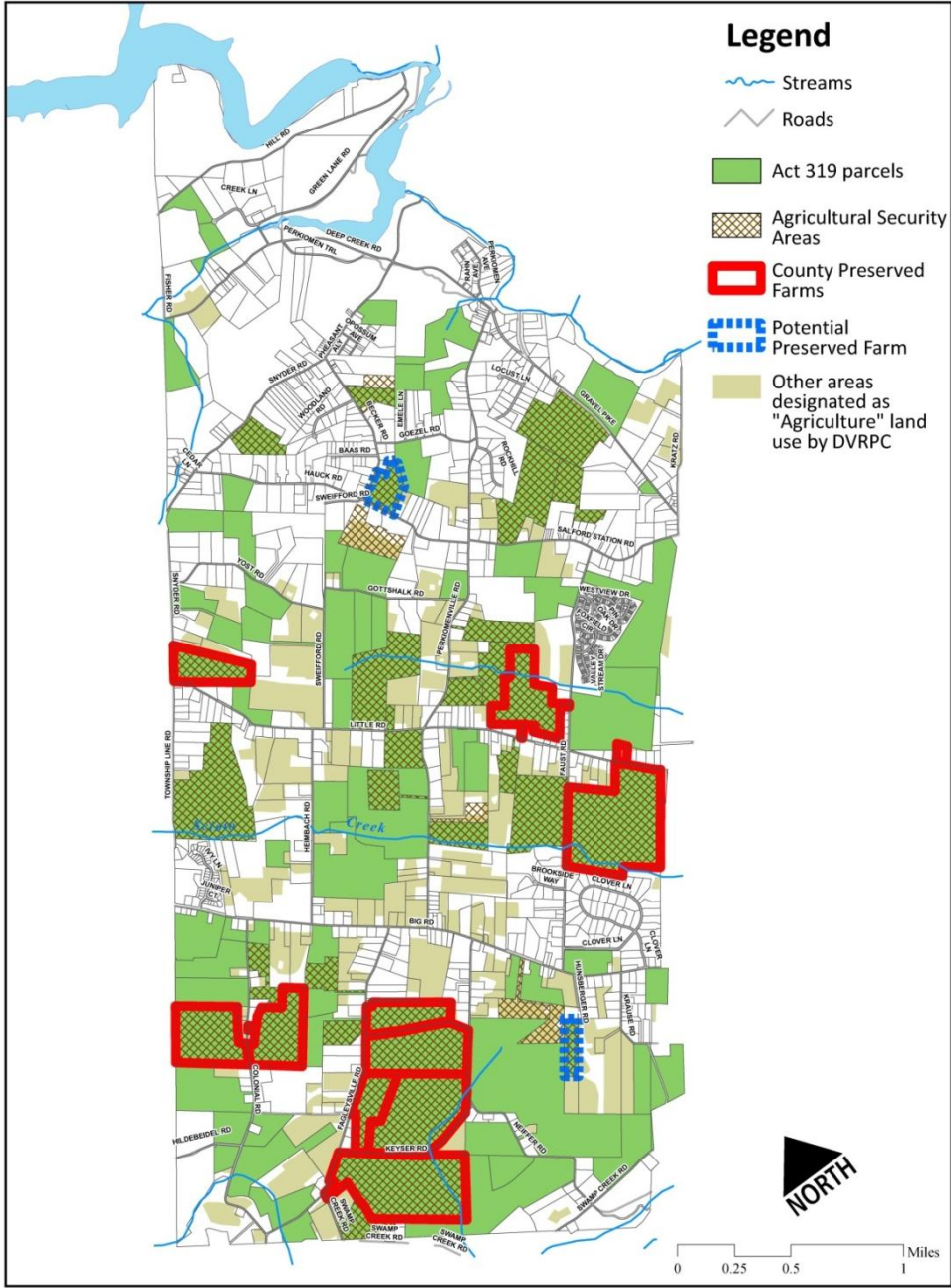
Most of the land in Upper Frederick above Yost Road and Gottschall Road is in tree cover. White oaks, maples, pin oaks, black oaks, sycamores, and dogwoods are common in this area. This area is an important block of woodland because it is part of a larger stand that extends into New Hanover and Upper Hanover Townships. This forest provides a sizable habitat for wildlife. In addition, these woods surround part of Deep Creek and part of the Perkiomen Creek, and thereby help to maintain the creeks' water quality. There are also many wooded corridors throughout the Township which permit migrating wildlife to find cover, provide windbreaks between farms, cool the ground, and lend an agrarian atmosphere to Upper Frederick.

## **Farmland and Forest Protection Programs**

Upper Frederick highly values the protection of farmland, in addition to other natural resources, and contains several farms that are utilizing a variety of permanent and temporary protection measures. There are four protection programs available to property owners in the Township, two of which offer permanent protection and two provide temporary protections. All of the programs support the preservation of active farms and forest lands. These programs include the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program (permanent), transfer of development rights (permanent), the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974, referred to as Act 319 (temporary), and the Agricultural Security Area (temporary). According to DVRPC, there were 2,604 acres of agricultural lands in 2000 and 2,398 acres of agricultural lands in 2010, representing a decrease of approximately three (3) percent from 40 percent to 37 percent of the total Township area.

The following map provides an overview of the application of the farmland protection programs in the Township, each of which is discussed in more detail on the following pages.

# Upper Frederick Township Agricultural Lands Map



## Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program

The Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program (Program) purchases agricultural easements from productive farms resulting in the removal of any right to build non-agricultural buildings on the land. The land must remain in farming in perpetuity. The property may be sold, but new owners must continue to grow productive crops or utilize the property as pasture land. As of December 2014, Upper Frederick has nine farms totaling 645 acres that are permanently protected under the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program and two farms totaling 94 acres are under review. In Upper Frederick Township, the total farm acreage preserved under the County program has increased by 230 acres since the preparation of the 2006 Open Space Plan. The following table provides an overview of approved and pending farmland preservation applications as of December 2014.

Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program				
Approved Farms				
Name	Acreage	Farm Type	Status	Parcel ID
Anders, Neil & Laurie	86.34	Dairy	2/11/1998	55-00-01141-001 55-00-01140-002
Hutt, William	38.4	Beef & Hay	10/21/2002	55-00-01703-006
Kwapisz, Joseph & Regina (#1)	51	Crop & Goats	9/2/2010	55-00-00544-004
Kwapisz, Joseph & Regina (#2)	47.43	Crop & Goats	9/2/2010	55-00-0544-004
Mack, James P.	43.55	Beef, Swine, Poultry	12/20/2011	55-00-00991-007 55-00-00991-106
Marriot, Gloria	87.83	Feed Crop	2/26/2014	
Mest, Merrill	101.2	Dairy	7/6/1999	55-00-00886-004 55-00-00490-004
Slater, Edward & Barbara	106.85	Crop	6/9/1995	55-00-01672-001
Zawada, Robert & Edith	82.53	Horse	9/1/1994	55-00-01702-007
<b>Total</b>	<b>645.13</b>			
Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program				
Applicants				
Name	Acreage	Farm Type	Status	Parcel ID
Linsenmaier, Estate of Winifred E.	77.5	Feed Crop	Pending	55-00-00931-004
Spinelli, Anita	16.64	Beef, Horse, Lamb	Pending	55-00-00802-007
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.14</b>			

According to the Montgomery County website, as of June 12, 2014, there are 152 farms preserved in Montgomery County under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program totaling 8,945 acres with 28 more farms on the waiting list.

Funding for the program comes from annual allocations from the Montgomery County Commissioners, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through cigarette taxes, the Environmental Stewardship Fund, and other sources. A local municipality may also contribute funding toward the acquisition of the easements.

Application to the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program first requires the subject property be in the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program, which is a temporary protection program discussed in the following section. The Program evaluates applicant properties on four main criteria considered important for farmland preservation:

- ❖ soil quality
- ❖ the farming operation
- ❖ clustering potential (proximity to other farms)
- ❖ development pressure

Farms selected through this process are then appraised for their development value; the farmer receives payment for sale of agricultural easements, and simultaneously signs a deed of agricultural easement, which will remain with the land in perpetuity.

Additional information about the program is available on the Montgomery County website at <http://www.montcopa.org/FarmlandProgram>, which includes links to the following resources.

- [Agricultural Land Preservation Easement Purchase Program Manual](#) (April 2014)
- [Agricultural Conservation Easement Sale Application](#) (*print, complete, and return*)
- [Application, Evaluation, and Selection Information](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Montgomery County Agencies for Farmers](#)
- [Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Board](#)

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

The Township recently implemented a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) ordinance to establish a private mechanism for conserving agricultural and forestry uses of land, preserve open space, scenic views, critical and environmentally sensitive areas, and natural hazard area,

and protect lands and structures of aesthetic, architectural, and historic significance. The program allows owners of land in the rural portions of the Township to sell their development rights to developers proposing development within the Township Growth Area allowing additional density in accordance with the standards adopted. The TDR has not been used as of the issuance of this Plan.

### **Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974 (Act 319)**

The Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974, referred to as Act 319, is a temporary farmland and forestry land protection program that offers participating landowners a preferential tax rate on their properties. The program classifies enrolled properties as either agricultural, agricultural reserve, or forest reserve, each of which has specific applicable standards. To be eligible for consideration under Act 319 the property must be a minimum of ten acres and be considered either farmland or forest by the local tax assessing authority. The amount of the tax savings that results from the preferential assessment under Act 319 is dependent on the soil type of the land being considered. Land with more productive soil types realizes greater tax savings. The tax savings that result from the preferential assessment under Act 319 are intended to encourage the preservation of farmland by reducing the costs of running the farm.

While Act 319 encourages open space preservation, it does not ensure it. At any time a land owner may remove their land from the program and develop the land. Removal of the land from Act 319 designation results in monetary penalties, in the form of payment of back taxes, which is typically factored into development costs. So, while Act 319 offers an incentive for farmland preservation, it is not always enough of an incentive to discourage development.

In the 2006 Plan it was noted that more than 80 properties accounting for approximately 2,600 acres in Upper Frederick were preferentially assessed under Act 319. As of late 2014, the number of parcels assessed under Act 319 increased to 90 with an acreage total of 2,621, representing a slight increase overall since the 2006 Plan was adopted.

### **Agricultural Security Areas (ASA)**

The Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program is a farmland preservation program administered by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation (Bureau). ASAs are a tool for strengthening and protecting farmland from the urbanization of rural areas. They are

intended to promote more viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm.

According to the Bureau's website, entry in the ASA program is voluntary for farmers/landowners. Petitions are submitted to township supervisors and the following standards apply.

- They are reviewed every seven years however; new parcels of farmland may be added to an established ASA at any time.
- A minimum of 250 acres from among all the participating farmers is required.
- An ASA may include non-adjacent farmland parcels of at least ten acres or be able to produce \$2000 annually from the sale of agricultural products.
- Participants receive special consideration regarding:
  - Local ordinances affecting farming activities.
  - Nuisance complaints.
  - And review of farmland condemnation by state and local government agencies.
- An ASA qualifies land for consideration under the Easement Purchase Program at the landowner's request, if the ASA has at least 500 acres enrolled.

The benefits of enrollment are:

- Prerequisite for applying to the county farmland preservation program
- Protection against local nuisance ordinances related to farming activity
- Oversight in certain cases of eminent domain.

The ASA designation is not a permanent designation and a landowner may develop the property for non-agricultural purposes without penalty. Having an ASA designation is required for any landowner intending to apply for the Montgomery County Farm Preservation Program. As of December 2014 there are 33 farms totaling 1,548 acres with ASA designation, which is an overall increase from the 30 farms and nearly 1,300 acres reported in the 2006 Open Space Plan.

## Privately Owned Open Space

Along with publicly owned parkland, Upper Frederick contains approximately 280 acres of privately owned areas of open space. Some of these privately owned parcels of open space are more vulnerable to development pressures than county and township owned parklands as they can be sold at any time by the landowners. The majority of this privately held open space is located in the southern portion of the Township.



The Girl Scouts of Philadelphia own close to 135 acres of open space land in the southwestern corner of Upper Frederick Township. These sites are recreational camps which offer hiking, camping, and horseback riding. In addition, the site has abundant woodlands and wildflowers that provide a serene setting for nature walks. The camps are located in the rural preservation district, which does permit the development of single family detached homes and agricultural activities. The development of the camp lands would be a significant loss as that portion of Upper Frederick contains many historic buildings, important streams, wooded areas, and indigenous flora and fauna. Other privately owned open space areas include parcels owned by the Lower Merion Rod and Gun Club, the Goschenhoppen Historians, and private homeowners associations. These lands could also be sold and developed.

## Cultural Assets

Cultural amenities are some of the most valuable resources of a community. The manmade environment reflects a community's cultural heritage and serves to create a spirit unique to that community. Unfortunately, cultural resources are also some of the most vulnerable community resources. Suburban growth continues to spread and threaten the rural landscape and its built contributions to community history and culture.

Upper Frederick is home to many historic and cultural resources, four of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The John Engelhardt Homestead, the first site in the Township to be listed on the National Register, was built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The home is considered important for its combination of Germanic and Georgian architectural styles and for the level bottom barn that also sits on the property. The Conrad Grubb Homestead, built in 1754, is a three room home typical of Germanic-Pennsylvania style that was the site of a home weaver. The homestead retains much of its original workmanship and materials. At the,



constructed in 1736, Washington made his decision to continue to pursue the British. English and German religious services were also held at the Antes House, as were joint classes for white, black, and Indian school boys. The Swamp Creek area of Upper Frederick contains a bridge that is listed on the National Register. The bridge crosses Swamp Creek at Fagleysville Road.



**Henry Antes House**

Also in the Swamp Creek area are the Hans Neuss log home, Bertolet's Meetinghouse, Samuel Bertolet's home, the Christian Stettler House, and the George Michael Kuntz Homestead. The Hans Neuss log home is one of the oldest log homes in Montgomery County. The home is located in an area experiencing substantial development pressures. Because this property has significant historic value within the community, consideration should be given to the preservation of this property, with a particular emphasis on its historic integrity. Bertolet's Meetinghouse is a brick building in the Mennonite style whose graveyard contains the grave of the first known German settler in the area. Samuel Bertolet's home contains a barn that, during the Revolutionary War, served as a shelter for Continental Army horses. The Christian Stettler House is a 2 1/2 story German log house. The Kuntz Homestead, typifying Germanic settlement in rural Pennsylvania, includes a smoke house, a stone summer kitchen, and a barn. As these sites are clustered in the Swamp Creek area of the Township, an ideal opportunity exists for a trail to connect these sites.

Other important historic sites are located within Upper Frederick. The George Nyce house is a Georgian home built from stone. The house, which has a round plaster flower star at the peak of its gable, was the residence of one of Montgomery County's earliest industrialists. The Fenton Russell stone house was built around 1745. It has historically significant features including wide plank floors, log beam supports, and hardwood doors. The Dodderer Homestead is a Germanic log house with a stone addition. The original home was built around 1745 and is used as a private residence today. The Frederick Mennonite Home was originally built in 1855 as the Frederick Institute. The building was used as a school run by the "friends of education" in the community until it became the Mennonite Home in 1867. The Perkiomenville Hotel, built



**Frederick Mennonite Home**

around 1820, was both a tavern and the central meeting place for the community for many years. The stone arch bridge that is adjacent to the hotel was built around 1810 and is currently preserved by Montgomery County. The Leidy Graveyard on Neiffer Road is located at the juncture of four private properties. The graveyard, one quarter of which was used by each family, is encompassed by a stone wall. St. Luke's Lutheran Church, formerly Keelors Union Church, is a stone structure that is still used today. The adjacent cemetery is noteworthy for the Victorian carvings on the gravestones.

An additional historic resource in the community is the building located at 3211 Big Road, adjacent to the Township building. The building is the former Church School, built in 1892, and is currently used as a private residence. The following photograph is taken from *A Compendium of the History of Upper Frederick Township*, published by the bicentennial committee of Upper Frederick Township in 1975, which documents historic resources within the community. The former Church School is located on a small parcel of land that is completely surrounded by Township Park. If the opportunity arises in the future, consideration should be given to acquisition of the property and incorporation into the Township Park as a community resource, such as a senior center. Consideration should also be given to the restoration of the structure to some of its original character.



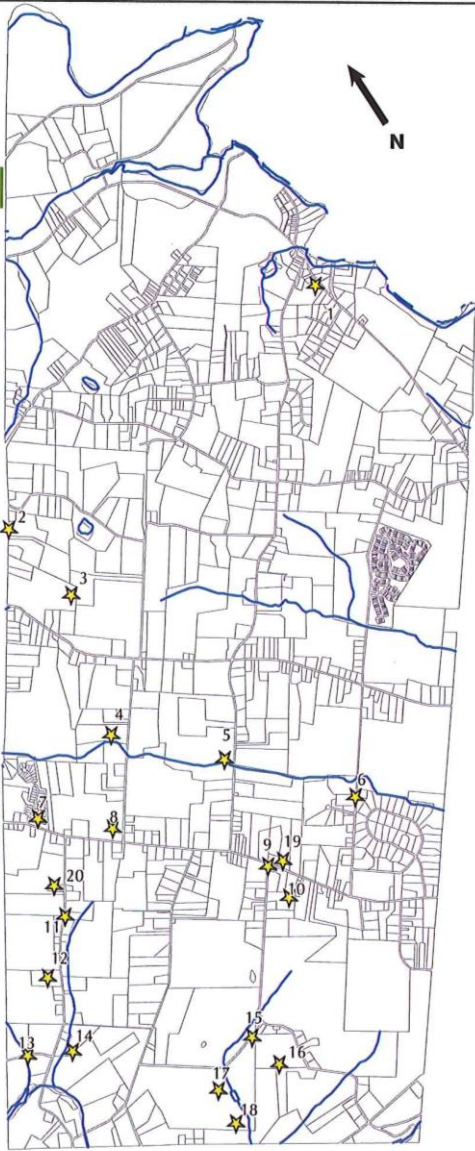
Church School

Upper Frederick also has two archaeological sites within its borders. Generally speaking, area archaeological sites include Indian and Revolutionary War artifacts. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission identifies the two sites as Perkiomen Rockshelter #4 and Perkiomen Rockshelter #5. The specific location of these sites is not publicly available, as the commission feels that the public disclosure of the locations could endanger the preservation of the sites.

Archaeological sites are not distributed randomly. Instead, they tend to be clustered together where the environment and topography are conducive to the preservation of artifacts. Based on this, and the fact that Montgomery County has never been systematically searched for archaeological sites, it is possible that other sites are present in the Township and region. The following map shows the location of historic resources in the community.

# Upper Frederick Township Historic Features

Map Number	Site
1	Perkiomenville Hotel
2	Grave of William Howe
3	Unidentified Local Resource
4	Dodderer Homestead
5	Conrad Grubb Homestead
6	Zuber-Schwenk Cemetary
7	George Nyce House
8	Frederick Mennonite Home
9	Union Cemetary Association of Keeler's Church
10	St. Lukes Lutheran Church
11	Bertolet Burying Ground
12	Bertolet's Mennonite Meeting House
13	Antes and Shalkop Families Burying Plot
14	Henry Antes Burying House
15	Leydich Burial Ground
16	Leidy Graveyard
17	John Englehardt Homestead
18	George Michael Kuntz Homestead
19	"Church School"
20	Hans Neus Log Home



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles  
Scale 1: 36,000 1" = 3,000'

**CI Planning**  
LIMITED  
Date: May 2008

## **CHAPTER 4: INVENTORY OF PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS**

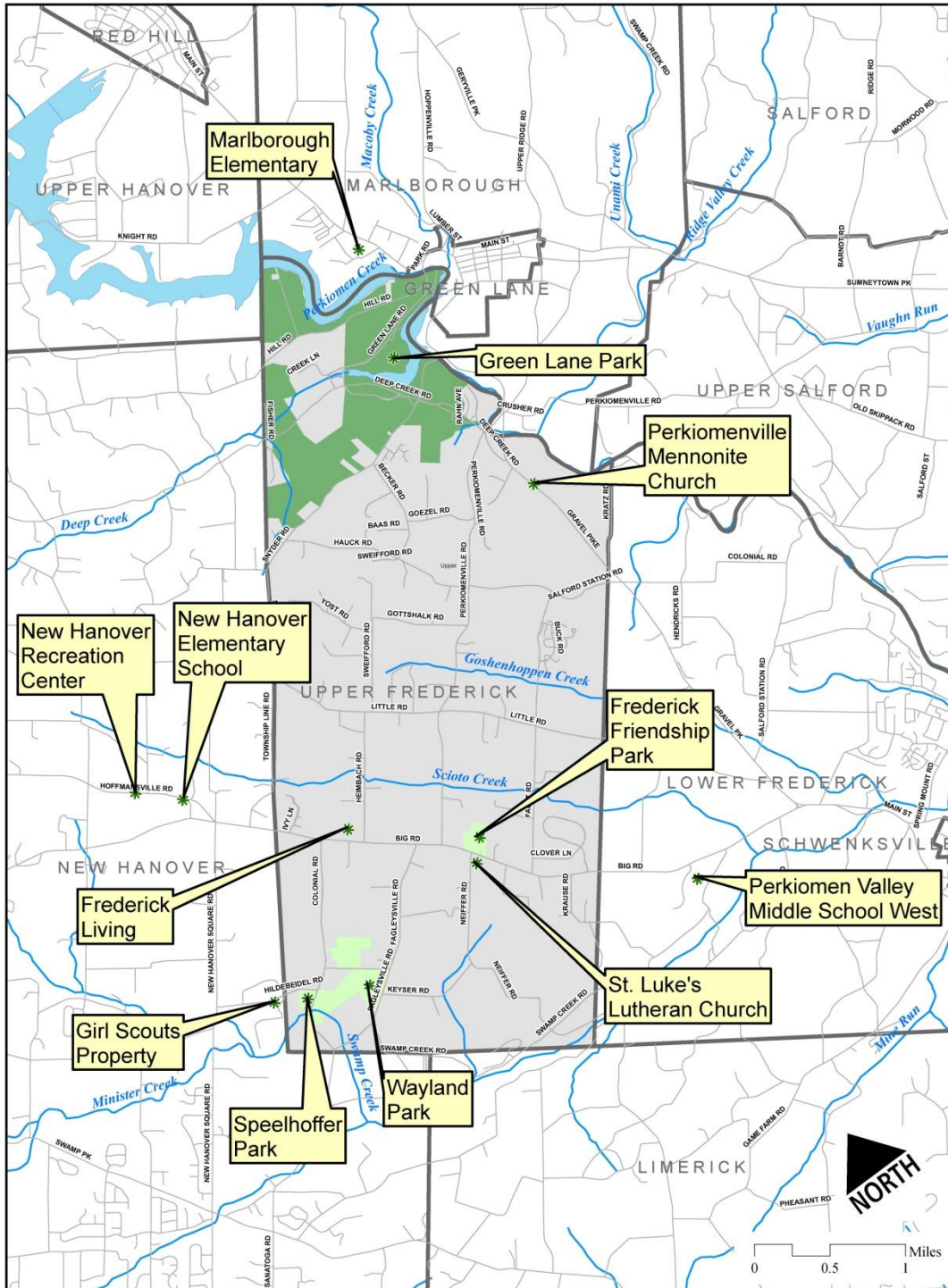
This chapter brings together information relating to the inventory of park and recreation resources that impact residents and employees, setting the foundation for development of the needs assessment and establishment of the Township level of service for parks, recreation, and open space.

### **Existing Recreational Opportunities**

This section provides an overview of existing recreation, park and open space facilities, both public and private, located within Upper Frederick Township and in close proximity to Upper Frederick Township. While the private park and recreational facilities will not be utilized in the needs assessment section of the Open Space Plan, it is useful to identify all recreational facilities available, both public and private, and their general location.

The following map and table identifies indoor and outdoor park and recreational facilities within the Township and the map identifies recreational facilities in close proximity to the Township. Mapped facilities include those owned and operated by Upper Frederick Township, Boyertown Area School District, Perkiomen Valley School District, non-profits, and the private sector. Within the Township there are limited active recreation facilities available and residents typically travel outside the Township for many recreational opportunities.

# Upper Frederick Township Recreational Facility Inventory



**Upper Frederick Township  
Recreational Facility Inventory**

Facility	# Owned by Upper Frederick Township	# Non-Township Owned	Comments & Location of Non-Township Owned Facilities
Softball Fields	0	1	St. Luke's Church
Baseball Fields	0	0	
Basketball Courts	0	0	
Soccer Fields	0	0	
Football Fields	0	0	
Multi-Purpose Fields	0	0	
Running Tracks	0	0	
Volleyball Courts	0	1	Green Lane Park
Tennis Courts	0	1	Green Lane Park
Play Equipment Areas	1	3	Green Lane Park; St. Luke's Church
Paved Walking Paths	1	0	
Dog Parks	0	0	Planned at Speelhoffer
Picnic Pavilions	1	2-3	Green Lane Park
Snack Bars	0	1	Green Lane Park
Horseshoe Courts/Quoits	0	1	Green Lane Park
Camping Areas	0	1	Green Lane Park
Golf Courses	0	0	
Nature Trails	2	multiple	Green Lane Park
Garden Plot Areas	0	1	Frederick Living
Community Buildings	1	3	Two churches & Frederick Living
Recreation Centers	0	0	
Outdoor Pools	0	0	
Indoor Pools	0	0	
Amphitheaters	0	1	Green Lane Park
Fitness Trails	1	1	Frederick Living
Gazebos	0	2	Frederick Living; Green Lane Park
Fishing Ponds	0	1	Green Lane Park
Frisbee Golf Courses	0	1	Perkiomenville Mennonite Church
Mtn Biking/Hiking Trails	2	multiple	Green Lane Park; Perkiomen Trail
Gymnasiums	0	0	
Ice Skate Park		1	Green Lane Park
Mini-Golf		1	Frederick Living
Bocce Court		1	Frederick Living
Lower Merion Rod & Gun Club		1	

Within the Township there are currently no official recreational programs sponsored by the Township. There also does not appear to be active recreational programs offered by other organizations within the Township other than those offered to members within private communities or organizations, such as the Frederick Living Continuing Care Retirement Community or individual churches.

Upper Frederick Township maintains an agreement with New Hanover Township where Upper Frederick Township residents are eligible for in-district rates associated with the use of the swimming pool in New Hanover Township. Upper Frederick Township then compensates New Hanover Township for the difference in revenue associated with this discount.

Annual community events sponsored by the Township, which are organized and staffed by community volunteers and municipal staff include the following:

- Swamp Creek Stomp 5K and Fun Run
- Flea Market
- Community Day

In addition to the Township-sponsored events, the Goschenhoppen Folk Festival occurs in the Township on an annual basis and is sponsored by the Goschenhoppen Historians.

### Township-Owned Parks

Upper Frederick Township currently owns three parks, each of which was acquired with funding assistance from the Montgomery County Open Space Program. The Township-owned parks include Frederick Friendship Park, Speelhoffer Park and Wayland Park. The following table provides an overview of the Township-owned parks, each of which is discussed in more detail following the table.

Upper Frederick Township Parks and Open Space			
Park Name	Location	Acres	Classification
Frederick Friendship Park	3205 Big Road	25 (including municipal complex)	Community Park
Wayland Park	Fagleysville Road	101 acres	Natural Area
Speelhoffer Park	Colonial Road	6 acres	Neighborhood Park

## ***Frederick Friendship Park and Municipal Complex***

### Description

The property containing Frederick Friendship Park and the municipal complex is centrally located within the Township at 3205 Big Road and contains approximately 25 acres. Approximately two (2) of the 25 acres is dedicated to the Township building and public works facilities (municipal complex), with the remaining 23 acres available as passive and active park and open space, of which approximately three (3) acres is currently dedicated and available for active park uses.



### Existing Facilities

Frederick Friendship Park is the only township-owned park with active recreational facilities in the Township. Current park facilities include the following.

- Toddler play area including a climbing structure, rocking structures and swings
- Pavilion/picnic area
- Walking trails (approximately 1,125 linear feet paved and 400 linear feet crushed stone)
- Exercise stations
- Roll of Honor
- 20-space parking lot
- Portable restroom

The most recent improvements to Frederick Friendship Park include the construction of 400 feet of a walking trail along the frontage of the park property dedicated to long-time Township resident and planning commission volunteer Kathleen Pramba.

In the fall of 2013 construction of an Honor Roll Monument was completed and dedicated to veterans of all conflicts on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2013. The new monument replaced the original monument which was built in the 1940's during WWII and reportedly fell into disrepair and was later destroyed by a hurricane.



### Recommendations

Frederick Friendship Park is the only township-owned park entitled to have active recreational facilities due to deed restrictions on the other two Township-owned parks. Based on Frederick Friendship Park being the Township's only park with active recreational opportunities, the Township places particular emphasis in this Plan on ensuring that the capacity and quality of facilities within this park meet the needs of the community.

Specific recommendations for Frederick Friendship Park are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### ***Constable Charles Speelhoffer Memorial Park (Speelhoffer Park)***

#### Description

Constable Charles Speelhoffer Memorial Park is located at the southwest corner of Colonial Road and Hildebeidel Road. The site contains six (6) acres and is restricted to passive park uses according to a covenant with the Open Space Board. The property primarily consists of a field that gently slopes south and west toward a tree-lined area located along the perimeter of the property.



#### Existing Facilities

Speelhoffer Park is not formally developed, but it does contain an informal trail along the perimeter and a small gravel area and driveway allowing access to the property from Colonial Road.

### Recommendations

Development of Speelhoffer Park is considered a high-priority project in the Township for 2015-2016. Current park plans include the construction of a dog park, associated parking, and a walking trail along the perimeter of the park. Specific recommendations for Speelhoffer Park are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

## ***Bob Wayland Memorial Park (Wayland Park)***

### Description

The Bob Wayland Memorial Park (Wayland Park) is located in the southern portion of Upper Frederick Township with access from Fagleysville Road. Portions of Wayland Park extend to Colonial Road directly across from Speelhoffer Park. Wayland Park contains 101 acres and is also restricted to passive uses.

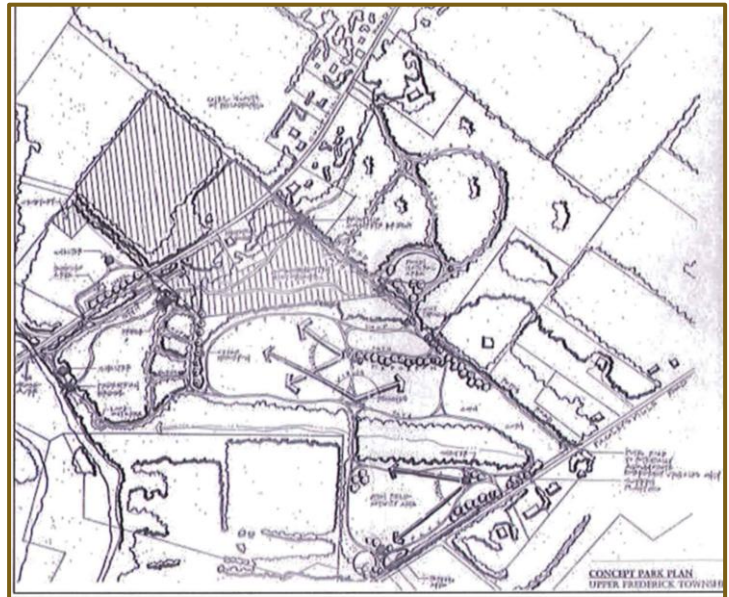


### Existing Facilities

Current amenities include approximately three miles of trails, picnic tables, information kiosk, portable restroom, and wildlife placards.

### Recommendations

Plans for the future include expansion of the existing trail system to include a connection into Speelhoffer Park and the County planned Sunrise Trail proposed along Swamp Creek. Specific recommendations for Wayland Park are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.



## **County- Owned Parks and Trails/Greenways**

Upper Frederick Township is fortunate to have portions of two of Montgomery County regional parks and a portion of a regional multi-use trail in the Township. Each of these county-owned parks is discussed in more detail as follows.

### ***Green Lane Park***

The northern quadrant of the Township consists of a portion of Green Lane Park, containing 3,062 acres, which is a regional park owned by Montgomery County offering a variety of recreational activities including fishing, boating, camping, trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding and two children's playgrounds. The majority of the Township is within three miles of Green Lane Park.

### ***Perkiomen Trail***

A portion of the 20-mile multi-use Perkiomen Trail traverses the northern portion of the Township through Green Lane Park. The Perkiomen Trail generally follows Perkiomen Creek beginning in Oaks, where it connects to the Schuylkill River Trail, and continuing through Green Lane Park ending in Green Lane Borough. The Perkiomen Trail is predominantly crushed stone with a width of 10-12 feet. Suitable activities on the trail include biking, walking, jogging, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

### ***Sunrise Mill Park***

In the southeastern corner of Upper Frederick Township is a small portion of the Sunrise Mill county park which is a 200 acre park along Swamp Creek extending into Lower Frederick and Limerick Townships. The Sunrise Mill property contains a grist and sawmill built in 1767 together with a cluster of other historic buildings. The site is not currently open to the public, but is informally used by hikers along Swamp Creek and will ultimately serve as a second regional park easily accessible to Upper Frederick Township residents.

According to the Montgomery County website, the site will be open to the public upon completion of renovation. The Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan identifies the proposed Sunrise Trail as a planned trail to extend from Schwenksville through the Sunrise Mill property with opportunities to connect to the proposed West County Trail proposed to extend from Green Lane Park to the Pottstown area.

## CHAPTER 5: PARK AND OPEN SPACE CATEGORIZATION, NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SPATIAL PARK ANALYSIS

### Overview

Upper Frederick Township remains a relatively rural community with 2,621 acres of farm and forest land protected by the Act 319 program of which 645 acres is permanently protected farmland. In addition to the Act 319 properties, the Township maintains 132 acres of permanently preserved parkland and a portion of two County parks, Green Lane Park and Sunrise Mill Park, are located within the Township. Therefore, of the 6,450 acres in the Township approximately 43 percent of the land area is protected as Township parkland or farm/forest land under Act 319. Maintaining this rural character is of utmost importance to Upper Frederick Township. While the Township prioritizes the preservation of agricultural uses and the rural character, it is also recognized that there is a need to ensure adequate park and recreational facilities for existing and future residents.

A needs assessment was conducted utilizing the inventory of existing parks, open space and facilities, guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), along with the Township priorities and perceived needs of the community. The needs assessment brings together the inventory of existing facilities together with the following factors to determine how current parks are meeting the recreational needs of Upper Frederick Township residents and employees.

- location and size of existing municipally-owned parks and open space
- facilities available in each park
- classification of existing parks in accordance with the NRPA standards
- service areas associated with each park

### Public Involvement

Information relating to the public's interests, desires and needs was gathered via surveys, a joint workshop of the Parks Board and Planning Commission, public meetings, and a public hearing, where the public was invited to provide comments and suggestions regarding the existing facilities and needed park and recreation facilities in the Township.

**Community Survey.** A survey was conducted at the 2014 Upper Frederick Township Community Day and was also made available on the Township website for 30 days requesting feedback from residents regarding the existing park facilities and any new facilities users would

like to see in the parks. While not a large number of surveys were completed, the comments received in the surveys tended to be consistent with the verbal comments provided during the Community Day event. The comments received reflect a generally positive feeling toward the parks and the maintenance of the parks, reinforcing the work of the Upper Frederick Township Park Board, Board of Supervisors, and staff.

The survey results are summarized as follows.

Survey Results	
Question	Response
<b>What do you like about the park and open space resources available in the Township?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great place to hike, nature watch, and walk dogs.</li> <li>• Use the Swamp Creek Park to walk our dog. It has been very useful.</li> <li>• Free access</li> <li>• Safe environment</li> <li>• Cleanliness</li> <li>• The availability</li> <li>• Pet friendly</li> <li>• Great for children</li> <li>• Beautiful countryside (2)</li> <li>• Well maintained (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Do you think the Township needs to plan for additional park amenities at the existing parks (other than those listed)? If so, what would you like to see?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community garden in park. Some properties are too wooded to have a garden.</li> <li>• Better trail maintenance and mowing</li> <li>• The Dog Park built</li> <li>• Larger unique playgrounds (such as Mandarach Park in Limerick)</li> <li>• More walking/biking paths</li> <li>• Playgrounds</li> <li>• Restore native plants</li> <li>• Plant more native ornamental trees and shrubs and flowers (2)</li> <li>• Support education about native plants and animals (2)</li> <li>• Preserve and educate about stormwater project at the Township building (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Are there park resources not currently available or planned in the Township that you would like to see available?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly archery hunting with a permit</li> <li>• Playground on Fagleysville</li> <li>• Would like to see the walking paths get completed</li> <li>• A dog park would be great (2)</li> <li>• More hiking trails (2)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding parks, recreation and open space in Upper Frederick?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love that the Township is saving open space</li> <li>• Keep up the good work</li> <li>• The community event on 9/27 was wonderful! Great amounts of activities for kids and at a great price.</li> <li>• You are doing a great job! (2)</li> <li>• Continue to partner with environmental and conservancy organizations</li> </ul>
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## **Categorization and Needs Assessment**

In determining the categorization and needs assessment it is recognized that much of the Township is rural in nature and maintaining this rural quality remains a priority of the Township and is taken into account when applying the NRPA standards to the Township recreation and park infrastructure. This chapter categorizes the existing Township-owned parks and open space utilizing the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards as a guide and outlines the results of the spatial park analysis identifying existing deficiencies for the existing population.

It is noted that the NRPA standards do not take into account the use of recreation and park facilities by non-resident employees within a community. While quantifying impacts of employees on a park and open space system is difficult, it is not uncommon for employees within a community to utilize park facilities located in close proximity to places of employment and new non-residential development will result in additional users of the park system. This added impact should be taken into account when developing park dedication standards.

The following table summarizes the types of parks and open space as designated by the National Recreation and Park Association and the application of these standards in Upper Frederick Township, relative to the resident population. The NRPA standards serve as a guide for the establishment of appropriate acreage standards and park types to serve the existing Upper Frederick Township resident population.

Park Classification System			
NRPA Type/Size/Service Radius	Standard Applicable to Upper Frederick Township	General Description	Appropriate Facilities
<b>Mini-Park</b> (2,500 sf- 1 ac) less than 1/4 mile radius	<b>Mini-Park</b> (2,500 sf/25 dwelling units) 1/4 mile radius	-Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs. -Provides outdoor recreation in close proximity to higher-density neighborhoods	-playgrounds -benches, seating area
<b>Neighborhood Park</b> (5-10 acres) ¼ to 1/2 mile radius	<b>Neighborhood Park</b> (5 acres) 1/2 mile radius	-Serves as the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. -Focus is on informal active and passive recreation -Contributes to neighborhood identity	-Play areas -Ball fields -Game courts -Picnic areas -Seating areas -Pathways -Community Gardens
<b>Community Park</b> (30-50 acres) 1/2 mile - 3 mile radius	<b>Community Park</b> (26 acres) 3 mile radius	-Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood park. -Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. -Variety of recreational opportunities for all ages and interests -Space for organized, large-scale, high-participation events Family destination Fitness and wellness opportunities	-Play areas -Organized sports facilities -Pavilions Permanent restrooms -Lighting -Amphitheaters -Pools -Parking
<b>Natural Resource Areas</b> (Acreage and service radius varies)	<b>Natural Resource Areas</b> No standard applied	-Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering	-Trails -Signage -Support facilities
<b>Greenways</b> (Acreage and service radius varies)	<b>Greenways</b> No standard applied	-Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	-Pathways-multipurpose -Trailheads -Support facilities -Signage
<b>School Park</b> (Acreage and service radius varies)	<b>School Park</b> No standard applied	-Public school sites with recreation facilities -Combines two public entities for expanded recreational opportunities	-Youth-oriented game courts and ball fields -Play areas -Seating -Pathways -Lighting
<b>Sports Complex</b> 30+ acres	<b>Sports Complex</b> N/A	-Consolidates sports fields and related facilities in a centralized location. -Economy of Scale -Improved management	-Ball fields, lighting -Spectator areas -Restrooms -Concessions -Landscaping -Parking

## **Mini- Parks**

Mini-parks are used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs. They are typically less than a ¼ mile distance in a residential setting and typically range in size between 2,500 square feet and one acre in size. Upper Frederick Township does not currently have any mini-parks. Given the relative low-density of the Township, mini-parks would not typically be expected in much of the Township. However, the Township currently has one townhouse development, Perkiomen Crossing, consisting of 330 residential townhomes, which is currently the highest density residential development in the Township with no recreational amenities located within the development or in close proximity (approximately two miles to Frederick Friendship Park). Given the density and lack of recreational opportunities associated with this high-density development, the Township has identified this area of the Township as an area in need of a mini-park at a minimum, or preferably a neighborhood park.

### **Facilities Proposed**

Given anticipated pressure for higher density developments in the growth area along Big Road, combined with the potential application of the transfer of development rights allowing additional density in this area, the Township finds a minimum mini-park standard to be appropriate in areas of the Township proposed for higher density development.

### **Establishing the Mini-Park Level of Service**

The mini-park level of service should be applicable to proposed attached dwelling units and multi-family dwelling units due to the limited opportunity for construction of individual private recreational facilities. For development proposing attached dwelling units and/or multi-family dwelling units the following mini-park acreage standard is found to be appropriate to provide recreational opportunities for those dwellings that may not otherwise have an opportunity to provide private outdoor recreational facilities. Due to the need for mini-parks to be able to accommodate a wide range of uses in a compact area, the area designated for future mini-parks should not consist of any environmentally constrained land such as steep slopes, wetlands and woodlands.



Level of Service Determination for Mini-Parks		
	Needed Mini-Park Area	Needed Mini-Park Facilities
<b>Attached or Multi-Family Dwelling Units</b>	2,500 square feet/25 dwelling units 1 mini-park/100 units	TBD**
<b>Upper Frederick Township Mini- Park Level of Service</b>	100 square feet/dwelling unit or .0023 acres/dwelling unit	TBD**
*Example: For a 300 unit development 30,000 square feet (0.69 acres of land would be required for mini-parks in no fewer than three park areas.)		
**to be determined on a case by case basis		

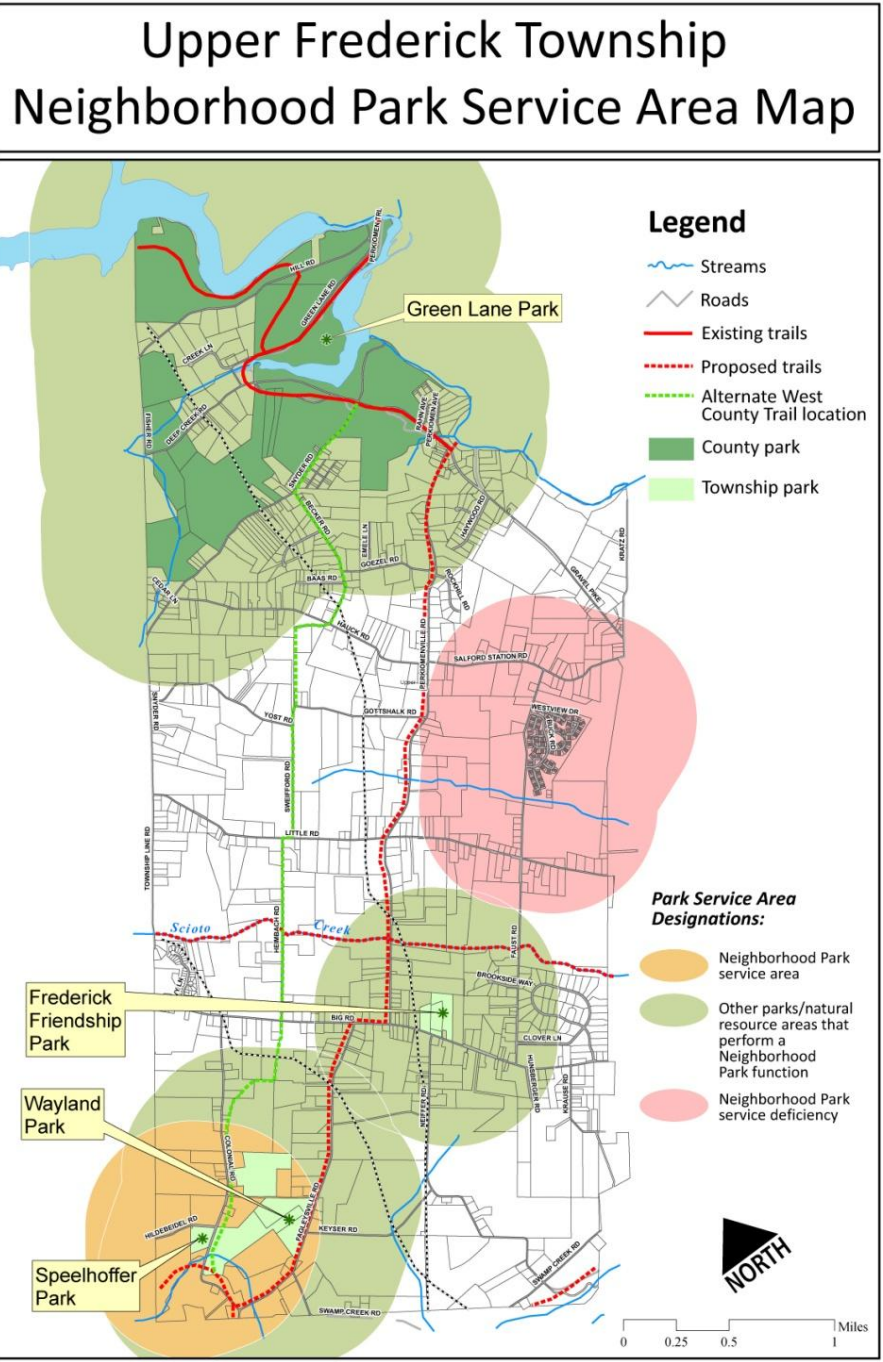
Determination of the facilities to be provided within the mini-parks should be determined on a case by case basis depending on the type of development proposed and the expected population composition. For age-restricted developments the proposed mini-park facilities may be oriented to more passive uses, while a development with children should include play structures.

**Neighborhood Parks and Design Standards**

Neighborhood parks are considered by the NRPA to be the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood with focus on informal active and passive recreation. Neighborhood parks tend to be five to ten acres in size and typically within ¼-½ mile of the neighborhoods they are serving. Given the rural nature of Upper Frederick Township the service radius for neighborhood parks is established at ½ mile for Upper Frederick Township.

The Township recognizes that all developed parks in the Township function as neighborhood parks to varying degrees, including Green Lane Park, Frederick Friendship Park, and Wayland Park. However, for classification purposes Speelhoffer Park is the only park in the Township currently designated as a neighborhood park for purposes of establishing a park dedication level of service standard for the Township. The following map identifies the ½ mile service radius from all Township parks and Green Lane Park. It can be seen from the following map that the area between Green Lane Park and Frederick Friendship Park is not served by neighborhood parks. The Township recognizes that much of this area is rural and as such

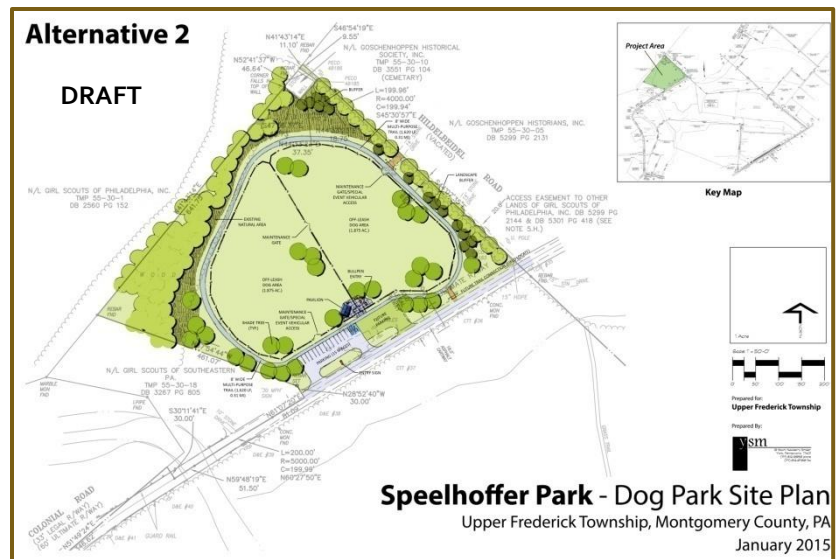
neighborhood parks may not be appropriate. However, the Perkiomen Crossing development located on Faust Road is the highest density residential development in the Township with no Township park facilities available within a mile of the development. As noted previously, given the density of this development (330 townhomes) and the lack of park facilities in close proximity, the Township determines that one additional neighborhood park of approximately five (5) acres within ½ mile of Perkiomen Crossing should be developed if the opportunity arises.



**Constable Charles Speelhoffer Memorial Park.** Constable Charles Speelhoffer Memorial Park (Speelhoffer Park) is an undeveloped open space restricted to passive park uses containing six (6) acres. This park is categorized as a neighborhood park within the Township and is prioritized for development. Development of Speelhoffer Park is the highest priority Township park project as of the adoption of this plan.

**Facilities Proposed**

Plans for Speelhoffer Park include the construction of a dog park, parking, approximately 2,000 linear feet of a walking trail along the perimeter of the park, meadow with restoration vegetation, stormwater facilities and interpretive signage program. Access to the dog park will be designed to be ADA accessible together with an appropriate portion of the proposed parking. Development of Speelhoffer Park is the highest priority Township park project scheduled to occur in 2016. The Township is prioritizing construction of the dog park in Speelhoffer Park in response to community demand for a place to exercise dogs and the current unauthorized use of other parks for the exercising of dogs. The first phase of development is proposed to include construction of the dog park, parking, stormwater facilities, interpretive signage and landscaping. The second phase of development for Speelhoffer Park includes the formal development of a perimeter walking trail and additional landscaping.



**Establishing the Level of Service for Neighborhood Parks**

The establishment of the neighborhood park level of service is based on the application of a 1/2 mile service radius around existing parks, the designation of Speelhoffer Park as a neighborhood park, and the identified shortfall of a neighborhood park near Perkiomen Crossing. The following table provides a breakdown of the available and needed neighborhood park acreage in the Township.

<b>Level of Service Determination for Upper Frederick Township Neighborhood Parks</b>		
	<i>Available/Needed Neighborhood Park Acreage</i>	<i>Available/Needed Neighborhood Park Facilities</i>
<b>Existing Neighborhood Park Acreage &amp; Facilities</b> (Speelhoffer Park in southwest quadrant of Township)	6 acres	No facilities existing. Dog park and trail proposed.
<b>Needed Neighborhood Park Acreage &amp; Facilities</b> (Northeast Quadrant of Township near Perkiomen Crossing)	5 acres	TBD**
<b>Total Neighborhood Park Needs for Upper Frederick Township</b> (Based on 2010 population of 3,523)	<b>11 acres</b>	TBD**
<b>Upper Frederick Township Neighborhood Park Level of Service</b> (Based on 2010 population of 3,523 and 2.51 residents per dwelling unit )	341 square feet/dwelling unit or 0.008 acres/dwelling unit*	
*Example: For a 300 unit development 2.4 acres of land for neighborhood parks would be required. (0.008 acres/dwelling unit * 300= 2.4 acres) **to be determined on a case by case basis.		

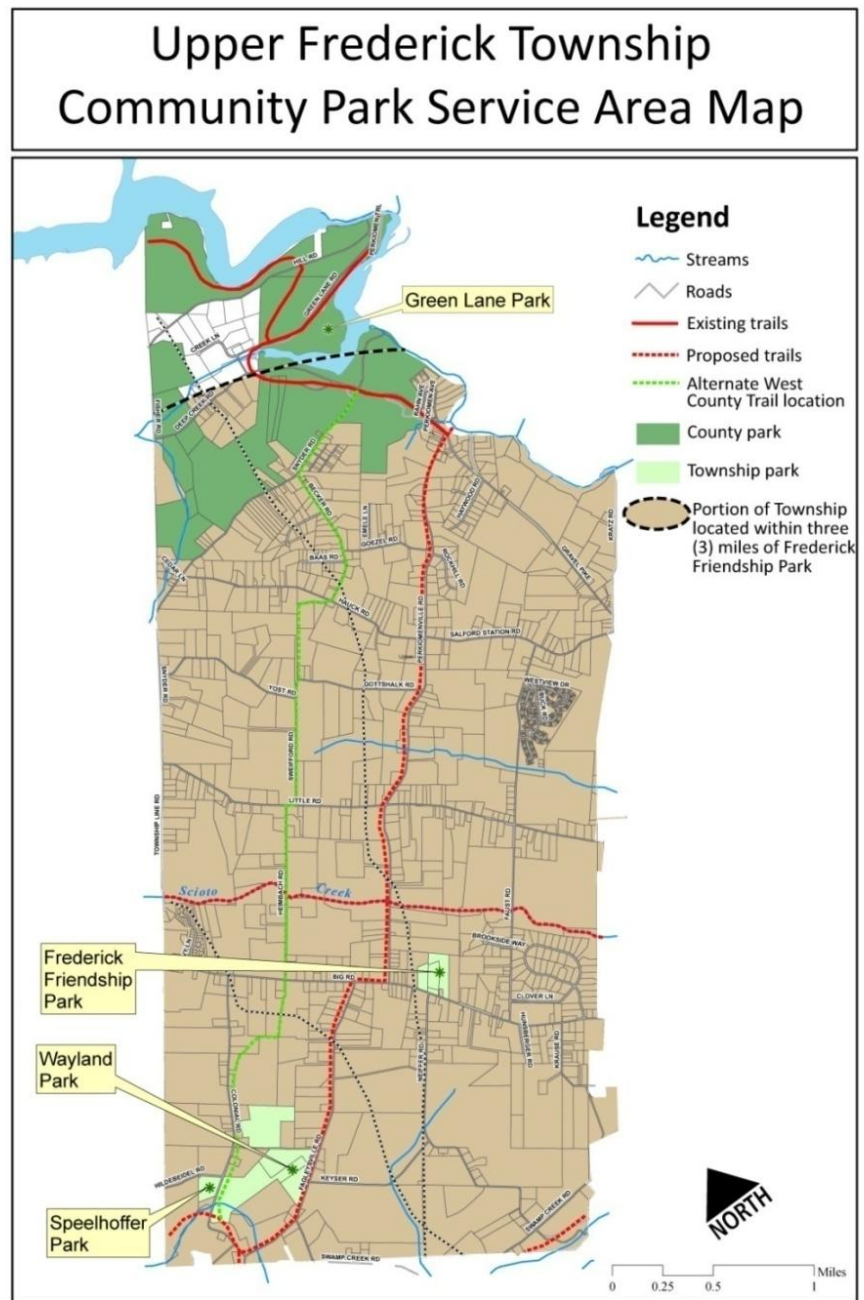
Based on the total neighborhood park acreage standard for the existing population, it is determined that the neighborhood park acreage level of service for the existing population should be 341 square feet per dwelling unit or 136 square feet per resident. Because a neighborhood park tends to be an active, central gathering area for a neighborhood, the Township should consider standards that require at least 75 percent of an area identified as a neighborhood park is unconstrained by environmental features such as steep slopes, wetlands and woodlands.

Similar to the discussion of facilities to be provided within the mini-parks, determination of facilities to be provided within new neighborhood parks should be determined on a case by case basis depending on the type of development proposed and the expected population composition. For age-restricted developments the proposed neighborhood park facilities may be oriented to more passive uses, while a development that will include children should have active recreational facilities.

## Community Parks and Design Standards

According to the NRPA park classification guidelines, a community park serves broader purposes than the neighborhood park with a focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. The location criteria of community parks are typically determined by the quality and suitability of the site and the ability to serve two or more neighborhoods within a ½ mile to 3 mile distance. The size criteria are typically between 30 and 50 acres.

Green Lane Park and Frederick Friendship Park function as community parks serving Upper Frederick Township. Applying the 3-mile service radius for community parks to Green Lane Park and Frederick Friendship Park all properties in the Township are located within three miles of either park and nearly all residents of the Township are within three miles of Frederick Friendship Park as shown in the following map.



**Frederick Friendship Park.** Frederick Friendship Park is centrally located within the community, occupying approximately 25 acres on Big Road of which approximately two (2) of the 25 acres is dedicated to the Township building and public works facilities (municipal complex), with the remaining 23 acres available as park and open space, of which approximately three (3) acres is currently dedicated and available for active park uses. As noted previously, existing park facilities include:

- Toddler play area including a climbing structure, rocking structures and swings
- Pavilion/picnic area
- Walking trails (approximately 1,125 linear feet paved and 400 linear feet crushed stone)
- Exercise stations
- Roll of Honor
- 20-space parking lot
- Portable restroom

#### **Facilities Proposed/Needed**

The following facilities are identified by the Township as future facilities to be constructed in Frederick Friendship Park as funding becomes available to serve the existing Township population.

- Extension of paved walking trail
- Extension of unpaved walking trails
- Two footbridges
- Multi-use court
- Kitchen area within the pavilion
- Play structures/equipment for older children
- Multi-use field
- Community center
- Permanent restrooms
- Future trail connection to Scioto Creek greenway
- Additional parking

#### **Establishing the Level of Service**

Given the central location of Frederick Friendship Park and the limited Township resources available for park and open space maintenance and acquisition, it is determined that only one township-owned park community park is necessary to serve the existing population. Based on the facilities needed in the community park to serve the existing residents, it is estimated that an additional three (3) acres suitable for active recreation be acquired to adequately

accommodate the proposed facilities for current residents and employees. The level of service for community parks in Upper Frederick Township is calculated as follows:

<b>Level of Service Determination for Upper Frederick Township Community Park</b>		
	<i>Available/Needed Community Park Acreage</i>	<i>Available/Needed Community Park Facilities</i>
<b>Existing Community Park Acreage &amp; Facilities</b> (Frederick Friendship Park)	23 acres	trails, tot playground, Pavilion, exercise equipment, parking
<b>Needed Community Park Acreage &amp; Facilities</b>	<i>3 acres</i>	See pg. 39
<b>Total Community Park Needs for Upper Frederick Township</b> (Based on 2010 population of 3,523)	<b>26 acres</b>	See pg. 39
<b>Upper Frederick Township Community Park Level of Service*</b> (Based on 2010 population of 3,523 and 2.51 residents per dwelling unit )	807 square feet/Dwelling unit or 0.019 acres/dwelling unit	TBD**
*Example: A 300 unit development would be required to provide 5.7 acres of area for a community park to maintain Township level of service.		
**To be determined on a case by case basis and with ordinance development.		

Based on the total community park acreage standard for the existing population, it is determined that the community park acreage level of service for the existing population should be 807 square feet (0.019 acres) per dwelling unit. Because a community park tends to be a combination of active and passive park uses, the Township should consider standards that require at least 25 percent of an area identified as a community park be unconstrained by environmental features such as steep slopes, wetlands and woodlands.

Determination of the facilities to be provided in association with a community park should be determined as part of an ordinance development or on a case by case basis depending on the type of development proposed and the expected population composition. As noted previously, the type of facilities to be provided should be oriented to the population proposed.

## Linear Parks and Greenways

Greenways are described by the NRPA as areas that effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), specific benefits of greenways include:

- Greenways enhance the sense of place in a community or region.
- Greenways accentuate the scenic beauty and majesty of our state.
- Greenways protect our state's water resources by buffering non-point sources of pollution.
- Greenways provide opportunities to protect and manage wildlife, forests, and ecological systems. .
- Greenways provide recreation opportunities for families and individuals of all ages and abilities.
- Greenways provide alternatives to automotive transportation, reducing traffic congestion.
- Greenways add positively to our economic climate.
- Greenways are a core component of strategies to foster health and wellness, especially as our population ages.
- Greenways help increase real estate values and promote eco-tourism, as well as cultural, heritage, and recreational tourism.

## Open Space Linkages

As discussed in the 2006 Plan, Upper Frederick Township residents regard open space as a critically important component of the community. These open spaces include dedicated land such as parks for passive and active recreation, as well as parcels that remain undeveloped. Open space adds to the livability, quality of life, and property values experienced by a community's residents. A long-standing Township goal has been to join these open spaces with each other and with the neighborhoods and people that they serve.

## Internal Trail System

An important aspect of open space is the accessibility of that space to community residents and to the region as a whole. Open space linkages such as streambeds, hedgerows, and utility corridors can both increase the accessibility of parks by allowing off street pedestrian and bike access, and can offer recreational opportunities in and of themselves as passive, natural recreational space. By locating open and recreational lands along potential linkages, the lands



will be more accessible and can go farther toward meeting the recreational needs of the community.

In terms of traditional open space linkages, Upper Frederick has several wooded stream corridors that could be ideal walking trails. The woods provide shaded cover and the streams provide paths that could be used for passive recreational opportunities including walking, hiking, and nature study. In addition, by creating a trail, the riparian buffers along the creeks would be preserved, and the water quality would be better maintained. Finally, because development is not permitted in the floodplain, the stream corridors are ideal for trails.

The second traditional source of open space linkages is two underground pipelines that span the Township. The pipelines run from the Swamp Creek area to the Upper Perkiomen Park area. Because these are utility easements and structures may not be built on the ground above the pipelines, there is a linear space spanning the Township that will remain undeveloped in perpetuity. If that land were used as a recreational trail, then residents could hike, for example, from the Sunrise Mill Historic Site to Green Lane Reservoir and Green Lane Park. Trails along the pipeline right-of-way could also link up with trails along the stream corridors, as the two meet in several places within Upper Frederick Township.

Several historic resources are located in the southwest quadrant of the Township in close proximity to the proposed alternate West County Trail. Consideration should be given to special signage or trail spurs to identify the historic resources in this area. The opportunity to incorporate a walking, self-guided tour of several historic resources within the community could be a unique connection of historic resources and passive recreation.

### **Regional Trail Systems**

Surrounding Upper Frederick are several efforts that will become significant recreation and transportation alternatives to residents of the Central Perkiomen Valley. The Township has the opportunity to link into these efforts at strategic points to develop strong connections with its neighbors.

These connections could offer Township residents a means of accessing other trails and parks that exist outside the municipal borders.

Both Montgomery County and the Central Perkiomen Valley Region have proposed regional trail networks. These networks are consistent with each other, and with this plan, and act to tie the region's major open space sites together.

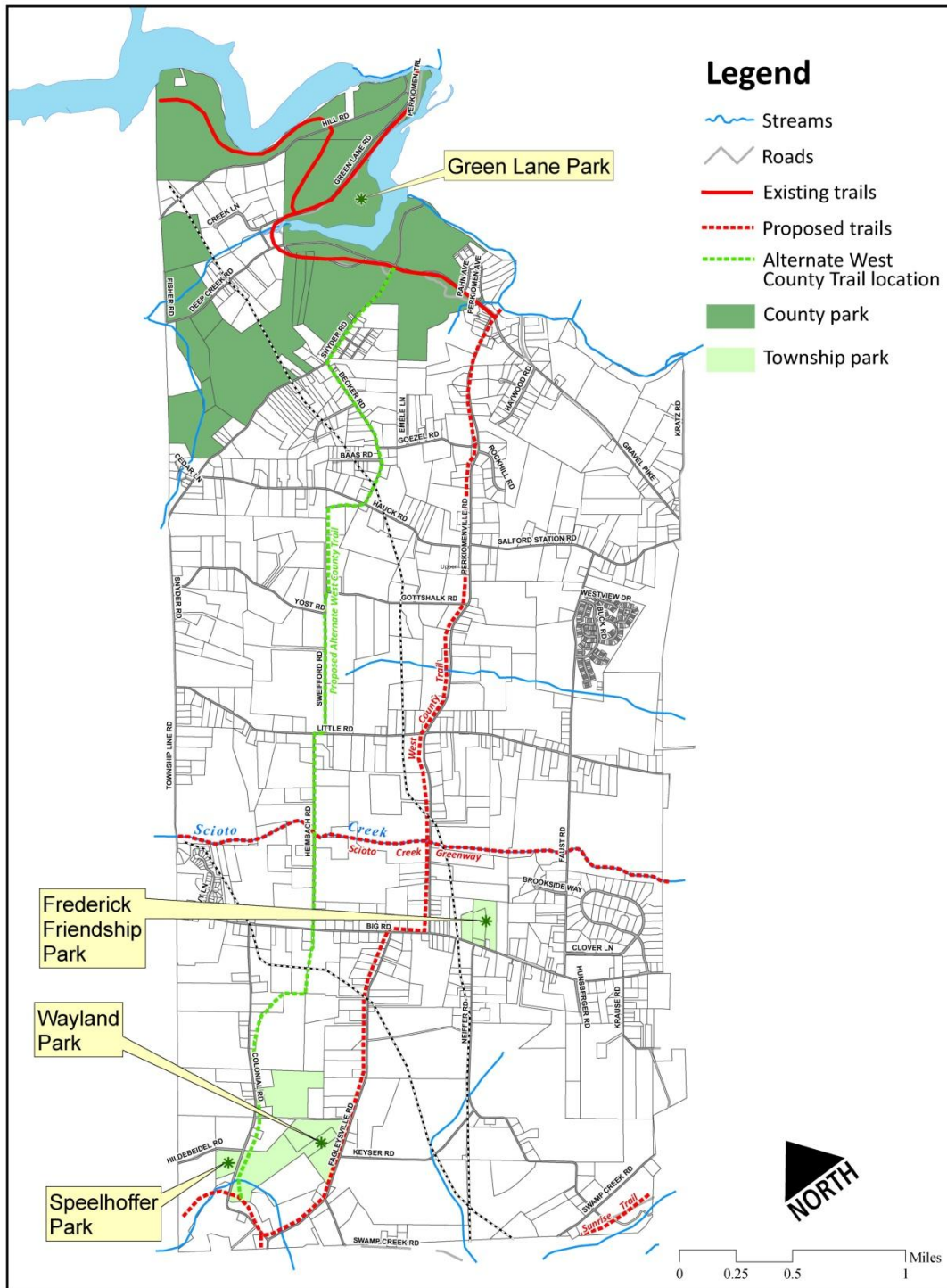
The size and location criteria for linear parks and greenways are variable and based on resource availability and opportunity.

### **Existing Facilities**

**Perkiomen Trail.** Upper Frederick Township currently has a portion of the 20-mile long Perkiomen Trail traversing the northern portion of the Township through Green Lane Park. The Perkiomen Trail is a County maintained trail. The 20-mile Perkiomen Trail is a rail-trail that runs through the Perkiomen Creek Valley from its junction with the Schuylkill River Trail at Oaks, Upper Providence Township to the largest County Park, Green Lane Park. Most of the trail is a 10-foot wide cinder or stone aggregate (non-paved) surface with grass shoulders. Selected sections are paved where deemed appropriate.

The multi-use trail follows the Perkiomen Creek and connects three County parks (Lower Perkiomen Valley Park, Central Perkiomen Valley Park, and Green Lane Park) and two County historic sites ("Mill Grove" – Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary and Pennypacker Mills). It passes directly through ten (10) municipalities making connections to numerous municipal parks and open spaces along the scenic waterway. The trail provides access to Valley Forge National Historical Park via its connection to the Schuylkill River Trail extension.

# Upper Frederick Township Park and Trail System



## Proposed Facilities

**Sunrise Trail/Swamp Creek Greenway.** The County Comprehensive Plan identifies a portion of the Sunrise Trail and Swamp Creek Greenway traversing Upper Frederick Township in the southern portion of the Township. As discussed in the 2006 Plan, the trail is proposed run along the scenic rural Swamp Creek valley between the County's Sunrise Mill Historic Site and the Perkiomen Trail at the confluence of the Swamp Creek and Perkiomen Creek in Lower Frederick Township. The trail, which will utilize County and municipal lands, easements on private and school district properties, and local rural road segments where necessary, will connect the north central part of the County to Pottstown to the northwest. This trail will also make connections to a system of nature footpaths located in the nearby Stone Hill Greenway. The Sunrise Trail is not identified as a high priority trail project in the draft Montgomery County 2040 Comprehensive Plan; however, development of the Sunrise Trail and Swamp Creek Greenway would allow the development of a valuable trail connection from Wayland Park to Swamp Creek. The Township will continue to support the County in the development of the Sunrise Trail and Swamp Creek Greenway

**West County Trail.** A portion of the County proposed West County Trail is proposed to connect the Perkiomen Trail in Green Lane Park to the proposed Swamp Creek Greenway and Sunrise Trail. The proposed West County Trail passes directly through Upper Pottsgrove on its way from the Pottstown area through the southeastern corner of Douglass Township. The trail would then continue through New Hanover Township and run south to north through Upper Frederick Township where it would connect to the Perkiomen Trail. The West County Trail is also not identified as a high priority trail projects in the draft Montgomery County 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Development of the proposed County linear park system would result in significant linear parks connecting the north and south portions of the Township.

The 2006 Plan identified an alternate alignment through Upper Frederick Township to reduce the anticipated conflict with traffic. When plans begin for the segment of the West County Trail, consideration should be given to an alternate alignment, if the Upper Frederick Township segment of the trail is proposed to be integrated with on-street traffic.

**Scioto Creek.** In addition to the County proposed linear parks, the Township proposes a greenway along Scioto Creek potentially leading to pedestrian connections across the Township paralleling Big Road.

### Establishing the Level of Service

Rather than establishing a level of service for linear parks and greenways, the Township should continue to identify opportunities for supporting the development of designated linear trails

and greenways within the Township. The Township should consider requiring future developments occurring adjacent to designated linear parks and greenways to dedicate easements to permit the development of designated linear parks and greenways and construct trail segments as deemed appropriate. Future developments should also be designed to incorporate connections to the linear parks and greenways to allow future residents and employees the opportunity to utilize the greenways of Upper Frederick Township.

## **Natural Resource Areas and Regional Parks**

The NRPA identifies natural resource areas as lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. The location criteria for natural resource areas are based on resource availability and opportunity and the size criteria are variable.

### **Existing Facilities**

Upper Frederick Township is unique to have two significant county-owned regional parks/natural resource areas located partially within the Township boundary. In addition, Wayland Park (101 acres) is a Township-owned natural resource area, which is dedicated to passive uses.

### **Proposed Facilities**

In terms of spatial park analysis, Upper Frederick Township is well served by natural resource areas and regional parks and there are no current plans to acquire additional natural resource areas by either the Township or the County. It is noted that there are two large properties in the southwest quadrant of the Township used for private recreational uses, the Girl Scouts Camp Laughing Waters and the Lower Merion Rod and Gun Club. Should these private recreational uses cease and these properties become available, opportunities to acquire the properties for public open space should be considered by the County and/or Township.

### **Establishing the Level of Service**

Given that Upper Frederick Township is well served by natural resource areas and regional parks, it does not appear to be necessary to establish a level of service for natural resource areas and regional parks at this time. However, the Township should consider adopting an Official Map identifying the Girl Scouts Camp Laughing Waters and the Lower Merion Rod and Gun Club as future natural resource areas if these properties become available in the future.

### **Summary**

Based on the needs assessment and the spatial analysis, the level of service proposed is intended to guide Township decision-makers in the future planning and development of parks and open space, as well as serve as a foundation for implementing park dedication standards.

## **CHAPTER 6: PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The 2006 Open Space Plan presented an inventory of potentially vulnerable resources in Upper Frederick Township, both natural and cultural, and discussed the value associated with these areas of resources which contribute to Upper Frederick's rural character, noting that these resources may be worthy of prioritization and preservation in the Township's open space program. The Township continues to prioritize preservation of these resources.

### **Natural Resource Protection**

Upper Frederick has several zoning districts with regulations aimed at the protection of natural resources and open spaces. These include a Rural Preservation District, a Land Preservation District, a Steep Slope Conservation District, and a Floodplain Conservation District.

The Rural Preservation District was established to maintain the rural character of certain portions of the Township and promote the preservation of land and waterways with a unique character. This is accomplished by minimizing the amount of new development which occurs in rural areas, discouraging the location of non-rural uses in proximity to rural areas, maintaining low density development, preserving natural amenities from development, encouraging the retention of vegetation, maintaining rural vistas, and visibly shielding housing units and other non-rural uses to minimize perceived density.

The Land Preservation District, adopted in 1991, preserves open land, sensitive natural areas, and rural community character by promoting clustered residential development in lieu of conventional lot design. Within this district a minimum of 75% of the parcel area must be preserved as undisturbed open space. In addition to preserving open space the Land Preservation District provides greater design flexibility and efficiency in the siting of services and infrastructure including the opportunity to reduce length of roads, utility runs and the amount of paving required. It also creates compact neighborhoods with direct visual access to preserved open land with amenities in the form of neighborhood open space with a strong neighborhood identity.

The Steep Slope Conservation District is intended to conserve and protect areas of steep slope from inappropriate development and excessive grading, and encourage the use of steep slope areas for open space purposes so as to constitute a harmonious aspect of the continuing physical development of the Township. By preserving areas of steep slopes, defined as areas having slopes greater than 15%, the Township is able to avoid the negative impacts caused by erosion, stream siltation, and soil failure leading to structural collapse.

Similar to the Steep Slope Conservation District, the Floodplain Conservation District is intended to protect areas of floodplain subject to and necessary for the containment of flood waters, and encourage the use of floodplain areas for open space purposes. Preserving floodplain areas not only protects the important natural functions of the area such as promoting safe and sanitary drainage but also protects the Township and local residents from damage associated with flooding.

Since the adoption of the 2006 Plan the Township adopted riparian buffer standards and transfer of development standards to help protect a range of natural resources along stream corridors and agricultural areas.

The riparian corridor protection standards adopted apply to properties proposed for development and the standards preserve open space along stream corridors as buffers with the following benefits:

- prevents nutrients from entering the waterways thus protecting water supplies
- reduces flood hazards by providing more pervious cover
- promotes a diversity of plant and animal species
- serve as potential greenways and trail linkages

In response to concern about potential development permitted in the rural areas of the Township as identified in the 2006 Plan, the Township adopted a transfer of development rights ordinance allowing the transfer of development rights from the rural zoning districts to the growth area to help preserve agricultural lands and natural resources. It is noted that the transfer of development rights provision had not been used as of the adoption of this plan.

### **Easement Acquisition**

Easements can either be purchased or donated. The Township should continue to encourage landowners to provide greenway easements where appropriate when fee simple ownership is either not possible or unnecessary. A prime example would be an easement along scenic roads to protect the views that motorists and pedestrians enjoy along the public rights of way. These easements should require the maintenance of street trees and restrict grading within a strip of land parallel to the right of way. The easements would vary in width and shape, depending upon the particular resource being protected.

Public access easements should be pursued for trails. It is unnecessary for the Township to purchase entire tracts of land to secure enough usable space for a trail, which may only require a 50 to 60 foot wide right-of-way.

### **Private Donations**

Sometimes, landowners want to preserve their land by donating the full title of the property or by donating their development rights to a non-profit land conservation group. Either of these approaches will permanently preserve land as open space. At this time, if landowners donate development rights, they receive tax benefits, but the land must be permanently restricted from future development. There are a number of land conservation groups operating in Montgomery County that would be willing to take these donations, including the Montgomery County Lands Trust, the Brandywine Conservancy, the Natural Lands Trust, the Nature Conservancy, the Conservancy of Montgomery County, the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy and Heritage Conservancy.

Land conservation groups may be able to help local landowners develop some of their land while keeping a major portion of the property open and deed restricted. With this approach, there would be a limited development designed in a sensitive manner, allowing a landowner to receive some compensation while preserving the most important environmental and cultural resources on the site.

The Township Manager and the Commissioners can refer interested landowners to these conservation groups. They also may welcome proposals to donate land to the Township for permanent open space use.

### **Community Education**

Education programs for children and adults help instill a land conservation ethic in Upper Frederick, which may be more important in the long term than any number of regulatory changes. This ethic recognizes and values the existing parks and open spaces in the Township, encourages volunteers to clean up and maintain parks and trails, and keeps the needs of a sound parks and open space plan always before elected officials.

### **Village Character and Cultural Resource Preservation**

The preservation of local heritage is important in maintaining quality of life in Upper Frederick Township. Local heritage consists of the historic buildings, landmarks, and landscapes that provide a link to a community's rural and village past and thereby make a valuable contribution to current educational, cultural, and social environment.

The inventory of historic places in chapter three describes some of the historic resources in the township. Protecting these sites and others with historic architecture and appropriate zoning, will help to maintain or enhance the character of the village areas of Frederick and Perkiomenville and parts of the Township's rural landscape. Also of importance will be redevelopment and infill development that is consistent with local historic character.



## CHAPTER 7: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Many of the following goals and objectives were originally developed in association with the 2006 Open Space Plan and have been found by the Township to remain applicable. The following goals and objectives have been updated to reflect new objectives developed since the adoption of the 2006 Plan and the removal of objectives that are no longer applicable.

### Goals and Objectives

#### Goal: Preserve Rural and Historical Landscape

- Preserve undeveloped land where it remains to retain a connection to Upper Frederick's rural heritage
- Preserve farmland where development pressure is greatest and land is productive
- Preserve historical structures that contribute to the township's rural character and history
- Support farmers as they maintain agriculture as a productive industry
- Discuss agricultural preservation options with land owners who have land in the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) within the Township
- Encourage landowners who have active agricultural land to enter the ASA if they are not already in it

#### Goal: Preserve Undeveloped Land Parcels

- Encourage landowners of privately owned open space to permanently preserve the land, specifically the Girl Scouts of Philadelphia, and the Lower Merion Rod and Gun Club, both located in the southwestern corner of the Township

#### Goal: Protect Existing Natural Features

- Preserve Lands on which sensitive natural resources exist and deserve protection
- Adopt regulations that further add protection to natural resources
- Provide public access to natural areas while ensuring a high standard of protection
- Encourage the use of preservation easements over sensitive natural features within the Township, especially stream corridors
- Maintain existing partnerships with Montgomery County Lands Trust and Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy with an emphasis on stream restoration projects.

#### Goal: Link Existing Open Space

- Create a safe alternative trail route for the County's proposed West County Trail, if determined appropriate

- Provide sufficient roadside shoulders or sidewalks to allow pedestrian and cyclist use of roadways, specifically along potential pathways
- Require strong pedestrian connections between land developments, historic resources, and existing trails
- Cooperate with regional efforts to build trail and greenway connections across the landscape
- Work with developers to provide greenway easements for trail segments, wherever feasible
- Find sources of funding to purchase easements or land outright to make vital connections between trail segments

**Goal: Protect Scenic Viewsheds and Vistas**

- Identify the primary properties that provide scenic or important vistas throughout the Township and prioritize these for potential preservation efforts
- Work with developers to minimize impacts from development on properties that possess scenic viewsheds and vistas

**Goal: Provide Adequate Passive and Active Parkland**

- Complete development of park improvements identified in this Plan, including construction of planned trails in the Township parks, as staff time allows
- Ensure that the Township has adequate land to address near term and future needs for athletic fields, courts and other play areas
- Explore the possibility of obtaining land in the northeast quadrant of the Township for the development of a neighborhood or mini park
- Develop partnerships with neighboring municipalities and the Central Perkiomen Valley region to develop greater recreation opportunities
- Enact park dedication standards for new residential and non-residential development
- Adopt an Official Map to identify properties to potentially be preserved as park or open space areas should they become available for sale.
- Continue partnering with adjacent municipalities to allow Upper Frederick Township residents to participate in recreational programs at in-district prices.
- Explore opportunities for obtaining additional land adjacent to Frederick Friendship Park to accommodate additional active park facilities and linking to Scioto Creek.
- Consider acquisition of the former “Church School” should it become available for a community or senior center.

## **CHAPTER 8: RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROVIDE NEEDED PARK LANDS AND FACILITIES**

### **Capital Improvement Program and Projected Operating Budget**

Due to limited revenues, Upper Frederick Township does not currently have a five year capital improvement plan for recreation, parks and open space. The Township has budgeted \$15,000 in 2015 for design and engineering associated with Speelhoffer Park for the proposed dog park and anticipates as much as \$20,000 will be budgeted in 2016 for the development of Speelhoffer Park and serve as match funding for a DCNR grant the Township intends to apply for in 2015 to assist with the development of the proposed dog park and associated parking area.

The Township dedicates staff resources on an annual basis, as available, to continue construction of the park trails within the existing parks.

### **Projected Maintenance Needs and Staffing Requirements**

Upper Frederick Township maintains the three existing parks Frederick Friendship Park, Wayland Park and Speelhoffer Park utilizing existing Public Works staff. Park maintenance generally includes mowing, trash removal, and repairs, as needed. The Township also utilizes public works staff to complete trail projects within the parks as time allows. Millings are donated to the Township from PennDOT as they are available and these millings are used as the surface material for the trails. Community volunteers also work on trail projects, particularly in Wayland and Speelhoffer Parks.

Park equipment repairs have not been an issue to date due to the fact that all active park facilities were installed since 2005 and are relatively new and in good condition. At this time the active park facilities are inspected as needed when concerns are reported to the Township. The Township is moving forward with developing and implementing a regular inspection plan. The Township installs new playground surfacing material (wood chips) on an annual basis in accordance with the standards established for the individual playground equipment.

The Township estimates the park maintenance and trail construction tasks require the equivalent of approximately one-half of a full-time employee annually. In addition to staff time for maintenance and trail development, the 2015 Township budget for parks is approximately \$23,500, which includes costs associated with mowing, maintenance, park

supplies, Community Day and the Swamp Creek Stomp. The Township also budgeted for a new mower for the parks in 2015 estimated to cost \$10,644.

Results from the 2014 community survey indicates that residents are satisfied with the quality of park maintenance, but some comments suggested completion of trails in the parks. The Township intends to continue to incorporate trail construction in the parks as time allows. The Parks Board also organizes a working day on the morning of the last Saturday of every month, which has resulted in the construction of approximately three miles of trails in Wayland and Speelhoffer Parks.

Township funding for parks remains limited due to the limited revenues. However, the Township has been able to maximize the use of the available staff and community volunteers, together with obtaining grant funding when opportunities arise, to maintain and develop the Parks to meet the needs of the community.

## **Land Acquisition Methods and Sources of Funding**

There are several methods for preserving open space that Upper Frederick may wish to consider. Each method has pros and cons associated with it. The following section discusses potential sources of funding and techniques for land acquisition, park development and agricultural preservation. Upper Frederick will pursue funding opportunities as deemed appropriate and work to leverage funds whenever possible. The Township will work with conservation organizations to help achieve the goals of this Plan.

### **Acquisition**

The most common type of acquisition is fee simple acquisition which is the most direct means of obtaining land for parks and greenway. The main advantage of this option is that an entire parcel of land belongs to the municipality or other entity purchasing the land. While fee simple acquisition may be the most direct, and often, appropriate manner by which to preserve land, the expense of fee simple purchase often exceeds available funding sources. The Township has used fee-simple acquisition, through coordination with the Green Fields/Green Towns program to acquire the land for Frederick Friendship Park, Wayland Park, and Speelhoffer Park. However, with limited funding available and limited staff resources, fee simple acquisition of land by the Township is not anticipated in the near future.

At the other end of the spectrum is acquisition by condemnation, which is generally not used for purposes of open space and is not envisioned as a tool to be used in Upper Frederick Township. Acquisition can occur by exercising the right of eminent domain where the public purpose is well defined, where fee simple acquisition is desired but not possible at a fair price

and where the owner is reluctant to sell. There tends to be a hostile stigma associated with condemnation procedures and therefore this option should be explored as a last resort.

Another fee-simple purchase option that can be used is purchase and lease-back *or* resale. Using this technique land is acquired through fee-simple acquisition and deed restrictions are placed on the land to limit certain activities and the land is then leased back to interested parties. This allows for immediate purchase of properties and allows the purchaser to recover part of the purchase price back through leasing. This technique is not currently proposed by Upper Frederick Township.

A middle ground between these two extremes, and a commonly used technique, is the use of conservation easements to preserve land at a relatively low cost without acquiring it. Ownership of the property is maintained by the private landowner, however, they voluntarily agree to donate or sell the right to develop the land. A restriction is placed in the deed of the property, which then becomes binding on all future owners of the land. For example, most conservation easements prohibit the construction of new buildings and cutting down woods. In exchange for giving up their development rights, the landowner is often granted some form of tax relief. The easement offers some flexibility since it can be written in different ways to restrict or not restrict certain types of activities. These easements are one of the main tools that the Township expects to use to implement many of the natural resource and agricultural land preservation recommendations in this plan.

Occasionally pedestrian easements are combined with conservation easements to allow the public the right to walk, hike, or ride bicycles in certain areas if certain rules are followed. Such easements, in conjunction with riparian conservation easements, will allow for some trail development in the Township.

The final technique for preserving land is through donations by private landowners, organizations or corporations. Donating land can offer public relations and federal income tax benefits to the granting landowner. Before accepting a donation the Township should consider maintenance costs on the property to determine if the property can afford these costs and also should encourage landowners to provide an endowment fund to help maintain the properties. The Township has not acquired open space through dedication, though some private organizations have.

## Funding Sources

Upper Frederick Township is eligible for funds from a variety of sources including grants, general revenue funds, bond issues, and donations (of cash, materials, or labor). A sampling of possible grant sources is described below.

### Federal Programs

#### National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

The program offers technical assistance only to nonprofit organizations, community groups, and local or state government agencies. Rivers and Trails technical staff offers the following types of assistance for recreation and conservation projects:

- Building partnerships to achieve community set goals
- Assessing resources Developing concept plans
- Engaging public participation
- Identifying potential sources of funding
- Creating public outreach
- Organizational development
- Providing conservation and recreation information

### Commonwealth Programs

#### Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

DCNR manages a variety of grant and technical assistance programs concerned with a variety of issues. DCNR annually awards about \$30 million in planning, acquisition, and development grants for parks, recreation, rivers conservation, trails, greenways, and protection of open space and critical natural areas. Most DCNR grants require a 50/50 match. However, the small communities grant is for communities with populations of less than 5,000 for projects costing between \$20,000 and \$60,000. The Small Communities grants do not require match for the first \$20,000 of grant funds. DCNR also provides pre-application workshops to assist applicants in the preparation of their application forms.

#### Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)

The Growing Greener program has funded efforts to clean up Pennsylvania's rivers and streams, reclaimed abandoned mines and toxic waste sites, invested in new alternative energy sources, preserved farmland and open space, and developed watershed restoration programs. Thus far, Growing Greener has generated nearly \$1.50 in matching funds for the environment for every \$1.00 in state money. As the Growing Greener program evolves, it will focus on

brownfield redevelopment, farmland and open space preservation, water quality improvements, enhanced state and community parks, and an upgraded fish and wildlife infrastructure. Growing Greener II will accomplish these goals while making critical investments in community revitalization and the promotion of the use of clean energy. Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) Enhancement Projects Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities offer communities funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices such as: safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic routes, beautification, and other investments that increase recreation opportunity and access. Communities may also use TE funds to contribute toward the revitalization of local and regional economies by restoring historic buildings, renovating streetscapes, or providing transportation museums and visitors centers.

The Transportation Enhancements Program is a unique cooperative arrangement between the sponsor, the Federal Highway Administration and PENNDOT. It should be noted that the Enhancement Program is a reimbursement program and percent funding is offered for planning, design and acquisition. There are twelve funding categories for projects that "enhance the surface transportation experience":

- Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
- Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Acquisition of scenic easements of historic sites related to transportation
- Scenic or historic programs, including tourist and welcome center facilities
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation or operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities including historic railroad facilities and canals.
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising
- Archaeological planning and research
- Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or reduction of vehicle caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
- Enhancement of transportation museums

### **Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to Schools Program**

This PENNDOT program offers funding for streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, benches and streetlights; for pedestrian improvements such as crosswalks and other pedestrian crossings; for traffic calming measures; and for bicycle trails and bicycle lanes. This program is primarily aimed towards improving roads that serve as main streets for older

communities and villages. Requires a 20 percent match from other sources such as local funds or other grants.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED)**

The mission of DCED is "To foster opportunities for businesses and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, thereby enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life." Therefore there are several assistance and grant programs available to Pennsylvania municipalities. Often, local economic and community revitalization efforts are supported by the implementation of green infrastructure and open space plans.

### **Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program**

The Farmland Preservation Program purchases agricultural easements from productive farms in Montgomery County. When the rights are sold, the owner keeps the land, but no longer has the right to build non-agricultural buildings. It must remain in farming in perpetuity. The farmer may sell the land, but the new owner must continue to grow productive crops or pasture on it.

## **Township Funding Options**

### **General Revenue Funds and Bond Issue**

Upper Frederick has the option of using general revenue funds for open space and recreation purposes. It also has the option of issuing a bond to pay for the capital costs of parkland acquisition and development. The decision to pursue these options rests with the township supervisors.

### **User Fees**

User fees are revenues collected directly from people who use a program or facility and can be used to help offset costs of these facilities. The level of such fees needs to be carefully set so that most residents can afford them. Upper Frederick Township does not currently charge user fees to utilize any of the Township parks and does not envision charging user fees in the immediate future.

### **Mandatory Park Dedication/Fee in Lieu of Dedication**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities to require that developers dedicate land or fees in lieu of land for public recreation. Mandatory dedication of land or fee in lieu of land by developers for public recreation is a method for preserving open space that the Township intends to pursue following the adoption of this plan. Mandatory dedication requires the municipality to have an adopted recreation plan and an adopted



ordinance relating to mandatory dedication before land or fees can be accepted. The amount of land required for dedication must be related to the demand for recreation land created by the new development or the required fee should reflect fair market value of the amount of land for which the fee is being substituted. Park dedication standards are intended to be based on the level of service established in this Plan, which has been developed in accordance with Section 503(11) of the Municipalities Planning Code.

### **Private Programs**

#### **PECO Energy Green Region Open Space Grant Program**

PECO Energy, a subsidiary of Exelon, is partnering with the Natural Lands Trust to provide grants to assist with open space projects. Green Region grants are available to municipalities in amounts up to \$10,000. The grants can be used with other funding sources to cover a wide variety of expenses associated with development and implementing open space programs, such as consulting fees, trail construction, land acquisition, habitat improvement, and the cost of creating and implementing an open space plan

#### **Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation**

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes healthy living by providing grants for projects that support nutrition, activities and programs in the Pottstown Area. The organization considers the Pottstown Area to be the area within 10 miles of Pottstown, which includes Upper Frederick Township. Grants can be awarded for projects that improve access to facilities that encourage physical activity such as park play structures, exercise equipment and trails.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 Compliance Requirements**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires that newly constructed and altered State and local government facilities, including recreational facilities, be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Upper Frederick Township does not have an ADA policy specific to parks and open space; however, all active park facilities and access to those facilities have been installed since the adoption of the ADA requirements and are designed to meet ADA standards. The Township continues to prioritize ADA accessibility in the parks.

## **Consumer Product Safety Guidelines**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's "*Public Playground Safety Handbook*" presents safety information for public playground equipment in the form of guidelines. Installation of all park equipment has been in accordance with the applicable standards and guidelines.

## **Municipality's Role in the Provision of Recreation Programs and Services**

Upper Frederick Township maintains a small administrative staff and public works staff to administer and maintain the Township owned facilities. Given the limited staff resources and relatively small population, the Township is unable to provide recreational services to the community. The Township should continue to work with adjacent municipalities and private organizations to support recreational opportunities as deemed appropriate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities for Administrative Bodies**

The Upper Frederick Township Board of Supervisors (BOS) will focus on supporting the Upper Frederick Township Board of Parks and Recreation in achieving the goals and objectives set for open space, both parks and recreation as follows.

### **Upper Frederick Township Board of Supervisors:**

- Adopt this plan as the basis for planning for parks and recreation, and implementation of park dedication standards.
- Maintain ultimate responsibility for all parks and recreation operations
- Oversee work of the Board of Parks and Recreation and Planning Commission
- Adopt a new ordinance establishing park dedication and fee-in-lieu standards for future development.

- Continue to support the goals and objectives established in this Plan.

### **Upper Frederick Township Board of Parks and Recreation**

The Upper Frederick Township Board of Parks and Recreation (Board) will focus on achieving the goals and objectives set for recreation, parks and open space in the Township as adopted by the Township Board of Supervisors in this Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. This Plan also provides the basis for joint efforts with adjacent municipalities and organizations relating to parks and recreation.

- Assist the Upper Frederick Township Supervisors to implement the goals and objectives of the Plan.
- Assist the Township Supervisors and Manager in identifying and developing funding opportunities for improvements and development.
- Serve as a community advocate for parks and recreation.
- Coordinate the publicity of community recreation.
- Undertake fundraising efforts.

### **Upper Frederick Township Planning Commission**

The Upper Frederick Township Planning Commission will review development proposals for consistency with the goals and objectives set for recreation, parks and open space in the Township as adopted by the Township Board of Supervisors in this Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan.

- Assist the Upper Frederick Township Supervisors to implement the goals and objectives of the Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan.
- Consider recommendations of the Upper Frederick Township Board of Parks and Recreation in the review of development proposals.