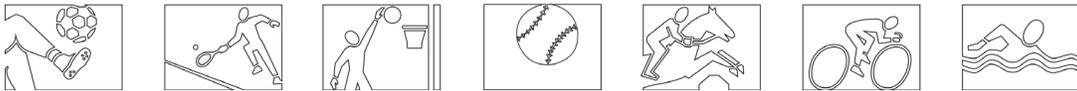


# TOWNSHIP OF FINDLAY



## COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARK & OPEN SPACE PLAN



Landscape Architects



Landscape Architecture  
Site Planning  
Campus Planning  
Recreation Planning

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Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
412-521-3000 gws@usaor.net

BALICKI RECREATION  
AND PARK PLANNING

104 Independence Court  
Monroeville, PA 15146-4730  
412-373-8160

**July 11, 2001**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The following individuals, agencies and organizations were extremely helpful in providing data, advice and assistance during the preparation of this Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. Their cooperation and encouragement were invaluable in the completion of this document.

### **Findlay Township Supervisors**

Joseph O. Nester, Chairman  
Thomas J. Gallant, Vice Chairman  
Janet L. Craig, Supervisor

### **Findlay Township Planning Commission**

Ernie Leopold, Chairman  
Dan Moskal, Vice Chairman  
Eleanor Arnold, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mercedes Kunkel  
William Lutz  
Thomas Jackson  
Michael Penton

### **Findlay Township Staff**

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Christopher J. Caruso, Assistant Manager & Planning Administrator  
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Steve Sarachine, Parks and Recreation Director  
Thomas Bayly, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

### **West Allegheny School District**

Dr. Charles Hughey, Superintendent  
Carol Bonnar, West Allegheny School District  
Rich Moran, Principal, West Allegheny High School  
Janet Walsh, Principal, West Allegheny Middle School  
Frank Bruno, Principal, Wilson Elementary School  
James Hoover, McKee Elementary School  
Dave McBain, Athletic Director  
Marge Gillen, Secretary, West Allegheny High School

**Other Organizations**

Dennis Pfeiffer, Montour Trail Council  
Chuck and Cheryl Cherico, West Allegheny Youth Association  
Bo Muraco, West Allegheny Youth Wrestling  
William Debo, Findlay Athletic Association  
Warren Kelly, West Allegheny Youth Soccer  
Tim Zeroski, West Allegheny Basketball Association  
Bob Miller, West Allegheny Aqua Club  
Jackie Wellard, West Allegheny In-Line Hockey Association  
Jeff Sweet, West Allegheny Hockey Association  
Tim Decker, Western Area YMCA  
Marianne Sforza, West Allegheny Community Library

A special thanks to all the residents of Findlay Township for their time and contribution to this plan.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Findlay Township Comprehensive Recreation Park and Open Space Plan is an update of the January, 1992 Open Space and Recreation Plan. This study is the result of a process of research, data gathering, public meetings, preparation and compilation of the results of a community recreation survey, field investigation and discussions with numerous individuals from Findlay Township Supervisors, Planning Commission and Staff.

GWSM, inc., a firm of Landscape Architects, developed this plan in conjunction with the Township and with the expertise of Balicki Recreation and Park Planning, Inc.

The consultant reviewed the 1992 Open Space and Recreation Plan and the national and cultural features of the Township, including an assessment of demographics based on the 2000 census and a study of projected economic trends. The consultant also examined current recreation programs and facilities to determine whether deficiencies exist.

The basis for the recommendations of this study is rooted in the desires and needs of Findlay Township residents for recreation opportunities. The following is a brief summary of the various study recommendations.

- A mission statement and goals, which will be developed by the Township, communicates a vision and gives reason for the existence of the Parks and Recreation Department to the residents. A logo, symbolizing the mission statement, should be developed to give community identity to all Township facilities, signs, brochures and other promotional efforts.
- According to the recreation survey, the development of a centrally located community park complex including a community

center/swimming pool facility is the highest priority of the residents of Findlay Township. It is recommended that a feasibility study should be conducted to determine the costs to the community for building, operating and maintaining such a facility. Intergovernmental cooperation agreements with neighboring communities and the school district should be explored.

- The Township should establish greenway corridors and trails to protect the natural resources of the Township as well as provide venues for passive and active recreation activities and outdoor education. The trail system will link together parks, recreation facilities and historic/semi-historic sites for the community's benefit.
- The Township should improve the existing parks by making each park the social focus of their respective neighborhoods. Signs and entrance monuments for each park should be consistent and clear. All parks should conform to ADA guidelines and all playground structures should comply with current Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) safety recommendations. The following is a summary of recommendations:

### Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton)

- Convert existing ballfield to soccer/football field.
- Add accessible walks and develop trail links.
- Renovate amphitheater and fitness trail.

### Elm Street

- Improve bike trail link.
- Renovate tennis courts; reconfigure basketball courts.
- Provide accessible route to restrooms.

#### Aten Road Park

- Remove existing play lot and reprogram play area space.
- Develop multi-purpose athletic field.

#### Old Ridge Ballfield

- Reduce parking and add recreation space.
- Provide picnic shelters and tables.
- Develop playground.

#### Westbury Tot Lot

- Remove existing play equipment.
- Provide gazebo, benches and landscaping.
- Develop new tot lot next to Westbrook Townhouses.

#### Leopold Lake (if not site of new community park)

- Acquire greenspace buffer around lake.
- Provide wheelchair accessible parking and access to the lake.

- Private enterprise should be encouraged to participate in the development of recreational facilities that meet the needs of the community and work to establish trail links to Findlay
- It is recommended that a Risk Management Plan and Equipment Action Plan be developed by the Township to address both short-term and long-term actions. The emphasis should be preventative rather than responsive. The plan should include a clear definition of responsibility for decisions regarding maintenance, regular safety inspections, training of maintenance personnel, and documentation of park maintenance activities.



# **SECTION I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

"Play for the child, sport for youth, and recreation for adults are essentials of normal life. It is becoming generally recognized that the creation and maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities is a community duty in order that the whole public might participate in their enjoyment. This presents a particular challenge to municipal and county administrators."

~ Calvin Coolidge, 1928 ~

## SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

### THE TOWNSHIP OF FINDLAY

#### Community Description

The Township of Findlay, situated in the western corner of Allegheny County is located approximately 15 miles west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is 32.42 square miles in size, the largest Township in Allegheny County. The Township was originally part of the Virginia territory and subsequently became Moon Township. The Township of Findlay, incorporated from Moon Township in 1822, was named after a former Pennsylvania Governor, U. S. Senator and Treasurer of the U. S. Mint, William Findlay (1768-1846).

#### Regional Setting

Findlay Township shares its major borders with the following municipalities: Moon Township to the north, North Fayette Township to the east, Robinson Township in Washington County to the south, and Independence Township in Beaver County to the west (see Vicinity Map, Figure 1.1).

Primary transportation routes serving Findlay Township include: State Route 6060 (Airport Expressway) and U. S. Route 30 (main collector road through the Township).

The Township has a scenic Western Pennsylvania character of forested slopes and more than 3,000 acres of open lands. Due to the area's natural resource of coal, there has been extensive deep and surface strip mining, leaving large parcels of undeveloped land.

Findlay Township is home to the residential communities of Clinton, Imperial and Westbury.

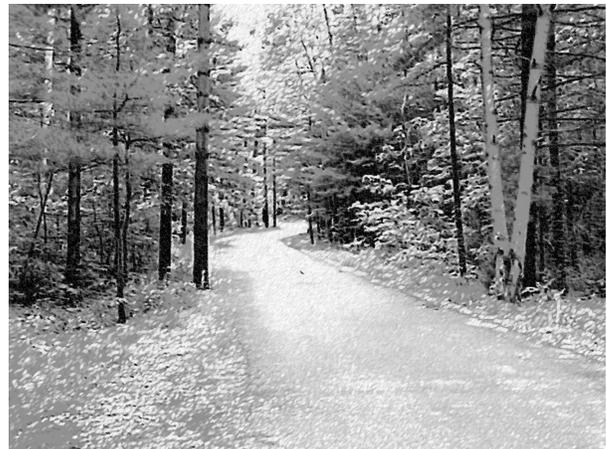
The residents of the community have access to six Township-owned parks, as well as the Montour Trail along the eastern township border.

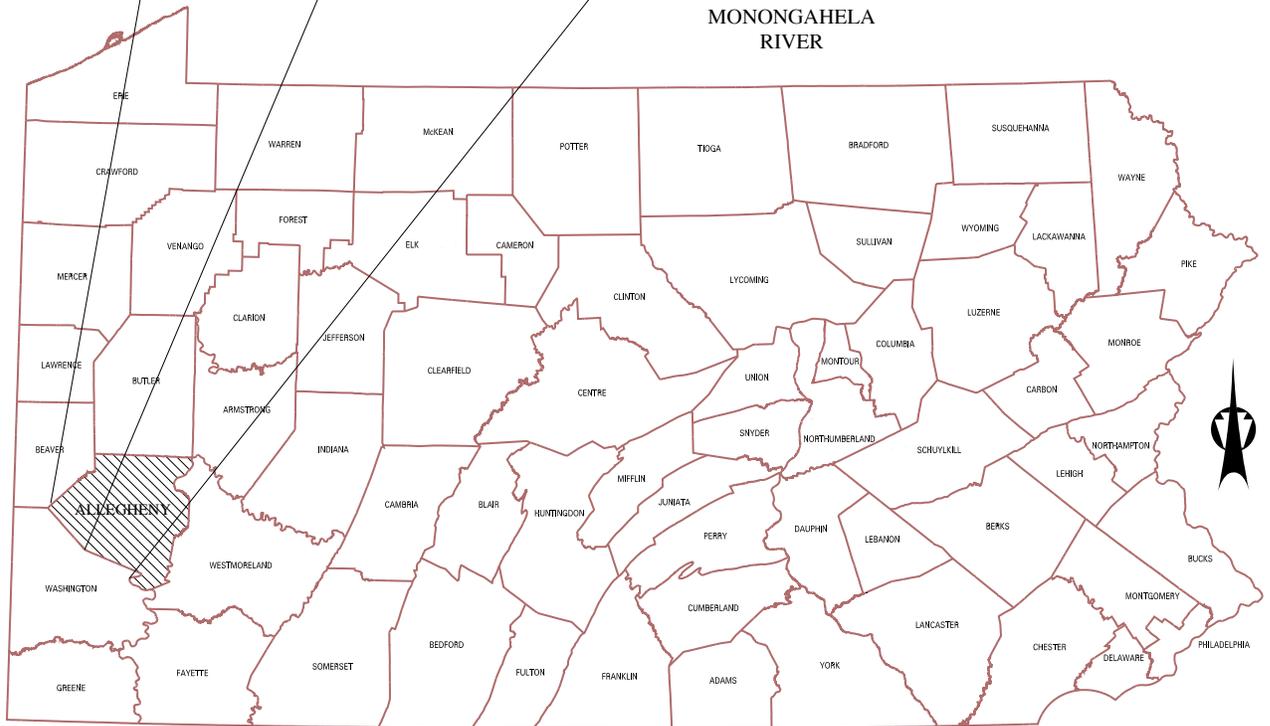
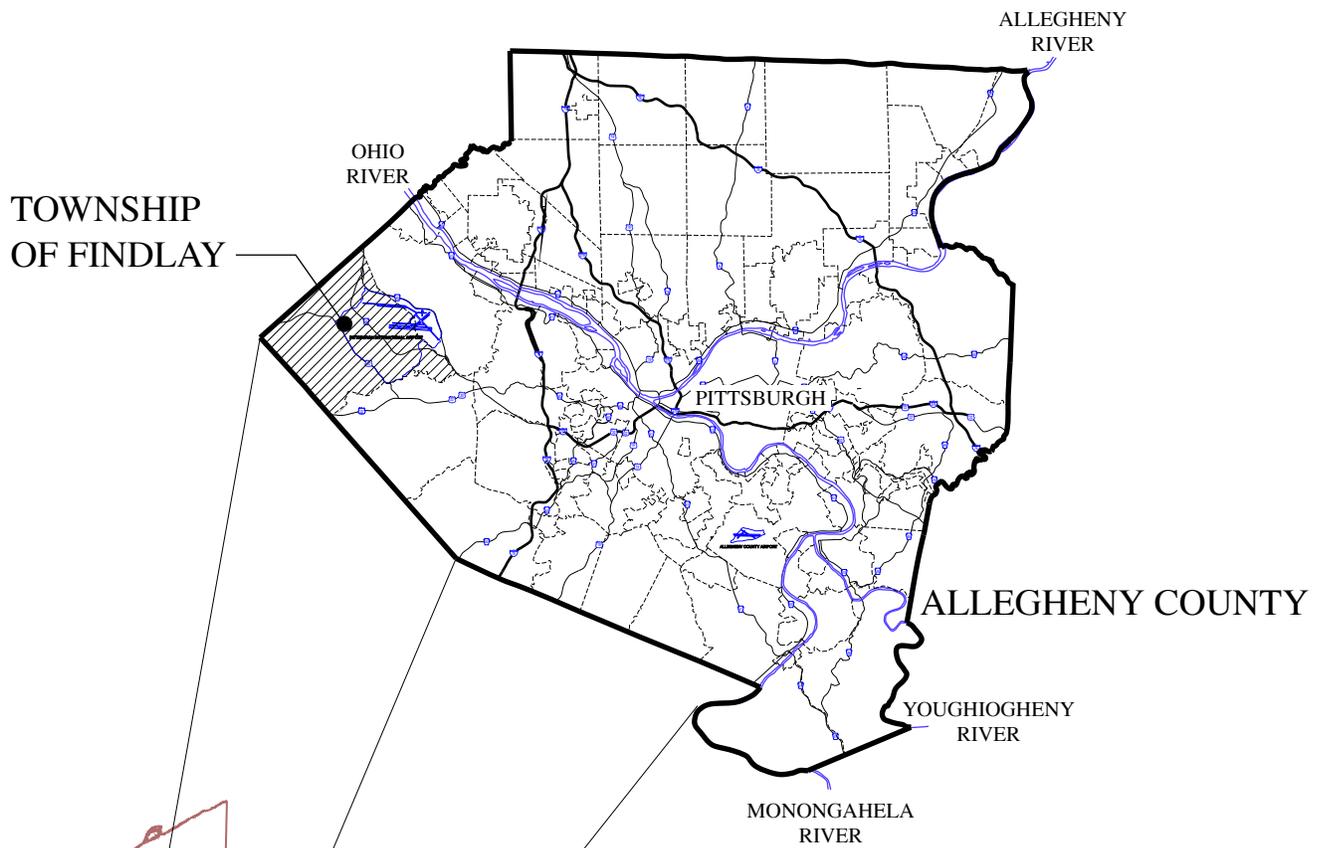
Some notable places within Findlay Township are the farms of Clinton, the Pittsburgh International Airport, Main Street Imperial and the RIDC Office Park.

The Pittsburgh International Airport owns slightly more than 8,000 acres in the northern half of the Township. This tract of land, comprising 30% of the Township, is administered by the Allegheny County Airport Authority.

**Source: Township of Findlay Comprehensive Plan, 1997**

For more community information on the Township of Findlay, visit the community website at: [www.town.findlay.pa.us](http://www.town.findlay.pa.us).





**Figure 1.1 - Vicinity Map**

**PENNSYLVANIA**

## **THE COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) defines a Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan as, “A municipal, county or regional based plan that identifies the methods, resources, organizational capacity and capital investment needed to accomplish both the short-term and long-term recreation, parks and open space goals of the community. The planning process includes substantial citizen involvement, inventory of existing conditions and facilities; analysis of issues and community needs, and specific recommendations that set forth actions, priorities and cost.”

### **The Benefits of Recreation, Parks and Open Space**

Recreation, Parks and Open Space play a vital role in a well-balanced community by providing a means for residents to reduce stress, increase physical fitness, promote social interaction and improve the overall quality of life for all ages. In addition to the social and physical advantages of recreation to the residents of the community, there are important economic and environmental benefits.

Businesses are attracted to areas that offer a high quality of life to its employees and customers. Furthermore, being located near open, green space and recreation facilities, land and property values increase, tourism is enhanced and vandalism and crime are reduced.

Some environmental benefits include the preservation of green space and wildlife and the provision of scenic viewsheds to enjoy the beauty of nature. In addition, greenways filter air and noise pollution, purify water and control flooding.



### **Goals of the Plan**

This Recreation and Open Space Plan for the Township of Findlay seeks to address many desired goals of the community. However, one primary goal encompasses all other goals.

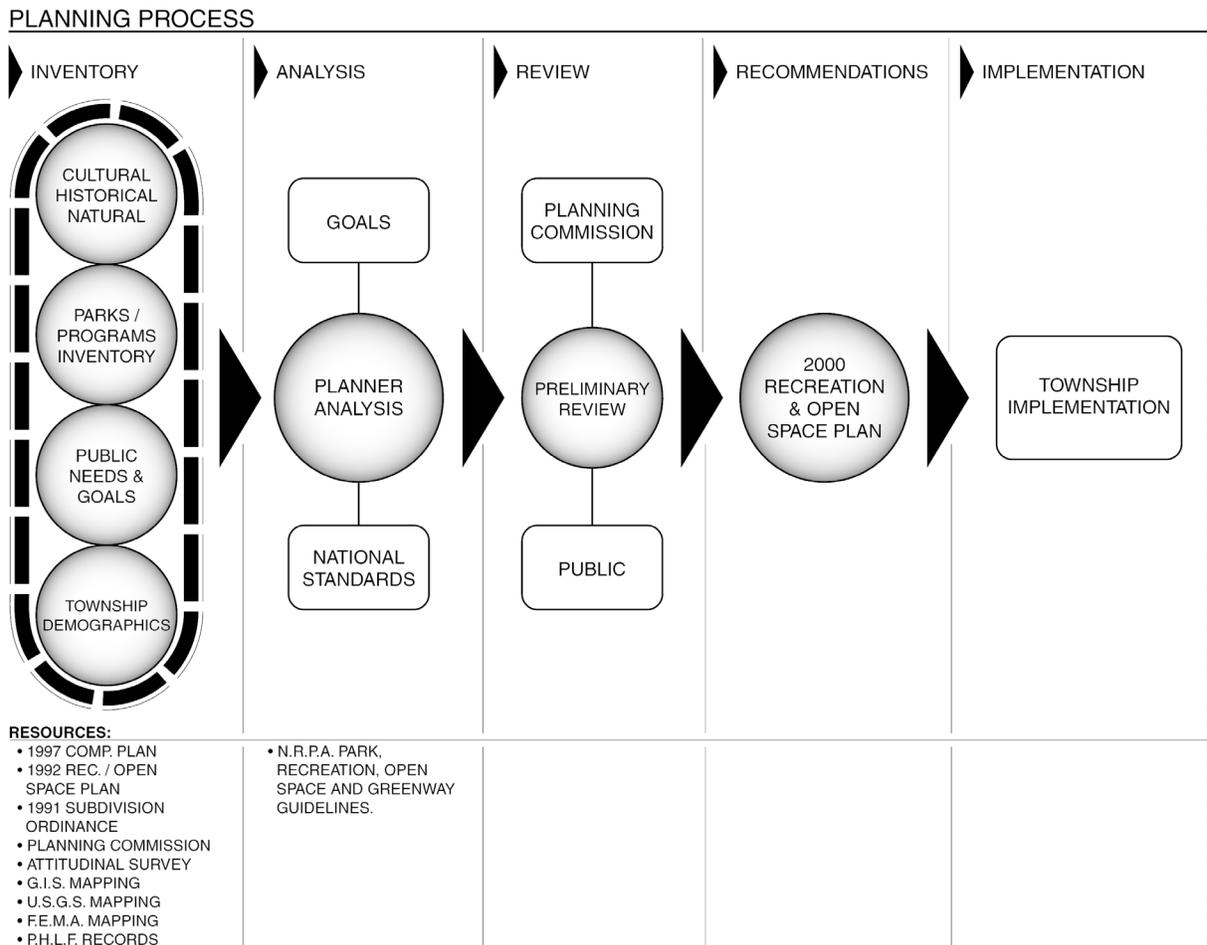
This Primary Goal is:

**To create a flexible set of planning guidelines and a useable tool which provides direction for recreation, parks and open space growth in the Township of Findlay during the next ten years.**

Other planning goals that have evolved from discussions with the Planning Commission and from those previously set forth as part of the 1992 Recreation and Open Space Plan are as follows:

- To complete the Recreation and Open Space Plan in consideration of recommendations of the recently completed planning reports (1997 Comprehensive Plan and 1991 Subdivision Ordinance).
- “Provide for a diversity of open space, recreational facilities, and programs available to all people who live and work in the Township by integrating natural, cultural, and historical resources into a meaningful system.”
- “Establish and preserve a continuous system of open space accessible to all people who live and work in Findlay Township.”
- To provide a strategy to preserve open space in the Township effectively and efficiently as development growth occurs.
- To develop a plan for future park(s) and recreation opportunities, identifying the most appropriate and geographic locations, including the potential expansion of the Leopold Lake area.
- To identify potential future links to the Montour Trail from existing trails, as well as to future development areas.
- To evaluate existing facilities and programs to determine if national safety and ADA standards are being met, and that current recreation opportunities meet the interests of all residents regardless of age, gender, race, disability or economic status.

**Figure 1.2 – Planning Process Diagram**



## **Intent of the Plan**

The intent of this study is to determine the recreational needs of the Township of Findlay and to provide the township a guide to improve and expand its parks, programming and recreation services to meet the current and future needs of the community.

This study provides a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the Township and its recreational facilities relative to standards set by the National Recreation and Parks Association. It also includes a compilation of results from the 2000 Findlay Township Park and Recreation Questionnaire: See the Planning Process Diagram, Figure 1.2.

From all of the data compiled in the first four sections of this study, recommendations were formed and are explained in Section 5. These recommendations are flexible guidelines covering all aspects of local recreation and park services: Policies, Administration and Personnel, Programs, Facilities, Financing, and Maintenance.

The recommendations set forth in this study are important, and will not be beneficial unless referenced by the Township when making decisions to provide safe, adequate and appropriate recreation facilities and programs for the future.



## **SECTION II**

# **DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES**

"He that will make good use of any part of his life must allow a large part of it for recreation."

~ John Locke ~

## SECTION II - DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Demographic data is important to include in the development of a Recreation and Open Space Plan. The data collected includes information regarding population, age characteristics and socio-economic data. Through understanding this information, an evaluation can be made in how the Township’s recreation system might be tailored to provide recreational opportunities that fit the community residents’ specific needs and desires today and in the future.

### TOWNSHIP POPULATION

#### Population Growth

The population of the Township of Findlay in 1980 was 4,573, which then decreased to 4,500 in 1990. The Township of Findlay Comprehensive Plan in 1997 projected a population in the year 2000 of 6,246. At the present time, 2000, the current population in the Township is 5,145. While falling short of the 1997 projection for the year 2000, the Township is definitely beginning to see an increase in residential population.

As shown in the Figure 2.1, the population has seen more than a fourteen (14.3%) percent increase in population since 1990. Prior to 1990, the resident population experienced only little fluctuation. With the relocation and expansion of the Pittsburgh International Airport terminal, the construction of the Airport Expressway and plans

for increased airport support facilities and the development of the Findlay Connector, Findlay Township is expected to experience steady growth increases in its residential population over the next twenty years.

#### Population Projections

Population projections for 2015, according to the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, predict an increase over fifty (50%) percent of the 2000 number. The following table (Fig. 2.1) shows the trend in population growth and projections, as well as the percentage of growth from each decade.

### REGIONAL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

#### County Comparison

Although Allegheny County has experienced a steady population decline since 1970, the entire district of Western Allegheny County has had a continuous net increase throughout the years. Findlay Township has maintained a virtually “level” rate of population growth from 1960 to 1990. However, with the residential growth in the Township over the last ten years, and the projected growth for the next ten years, Findlay Township can begin to experience a stronger “voice” in county and regional affairs. A comparison of the total population trends for Allegheny County and the Township of Findlay is presented in Figure 2.2 and 2.3.

**Figure 2.1 – Findlay Township Population Growth**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000 *	2015 **
Totals:	4,537	4,602	4,573	4,500	5,145	7,786
% Growth	-	+1.4	-.63	-1.62	+14.3	+51.3

Sources: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 U.S. Census Bureau  
 \* 2000 U.S. Census  
 \*\* Findlay Township Comprehensive Plan, 1997

With a 1990 census resident population of 4,500 and a total area of 20,736 acres, the Township has a relatively low population for each 4.5 acres. Residents of Findlay are generally younger than the county average with a median age of 33.6 in 1990 compared to 36.7 for the county as of the 1990 census.

In the period 1960 to 1980, the Township maintained its population with minor fluctuations, while at the same time many townships, the City of Pittsburgh, and Allegheny County lost population. In the decade between 1980 and 1990, the Township lost population but again it was not at the rate of loss experienced by those referred to above. In the first six years of the 1990's, the Township is experiencing residential growth with the expansion of new and existing residential areas. Clearly, the Township is seeing a growth in population and those figures are beginning to reflect in our school system.

Source: Findlay Comprehensive Plan, 1997

### Neighboring Communities Comparison

In comparing the trends in population in the municipalities surrounding the airport from 1970 to 1990, the most significant change in general population occurred in North Fayette Township.

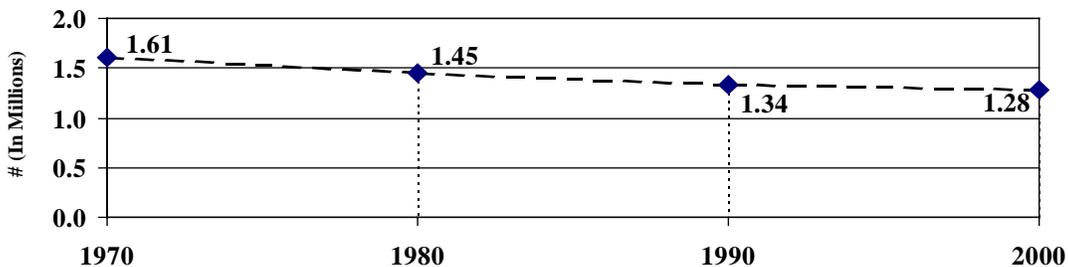
Findlay Township is currently experiencing and is projected to continue to experience the type of residential growth that North Fayette had experienced over the last ten to twenty years.

### AGE CHARACTERISTICS

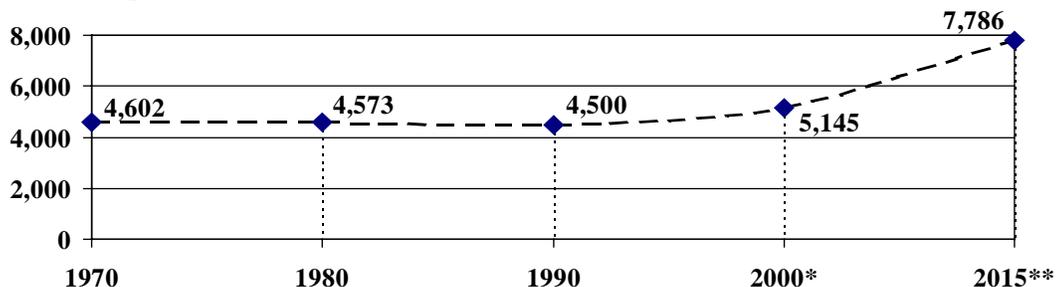
The age of population and numbers in each age group have important implications for recreational planning. Activities and facilities attractive to children are very different than those that are attractive to active adults. Methods for meeting the recreational needs of such a diverse population will be explored in

**Figure 2.2 - Township of Findlay and Allegheny County Population Comparisons**

#### Allegheny County



#### Findlay Township



Source: 1970, 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census  
 \* 2000 U.S. Census  
 \*\* Findlay Township Comprehensive Plan, 1997

**Figure 2.3 – Population Change, Neighboring Communities: 1970-2000**

Municipality	County	Population by Year				1990 - 2000 % Change
		1970	1980	1990	2000 •	
<b>Findlay</b>	<b>Allegheny</b>	<b>4,602</b>	<b>4,573</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>5,145</b>	<b>+14.3</b>
Moon	Allegheny	18,317	20,935	19,631	22,290	+13.5
North Fayette	Allegheny	6,148	7,351	9,537	12,254	+28.5
Oakdale	Allegheny	1,550	1,955	1,752	1,551	-11.5
Independence	Beaver	1,761	2,534	2,563	2,802	+9.3
Robinson	Washington	2,073	1,812	2,160	2,193	+1.5

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
 • U.S. Census, 2000

**Figure 2.4 – Findlay Township Population Trends**

Age	1970		1980		1990	
Totals	4,602	100 %	4,573	100 %	4,500	100 %
<b>Male:</b>	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Under 5	188	4.1 %	150	3.3%	158	3.5%
5-14	511	11.1 %	475	10.4%	450	10.0%
15-24	331	7.2 %	395	8.6 %	370	8.2 %
25-34	250	5.4 %	405	8.9 %	397	8.8 %
35-44	290	6.3 %	281	6.1 %	275	6.1 %
45-54	389	6.3 %	236	5.2 %	220	4.9 %
55-64	236	5.1 %	227	5.0 %	195	4.3 %
65-Over	159	3.5 %	186	4.1 %	176	4.0 %
Total	2,254	49 %	2,265	49.5 %	2,246	49.8 %
<b>Female:</b>	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Under 5	203	4.4 %	141	3.1 %	148	3.3 %
5-14	471	10.2 %	326	7.1 %	330	7.4 %
15-24	370	8.0 %	407	8.9 %	412	9.2 %
25-34	284	6.2 %	408	8.9 %	424	9.4 %
35-44	300	6.5 %	270	5.9 %	295	6.6 %
45-54	311	6.8 %	255	5.6 %	255	5.7 %
55-64	200	4.4 %	208	4.5 %	195	4.3 %
65-Over	209	4.5 %	203	4.4 %	195	4.3 %
Total	2,348	51.0 %	2,308	50.5 %	2,254	50.2 %

Source: 1970, 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census

later chapters. As shown in figure 2.4 and 2.5, historically school age children (5-17) make up approximately 20% of the overall population.

The following table compares the diverse population of Findlay Township to Allegheny County and to the state of Pennsylvania.

**Figure 2.5 – 1990 Population Trends by Major Age Groups**

Area	0 – 17	18 – 64	65 +
Pennsylvania	23.5 %	61.1 %	15.4 %
Allegheny County	21.1 %	61.5 %	17.4 %
<b>Findlay</b>	<b>24.3 %</b>	<b>65.4 %</b>	<b>10.3 %</b>

Source: Population Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau

**HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**

Historically, Findlay Township has been rural in its character. The residential land uses are concentrated around the communities of Clinton, Imperial and Westbury. According to recent Findlay Township figures there are approximately 2,124 dwelling units with an average per household of 2.45 persons. The median home value in Findlay Township is \$64,200 according to 1990 U.S. Census, which is 47.5% greater than the Allegheny County-wide median of \$43,500.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Findlay Township is “home of the Pittsburgh International Airport” owned by Allegheny County and administered by the Department of Aviation. This is reflective in recognizing the top five employers in Findlay:

1. U. S. Airways
2. PSA Airlines
3. County of Allegheny
4. Cutler-Hammer
5. ADP

The 1990 U. S. Census shows 2,225 persons (age 16 and over) in the Township are employed. This figure represented nearly 50% of the entire population of Findlay Township residents. See Figure 2.6 for employment status.

The 1990 U. S. Census data shows the median family income was \$40,997 and per capita income for Findlay was \$14,506. Less than five percent (4.9%) of families lived in poverty. According to

the 1990 U. S. Census, Allegheny County had a 6.3% unemployment rate.

See Figure 2.7 for family incomes.

**EDUCATION**

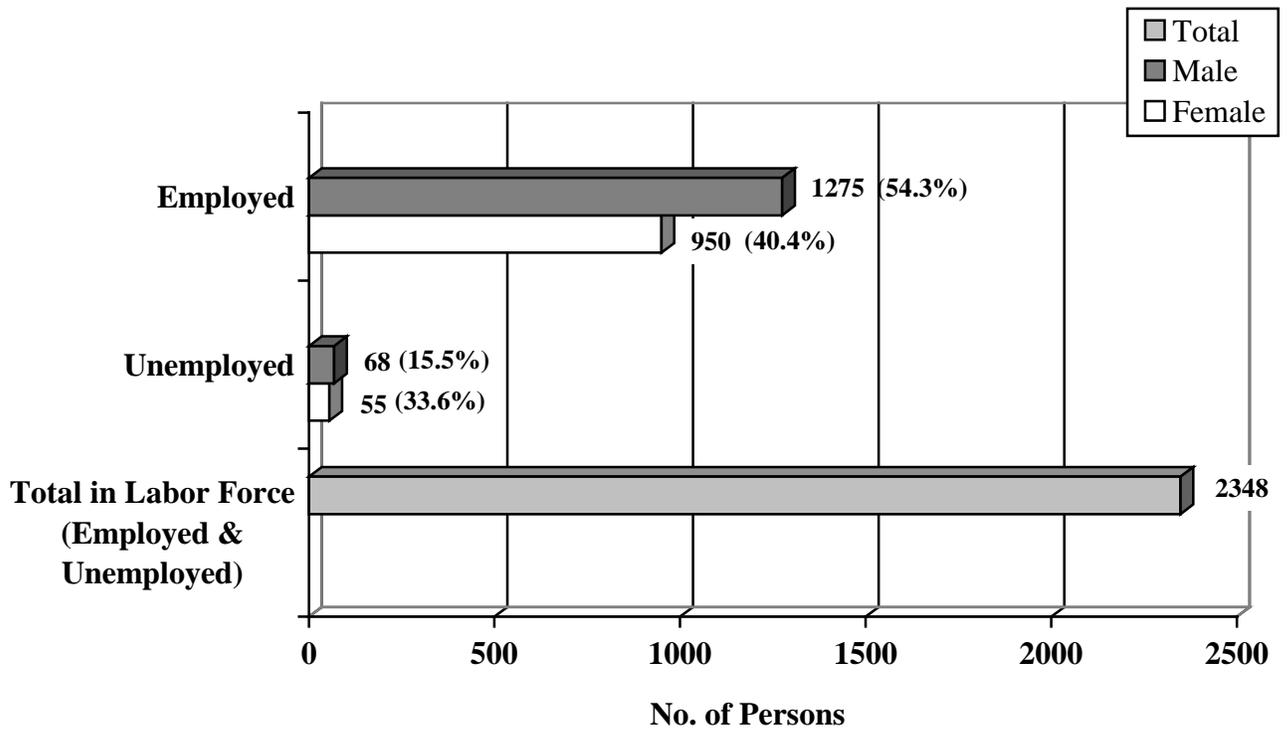
The West Allegheny School District (WASD) serves three municipalities: Findlay Township, North Fayette Township and Oakdale Borough. The District currently operates four schools on three school sites, totaling 182 acres.

Elementary students are divided between McKee Elementary in North Fayette and Wilson Elementary in Findlay. Secondary students attend West Allegheny Middle and High Schools, located on a 75-acre campus in North Fayette Township.

According to the West Allegheny School District School Facilities Master Plan completed in 1996, projected school enrollments are expected to realize an average growth of 135 students per year from 2001 to 2006.

In an attempt to project the number of school-aged children (5-17) in Findlay Township by the year 2006, the consultant assumed the percentage of Findlay school-age children to be 34% based on 1990 U. S. Census figures. Of the 2006 projected total enrolled students attending WASD schools (4,072), it is surmised that the number of students from Findlay Township would be at least 1,385. See Figure 2.8 for WASD school enrollment and projected enrollments.

### Persons 16 Years and Over in Labor Force



### Persons 16 Years and Over Not in Labor Force

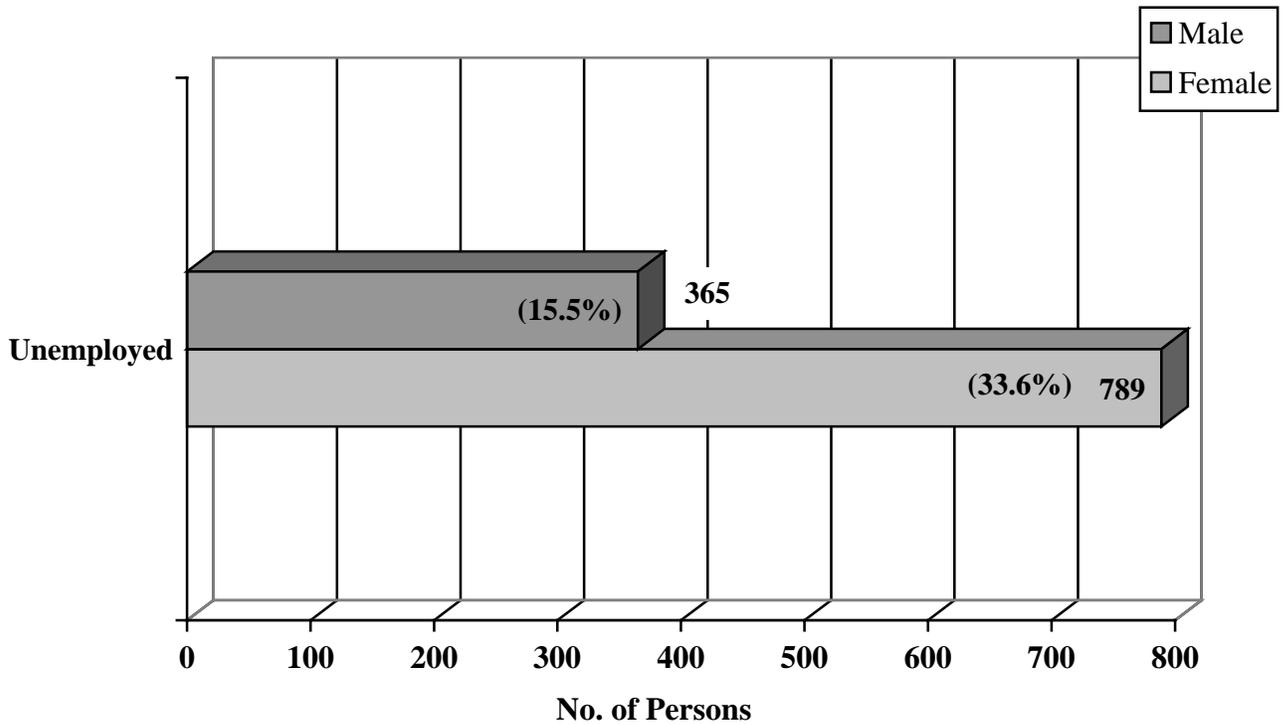
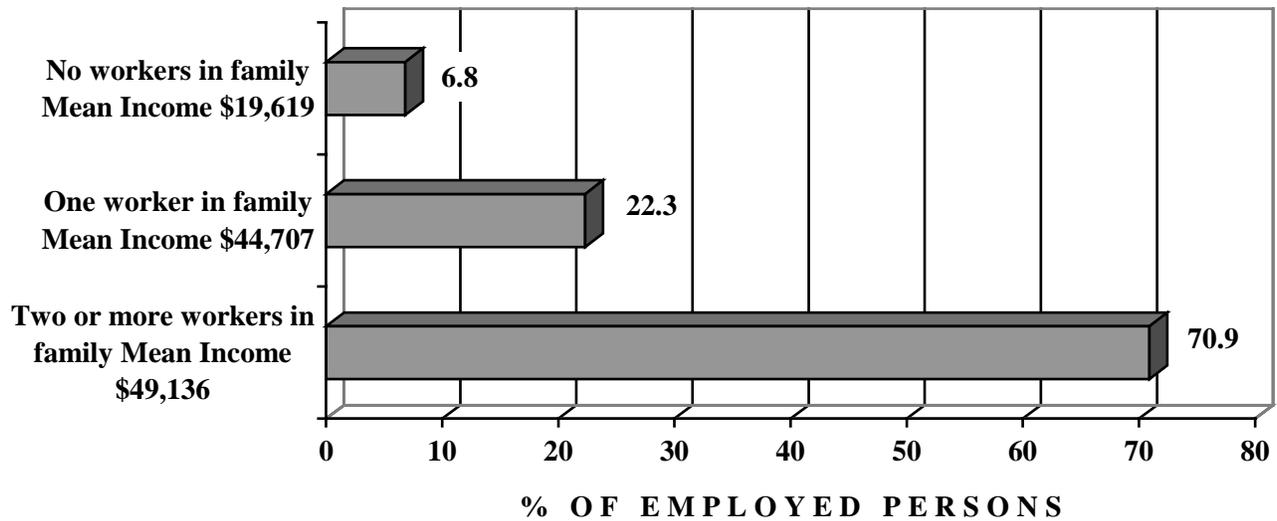


Figure 2.6 – Employment Status

**Families by number of workers and mean family income**



Source: 1990 Census

**Figure 2.7 – Findlay Township Household Incomes**

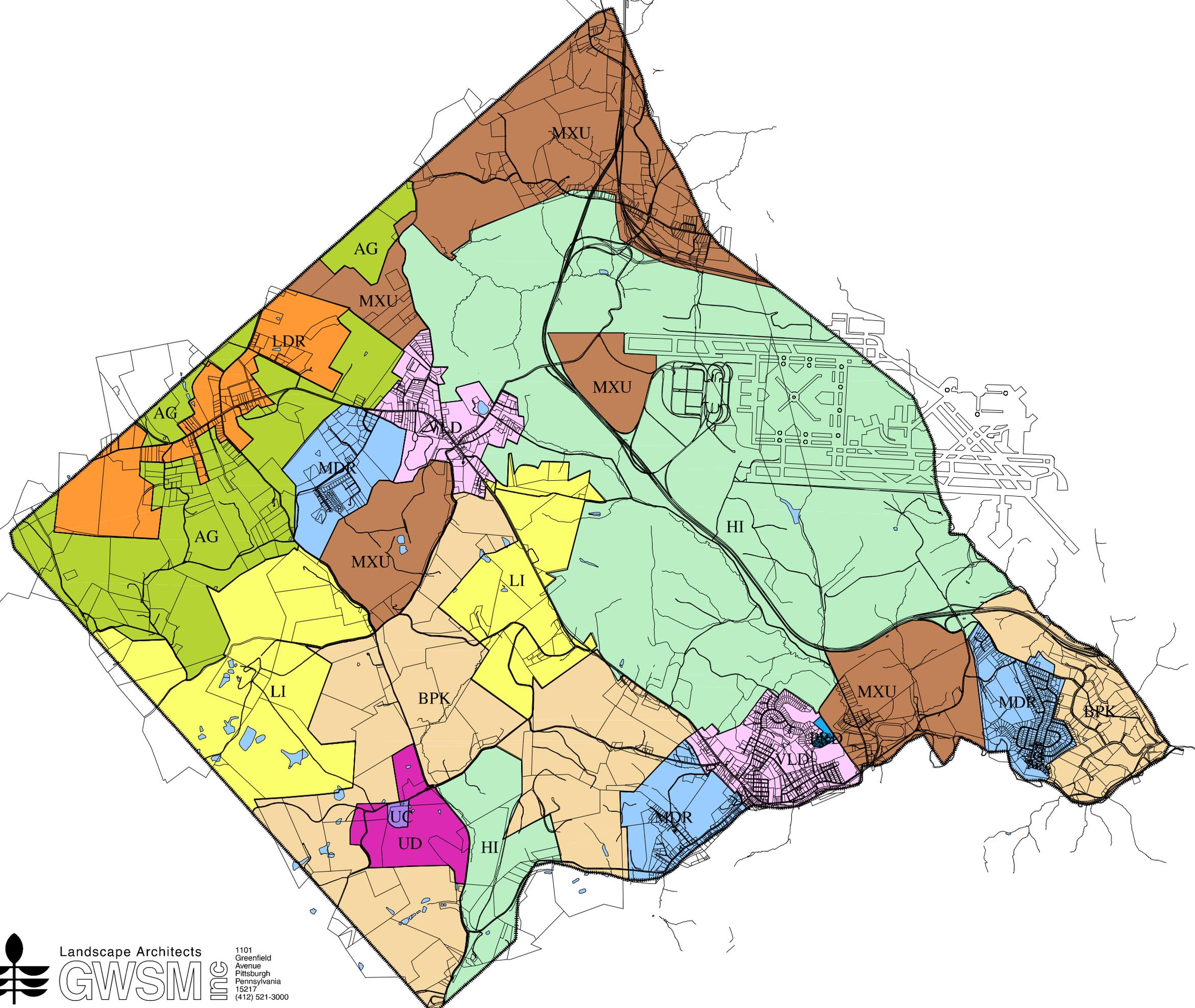
	1990	1995	Grades	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
K	195	236	214	233	302	315	329	343	358
1	190	241	252	236	302	316	329	344	359
2	211	209	227	245	275	286	300	312	326
3	204	211	269	222	276	389	300	315	328
4	192	249	255	271	274	286	299	311	326
5	203	224	254	256	267	279	292	305	317
6	174	208	239	249	263	273	286	299	312
7	175	230	227	239	271	273	284	297	311
8	164	223	254	235	275	273	274	286	299
9	149	213	257	263	247	285	281	283	296
10	155	205	222	257	246	248	286	282	284
11	162	199	227	215	280	243	245	282	279
12	173	161	209	224	241	276	239	241	277
<b>Total</b>	<b>2347</b>	<b>2809</b>	<b>3106</b>	<b>3145</b>	<b>3519</b>	<b>3641</b>	<b>3744</b>	<b>3900</b>	<b>4072</b>
<b>K – 5</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>1370</b>	<b>1471</b>	<b>1463</b>	<b>1696</b>	<b>1771</b>	<b>1849</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>6 – 8</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>922</b>
<b>9 – 12</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>1088</b>	<b>1136</b>

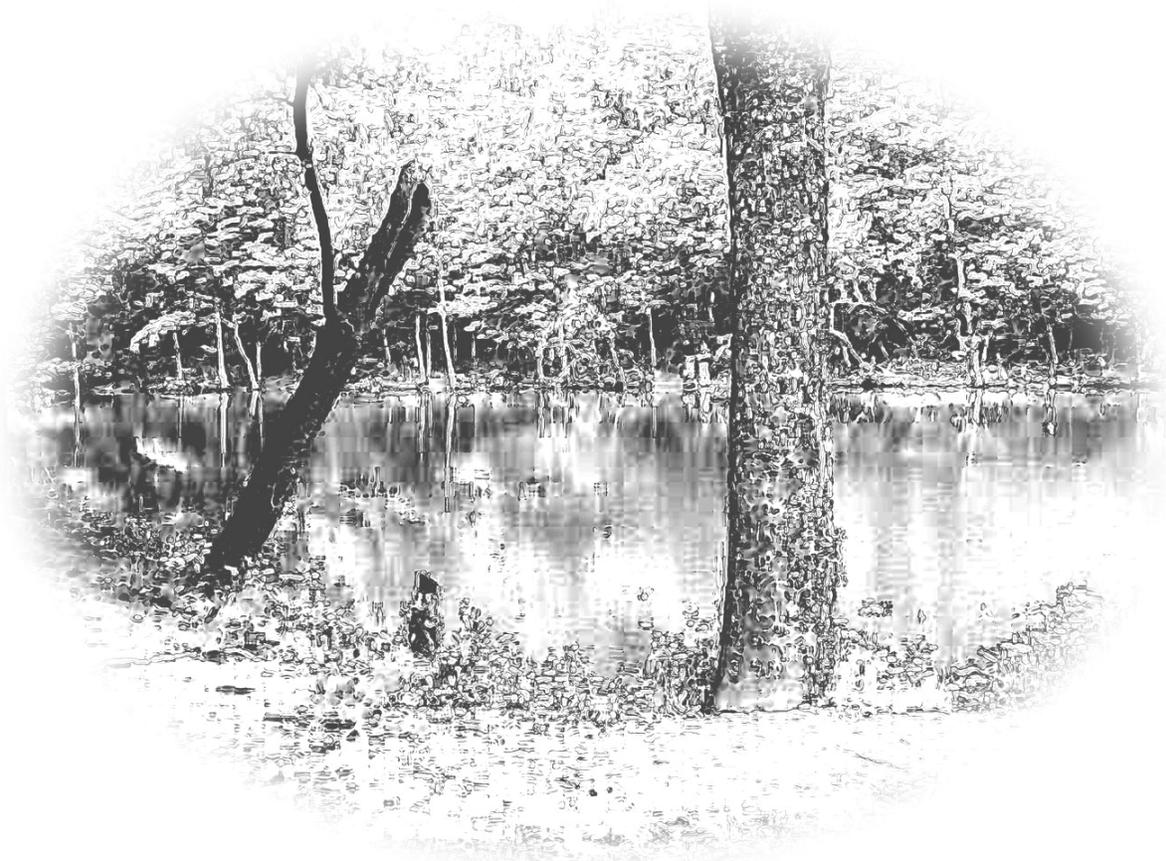
Source: West Allegheny School District – Facilities Master Plan

**Figure 2.8 - West Allegheny School District Historical and Projected Enrollment**

**LEGEND**

- AG** AGRICULTURAL
- LDR** LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MDR** MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- VLD** VILLAGE
- MXU** MIXED USE
- BPK** BUSINESS PARK
- UC** URBAN CORE
- UD** URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- LI** LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HI** HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- PRD** PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY**





## **SECTION III**

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

"How best do we assess and respond to the changing leisure and recreational needs of our cities? Of our rural communities? How do we guarantee the preservation of our natural and historic resources?"

~ Robert P. Casey, Governor ~  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
1990 Governor's Conference on  
Recreation, Parks and Leisure

## SECTION III – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Park and recreation issues touch the lives of everyone. The quality of life is affected by park and recreation opportunities whether we are participants in active or passive activities or the observers of natural beauty. One of the major components of this Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan is to provide the residents of Findlay Township with the opportunity to contribute to the planning process. Needs assessment surveys, community meetings, key-person interviews, and study group meetings are methods utilized to assess community needs and desires.

The public participation process is very important in seeking state funding for future projects. The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) requires the public's input in all planning projects, which are state funded. Therefore, in seeking assistance to implement future recreation improvements, the Township is in a more favorable position to qualify for funding.

The information collected through the public participation process is analyzed in conjunction with other information that is collected throughout the study. This analysis identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses with the current Township park and recreation system. The intent of this section is to describe the results of the public participation process.

In an effort to encourage and maximize public participation, several methods were used. These methods included the following:

- Needs Assessment Survey
- Public Input Meetings
- Planning Commission Meetings

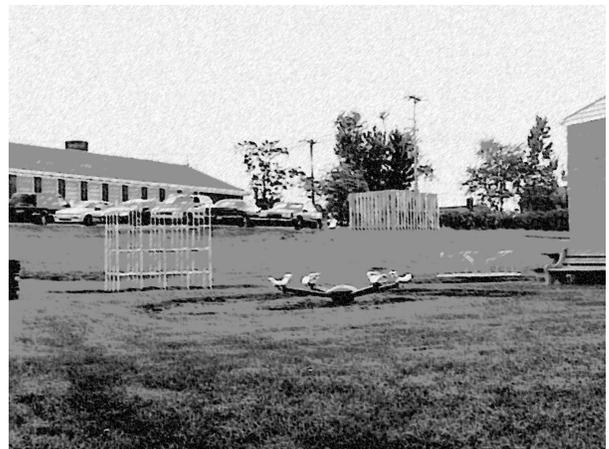
## NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

A needs assessment survey was conducted as part of this study to learn the needs and desires of the residents of Findlay related to recreation in their community.

The Findlay Township Parks and Recreation Questionnaire was distributed to every household in the Township in July of 2000. (Refer to Appendix B for a copy of the Parks and Recreation Questionnaire and cover letter.)

A total of 2,118 questionnaires were mailed out to community residents. Four hundred ninety-one (491) residents returned questionnaires, a 23.2% rate of return.

The following pages include the actual survey indicating all tabulated responses. Following the survey response tabulation is a graphic summary of the key issues derived from the questionnaire. In addition, residents were given the opportunity to state their opinions beyond the specific questions asked on the questionnaire. These comments are listed and tabulated in their entirety in Appendix B.



Tabulated Results of Recreation Survey

**PARKS**

1. Which Park & Recreation facilities do you use in Findlay Township?

Facility	Never	1-6 Times Per Year	7-12 Times Per Year	13+ Times Per Year
Aten Park	62.1	26.6	7.1	4.2
Clinton Community Park	42.7	44.2	5.3	7.8
Community Center (Clinton)	67.4	28.2	2.2	2.2
Elm Street Park (Alvin Dietterich Ball Field)	46.8	32.3	7.9	13.0
Activity Center (Imperial)	51.8	39.9	4.4	3.9
Leopold Lake	55.6	36.5	5.2	2.7
Montour Trail	18.1	31.7	18.8	31.4
Old Ridge Ball Field	75.0	16.6	5.3	3.1
Westbury Tot Lot	81.2	8.7	3.4	6.7

2. Which facilities do you use that are not provided by Findlay Township?

*Please check all that apply.*

- 24.2 A. Hankey Farms Pool
- 2.6 B. Hillman State Park
- 19.6 C. Point State Park
- (1) 57.8 D. Raccoon State Park
- (2) 50.5 E. Settler’s Cabin Regional Park
- (3) 47.3 F. Post Gazette Pavilion (Star Lake)
- 20.8 G. State Game Lands
- 30.8 H. Airport Ice Arena
- 16.9 I. Robinson Township Pool
- 13.4 J. Other

**RECREATION**

3. In which township-based programs / special events does your family participate / attend? *Please check all that apply.*

- (3) 19.6 A. Halloween Parade
- 12.6 B. Fishing Derby
- 3.7 C. Snack & Craft
- 2.0 D. Cookie & Movie Madness
- 6.3 E. Marianne King Fitness Class
- (1) (55.4) F. Fair in the Woodlands
- 8.1 G. Senior Citizens Activities
- 3.5 H. Hunter Safety Course
- 2.0 I. Boating Safety Course
- (5) 18.7 J. Easter Egg Hunt
- (4) 19.3 K. Findlay Athletic Association
- (2) (22.8) L. None, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If the township were to develop new recreation programs, which age group(s) should the programs target?

A. 0-5 27.3	C. 13-18 <b>(1)</b> 56.0	E. 31-44 <b>(3)</b> 28.7	G. 51-64 18.3	I. 75+ 13.2
B. 6-12 <b>(2)</b> 47.5	D. 19-30 21.0	F. 45-50 21.6	H. 65-74 17.7	

5. What activities, facilities, and/or programs do you feel are needed within the township for:

Seniors? \_\_\_\_\_

Adults? \_\_\_\_\_

Teenagers? \_\_\_\_\_

Children? \_\_\_\_\_

### NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES

6. The township is considering developing a new, centrally located community park. Would you be in favor of such a park, if no increase in taxes were required?

A. Yes 91.6	B. No 8.4
-------------	-----------

If yes, what features would you like to see included? *Please check all that apply.*

C. Swimming Pool <b>(2)</b> 75.4	N. Volleyball Courts 34.6
D. Walking Trails <b>(4)</b> 53.2	O. Basketball Courts 35.4
E. Bike Trails <b>(5)</b> 45.0	P. Tennis Courts 34.2
F. Picnic Shelters <b>(3)</b> 67.2	Q. Frisbee Golf 10.2
G. Rest Rooms <b>(1)</b> 78.4	R. Street Hockey Court 18.9
H. Amphitheater 28.3	S. BMX Track 12.2
I. Lodge Facility 17.7	T. Open Space 29.3
J. Nature Center 30.1	U. Natural Areas 40.3
K. Fishing Pond 31.4	V. In-Line Skating Facility 28.7
L. Ball Fields 35.0	W. Other 10.6
M. Soccer Fields 23.8	

7. If the township constructed a new community pool, would you be willing to pay an annual membership fee?

A. Yes 66.5	B. No 33.5
-------------	------------

If yes, what amount would you be willing to pay?

C. Less than \$100 71.9	D. \$100 to \$150 25.2	E. \$150 to \$200 2.8
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11. Please make any additional comments that you feel would be helpful in planning for the future of Findlay Township’s park system and recreation department. \_\_\_\_\_

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

12. How long have you lived in Findlay Township?

A. 0-5 Years 24.4                      B. 5-10 Years 20.5                      C. Over 10 Years 55.1

13. In which postal zip code do you reside?

A. 15126 46.5                      B. 15108 35.9                      C. 15026 17.6

14. Please *circle* the number of people in your household from each age group represented in the chart below. Place a *check* (✓) in the box, indicating your age group. **329**

		Age	Number of Household Members											
	<input type="checkbox"/>	0-5	0 [376]	1 [81]	2 [28]	3 [5]	4 [1]	5 [0]						
	<input type="checkbox"/>	6-12	0 [366]	1 [80]	2 [38]	3 [7]	4 [0]	5 [0]						
	<input type="checkbox"/>	13-18	0 [399]	1 [57]	2 [32]	3 [3]	4 [0]	5 [0]						
31 (9.4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	19-30	0 [389]	1 [62]	2 [37]	3 [3]	4 [0]	5 [0]						
159 (48.3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-44	0 [234]	1 [102]	2 [154]	3 [1]	4 [0]	5 [0]						
89 (27.1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	45-64	0 [296]	1 [82]	2 [110]	3 [2]	4 [0]	5 [1]						
50 (15.2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	65+	0 [409]	1 [53]	2 [27]	3 [2]	4 [0]	5 [0]						

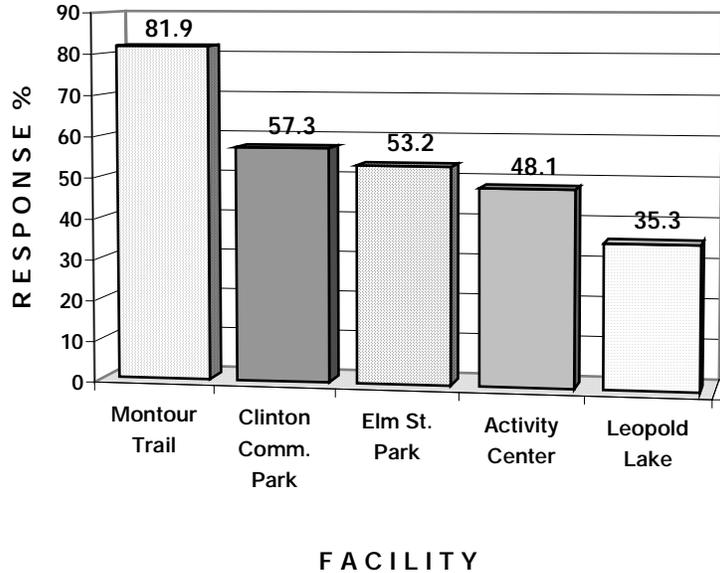
15. Do you own or rent your home?

A. Own 93.6                      B. Rent 6.4

THANK YOU for taking the time to complete this survey. Your opinion counts.

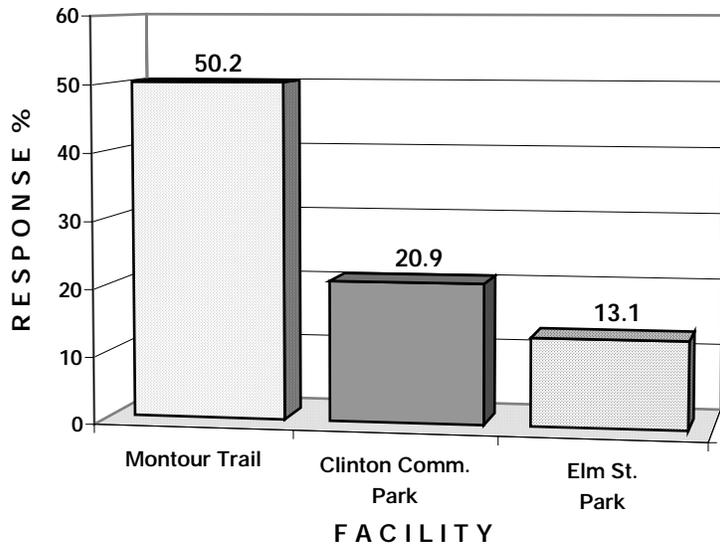
According to survey respondents, the Montour trail is the most frequently used recreation facility in Findlay Township. This along with responses received from the first public meeting suggests a strong desire for more trails.

**1. WHICH PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES DO YOU USE IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ?**



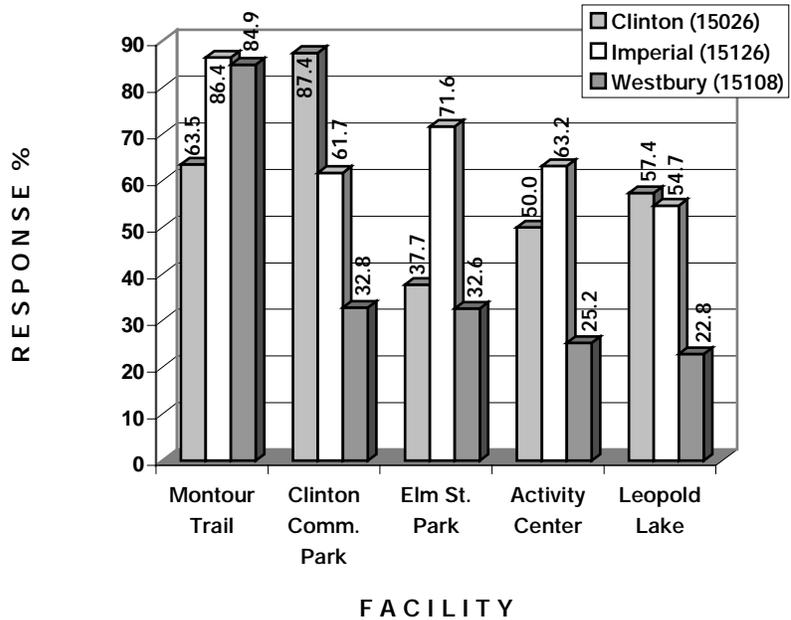
The Montour Trail is not only the most frequently used recreation facility in Findlay Township, but it also has the most repeat visits with over 50% of respondents reporting utilizing the trail more than 6 times per year.

**1a. WHICH PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES DO YOU USE IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP, MORE THAN SIX (6) TIMES PER YEAR ?**



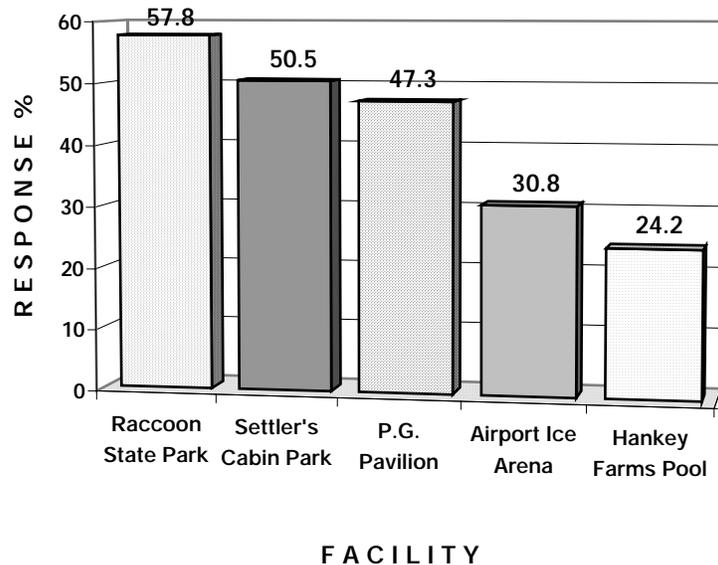
The geographic cross-tabulation of the data indicates that the greatest use of each facility comes from the respondents who live closest to it, although the Montour Trail is used extensively by respondents throughout the Township.

**1. WHICH PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES DO YOU USE IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ?**  
**• GEOGRAPHIC CROSS-TABULATION •**



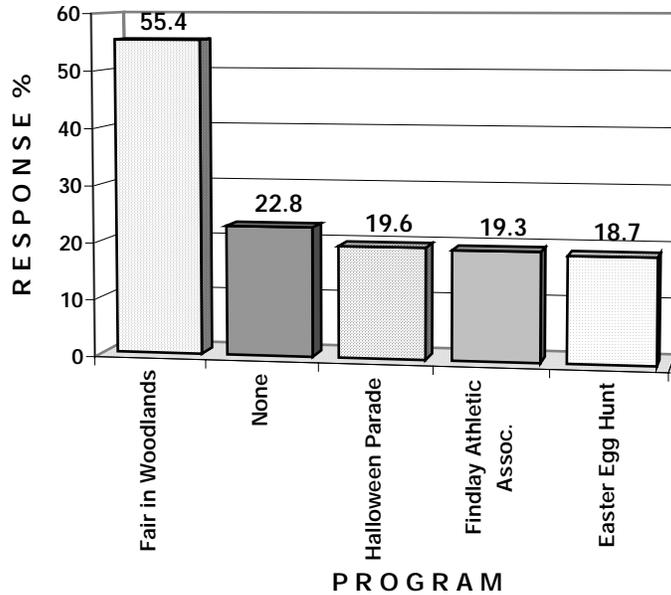
The State and County Parks and the Post Gazette Pavilion are the most used facilities not provided by Findlay Township. The Airport Ice Arena and Hanky Farms are used by less than 31% of the respondents.

**2. WHICH FACILITIES DO YOU USE THAT ARE NOT PROVIDED BY FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ?**



At 55.4% of all respondents, the Fair in the Woods was by far the most attended Township special event. Less than 20% of the respondents attended the other events.

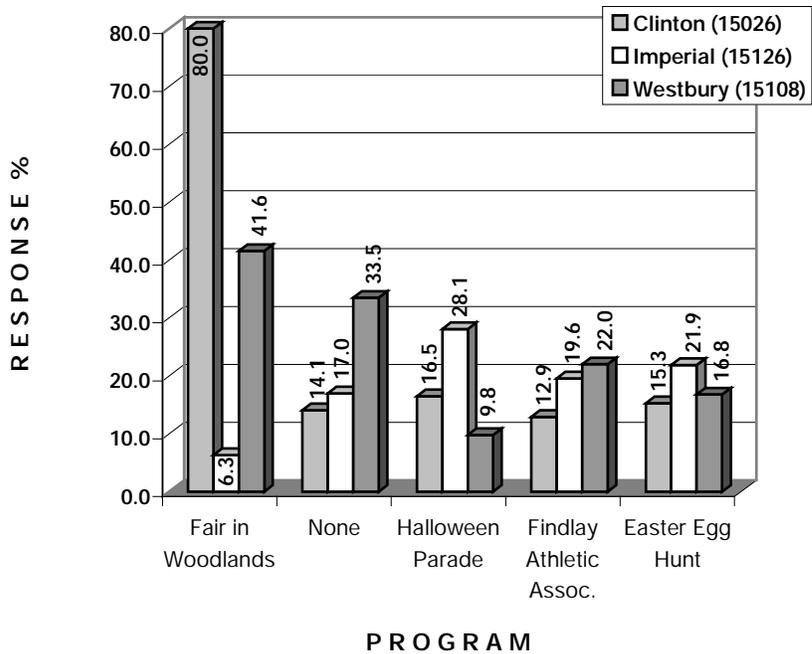
**3. IN WHICH TOWNSHIP - BASED PROGRAMS / SPECIAL EVENTS DOES YOUR FAMILY PARTICIPATE / ATTEND ?**



Fair in the Woodlands is most attended by respondents from Clinton and Westbury (80% and 41.6% respectively) and least attended by respondents from Imperial (6.3%). Respondents from Westbury (33.5%) have the highest percentage of non-participation. The remaining three township events/programs draw roughly equally from all three geographical areas.

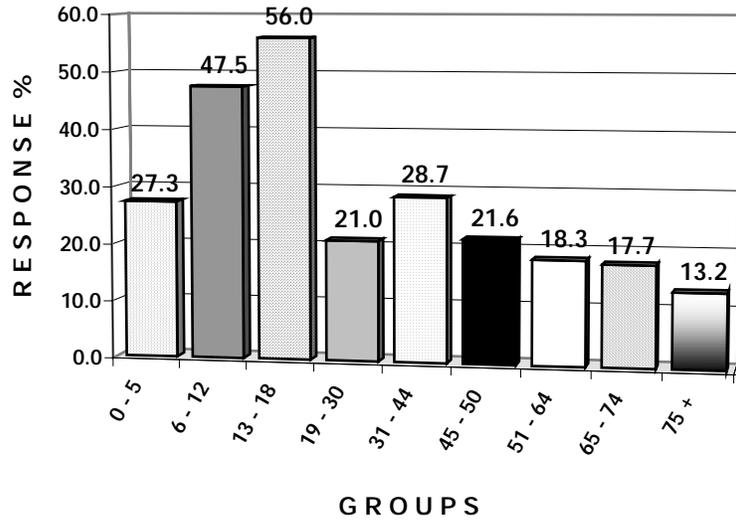
**3. IN WHICH TOWNSHIP - BASED PROGRAMS / SPECIAL EVENTS DOES YOUR FAMILY PARTICIPATE / ATTEND ?**

**• GEOGRAPHIC CROSS-TABULATION •**



A large majority of respondents indicated that the Township should target new recreation programs toward teens (13-18) and “tweens” (6-12).

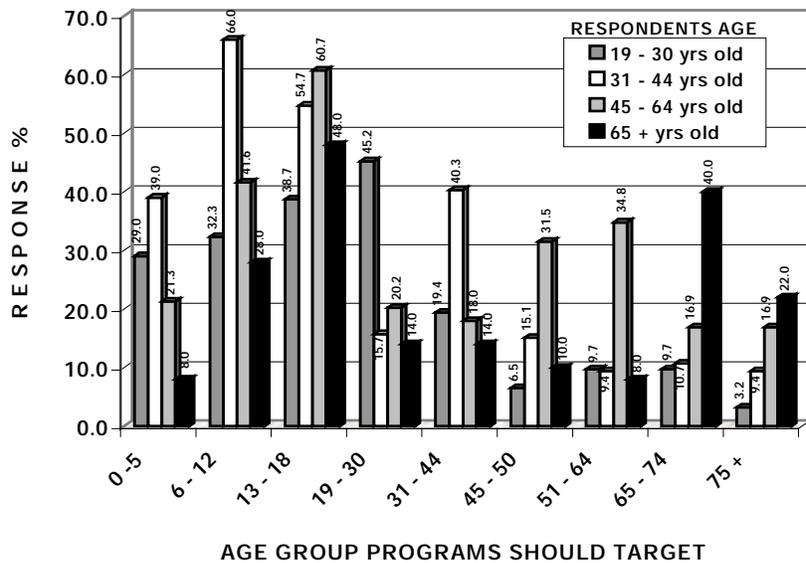
**4. IF THE TOWNSHIP WERE TO DEVELOP NEW RECREATION PROGRAMS, WHICH AGE GROUP(S) SHOULD THE PROGRAMS TARGET ?**



The cross tabulation by age groups indicates broad based support for programs for teens especially from the 31-44 and 45-64 age groups (parents) and also from the 65+ age group (grandparents). The other age groups supported programs for their respective age group i.e.; 19-30 year olds supported programs for 19-30 year olds, etc.

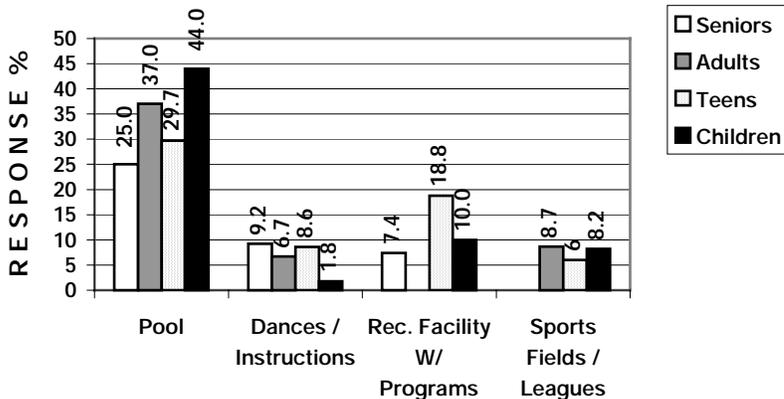
**4. IF THE TOWNSHIP WERE TO DEVELOP NEW RECREATION PROGRAMS, WHICH AGE GROUP(S) SHOULD THE PROGRAM TARGET?**

• AGE OF RESPONDENTS CROSS-TABULATION •



The majority of respondents to the survey indicated that a pool is most needed by all age groups—children to seniors. And, as public meeting No. 1 indicates, most respondents would like to have a year-round facility developed.

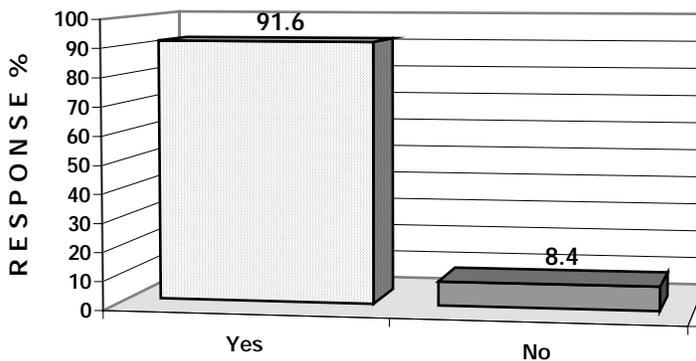
**5. WHAT ACTIVITIES, FACILITIES AND/OR PROGRAMS DO YOU FEEL ARE NEEDED WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP FOR:**



**FACILITIES / PROGRAMS**

By a large margin, 91.6% of the respondents would be in favor of a new, centrally located community park if there were no increase in taxes.

**6. THE TOWNSHIP IS CONSIDERING DEVELOPING A NEW, CENTRALLY LOCATED COMMUNITY PARK. WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF SUCH PARK, IF NO INCREASE IN TAXES WERE REQUIRED ?**

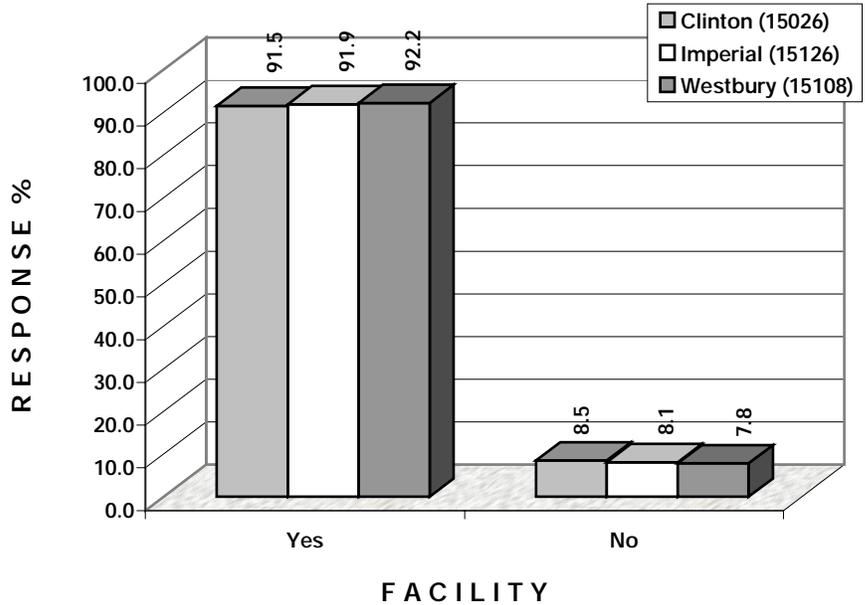


**RESPONSE**

Support for a centrally located community park was evenly distributed throughout Findlay Township.

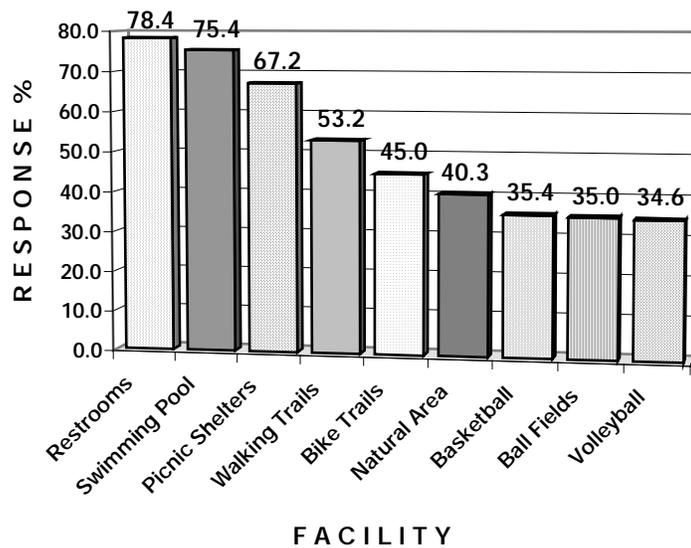
**6. THE TOWNSHIP IS CONSIDERING DEVELOPING A NEW, CENTRALLY LOCATED COMMUNITY PARK. WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF SUCH PARK, IF NO INCREASE IN TAXES WERE REQUIRED ?**

**• GEOGRAPHIC CROSS-TABULATION •**



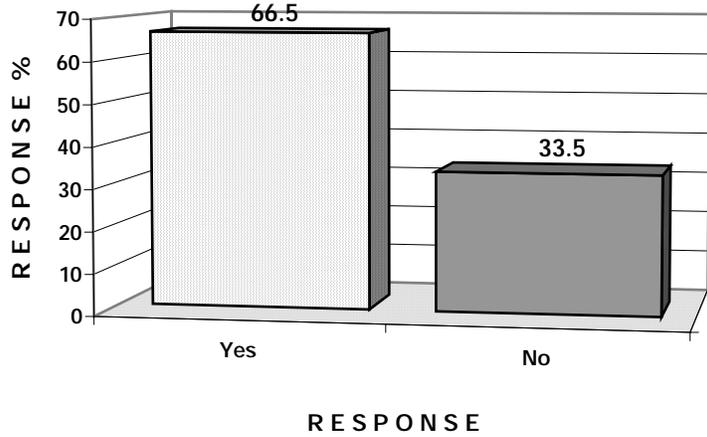
If a new community park is developed, restrooms, a swimming pool and picnic shelters are the most desired features followed by walking and bike trails and natural areas.

**6a. THE TOWNSHIP IS CONSIDERING DEVELOPING A NEW, CENTRALLY LOCATED COMMUNITY PARK. WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF SUCH PARK, IF NO INCREASE IN TAXES WERE REQUIRED ? IF YES, WHAT FEATURES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED ?**



By a 2:1 margin, respondents indicated a willingness to pay an annual membership fee.

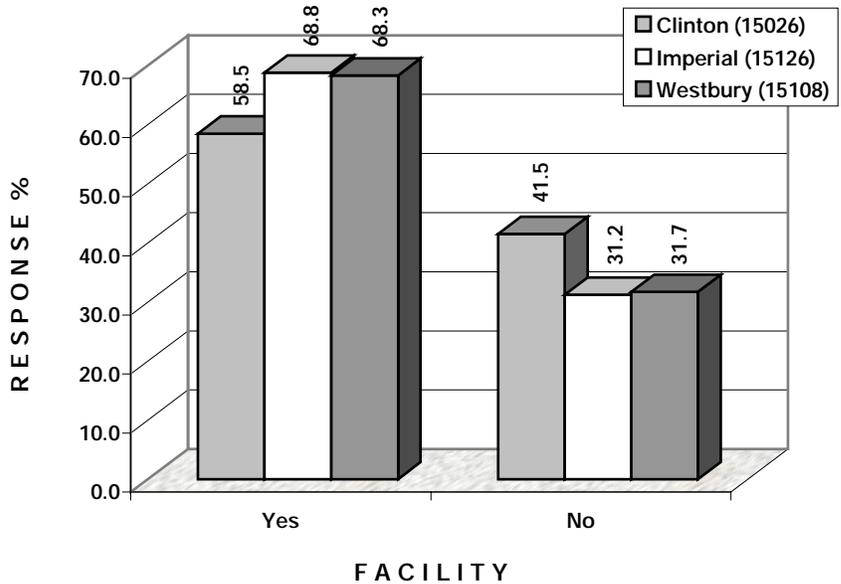
**7. IF THE TOWNSHIP CONSTRUCTED A NEW COMMUNITY POOL, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY AN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE ?**



Respondents willing to pay an annual fee for a community pool are almost equally distributed from all three zip codes.

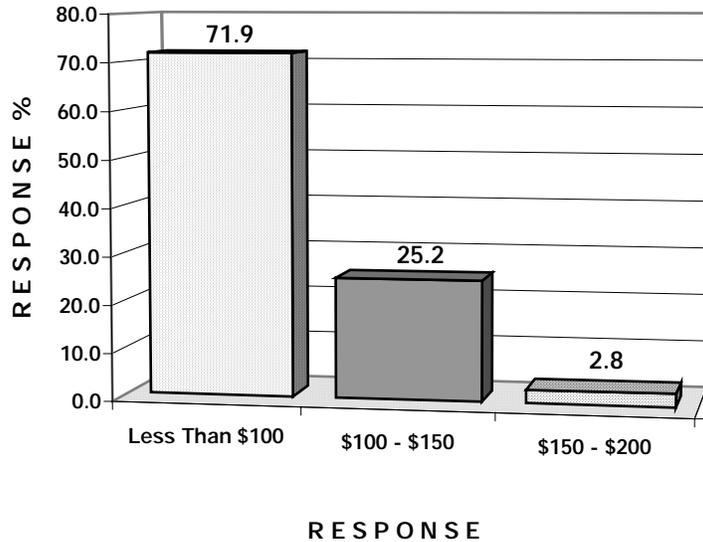
**7. IF THE TOWNSHIP CONSTRUCTED A NEW COMMUNITY POOL, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY AN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE ?**

• **GEOGRAPHIC CROSS-TABULATION** •



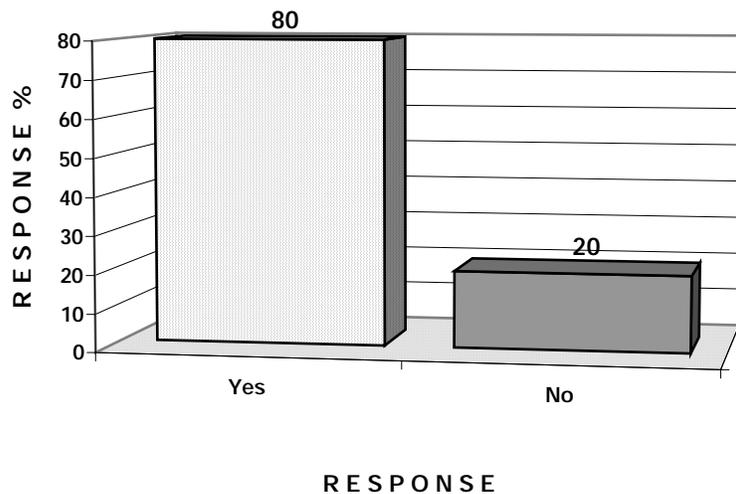
Support falls markedly above \$100 annually and is almost non-existent above \$150.00

**7a. IF THE TOWNSHIP CONSTRUCTED A NEW COMMUNITY POOL, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY AN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE ? IF YES, WHAT AMOUNT WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY ?**



An ordinance requiring developers to dedicate land or provide fees for new or improved park facilities is strongly supported.

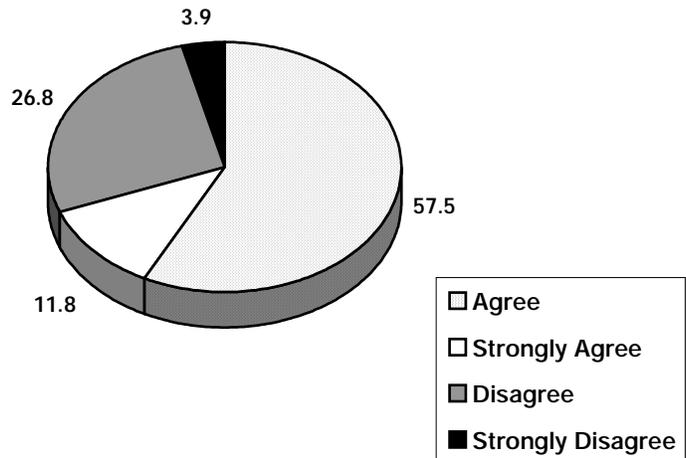
**8. MANY COMMUNITIES WITH THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF FINDLAY TOWNSHIP REQUIRE DEVELOPERS TO DEDICATE LAND OR PROVIDE FEES FOR NEW OR IMPROVED PARK FACILITIES. DO YOU FEEL FINDLAY SHOULD ENACT SUCH AN ORDINANCE ?**



Over 69% of the respondents are satisfied with park facilities in Findlay Township. Only a small percentage (3.9%) strongly disagree with this statement.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

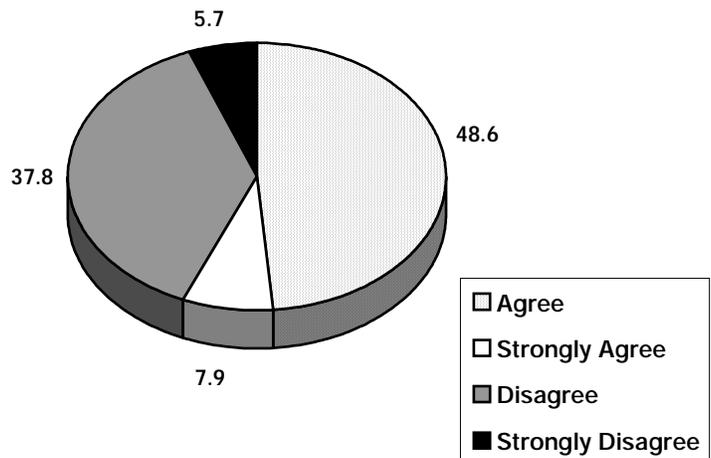
**A. SATISFIED WITH PARK FACILITIES IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIPS.**



Slightly over 56% of respondents (agree/strongly agree), are satisfied with the recreation programs offered by the Township. Of those who disagree, only 5.7% strongly disagree.

**9. RESIDENTS OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

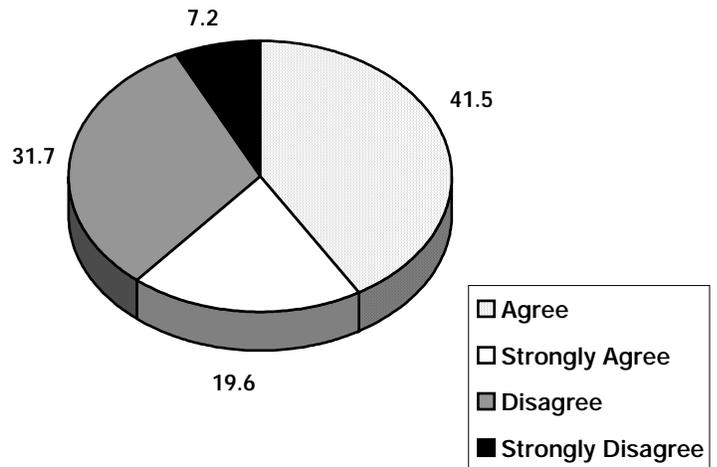
**B. I AM SATISFIED WITH THE RECREATION PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE TOWNSHIP.**



Approximately 61% of the respondents wish to see more open space in their area. Of those who disagree, only 7.2% strongly disagree.

9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.

C. MORE OPEN SPACE (UNDEVELOPED AREA) IS NEEDED IN MY AREA.

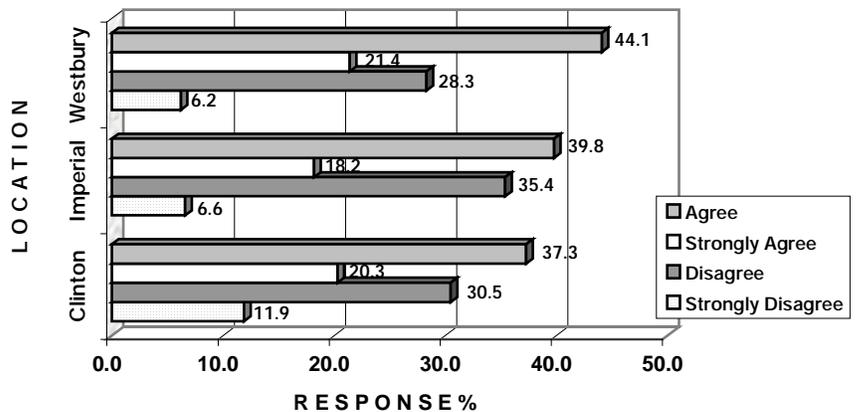


Broken down geographically, 58% of respondents from Clinton, 58% of respondents from Imperial and 66% of respondents from Westbury indicated the need for more open space in their respective area.

9. RESIDENTS' OPINION OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.

C. MORE OPEN SPACE (UNDEVELOPED AREA) IS NEEDED IN MY AREA.

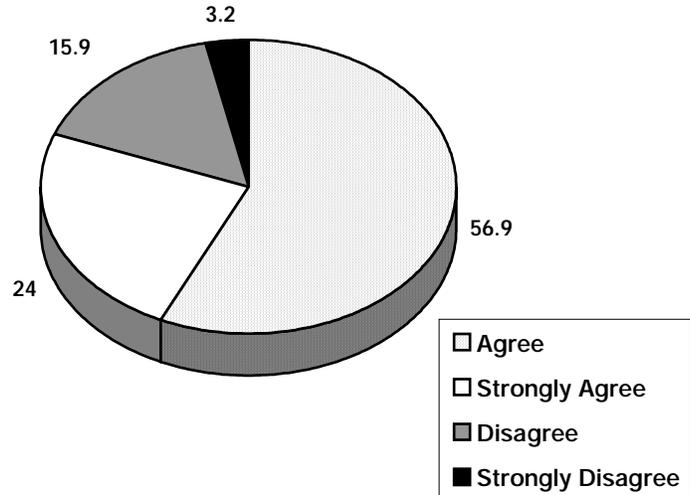
• GEOGRAPHIC CROSS-TABULATION •



Approximately 81% of all respondents indicated need for more indoor facilities. Of those who disagree with the need for indoor facilities, only 3.2% strongly disagree.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

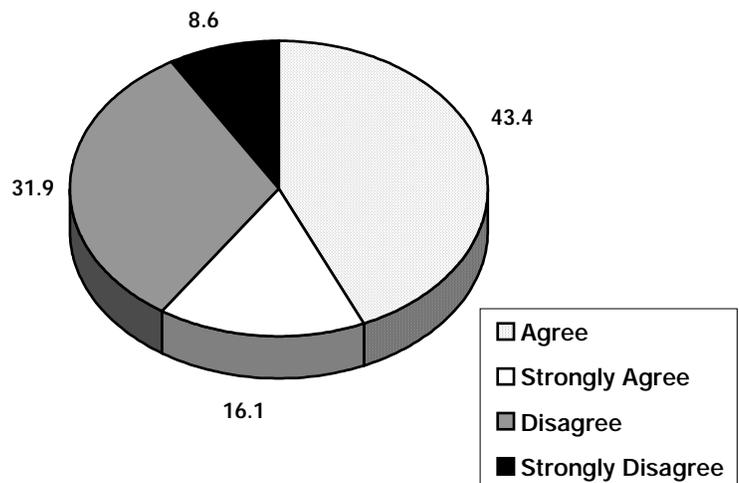
**D. MORE INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES ARE NEEDED.**



Approximately 60% of all respondents indicated a need for more biking and biking trails. Of those who disagree, only 8.6% strongly disagree.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

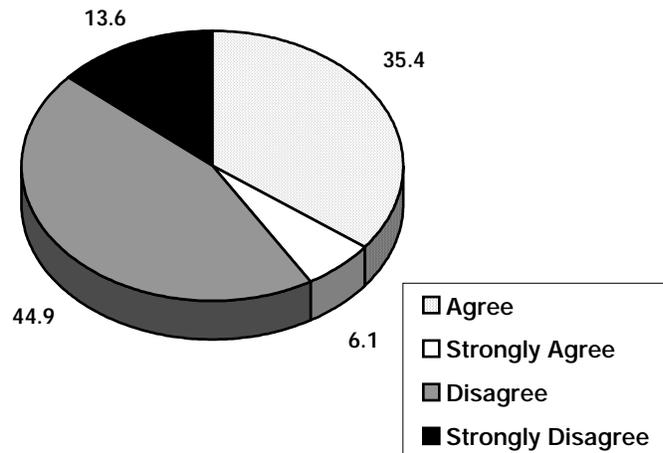
**E. ADDITIONAL HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.**



Only 41.5% of the respondents to the survey believe that there is adequate publicity about parks and recreation opportunities in the Township.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

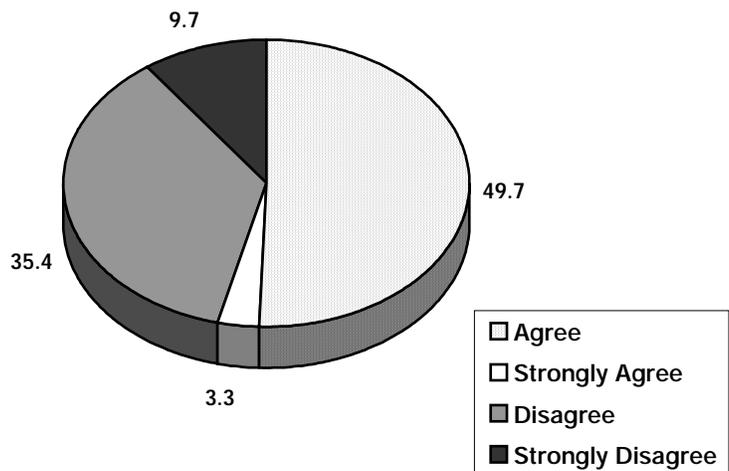
**F. THERE IS ADEQUATE PUBLICITY ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TOWNSHIP.**



Opinion on the sufficiency of recreational opportunities for people with disabilities is fairly evenly split with 53% agreement and 45.1% disagreeing.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

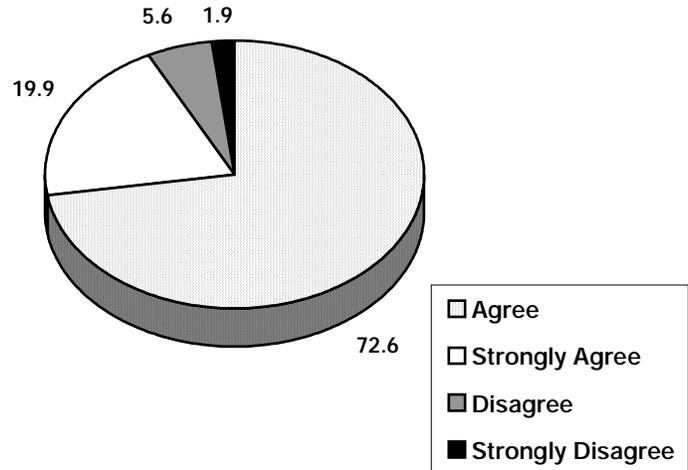
**G. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE SUFFICIENT.**



Overwhelmingly, 92.5% of respondents' agree/strongly agree that park maintenance is adequate.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

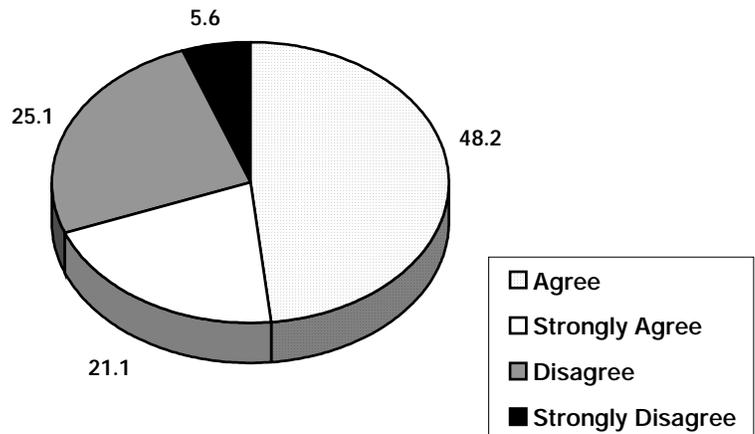
**H. PARK MAINTENANCE IS ADEQUATE.**



69.3% of respondents' agree/strongly agree that Township parks should be linked with a bikeway network. Of those that disagreed, only 5.6 strongly disagreed.

**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

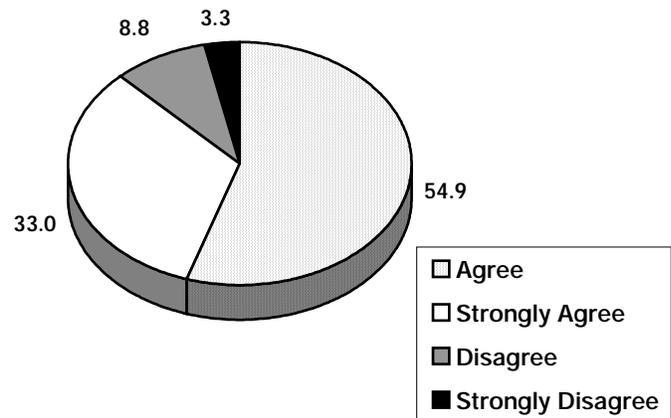
**I. THE TOWNSHIP PARKS SHOULD BE LINKED WITH A BIKEWAY NETWORK.**



Approximately 88% of all respondents agree/strongly agree that parks are important to them.

9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.

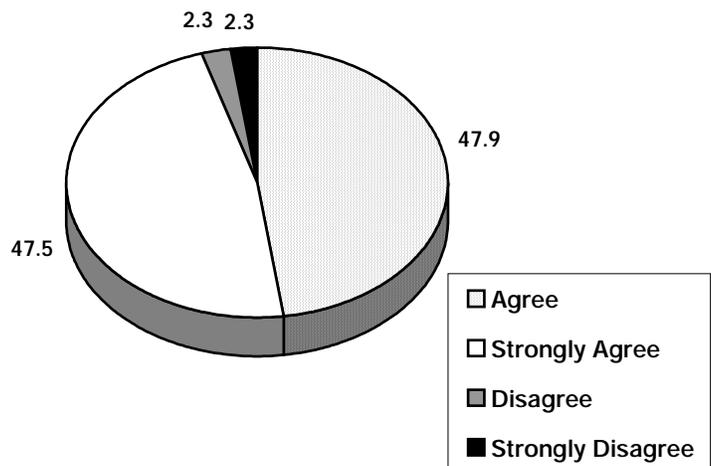
J. TOWNSHIP PARKS ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR HOUSEHOLD.



Approximately 95% of all respondents agree/strongly agree that recreation programs for teens should be provided with a remarkable 47.5% strongly agreeing. Of those that disagree, only 2.3% strongly disagreed.

9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.

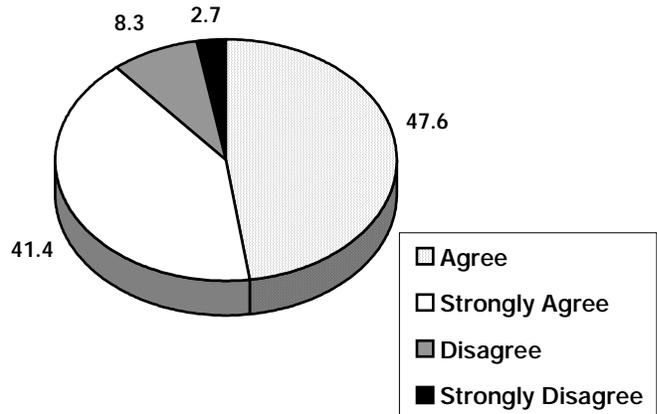
K. RECREATION PROGRAMS FOR TEENS SHOULD BE PROVIDED.



Approximately 89% of all respondents agree/strong agree that the Township recreation department should provide cultural programs. Almost half of those strongly agree.

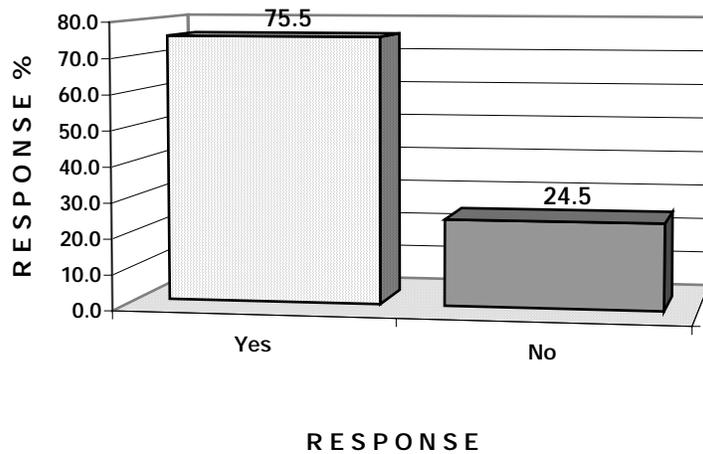
**9. RESIDENTS' OPINIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR RECREATION IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP.**

**L. THE TOWNSHIP RECREATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE CULTURAL PROGRAMS, LIKE CONCERTS IN THE PARKS OR SUMMER THEATER.**



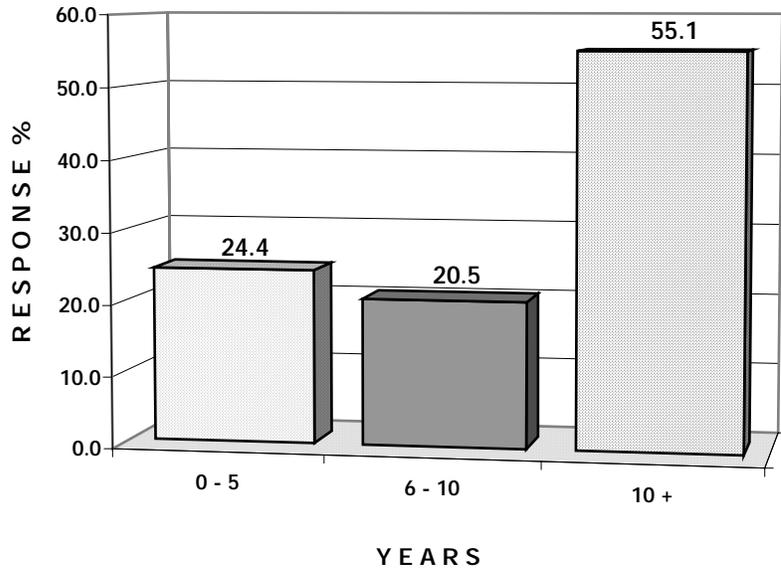
75% of the respondents indicate a strong desire for greater cooperation between West Allegheny School District and Findlay Township in providing recreational space and facilities. This was also expressed in the first public meeting.

**10. DO YOU FEEL WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT SHOULD PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN PROVIDING RECREATIONAL SPACE AND FACILITIES TO THE CITIZENS OF FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ?**



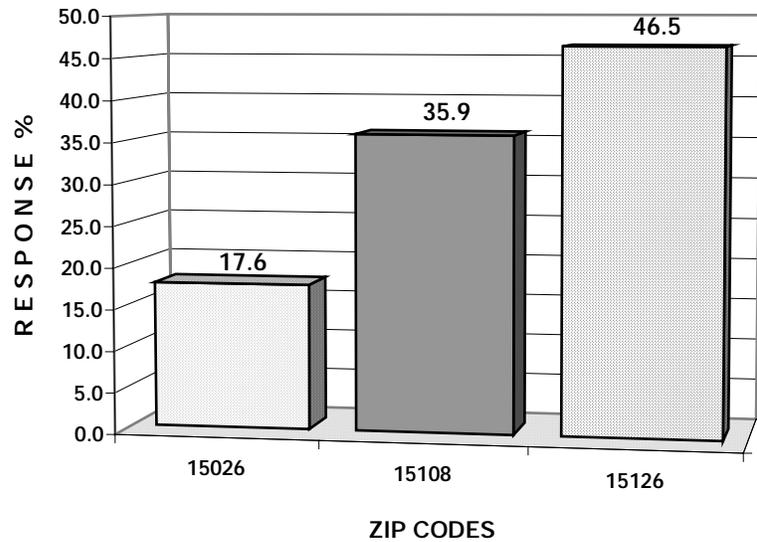
Of the respondents to the survey, the majority (over 55%) have lived in Findlay Township for over 10 years.

### 12. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ?



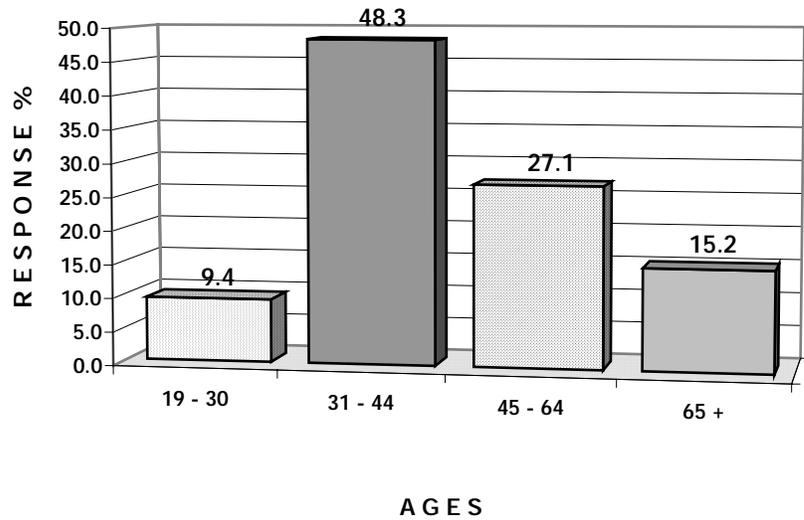
82.4% of the survey respondents live in zip codes 15108 (Westbury) and 15126 (Imperial), concentrated in the northeastern portion of the Township.

### 13. IN WHICH POSTAL ZIP CODE DO YOU RESIDE ?



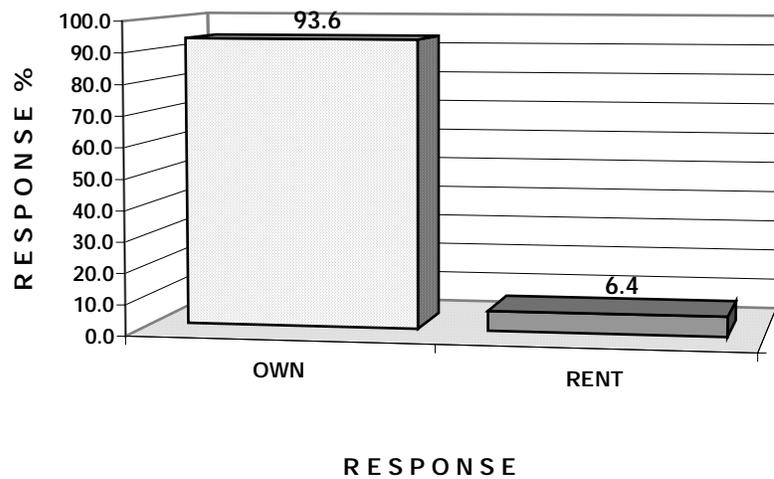
The majority of respondents, over 75% are middle aged (31 to 64). Less than 15% are seniors (65+) and less than 10% are young adults (19-30).

#### 14. AGES OF RESPONDENTS ?



By a huge majority, approximately 94% of all respondents are homeowners.

#### 15. DO YOU OWN OR RENT ?



## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

### **Public Meeting No. 1, August 16, 2000**

The first public meeting was held at the Township of Findlay Community Center Building, located in Clinton. The community had an opportunity to attend this meeting and voice any concerns, needs or desires related to recreation in the Township.

The public meeting was advertised in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, the local paper and the Findlay Township calendar on the community web site. However, the attendance for this meeting was low and seemingly unbalanced geographically.

The entire meeting minutes and attendance are provided in Appendix A.

The following represents the key issues discussed and prioritized by those in attendance.

### **Parks**

- Desire for a safe off-road (ATV) facility.
- Desire for in-line skating/skateboard facility.
- Provision for land dedicated to recreation as part of future development.
- Desire for an all season aquatic center.

### **Programs**

- Desire to have beautification committee/garden club.
- Desire to have water aerobics program.
- Desire for children's programs.

### **Maintenance**

- Maintenance staff to be sensitive to neighboring properties.
- Desire for ballfield fence updating.
- Residents overall opinion of Township maintenance service is very favorable.

### **Trails**

- Desire for trails in Clinton.
- Desire to tie the Clinton-Block Trail into the Montour Trail.
- Desire to improve Clinton-Enlow Road for trail access.

### **Non-Township Recreation Providers**

- Strong desire for more Township support for West Allegheny Aqua Club.
- Resident's opinion regarding support for Findlay Athletic Association is that it is supported very well.
- Currently the residents use both Hankey Farms pool and Settlers Cabin wave pool.

### **Greenways/Open Space**

- Residents offered great concern for safety liability at Leopold Lake in its current conditions
- Desire for more passive recreation/picnic areas.

## Other

- Strong desire for greater cooperation between school district and township.
- Concern regarding the viability of future Township pool and to develop it as a year-round facility.



## Public Meeting No. 2, November 1, 2000

The second public meeting was held at the Findlay Township Activity Center, located in Imperial.

Again, despite the advertising in the newspapers and schedule on the Township web site, the attendance at this meeting was light (refer to Appendix A for full meeting minutes and attendance roster).

The results of the Parks and Recreation Questionnaire were summarized and reviewed. Some of the key issues discussed, as stated previously in this section under “Recreation Needs Survey” are as follows:

- Very strong desire for a public pool facility from each age group.
- Very strong desire for programs of school-aged children and teens.

- Strong support for a centrally located township park.
- High percentage of respondents indicating the need for indoor recreation facilities.
- Greater need for more effective publicity regarding parks and recreation. Many commented on the lack of attendance at the public meetings as an example of inadequate awareness.
- Strong desire for cultural programming.

Preliminary recommendations were reviewed for public comment and discussion. Some of the following items were discussed as potential improvements.

- Improvement to all township park and recreation facilities to comply with ADA accessibility guidelines to promote recreation to all persons living and/or working in Findlay Township.
- Playgrounds to follow recommendations to update facilities to meet current Consumer Product Safety Commission Standards.
- Maintain and expand township parks and provide additional facilities to accommodate the resident population using the parks.
- Acquiring a centrally located parcel of land from the Pittsburgh International Airport to develop future recreational facilities as desired by township residents.
- Reprogramming the uses of the current recreation facilities in the Westbury area to provide for the growing population there.
- Develop trail links and connections that link open, green spaces and recreational lands with each other and the Montour Trail.

See Appendix D for newspaper articles related to the November 1, 2000 meeting.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS**

Three meetings with the Findlay Planning Commission were attended during the inventory and analysis stages of the plan.

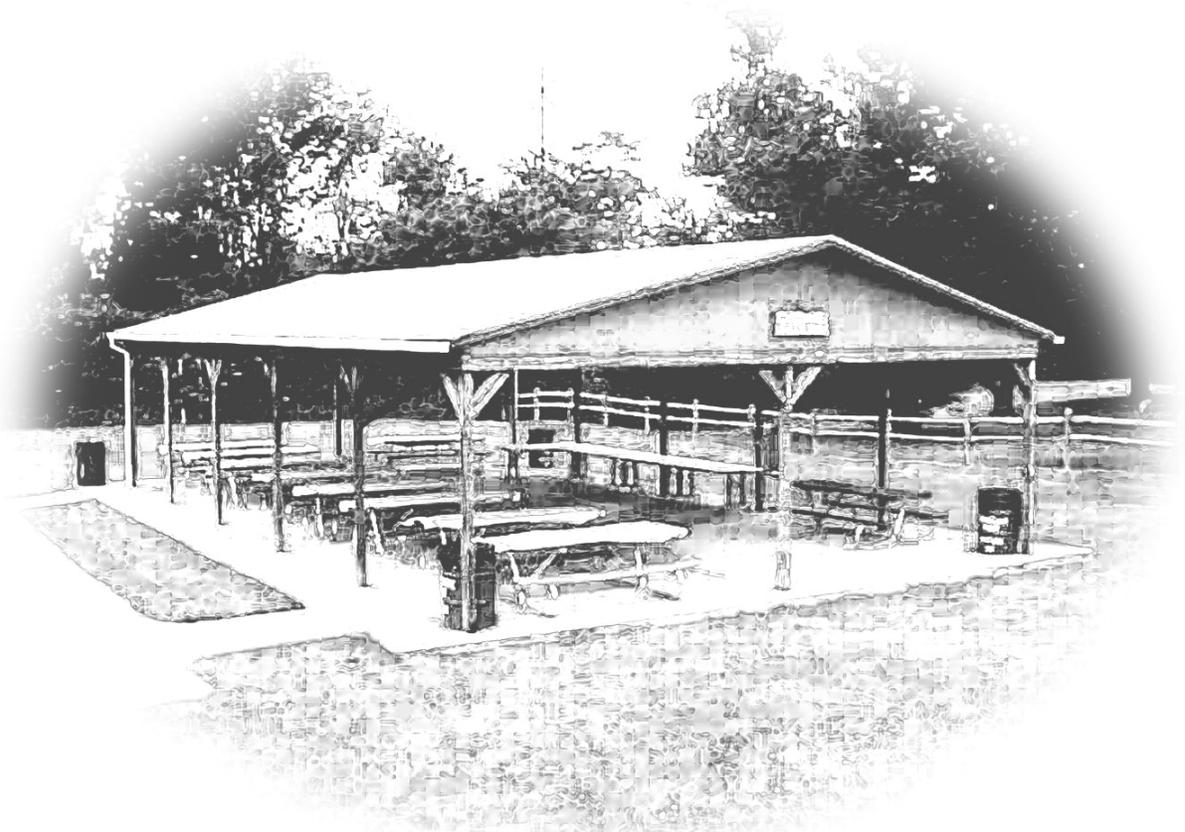
Each meeting was held at the Findlay Township Community Center building, and was beneficial in gathering additional input and direction from those members interested in the parks and recreation issues in the community. An update of progress on the plan was offered at each meeting.

Two Planning Commission Meetings were held during the draft stages of the Parks and Recreation Plan, to review and gather comments for final recommendations and the final report.

A copy of the meeting minutes for each meeting is included in Appendix A.

## **SUMMARY**

The community had many opportunities to be involved in this project. Newspaper articles provided awareness of this project. The Needs Assessment Survey provided for personal comment in the comfort and convenience of their home. The community meetings provided opportunities for the residents to render their comments. The recommendations of this plan have responded to many of the community's needs and desires identified through the public participation process.



## **SECTION IV**

# **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

"The bottom line is that the purpose of recreation, and the task facing the people who have devoted their lives to recreation, it is to improve the quality of life for citizens."

~ Joseph V. Paterno, Head Football Coach ~  
The Pennsylvania State University  
1990 Governor's Conference on  
Recreation, Parks and Leisure

## SECTION IV – INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

As stated in the 1997 Township of Findlay Comprehensive Plan, there are three influential, natural physical features in the Township.

- Wetlands and flood plains
- Steep slopes/landslide prone areas
- Five separate watersheds

The plan states the intention of the Township leaders is to protect these natural features, while still encouraging development. This preservation will maintain the physical, cultural, environmental and recreational value of the natural factors, providing linked open space throughout the community.

While there are certainly constraints to future development due to these physical features, there are tremendous recreation and open space opportunities: to provide green, aesthetic buffer zones between development areas; preserve natural ecosystems while providing linked open space and trail corridors; and promote outdoor educational experiences for both children and adults.

In 1995 the Allegheny County Planning Department identified “Conservation Corridors” in the Allegheny County Conservation Plan. These conservation corridors are defined as “ribbons of undeveloped open space, which include and link sensitive natural features of Allegheny County. They include flood plains, wetlands, and steep unstable slopes, and often follow stream valleys”.

Two of the corridors identified in the plan are located in Findlay Township. These corridors, Potato Garden Run and Montour Run are ranked

2 and 3 respectively out of 29 corridors in the county. They both have been assigned a “high priority” ranking based on their natural features.

The predominating natural feature found in these two corridors are wetlands. Combining the number of wetlands in both corridors, there are a total of seventy-five (75) wetland features.

Figure 4.1 identifies the benefits of protecting these corridors.

#### Figure: 4.1 Benefits of Protecting Conservation Corridors

##### Benefit of Protecting Conservation Corridors

###### **Improve recreation opportunities:**

Conservation corridors can provide trails for bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and wildlife observation. They can also improve public access to riverfronts.

**Protect natural environment:** Conservation corridors help protect wildlife and habitats. They help conserve wetlands and can preserve characteristic Allegheny County features such as steep wooded hillsides and undeveloped stream valleys. They also provide migration routes for wildlife that are important to the biodiversity of the region.

**Offer educational opportunities:** Conservation corridors allow students and the general public to observe plants and animals in their natural environment.

**Reduce air pollution:** When conservation corridors contain trails, people can walk or bike (and avoid motorized transport) in the corridors to schools, parks, libraries, and workplaces. Also, trees within a corridor mitigate air and noise pollution.

**Increase property values:** Along their routes, conservation corridors can attract residents and

businesses, increase property values and improve marketability.

**Connect cultural features:** Some cultural features have the possibility of being incorporated into the proposed corridors. The cultural features identified include the following:

- Municipal, county, and state parks greater than five acres.
- Pennsylvania State Game Lands.
- Land trust owned lands.
- Regional and local trails.
- Other cultural features, such as parks, trails, Beechwood Farms, and golf courses, as appropriate.

Source: Allegheny County Conservation Corridors Plan

land use for each natural and man-made development constraint. Each constraint listed identifies “recreation” or “open space” as a compatible land use, providing the Township with a vast recreation opportunity as development growth occurs.

Both the *Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, 1991* and the *1991 Findlay Township Zoning Ordinance* provide requirements regarding development restrictions for each natural area.

Refer to the Natural Resources Inventory Map (page 4.37) to identify the areas discussed above. The areas depicted are approximate locations as determined by information gathered from the following resources: National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Maps prepared by the U. S. Department of the Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service; National Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Findlay Township area of Allegheny County, prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and the *1997 Findlay Township Comprehensive Plan*.

In Chapter Three, “Development Constraints” of the *1997 Findlay Township Comprehensive Plan*, it clearly defines and identifies the natural resources issues in Findlay. In addition, the following figure (Figure 4.2) lists the compatible

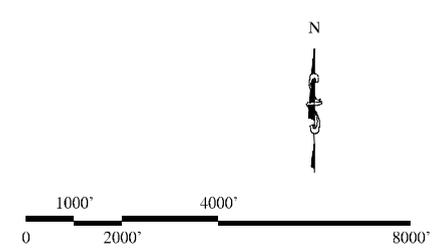
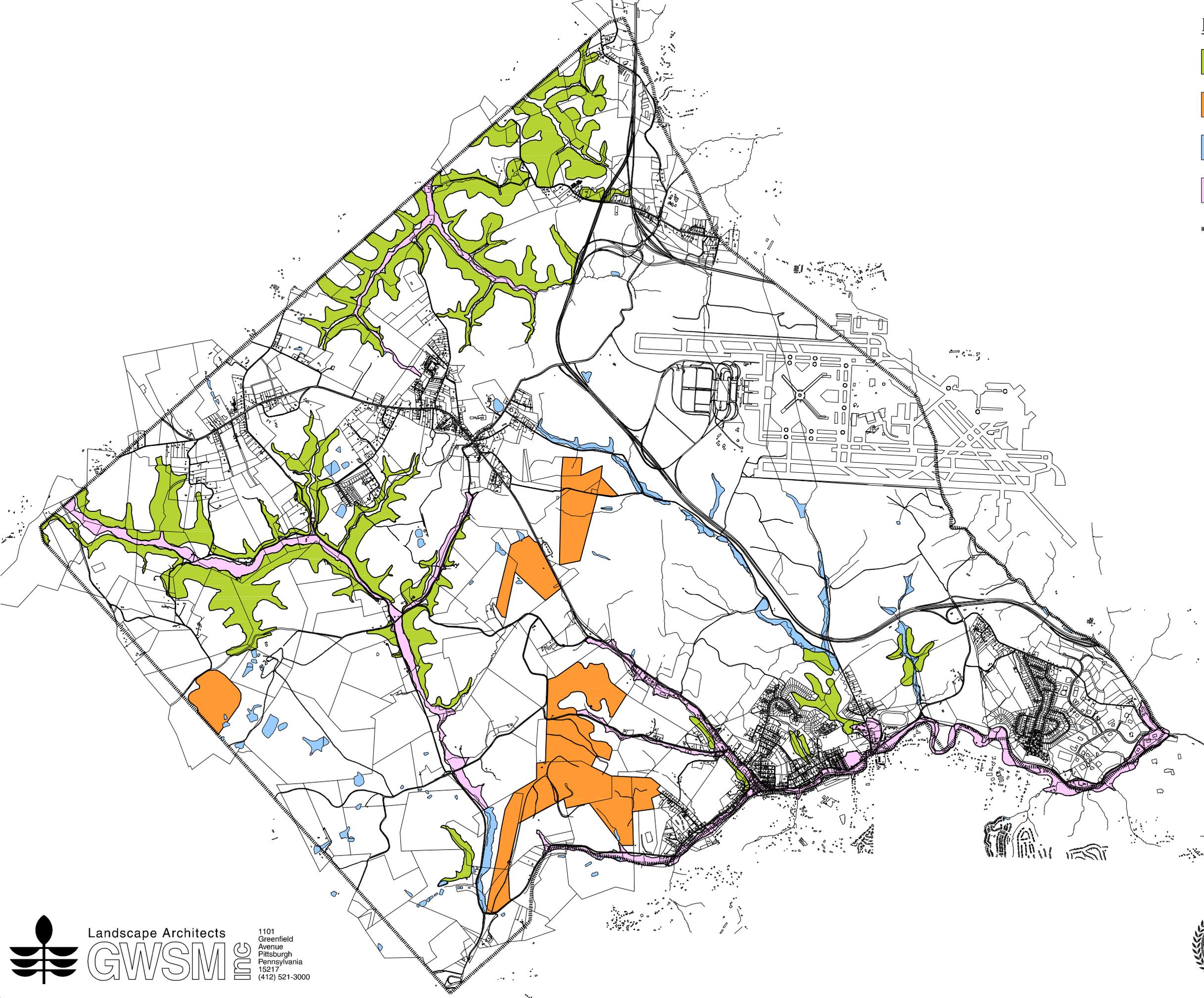
**Figure: 4.2 Natural and Man-Made Development Constraints**

Development Constraint	Potential Degree of Constraint	Compatible Land Use
Wetlands	Severe	Open Space, Conservation
Floodplains	Severe	Open Space, Conservation
Steep and Landslide Prone Land	Moderate to Severe	Recreation, Open Space, Conservation
Landfills	Moderate to Severe	Recreation, Open Space, Conservation
Subsurface Mining	Slight to Severe	Business Development, High Density Residential, Recreation, Open Space, Conservation
Surface Mining	Slight to Severe	Business Development, High Density Residential, Recreation, Open Space, Conservation

Source: Findlay Township Comprehensive Plan, 1997

LEGEND

-  LANDSLIDE PRONE AREAS
-  LANDFILLS
-  WETLANDS
-  FLOOD PLAINS
-  TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY



## HISTORICAL/CULTURAL INVENTORY

### Historical Background

Findlay Township, incorporated from Moon Township in 1822, is the largest township in Allegheny County. Although its size is roughly 32 square miles, Findlay's population is only slightly more than 5,000.

The Township, originally called "Second Moon" after its original municipal allegiance, was eventually named after William Findlay (1768-1846) a prominent Democratic legislator, State Treasurer and Governor of Pennsylvania (1817-1820). Findlay went on to become a U.S. Senator and Treasurer of the U.S. Mint (1827-1841).

The Villages of Clinton and Imperial date back to the 19th century when the Township was purely a coal mining and agricultural area; their modest size and character give an indication of Findlay Township's history.

In fact, the Imperial Coal Company laid out and constructed the village of Imperial, operated three mines and controlled the Montour Railroad. The railroad, constructed in 1878 along an 11-1/2 mile stretch from Montour Junction in Moon Township to Imperial, carried passengers and coal, thereby facilitating development along its route.

### Sites and Structures

As stated in the 1992 Open Space and Recreation Plan, there are no sites or structures in Findlay Township listed on the National Historical Landmarks list. However, there are eight individual sites listed by the Pittsburgh History and Landmark Foundation as being historically significant. They are as follows:

- McAdow-McAdams Log House, located on Boggs Road near Wilson Elementary School was built in the period between 1781 and 1800. It is the only apparent remaining log house in the Township and was built by one of the Township's earliest settlers, John McAdow. It has been restored by the School District and is used as a teaching aid.
- Adams House, located on Aten Road, was believed to be built in the period between 1841 to 1860. It is a one-story, five-bay brick house in the vernacular Greek Revival style and is one of the best representatives of early 19th century life in Findlay.
- McNall House, a vernacular Greek Revival style house located on Burgettstown Road, was constructed in the period between 1841 and 1860. The McNalls were among the Township's earliest settlers. Although the architectural integrity has been considerably altered, this house is one of the Township's oldest.
- Valley Presbyterian Church and Cemetery is located on Main and Church Street in Imperial. The church, built between 1901-1920, is considered to be in the Gothic Revival, late Queen Anne architectural style. The cemetery, sited on a sloping hillside at the rear of the church, has a variety of modest markers and obelisks. The oldest stones date from 1850, with many from the Civil War era.

- Clinton United Presbyterian Church is located on Wilson Road near Route 30. The three dates on the church's cornerstone 1797, 1828 and 1924, refer to two previous church buildings and the present 1924 structure. The church is considered to be in the Gothic Revival architectural style. The township's first church was located on or near this site. The cemetery behind this church is said to be the Township's oldest and contains the graves of some of its earliest settlers.
- Vernacular House, also known as Hamilton House, is located on Washington Road and is currently owned by James L. Hamilton, Jr. The house, built in the period between 1841 and 1860, is one of Findlay's few extant pre-1850 houses.
- Three abandoned school buildings, located at Pine Street and Stark Avenue, were built between 1901 and 1920 and between 1920 and 1940. The buildings are only of local significance. One of the buildings burned down, one is structurally unusable, and the last one is being used as offices.
- Hebron Cemetery is located on Route 30 behind Hebron Church. The cemetery has graves dating back to the early 19th century and is of local significance only.

### Sites of Interest of Semi-Historical Value



- Montour Farms, an abandoned racetrack and horse farm is located outside Imperial on McClaren Road. While possessing no particular architectural importance, the assemblage of gable-roofed sheds for horses and equipment is an interesting sight and could certainly remain as symbols of a lost era.



- The Enlow Tunnel is a landmark on the Montour Trail in Findlay Township. The tunnel has recently been lighted by the Township.

- An Air National Guard Base is located just outside Findlay in Moon Township. The base entrance lies in Findlay, within the airport boundary. The base has a fifty-year history of training fighter pilots. The Base Civil Engineer Major has expressed an interest in locating a trail in the vicinity of the base for use by employees, trainees and the general public.

## Evaluation

Findlay has many historical structures which offer enough significance to validate preserving and sharing them with residents and visitors. However, common problems associated with historic structures face the Township. The sites and structures, spread out over the entire Township, are for the most part, privately owned and most are occupied. Some of the structures are in very good condition, but a few are in dire need of repair. Though the tasks of repair and maintenance may not be the Township's responsibility, these historical resources should be recognized as an asset and protected.

By including historic and semi-historic sites in the open space and recreation system, a diversity of experiences can be realized. It would be in the Township's best interest to contact some of the numerous public and non-profit organizations specializing in historic preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for professional advice and possibly potential support to protect these historical resources.

## Cultural Resources

Residents of Findlay Township are fortunate to live in a region rich in cultural resources, both public and private. Because numerous recreational and cultural opportunities exist both within and outside the Township boundaries, the

cultural resources were inventoried on five levels: those located in Findlay Township, those provided in the region by the West Allegheny School Board, those located in adjacent townships, nearby county parks and state parks.

Facilities and organizations located in Findlay Township are both public and private. They are as follows:

- There are six parks in Findlay Township currently maintained by the municipal Parks and Recreation Department under the supervision of the Township Manager. These parks are: Findlay Township, Community Park (Clinton), Aten Road Park, Elm Street Park, Leopold Lake, Old Ridge Ballfield, and Westbury Tot Lot.
- Findlay Township Activity Center is a two story facility available for rent for various types of events and programs.
- Western Allegheny Community Library is housed in a portion of the former Imperial Christian Academy. This library serves, and is supported by the residents of Findlay Township, North Fayette, and Oakdale Borough.
- Findlay Athletic Association promotes interest in youth sports and related activities and programs.
- Private facilities and programs offered in Findlay area include: The 9-Hole Marada Golf Course located in Clinton; West Hills Par 3 adjacent to Rt. 60; an aerobic class held by a private individual at the activity center in Imperial; the fitness room and swimming pool at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel; the outdoor pool at the Four Points Barcelo; and two private summer camps: Youthtowne acre facility located in Clinton and Tri-State Holiness Association Camp.

## West Allegheny School District

The schools within West Allegheny School District provide various facilities to students and in some instances to the public.

- McKee Elementary and Wilson Elementary each have a gymnasium, a swimming pool, a soccer field and playgrounds. Only Wilson Elementary located in Findlay Township. McKee is located in nearby North Fayette.
- West Allegheny Senior High School and Middle School complex has a gymnasium, a baseball field, a softball field, a football field and a practice field.

## Adjacent Townships

Findlay Township is bordered by seven townships: Moon Township, North Fayette Township, Robinson Township, Independence Township, Hopewell Township, Hanover Township (Beaver County) and Hanover Township (Washington County). Recreation facilities in the adjacent townships vary considerably.

- Moon Township has one centrally located park with ball fields, tennis courts, a nature trail, play lot, picnic shelters and soccer fields. Whispering Woods, a private development, has a ball field. Robin Hill, an historic mansion operating as a senior citizen's center, has a nature trail and can be rented for private functions.
- North Fayette Township has one park with two picnic shelters, three lighted little league fields, one soccer field, two tennis courts, two lighted basketball courts, horseshoe pits, a playground area and a sled-riding hill. The Township Community Center houses a meeting room and a

gymnasium. Hankey Farms pool, which is owned by the Township, has a play area, a picnic shelter and a pool. Hankey Farms Fields has two little league fields that are Township maintained.

There are numerous private developments that provide recreational opportunities within the Township. Walden Woods has one ball field, one tennis court, one basketball court, two playgrounds and one picnic shelter. Lincoln Highland has a pool, a walking trail, one basketball court, one tennis court, an exercise room and a clubhouse. Hawthorne has a pool and a tennis court. Virginia Hills has a pool and a play area. Redwood Estates has a pool and a play area. Settler's Place has two tennis courts. Timberglen has a ball field maintained by the Homeowner's Association.

The Township Parks & Recreation Board sponsors an Easter Egg Hunt, Community Days, Movies in the Park and Light Up Night at the township park located on North Branch Road.

- Robinson Township has three parks: Groveton Park, a 40-acre park; Clever Park, a 30.2-acre park; and Robinson Township Community Park, which is approximately 25 acres. The facilities in Robinson include a municipal outdoor swimming pool, picnic facilities and shelters, restrooms, playgrounds, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, tennis courts, lighted ball fields and a concession building.

Also in Robinson Township, the Western Area YMCA offers a wide variety of programs and facilities to all residents in this region.

- Hopewell Township in Beaver County has an extensive recreation program.

Community Park, a centrally located 70-acre tract with a 1-1/2-acre lake on the property has nature trails, a trail for the blind, and an exercise trail. There are pavilions with playgrounds, concession stands and restrooms. In the winter months, subject to ice conditions and supervision, ice skating is allowed on the lake.

Various events in Hopewell are organized throughout the year: a fishing derby, a 4th of July festival, a “Haunted Trail”, and a “Visit Santa” program. A shuttle service is provided to transport families to and from these events.

Summer camp programs for two age groups are run by the recreation staff from June to August.

**County Parks**

Allegheny Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department conducts year-round programs for outdoor recreational opportunities at a county-wide and local level and works with adjacent counties to provide facilities on a regional scale.



- Settler’s Cabin, a 1600-acre park of which only 300 acres are open to the public. Facilities in the park include 11 tennis courts, 11 picnic groves with 9 shelters, a handicapped accessible hiking trail and a wave pool.



- The Montour Trail, located on abandoned railroad rights-of-way, traverses thirteen municipalities with end points in Imperial and Coraopolis. It runs along the southeastern boundary of Findlay Township and will eventually wind through 55 miles of woods and road. Six miles of the trail are located in Findlay Township. The trail is a product of a public/private initiative led by the Montour Trail Council and the Allegheny County Planning Department.

**State Parks**

Findlay Township falls within the southwest region of the state, and is in Pennsylvania Hiking Region 5. There are several state parks, state forests, and state game lands within one to two hours drive (at the most 88 miles) and include the following:

- Hillman State Park in Washington County
- Moraine State Park and Jennings State Park in Butler County
- Keystone State Park, Laurel Mountain State Park, Laurel Summit State Park, Laurel Hill State Park, and Laurel Ridge State Park in Westmoreland County
- Koosier State Park in Somerset County
- McConnell’s Mill State Park in Lawrence County

- Ohiopyle State Park in Fayette and Somerset Counties
- Point State Park in Allegheny County
- Raccoon State Park in Beaver County
- Ryerson Station State Park in Green County

## **Evaluation**

Due to demographic, socio-economic and infrastructure changes, the Township will be obligated to allocate funds and staff to maintain the active recreational areas, establish conservation areas and provide additional active recreation for a growing population. Also, there is a lack of cultural programs and events, such as music and performance programs, museums and ethnic community programs within the Township. Providing such programs and meeting other cultural needs of the residents are important and should be addressed.

## **The Private Sector**

The role of private institutions and landowners in regards to the provision of open space and recreation facilities is significant.

First, private companies are capable of responding quickly to perceived needs or markets without requiring the expenditure of public revenue. Privately-owned facilities, which may be brought to the Township, could include profitable enterprises such as bowling alleys, billiard halls, or ice-skating rinks.

Secondly, the private sector may dedicate land or provide open space easements on their land through innovative planning methods such as clustering or Planned Residential Developments (PRD's).

Thirdly, the private sector can sponsor and provide fitness and health programs for employees at the workplace. These programs could provide facilities outdoors, as well as indoors.

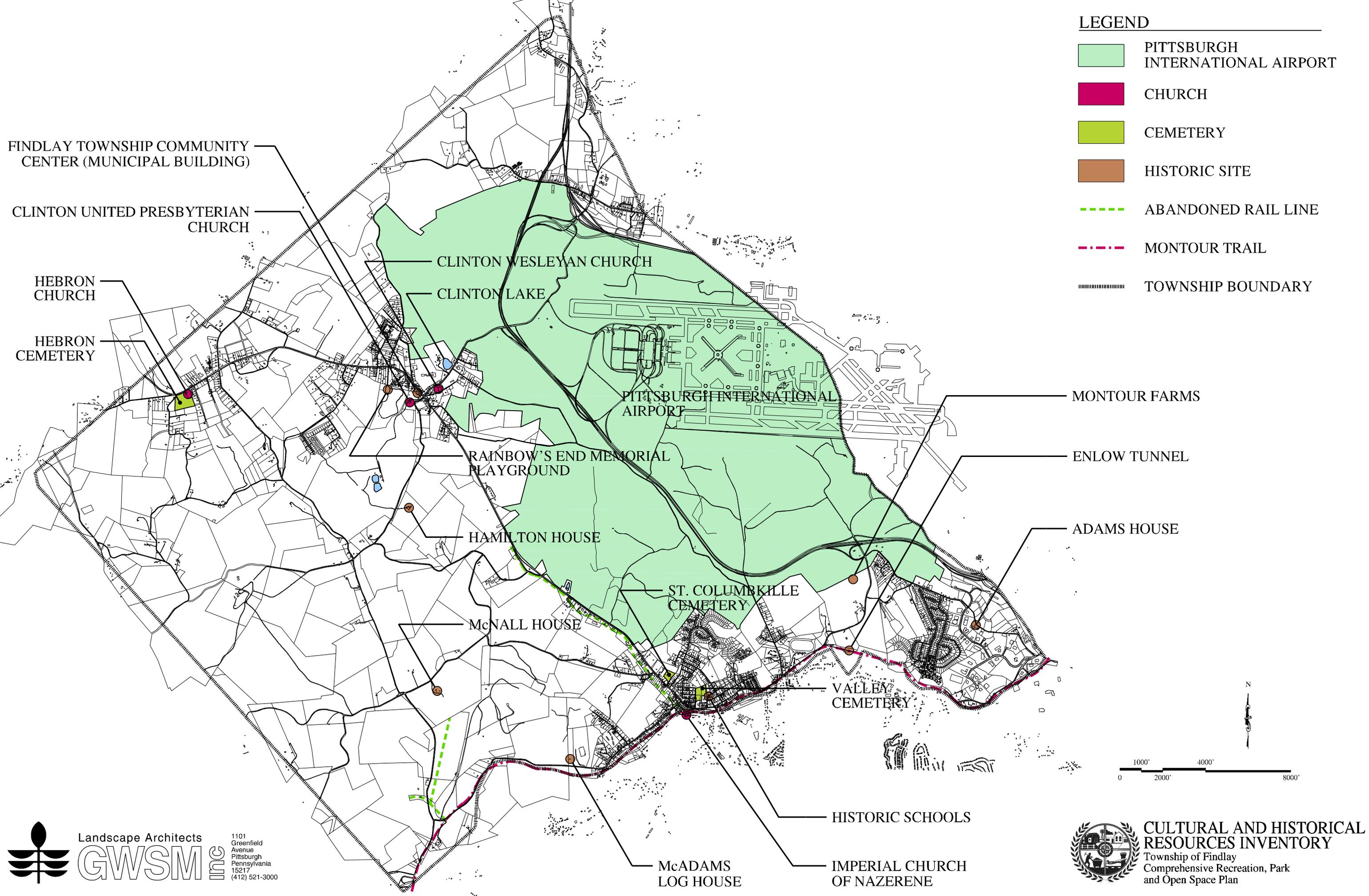
## **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

There are numerous reasons for the Township to cooperate with neighboring municipalities and school boards to successfully develop parks and recreation programs. For example, most small municipalities do not have a large enough population base to finance and maintain expensive recreation facilities such as pools and ball field complexes. Also state grant programs promote intergovernmental cooperation, thereby creating a better opportunity to receive state grants.

In this region, Findlay Township has the opportunity to take a leading role in providing open space and recreation opportunities. By working with adjacent municipalities, the county and the state, a regional trail system can be established which would benefit the whole region. Extending the Findlay Trail System via Independence and Hanover Townships, could connect the Montour Trail to Raccoon Creek State Park. These connections would enhance the regional trail system and give area residents the opportunity to use not only the Township trails, but also the existing county and state facilities.

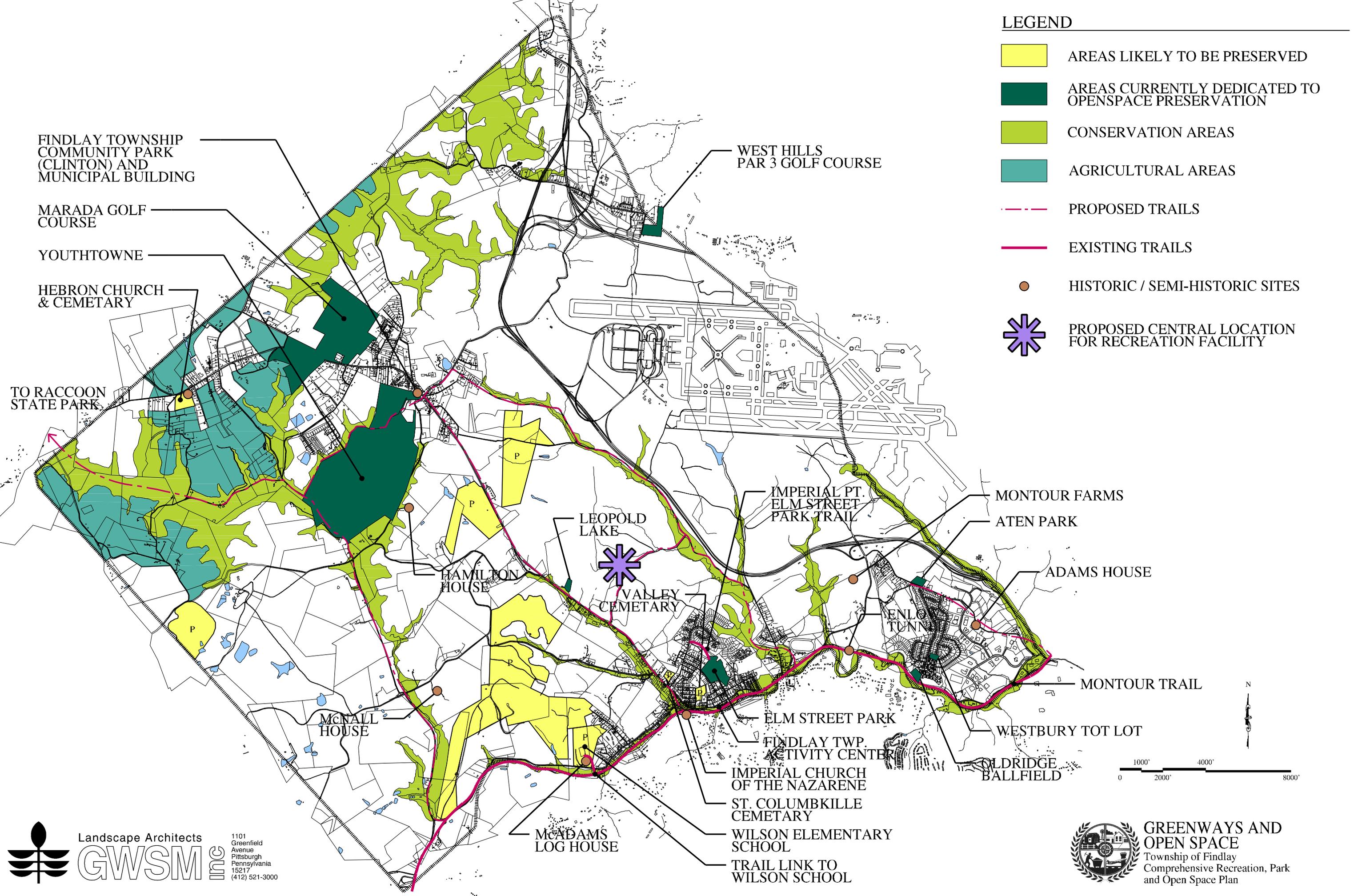
LEGEND

- PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
- CHURCH
- CEMETERY
- HISTORIC SITE
- ABANDONED RAIL LINE
- MONTOUR TRAIL
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY



**LEGEND**

-  AREAS LIKELY TO BE PRESERVED
-  AREAS CURRENTLY DEDICATED TO OPENSACE PRESERVATION
-  CONSERVATION AREAS
-  AGRICULTURAL AREAS
-  PROPOSED TRAILS
-  EXISTING TRAILS
-  HISTORIC / SEMI-HISTORIC SITES
-  PROPOSED CENTRAL LOCATION FOR RECREATION FACILITY



FINDLAY TOWNSHIP  
COMMUNITY PARK  
(CLINTON) AND  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

MARADA GOLF  
COURSE

YOUTHTOWNE

HEBRON CHURCH  
& CEMETARY

WEST HILLS  
PAR 3 GOLF COURSE

TO RACCOON  
STATE PARK

IMPERIAL PT.  
ELM STREET  
PARK TRAIL

MONTOUR FARMS

ATEN PARK

LEOPOLD  
LAKE

HAMILTON  
HOUSE

VALLEY  
CEMETARY

ADAMS HOUSE

MCNALL  
HOUSE

ELM STREET PARK

MONTOUR TRAIL

WESTBURY TOT LOT

FINDLAY TWP.  
ACTIVITY CENTER

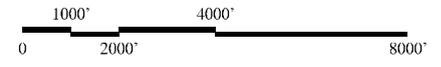
IMPERIAL CHURCH  
OF THE NAZARENE

OLDRIDGE  
BALLFIELD

MCADAMS  
LOG HOUSE

WILSON ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

TRAIL LINK TO  
WILSON SCHOOL



# INVENTORY OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Lot (including the ball field and recreation area at the Community Center), and Leopold Lake. The combined area of all Township-owned parks equals less than 90 acres.

## Findlay Township-Owned Recreation Facilities

The Township of Findlay owns and maintains six parks: Aten Road Park, Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton), Elm Street Park, Leopold Lake, Old Ridge Ballfield, Westbury Tot

A complete descriptive inventory of existing Township-owned parks are listed in the following paragraphs and can be referenced in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3 – Summary of Findlay Township Park Amenities**

Summary of Findlay Township Park Amenities																								
Park	Acreege	Amphitheater	Baseball Field	Basketball Court	Batting Cage	Bleachers	Biking Trail	Concession Building	Equestrian Trails	Fire Rings	Fishing	Horseshoes	Outdoor Grills	Pavilion (lighted)	Pavilion (non-lighted)	Pay Phone	Picnic Tables	Playground Equipment	Restrooms (permanent)	Restrooms (portable)	Soccer (comb. w/ ball field)	Tennis Court	Walking / Fitness Trails	Youth Baseball Field
Aten Road Park	4.4		√	√		√		√								√		√	√					
Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton)	67.0	√	√	√	√	√		√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√
Elm Street Park	10.8 7		√	√		√	√	√				√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√	√	√	
Leopold Lake	3.0									√	√		√				√			√				
Old Ridge Ball Field	4.3					√		√								√				√				√
Westbury Tot Lot	.12																	√						
Total Acres	89.3 6																							

## MINI PARKS



**Westbury Tot-Lot** is a small corner parcel (.12 acres) located on Escalon Drive in the Westbury plan of homes that includes a few pieces of play equipment and a bench. In addition to the previously mentioned parcels there is a 3/4-acre undeveloped parcel adjacent to the Westbrook Townhome Complex dedicated for recreation.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



**Aten Road Park** is approximately 4-1/2 acres of parkland located along Aten Road in the Westbury area of Findlay Township. According to the needs assessment survey, approximately 26.5% of the residents in Findlay Township use this park more than once per year. This park includes a baseball field with concession stand

and restrooms, basketball court and a small playground.

**Elm Street Park** is nearly 11 acres of parkland located in the residential area of Imperial. This park was donated to Findlay Township in 1970 by the West Allegheny School District. Facilities existing at Elm Street include a tennis court, baseball field with concession stand and restrooms, playground, picnic pavilion and a biking/hiking trail.



**Old Ridge Ballfield** is comprised of a total of 13.16 acres of land formally dedicated to the Township during the development of the Westbury residential area. Approximately 4.3 acres of the site has been developed and maintained for recreation. Currently the facilities that exist at Old Ridge include a ballfield, concession building and portable bleachers, and portable restrooms.

## COMMUNITY PARKS



**Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton)** is approximately 67 acres of parkland, most of which was donated by West Allegheny School District in the 1970's. Located in Clinton, today the park is used by nearly sixty percent of all Findlay Township residents. However, it does not currently meet the NRPA standards it lacks large recreational facilities such as a pool, athletic complex and adequate parking -- this park features two baseball fields, amphitheater, picnic groves and pavilions, a hiking trail system constructed by Boy Scout Troop #830 and the newly constructed Rainbow's End Memorial Playground.

The Township holds noted annual events at Findlay Township Community Park, (Clinton) such as the Christmas Festival of Lights and the Fair in the Woodlands Community Fair.

## SPECIAL USE FACILITIES



**The Findlay Township Activity Center** is an 8,000 sq/ft. two- story handicap accessible facility available for rent for various types of events and programs and is located along Main Street in Imperial. The total seating capacity for the building is 300 people.



**Leopold Lake** is nearly 3 acres of land located along Route 30. This area includes a lake, picnic tables, fire rings and portable restrooms situated within an entirely wooded area.

## REGIONAL/METROPOLITAN PARKS

### Non-Township Recreational Facilities

The residents of Findlay Township have the opportunity to take part in recreation activities and enjoy facilities that are available to them regionally. These parks and facilities are used, by individuals from a much wider service area, (typically up to a one hour drive). These regionally significant parks are state or county-owned facilities. Refer to Figure 4.4 for a list of these facilities.

## Allegheny County-Owned Facilities

Refer to Figure 4.5

**North Park** is located in Hampton, McCandless and Pine Townships, approximately 25 miles north of Findlay Township. This 3,010-acre park provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including golf, tennis, swimming, boating, biking, picnicking and skating.

**South Park** is located in South Park and Bethel Townships, approximately 30 miles southeast of Findlay Township. This 1,999-acre park includes recreation facilities which provide camping, basketball, tennis, skating, hiking, golfing, baseball, tennis, biking. A wave pool complex provides for swimming activities.

**Settler's Cabin Park** is located nearby to Findlay Township, approximately 6 miles east of Findlay in Collier, Robinson and North Fayette Townships. This 1,589-acre park includes a wave pool complex, diving pool, tennis courts, picnic groves, shelters and trails.

**Figure 4.5 Nearby County Park Facilities**

	Allegheny County Parks		
	North Park	South Park	Settlers Cabin Park
Ball Fields	•	•	
Basketball Courts	•	•	
Boating	•		
Building Rental	•	•	
Fishing	•		
Golf Course	•	•	
Ice Skating Rinks	•	•	
Nature Center	•	•	
Picnic Groves	•	•	•
Platform Tennis	•		
Playground Equipment	•	•	•
Swimming Pools	•	WP	WPD
Tennis Courts	•	•	•
Tours		•	
Trails	•	•	
Biking	•	•	•
Exercise	•	•	
Hiking	•	•	•
Jogging	•	•	•
Nature Activities	•	•	•
Snowmobile	•	•	
X-Country Skiing	•	•	•
Wildlife Reserves	•	•	
Soccer Fields	•	•	

KEY: WP = Wave Pool WPD = Wave Pool & Diving

**Figure 4.4 – Summary of Regional/Metropolitan Park Amenities**

Park	Ownership	Acreage
Settlers Cabin	Allegheny County	1,589
North Park	Allegheny County	3,010
South Park	Allegheny County	1,999
Hillman State Park	State of Pennsylvania	3,654
Point State Park	State of Pennsylvania	36
Raccoon Creek State Park	State of Pennsylvania	7,572
McConnell's Mill State Park	State of Pennsylvania	2,551
Moraine State Park	State of Pennsylvania	16,725
Beaver Creek State Park	State of Ohio	3,038
Jefferson Lake State Park	State of Ohio	944

## State-Owned Facilities

### PENNSYLVANIA STATE PARKS

Refer to Figure 4.6

**Raccoon Creek State Park** is located in Beaver, PA approximately 12 miles south of Findlay Township. This 7,572-acre park is one of the largest and most beautiful parks in the Commonwealth. Facilities at the park range from early Civilian Conservation Corps camp to modern facilities. A centrally located 101-acre lake provides opportunities for outdoor recreation including: fishing, boating, swimming and viewing waterfowl. Raccoon Creek also has a wildflower preserve, which provides excellent educational opportunities, indoors and outdoors.

**Hillman State Park** is located in Washington County, PA approximately 10 miles west of Findlay Township. This 3,654 acre park is undeveloped and managed for hunting by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Hiking trails are open to the public and there is a field available for flying radio-controlled model airplanes.

**Point State Park** is located at the tip of Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle in Allegheny County, PA, approximately 20 miles east of Findlay Township. This National Historic Landmark marks the location of a strategic strong point of the French and Indian War, and eventually the "Gateway to the West". Today, this 36-acre park provides a majestic water fountain, paved promenades along the riverfront, open green space and dramatic views to the impressive hillside scenery.

**Moraine State Park** is located in Butler County, PA, approximately 55 miles north of Findlay Township. This 16,725-acre park features the 3,225-acre Lake Arthur. Visitors can enjoy fishing, boating, sailing and swimming. Many other recreational opportunities exist including: picnicking, biking, hiking, hunting and camping.

**McConnell's Mill State Park** is located in Lawrence County, PA, approximately 55 miles north of Findlay Township. This 2,551-acre park provides a scenic escape near Slippery Rock Creek, a National Natural Landmark. Some of the recreational opportunities available at McConnell's Mill include hiking, whitewater rafting, rock climbing and rappelling.

**Jennings State Park** is located in Butler County, PA, approximately 60 miles north of Findlay Township. This 300-acre park offers a full range of educational programs and features, a relic prairie, which includes the prairie flower called "Blazing Star". Visitors can attend the environmental education center; enjoy hiking and other nature related activities.

### OHIO STATE PARKS

**Jefferson Lake State Park** is located in the wooded hills of Jefferson County, OH. This 962-acre park is located in the Town Fork of Yellow Creek and features a manmade 17-acre lake. Some of the facilities available at Jefferson Lake include camping, boating, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing and hunting.

**Beaver Creek State Park** is a unique geological destination located in the sandstone hills of Eastern Ohio. This 3,038-acre park provided the opportunity for camping, boating, hunting, fishing, hiking and picnicking.

Additional information about Pennsylvania State Parks can be provided by visiting [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks) and for Ohio State Parks by visiting [www.dcnr.state.oh.us/stateparks](http://www.dcnr.state.oh.us/stateparks) .

**Figure 4.6 State Park Facilities**

	Pennsylvania State Parks						Ohio State Parks	
	Hillman State Park	Moraine State Park	McConnell's Mill State Park	Point State Park	Raccoon Creek State Park	Jennings State Park	Beaver Creek State Park	Jefferson Lake State Park
Acreage	3,654	16,725	2,551	36	7,572	300	3,038	944
Pavilion / Picnic		•	•		•		•	•
Playground					•			
Swimming		•			•			•
Fishing		•	•		•		•	•
Boating		•	•	•	•			•
Trails	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hunting	•	•	•		•		•	•
Winter Sports		•			•			
Camping					•		•	•
Nature Activities		•	•		•	•		
Educational Programs		•	•		•	•		
Climbing / Rappelling			•					
Family Rental Cabins		•			•			
Restrooms		•	•	•	•			
Accessible Restrooms		•	•	•	•			

**SCHOOL FACILITIES**

The schools within West Allegheny School District include McKee Elementary and Wilson Elementary Schools, West Allegheny Middle School and West Allegheny Senior High School. All four schools serve Findlay Township residents in a variety of ways. McKee Elementary and Wilson Elementary each have a gymnasium, a swimming pool, a soccer field and playgrounds. The Parent Teachers Association (PTA) organizes a swim program for two to three months during the winter at these schools. The pools are also available through West Allegheny School Board for other youth groups to use.

**PRIVATE COMMERCIAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS**

The private sector provides a variety of open space and recreation lands, facilities and programs for use of Findlay residents. Private activity ranges from preservation and conservation of open space and historic structures to providing specific recreation facilities and programs such as golf courses and indoor activities.

**The 9-Hole Marada Golf Course**, located in Clinton, is a privately owned public course that may, in the future, expand to 18 holes with a driving range.

**Marianne King Fitness** holds aerobic classes Monday through Thursday at the Findlay Township Activity Center in Imperial.

**The Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel** has fitness facilities and two pools. These facilities are available through club memberships which vary by the season. The outdoor pool is open only during the summer – Memorial Day to Labor Day. The other facilities are open year-round.

**The Airport Hilton** offers similar club memberships as the Airport Marriott during the summer months for the use of their pool facilities.

### **SPECIAL USE FACILITIES**

**Tri-State Holiness Association Camp** in Clinton is used once or twice a year by the congregation. This camp is comprised of a series of summer cottages as well as a dining and an assembly hall.



**Youthtowne**, in Clinton, is a privately owned camp dedicated to the needs of children. It is primarily used for church and youth groups. There are several fishing lakes, a baseball field, soccer fields, retreat center, volleyball court and other facilities for outdoor activities.

### **TRAILS**



**The Montour Trail** runs along the southern boundary of Findlay Township and winds through 55 miles of woods and fields. The trail is an abandoned railroad right-of-way and traverses thirteen municipalities starting in Imperial and ending in Coraopolis. Users include walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers. Its easy accessibility and gentle grades make it ideal for use by people with disabilities and the senior citizens.

LEGEND

- FINDLAY TOWNSHIP FACILITIES
- WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL FACILITIES
- PRIVATE FACILITIES
- MONTOUR TRAIL (MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL)
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY

COMMUNITY CENTER PARK  
 CLINTON COMMUNITY PARK  
 MARADA GOLF COURSE  
 YOUTHTOWNE

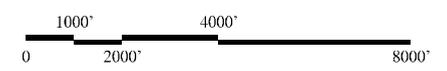
WEST HILLS PAR 3

ATEN ROAD PARK  
 OLD RIDGE BALLFIELD  
 WESTBURY TOT LOT (FINDLAY TWP. FACILITY)  
 MONTOUR TRAIL

LEOPOLD LAKE

IMPERIAL PT. ELM STREET PARK TRAIL

ELM STREET PARK  
 FINDLAY TOWNSHIP ACTIVITY CENTER  
 WILSON SCHOOL



## **POPULATION AND RECREATION STANDARDS**

### **Pennsylvania Region 10 – Issues, Needs and Priorities**

#### **Issues:**

As stated in the Pennsylvania Recreation Plan, the most critical recreation issue in Southwestern Pennsylvania is funding. Although money is needed most urgently for maintenance requirements of existing facilities, communities must also find ways to fund the acquisition of open space and other critical areas before they are taken up by development. Three seemingly great opportunities to fund new recreation acquisitions are user fees, public/private partnerships, and the state.

User fees make sense from a logical standpoint, but they have an associated administrative cost and a negative connotation with the public.

Public/private partnerships can be successful in stretching recreation dollars and providing better programs and facilities, but it can take years for these types of investments to become profitable. Profitability for private investors is crucial, in both the short and long term.

State grant programs are an obvious alternative to help solve recreation funding problems. The link between recreation opportunities and the tax revenues and economic development that they generate needs to be made clearer. One also must note that recreation opportunities influence location decisions for private companies.

Because of the need for more partnership approaches in recreation and combined with the need to stretch recreation dollars and avoid duplication efforts, there must be more

cooperation in planning between governmental entities.

Access is a growing issue in recreation. Public parks, in particular, cannot keep up with the growing demand of the public for recreation opportunities. Special groups such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income families, all have access problems that must be addressed.

Liability is another major issue in recreation. When facilities are free and open to the public, especially in natural areas, they should not be expected to be hazard free. State legislation to help protect recreation providers from costly and frivolous lawsuits would be helpful.

Finally, maintaining the education and conservation functions for the public park is another important issue in recreation. One lives in symbiosis with the other. The more people understand about nature and conservation of nature, the more they will respect nature and be willing to pay for conservation. One caveat to the hypothesis is this: many public parks are intensively used, thereby setting up a potential conflict between recreation and conservation, and/or active and passive uses. This is an issue that has and will continue to cause conflict in local communities.

**Recreation Needs and Priorities:**

In Region 10, which consists of nine Southwestern Pennsylvania counties including Allegheny, Beaver and Washington (relational to Findlay), the top recreation needs include expansion and rehabilitation of bicycle paths, hiking trails and picnic areas.

The recreation activities with the highest participation levels are: picnicking, sightseeing, jogging/walking, swimming, hiking, and biking. Hindrances to participation include the distances that must be traveled to facilities and the overcrowding of facilities. The major deterrent in this region is lack of information about the location of facilities. Residents strongly agree that all levels of government should do more to increase awareness about recreation facilities and opportunities.

Residents of communities favor more private sector participation and fundraisers rather than fees and general taxes to support recreation facilities. Maintenance of existing facilities, and protection of natural resources are high priorities. Residents advocate more government protection of open space areas.

The opinion/needs survey of both random sample and non-random sample respondents offers insights into their priorities and perceptions regarding recreation opportunities and facilities available to them. In this region, 77% of random sample respondents indicated that recreational activities are an important part of their lifestyle while 91% of non-random respondents indicated so. Further, 57% of the non-random group belong to an organization involved in outdoor recreation versus 28% of random sample respondents. Clearly, the non-random sample respondents have a keener interest in recreation. Refer to Figure 4.7.

In conclusion, to expand and/or rehabilitate the facilities for picnicking, hiking, biking and jogging, an increase in funding will be required. Since the public does not support general tax increases, the most active group of recreation participation should be encouraged.

**Figure 4.7 – Facilities That Need to be Provided or Expanded**

Rank	Random Sample		High-Interest Sample	
1	Bicycle Paths	52%	Bicycle Paths	60%
2	Hiking Trails	40%	Hiking Trails	49%
3	Picnic Areas	38%	Natural/Wild Areas	44%
4	Wildlife Areas	34%	Wildlife Areas	41%
5	Campgrounds	34%	Env. Education Areas	36%
6	Jogging/Fitness Trails	33%	Jogging/Fitness Trails	34%
7	Natural/Wild Areas	33%	Picnic Areas	34%
8	Outdoor Theaters/Concerts	32%	Campgrounds	33%
9	Swimming Pools	30%	Historical Sites	31%
10	Community Rec. Centers	29%	Fishing Areas	31%
11	Playgrounds	29%		

## **SPATIAL PARK ANALYSIS**

This section of the plan outlines a recommended classification system for local and regional recreational open space as defined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), and inventories park facilities located throughout Findlay Township. Additionally, specific inventory related to Township-owned facilities are emphasized.

The consultant visited each Township-owned facility to inventory and evaluate existing conditions related to quantity, type and general condition of play equipment, ballfields and support facilities. Other items evaluated were accessibility, general maintenance, conformance to ADA guidelines and CPSC safety standards. A detailed safety audit was conducted for each Township-owned playground. Supporting documentation and detailed notes are included in Appendix C.

### **NRPA Standards**

To provide the Township with an understanding of the uses of each park classification, the following are descriptions of each park classification according to the NRPA. Refer to Figure 4.8.

**Mini-Park (Vest-Pocket Park)** – The smallest park classification, used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. This park would serve concentrated or limited populations, which may occur in isolated development areas or provide unique recreational opportunities.

Although the past classification “mini-park” was often oriented toward active recreation, the “vest-pocket park” classification has a broader application that includes both active or passive recreation (e.g. picnic, gazebo, arbor, sitting areas).

Important criteria to consider for a Mini-Park are accessibility separated from vehicular traffic, linkage to a community pathway system and servicing a specific recreation need.

**Neighborhood Park** – The basic unit of the park system and ideally serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. The neighborhood park should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within the service area.

The neighborhood park should be located in an area that is within walking distance and accessible to its users. The uses of the neighborhood park are intended to be informal (non-programmed) with the exception of limited use by youth teams and not to result in overuse, noise, parking problems, and congestion. It should accommodate a balance between active and passive recreational uses.

The neighborhood park serves a specific purpose and population. It should provide the facilities that serve the unique needs of its community (e.g. shaded sitting areas, paved pathways and tables for an older community; play equipment for children, shelters and play fields and benches for communities with a higher population of children).

**Community Park** – Much larger in size than a neighborhood park, and serves a broader purpose and a larger population than neighborhood parks. The focus of a community park is to meet the recreational needs of several neighborhoods or larger sections of the community, as well as preserve unique natural characteristics in the landscape.

Due to its service area, a community park is most often accessed by automobile or bicycle and is centrally located to its targeted communities.

The facilities provided in a community park accommodate a greater number of people and several types of potential, active-recreation facilities such as large play structures, game courts, ballfields for youth play, tennis courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe areas, ice skating area, swimming pools, archery ranges and disc golf areas. Passive recreation facilities may include extensive internal trails, group and individual picnic/sitting areas, general open space, nature study areas and ornamental gardens. Due to the acreage at a community park, larger facilities such as athletic fields and swimming pool facilities could be accommodated.

**Regional/Metropolitan Park** – This facility serves an entire region made up of potentially an entire county or several counties. Generally, a regional park services an area of 40-50 miles or approximately an hour drive. Facilities found in a regional park would be extensive, many requiring a large quantity of land. Activities accommodated may include boating, swimming, camping, hiking, bicycling, fishing and/or golfing.

**Figure 4.8**

Type of Park by the Facilities it Contains						
Facility	Mini – Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Regional / Metropolitan Park	Regional Park Reserve	Special Use Facility
Amphitheater			•	•		•
Archery Range				•	•	•
Basketball Courts		•	•	•		•
Batting Cages				•		•
Bicycle Rental			•	•	•	•
BMX Track			•	•		•
Bocci Courts		•	•	•		•
Community Center / Lodge			•			•
Concessions			•	•	•	•
Conservatory				•		•
Cross-Country Skiing			•	•	•	•
Deck Hockey			•	•		•
Fishing				•		•
Driving Range			•	•	•	•
Fitness Trail		•	•	•		•
Game Arcade				•		•
Go-Cart Track				•		•
Golf Course				•		•
Gymnasium			•	•		•
Historic Site	•		•	•	•	•
Horseshoe Pits		•	•	•		•
Ice Rink			•	•		•
Miniature Golf			•	•		•
Nature Center				•	•	•
Open Space	•	•	•	•	•	•
Picnic Area	•	•	•	•	•	•
Play Equipment	•	•	•	•	•	•
Shelters		•	•	•	•	•
Skateboard Arena			•	•		•
Sports Fields			•	•		•
Stables				•	•	•
Swimming Pool			•	•		•
Trails (Hard Surface)		•	•	•		•
Trails (Soft Surface)		•	•	•	•	•
Tennis Courts		•	•	•		•

Source: NRPA

**Special Use Facility** – This classification is reserved for facilities with unique or specialized uses. Some examples are individual sports fields; sports field complexes, golf courses or facilities aimed toward one type of use, such as a racquet club, nature center or rodeo ground. Not typically located within a park, this facility would be considered a “special destination”. Whether publicly or privately owned, these facilities must be considered a recreation resource available to the residents of the community.

**Linear Park** – With this classification, the NRPA identifies many environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, flood plains and wetlands. Recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing or canoeing may exist in a linear park.

The following charts (Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.12) represent the recommended classification system for recreational open space as determined by the NRPA. The NRPA suggests this system as a guide to planning – not an absolute blueprint.

NRPA suggests that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a “core” system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. The size and amount of “adjunct” parklands will vary from community to community, but must be taken into account when considering a total, well-rounded system of parks and recreation areas.

Component	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres / 1000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Mini-Park	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.	Less than ¼-mile radius. Residential setting.	1 acre or less	0.25 to 0.5A	Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse development or housing for the elderly.
Neighborhood Park/Playground	Area for intense recreational activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.	¼ to ½-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 (a neighborhood). Uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 to 10 acres is optimal.	1.0 to 2.0A	Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population—geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school-park facility.
Community Park	Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon site suitability and community need.	Several neighborhoods. 1 to 3 mile radius.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.	5.0 to 8.0A	May include natural features, such as water bodies, and areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood served.

**Figure 4.10 – Local / Close-To-Home Space (6.25 – 10.5 Acres / 1000), according to NRPA.**

**Figure 4.11 - Regional Space (15-20 Acres / 1000), according to NRPA.**

Component	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres / 1000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Regional / Metropolitan Park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses; may include play areas.	Several communities. 1 hour driving time.	50 acres minimum. 75 acres optimal.	5.0 to 10.0A	Contiguous to or encompassing natural resources.
Regional Park Reserve	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as viewing, and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.	Several communities. 1 hour driving time.	1000+ acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.	Variable	Diverse or unique natural resources, such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, topography.

**Figure 4.12 - Space that may be local or regional and is unique to each community, according to NRPA.**

Component	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres / 1000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Linear Park	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing, and pleasure driving. May include active play areas. (NOTE: any included for any of above components may occur in the “linear park.”)	No applicable standard.	Sufficient width to protect the resource and provide maximum use.	Variable	Built or natural corridors, such as utility rights-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities, such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.
Special Use	Areas of specialized or single purpose recreational activities, such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservatories, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, or downhill ski areas, or areas that preserve, maintain, and interpret buildings, sites, and objects of archeological significance. Also plazas or squares in or near commercial centers, boulevards, parkways.	No applicable standard.	Variable depending on desired size.	Variable	Within communities.
Conservancy	Protection and management of the natural / cultural environment with recreation use as a secondary objective.	No applicable standard.	Sufficient to protect the resource.	Variable	Variable, depending on the resource being protected.

## **SAFETY AND ADA COMPLIANCE**

In an effort to reduce the frequency and severity of playground injuries, safety standards have been developed in the United States and have continued to evolve over the past two decades. The American Society for Testing and Materials (“ASTM”) and the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (“CPSC”) have produced the nationally recognized voluntary standards and guidelines for the manufacture, installation, and inspection of playground equipment and safety surfacing.

These voluntary standards and guidelines were used as the basis for the safety audits performed:

- ASTM F-1487-98:  
Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use
- ASTM F-1292-99:  
Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment
- CPSC:  
Handbook for Public Playground Safety

Additionally, each playground was reviewed for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

Five Township of Findlay playgrounds were audited, including:

- Aten Park
- Community Center Park (Township Building area)
- Elm Street Park
- Findlay Township Community Park (below Oriole Pavilion)
- Westbury Tot Lot

A new playground was added to Findlay Township Community Park in Clinton during the course of this study. An inspection of this “Leathers” playground was not included in the scope of work for this study; however, the consulting team strongly recommends that the township complete a safety audit on this playground as well.

### **Playground Hazard Priority Categories:**

The system of categorizing priority of hazards employed in the safety audit reports is based on criteria originally developed by the National Park Service for the removal of hazards. Those categories are:

<b>SECTION I</b>	<b>Hazard Category Description</b>
Class A Hazard	A condition that is life threatening or can cause severe, permanent disability
Class B Hazard	A condition likely to cause serious injury, resulting in temporary disability
Class C Hazard	A condition likely to cause minor (non-disabling) injury or does not meet CPSC or ASTM recommendations for playground safety

Each piece of playground equipment, safety surfacing, or related aspect that did not meet current CPSC guidelines and/or ASTM voluntary standards was cited in that playground’s audit report followed by a recommendation and a Hazard Category rating.

**Report Format:**

The audit reports for each township playground, which can be found in Appendix C, are laid out in the following manner:

- A general description of the playground is provided, its location, and its use patterns.
- Safety/Risk Management at the site is discussed.
- Wheelchair Access/ADA Compliance is reviewed and recommendations made.
- Safety Surfacing and Containment was inspected with recommendations provided.
- Play Equipment and Structures are each individually reported on, with recommendations for attention where needed.

## **RECREATION DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

The Township of Findlay Parks and Recreation Department (“FPRD”) was formally created in 1990 with the passage of Ordinance No. 193 and the hiring of a seasonal employee as Director. That Director’s position was made full-time in 1991. Currently, the Department is administered by the Parks and Recreation Coordinator.

Copies of ordinances and agreements pertinent to township parks and recreation can be found in Appendix F.

The FPRD does not have an appointed Advisory Board of township residents to advise the Board of Supervisors and the Department on matters related to parks and recreation. The Department does not have a mission statement.

For administrative and accounting purposes, the Department is structured in one operating budget: Culture – Recreation (expenditure code 450.---). All revenue for the FPRD is tracked in a general category: Miscellaneous Revenues – Recreation (revenue code 394.900). An annual report is not prepared at year-end.

The Department office is located in the Township Building. Registration is predominately handled by secretarial staff in other township administrative offices.

The FPRD produces flyers for individual programs and special events that are distributed primarily through the schools; it does not produce an overall program guide. The township has a tri-fold, four-color brochure on the Findlay Township Activity Center, but there are no promotional materials describing Findlay’s park system, recreation facilities, or the services provided by the FPRD. The Department does not have a self-identifying logo.

The Department has a working relationship with the Findlay Athletic Association and West Allegheny Youth Soccer and facilitates private recreation program provider Marianne King. Currently, there is no formal cooperative arrangement with the West Allegheny School District for joint use of facilities or joint programming efforts.

### **PERSONNEL:**

The FPRD has three full-time staff positions: Parks and Recreation Coordinator, Assistant Parks and Recreation Coordinator, and Recreation Coordinator. During the summer months, this work force is supplemented with four seasonal employees of township residence who attend an institution of higher education.

The Parks & Recreation Coordinator reports to the Township Manager. This is a “hands-on”, supervisory position whose responsibilities are largely maintenance-oriented, with over 75% of the workday going to those types of functions. The Parks & Recreation Coordinator oversees other full-time and part-time employees of the FPRD.

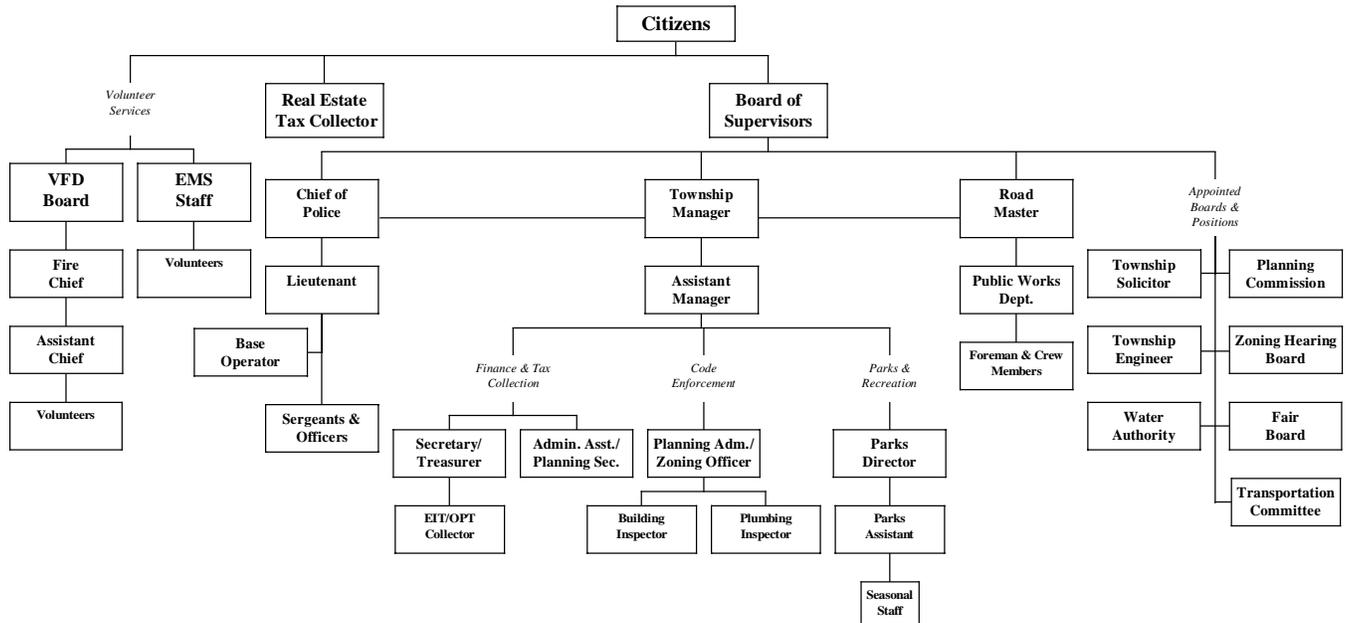
The Recreation Coordinator reports to the Township Manager. This position is responsible for the administration and conduct of a year-round comprehensive recreation program. The position also coordinates special events and other planned activities.

The Assistant Coordinator reports to the Parks and Recreation Coordinator. Like the Coordinator, the Assistant’s responsibilities are largely maintenance-oriented. Similarly, over 80% of the workday is spent on maintenance tasks. The Assistant supervises the work of seasonal employees and provides assistance with recreational activities.

Administrative functions for the Department are performed by both Coordinators. Telephone calls for the Department are received at the

**Figure 4.13 Findlay Township Municipal Organizational Chart**

Findlay Township Municipal Organizational Chart



township’s main number. Office support is provided by secretarial staff from other administrative offices. This secretarial staff also assists with the coordination of special events.

The hiring and evaluation of employees is done in accordance with township policies and procedures.

Figure 4.13 delineates the township’s existing organizational hierarchy.

**FINANCING:**

The Department’s operating budget is drafted jointly by the Coordinator and the Township Manager and submitted to the Township Supervisors for consideration. This operating budget includes appropriations for wages and benefits, supplies and materials, rentals, and vehicle repairs for parks maintenance and recreation programming. The FPRD operating budget also includes fund allocations for various community organizations. Capital

improvements and purchases are identified by line budget entry in the Capital Reserve Account under the same heading and coding as the operating budget: Culture – Recreation (450.---).

Fees, where charged for township-funded programs, are set at a level to cover the direct costs of offering the program. Special events are offered free of charge. A fee schedule is established for use of the Activity Center and for ball field and picnic pavilion rentals. Fees for facilitated programs, such as Marianne King fitness classes, are set by contractor and collected by both the contractor and the township. A percentage of the contractor’s fees are paid to the township.

Funding for the Department’s operating budget comes from township taxes, as does most of the funding for the Capital Improvement Program. Portions of the Department’s capital improvements are covered by grants. These are usually projects involving improved wheelchair access to existing recreation facilities.

Currently, grant applications are written by the Township Manager. Grant funding has largely come from the local Council of Government (Community Development Block Grants) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (Small Communities grants). Some of the expense incurred to offer special events is underwritten by support from local businesses. The Manager's secretary currently garners that support.

**MAINTENANCE:**

All aspects of park maintenance are completed by the FPRD. The township utilizes the services of a landscape maintenance company for its ball field fertilization program. The majority of the equipment used for parks maintenance is owned by the FPRD, augmented as needed with heavy equipment from the Public Works Department. Light maintenance on this equipment is performed by the Department, equipment repair is completed by

Public Works personnel. Figure 4.14 lists the Department's current pool of maintenance equipment and its condition.

A complaint form is used by the township administration and police department to report maintenance needs in the parks. The Department does not have in place a formal system for requesting service or documenting completed work. Written maintenance standards and maintenance schedules do not exist. The Department has developed playground maintenance checklists, but does not use them. Safety inspections are not routinely completed on the playgrounds. The township's insurance carrier periodically inspects the parks, but a Loss Control Report is not provided to the Department outlining safety concerns. The township does not have a Risk Management Plan in place.

The consulting team visited all parks and facilities owned by the township. These areas were evaluated for effectiveness of current maintenance practices, compliance with the

**Figure 4.14 Existing Maintenance Equipment**

<b>Park Department Maintenance Equipment</b>				
<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>Condition and Use</b>
1	Chevrolet Pick-up Truck	2001	1 Year	Good
1	Ford Utility Truck	1996	4 Years	Good
1	Ford Pick-up Truck	1999	2 Years	Good
1	Bobcat Skid Steer Loader	1993	8 Years	Fair
1	Toro Riding Mower	1993	7 Years	Fair
1	John Deere Riding Mower	1997	3 Years	Fair
2	6' x 12' Trailers	1993	7 Years	Fair
		1999	2 Years	Good
2	Toro Push Mowers	1996	4 Years	Fair
1	12" Ryan Jr. Sod Cutter	1997	3 Years	Good
1	Ryan Pull-Behind Aerator	1995	6 Years	Fair
3	Stihl Trimmer	1997	3 Years	Fair
		1998	2 Years	Fair
		2000	1 Year	Good
1	Ex-Cell Pressure Washer	1998	2 Years	Good
1	Stihl Leaf Blower	1999	1 Year	Good
1	Smithco Infielder	2000	1 Year	Good

Source: Findlay Township

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and for visitor safety and comfort.

Large-scale maintenance tasks in the heavily used park areas, such as ball field maintenance and grass cutting, were found to be completed regularly and to a good standard. Lesser-used areas, such as the fitness trail in Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) or some of the horseshoe pits adjacent to picnic pavilions, were found to be significantly lacking in maintenance. Conditions in park rest rooms were sometimes below a desirable standard. It is the opinion of this study that the substandard maintenance in these areas is due primarily to limited staff time.

## **RECREATION PROGRAMMING Township Programs**

Township recreation programs and special events are planned by the Parks and Recreation Coordinator with assistance by the Assistant Parks and Recreation Coordinator. Programs are offered at the Findlay Township Activity Center. Special events take place at the Activity Center and at various township park sites including Findlay Township (Clinton) Community Park, Elm Street Park, and Leopold Lake.

Recreation programming offered by the Department is aimed primarily towards adult with fitness programs and boating and hunter safety courses. A summer, drop-in basketball program is offered for age 15 years through adults. Special events target specific age groups, preschool through age 15 years, and family members of all ages.

The FPRD collaborates with the “Findlay Township Senior Citizens” to produce monthly

lunch meetings that include guest speakers, entertainment, and bingo. This senior group takes up to four offsite trips each year and holds an annual picnic and a Christmas party. The township subsidizes 50% of the cost for resident seniors to participate in these trips and any recreational programs offered by the Department. An exercise class, specifically geared to senior adults, is offered separately through the FPRD.

## **YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS**

Organized youth sports are available in Findlay Township through several youth athletic associations, including:

*Findlay Athletic Association* – spring T-Ball for boy and girls ages 5 through 7 years; spring and fall Baseball/Softball leagues for ages 7 to 18 years.

*West Allegheny Aqua Club* – fall/winter and spring/summer competitive swim program for boys and girls ages 6 through 18 years; learn-to-swim instructional program offered 2 or 3 times per year for ages 3 years and up.

*West Allegheny Basketball Association* – winter and summer league play for boys and girls 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In-house program with competitive travel team for 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys.

*West Allegheny Hockey Association* – fall/winter developmental teams for boys and girls 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades; interscholastic PIHL play for grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.

*West Allegheny In-Line Hockey* – fall/winter interscholastic competitive league play for boys and girls 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

*West Allegheny Youth Association* – football and cheerleading opportunities through skills mini-camps and league play for ages 6 to 13 years.

*West Allegheny Youth Soccer* – fall and spring league play for boys and girls 4 to 18 years and an instructional summer camp for ages 6 to 12 years

*West Allegheny Youth Wrestling* – winter/spring competitive wrestling program for boys ages 5 to 12 years.

## **PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

A number of recreation and leisure learning programs are offered by public and quasi-public organizations and are available to Findlay residents in nearby locations outside the township borders. Two organizations provide the majority of these programs: Western Area YMCA and Western Allegheny Community Library.

All program providers, known to the consultant, were contacted to catalog the program areas they offer and the age groups they serve. That information was charted and analyzed by age group to determine the program areas that are sufficiently covered and those that are deficient. Figure 4.16 lists the recreation program areas used in this analysis and provides a description and typical activities for each program area. A categorical analysis of available recreational programs by program area and by age and other groupings can be found in Figure 4.17.

**Figure 4.16 Classification of Leisure Program Areas**

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Typical Activities</b>
Arts	Creative work; making or doing items that display form, beauty, &/or unusual perception	Graphic or plastic forms, such as painting, sculpting, engraving, etching, printing, etc.
Performing Arts	Participant is the mode of expression; combines elements of several media; performance before an audience	Music, dance, drama
Crafts	Utilitarian; item(s) have decorative value, as well as being useful	Macramé, tie-dying, knot-tying, knitting, sewing, pottery, crochet, weaving, leather crafts
New Arts	Employs technology; computers, camera, recorder, video	Photography, computer graphics, motion pictures, videotapes, sound recordings, slide presentations
Literary Programs	Characterized by activities associated with language, speech, literature, books, writing	Written communication, reading, poetry, short stories, public speaking, storytelling, debate, interpretative reading, language studies
Self-Development Programs	Aimed at improvement of the individual; primary purpose focused on cognitive, communicative or affective skills; focused on changing one's behavior	Self-help seminars, marriage seminars, assertiveness training, genealogy
Aquatics	Activities done in or upon the water	Instructional swim, drop-in swim, competitive swimming, exercise programs, small craft instruction, aquatic games
Outdoor Recreation	Activities in the out-of-doors; land-, water-, or air-based	Climbing, camping, biking, backpacking, bird watching, canoeing, fishing, ice skating, skiing, rafting, jogging, scuba diving
Wellness	Focuses on a holistic way on the well-being of the individual; a process as well as an end directed toward achieving optimal health	Physical fitness, nutrition, leisure education, weight reduction, smoking cessation, stress management, substance abuse, & medical self-care, mental/spiritual enhancements, safety training
Hobbies	Activity pursued with intense interest & longevity, types include collection, creative, educational, & performing	Antique/coin collecting, baseball cards, dolls, cooking, ornithology, chess/checkers
Social Recreation	Promotes sociability & opportunities for social interaction; key factor is to bring people together for socializing	Parties, picnics, dances, family reunions, festivals, social clubs, exhibits, tournaments, contests
Volunteer Services	Services provided without pay, providing to others as a community/civic service	Administrative volunteers, program volunteers, coaches, service-oriented volunteers, adopted-a-park & beautification programs
Travel & Tourism	Travel involves the movement of individuals from one location to another; tourism involves provision of attractions & support services	Outings, trips, vacations, & destination attractions, pass-through tourist attractions
Sports, Games, Athletics	Games require low level of organization/skill, few rules, and short duration. Sports have codified rules & procedures; require vigorous exertion, higher level of organization. Sport becomes athletics when it is organized for competition.	Basketball, football, baseball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, tennis, racquetball, badminton

**Figure 4.17 Findlay Township Recreation Program Analysis**

Program Area	Preschool	Youth	Teen
Arts			
Performing Arts			
Crafts	LIB: Annual Ginger Bread House <sup>1</sup>	LIB: Annual Ginger Bread House <sup>1</sup>	
New Arts			
Literary Programs	LIB: Story Time, Story/Craft Day	LIB: Story/Craft Day, Storyteller	
Self-Development Programs			Y: Campers in Leadership (12-14)
Aquatics	Y: Swim Inst.		
Outdoor Recreation		FT: Fishing Derby <sup>1</sup>	FT: Fishing Derby (15 & Under) <sup>1</sup>
Wellness		Y: Karate, Tumbling	Y: Strength Training, Tai Chi (16+)
Hobbies		LIB: Chess Club & Tournament	LIB: Chess Club
Social Recreation	FT: Easter Egg Hunt <sup>1</sup> , Halloween Parade <sup>1</sup> , Fishing Derby <sup>1</sup>	FT: Easter Egg Hunt <sup>1</sup> , C & M Madness, Halloween Parade <sup>1</sup> , Fishing Derby <sup>1</sup> , Snack & Craft, Wiffle Ball Game <sup>1</sup> Y: Indian Guides (5-9)	Y: Trail Blazers (13 & Up)
Volunteer Services			Y: Leaders Club (12-18) LIB: Pages
Travel & Tourism			
Sports, Games, Athletics	Y: Indoor & Outdoor Soccer, B-Ball, Deck Hockey, Kyndersports, T-Ball	YA: Football, Cheerleading, Skills Mini Camp Y: Indoor & Outdoor Soccer, Roller Deck Hockey, Flag Football, B-Ball & Camp, Cheerleading, Swim Team, Tennis & Camp FAA: T-Ball (5-7, spring only), Baseball/Softball Leagues (spring/fall)	FT: Pickup B-Ball YA: Football, Cheerleading, Skills Mini Camp Y: Roller Deck Hockey, Tennis, V-Ball FAA: Baseball/Softball Leagues (spring/fall)
Day Care/Camps		Y: Fun Days (school holidays), After School Program, Summer Day Camp	

<sup>1</sup> = Offered Once Annually

CCW = Curtain Call West (Library/School District)

FAA = Findlay Athletic Association

FPD = Findlay Police Department

FT = Findlay Township

LIB = Western Allegheny Community Library

MK = Marianne King

VFD = Findlay/Imperial Volunteer Fire Department

MTC = Montour Trail Council

AC = West Allegheny Aqua Club

BA = West Allegheny Basketball Association

HA = West Allegheny Hockey Association

IH = West Allegheny In-Line Hockey

MW = West Allegheny Midget Wrestling

SD = West Allegheny School District

YA = West Allegheny Youth Association

YS = West Allegheny Youth Soccer

Y = Western Area YMCA

**Figure 4.17a Findlay Township Recreation Programs Analysis**

Program Area	Adult	Senior Adult	Special Needs	Family
Arts				
Performing Arts				LIB: Kindermusik, Shakespeare <sup>1</sup>
Crafts	LIB: Holiday Craft, Annual Ginger Bread House <sup>1</sup>			LIB: Egg Decorating <sup>1</sup> , Rep. Pippy <sup>1</sup>
New Arts				
Literary Programs	LIB: Bookworms, Sign Language			
Self-Development Programs	Y: CPR			
Aquatics	Y: Free Swim, Water Works			
Outdoor Recreation	FT: Boating Safety Course <sup>1</sup> , Hunter Safety Course <sup>1</sup>			
Wellness	FT: Cardio & Step (MK) Y: Hi/Low & Water Aerobics, Step, Kickboxing, Spinning, Crunch, Karate, Yoga, Strength Training, Tai Chi, Circuit LIB: Healthy/Herbal Way	FT: Silver Strides (MK)		Y: Family Fun Night
Hobbies	LIB: Chess Club, Garden Talk			LIB: Kids in the Kitchen
Social Recreation	Y: Sat. Night Tennis Parties/Dinner	FT: Senior Monthly Luncheons/Activities (speakers, entertainment, bingo, 3-4 trips, 2 parties)		FT: Fair in the Woodlands <sup>1</sup> LIB: End of Summer Picnic <sup>1</sup> , Family Night (3), Native Amer. Day <sup>1</sup>
Volunteer Services	Y: Coaches, Referees, Office Workers, Special Projects LIB: Volunteers VFD: Firefighters YA: Board Members, Coaches, Team Coordinators FAA: Board Members, Team Managers, Coaches, Tournament Director			
Travel & Tourism		FT: Senior Trips (3 or 4)		
Sports, Games, Athletics	FT: Pickup B-Ball Y: Deck Hockey, V-Ball, Wallyball, Men's Softball & Flag Football, Tennis, Racquetball			
Day Care/Camps				

<sup>1</sup> = Offered Once Annually

CCW = Curtain Call West (Library/School District)

FAA = Findlay Athletic Association

FPD = Findlay Police Department

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MW = West Allegheny Midget Wrestling

SD = West Allegheny School District

YA = West Allegheny Youth Association

YS = West Allegheny Youth Soccer

Y = Western Area YMCA



## **SECTION V**

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

"Let us put our heads together and ...draw up a recreation and parks agenda for the twenty-first century. We owe it to ourselves and we owe it to our children."

~ Robert P. Casey, Governor ~  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
1990 Governor's Conference on  
Recreation, Parks and Leisure

## **SECTION V – RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION**

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

Three administrative areas of the FPRD are targeted for development by this study: Mission Statement/Goals, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Public Awareness.

#### **Mission Statement and Goals:**

A mission statement is an important tool for several reasons. It communicates the vision and the reasons for the existence of the Parks and Recreation Department to township residents. It provides direction for Department staff in policy development, planning, and implementation of recreation services.

A mission statement should be a concise, functional statement set forth by the governing authority and implemented through the creation of organization goals and objectives. It is a broad statement with at least three important characteristics:

- *Results Terminology:* The mission should be couched in terms of the change, not the activities necessary to achieve the change.
- *Succinctness:* Ideally, the mission should be stated in a few words, no more than a sentence.
- *Ubiquity:* A mission should be pervasive in order to be powerful in organizational affairs. It simply cannot be repeated too much.

The mission statement should be brief enough for most people to keep it in mind. It should be broad enough to allow flexibility in

implementation, but not so broad as to permit a lack of focus. Finally, it should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Examples of other agencies' mission statements can be found in Appendix F.

After the mission statement is finalized, goals and objectives should be developed. Goals are broad, general statements of desired outcomes, based on identified desires and concerns. They can be written for each major area (program, service, facility) in the organization and are generally not measurable.

Objectives are more concrete statements of specific outcomes, which are part of achieving a goal and provide written measurable components for the goals. They enumerate the things that must be accomplished to realize the goals and define how the goals are to be achieved. Objectives are formed through analysis of the goal statements and breaking them down into workable parts.

Personnel from various levels within the organization should give input to the development of organization goals and objectives. The goals and objectives are usually updated annually and distributed to all appropriate personnel. They serve as a basis for measuring progress. Without goals and objectives, there are no real benchmarks for evaluation. Objectives are also used to determine which tasks will be done in what sequence. Determining priorities is a necessary part of systematic planning.

#### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:**

Citizen advisory boards provide an essential link between the professionals hired to provide service to a community and the residents they serve. Board members are typically appointed

by the elected officials of the governmental body. In addition to those members appointed by township officials, interested civic groups could select liaisons.

This type of board is purely advisory to the governing body and to the Department. It may be delegated authority to manage its own affairs; however, it has no final authority or responsibility for policy or administration. It has limited powers in that it may only make recommendations to the ultimate governing authority. It has no legal power or authority to enforce those recommendations. Its members do, however, offer perspective in decisions and help perform some of the organization's activities.

The advisory board may serve these important functions:

- Interpret the program, facilities, and services;
- Make studies and recommendations which help advance park and recreation services; and
- Be a sounding board that exerts board influence throughout the community to improve and expand park and recreation services.

An advisory board provides for vital citizen involvement and participation. Citizen advocacy is an important element in determining, implementing, and gaining financial support for services and programs.

A sample of advisory board Rules of Procedure and board member job descriptions can be found in Appendix F.

### **Public Awareness:**

Various efforts at communications, public relations, and marketing bring about an

awareness of the Department, its facilities and its services. These efforts are an essential part of bringing residents to the parks and recreational programs, generating public support, and successful fundraising. The need for improvement in this area was strongly voiced by residents in the needs assessment survey and at public meetings.

The newly developed Mission Statement should appear prominently on Department brochures. A logo should be created that symbolizes that mission. The logo will provide a visual identity on facilities, signs, brochures, flyers, and other promotional efforts that is quickly recognized and associated with the Department. The Department logo can incorporate, or adapt, the township logo or be an entirely unrelated icon. A recent marketing trend in the parks and recreation field is to use a slogan to accompany a logo. The use of a slogan, a brief striking phrase used to promote a salient aspect of a business, is a common practice in the private sector.

A consistently used name should be employed for all promotional materials. Currently, examples of Department flyers include the names of Findlay Township, Findlay Township Parks & Recreation, and Findlay Township Parks and Recreation Department. Similarly, the township's activity center is referred to as the Findlay Community Center, the Activity Center, Imperial Activity Center on Main, and the Findlay Township Activity Center in various program flyers. This problem extends into park names on flyers and park entrance signs as well. The township park located in Clinton is referred to as Clinton Community Park and as the Findlay Township Community Park on "Fair in the Woodlands" programs/posters.

Another level of confusion is generated by the fact that all township park entrance signs begin with the words Findlay Township Community Park; however, the park in Clinton is formally named the Findlay Township Community Park.

While using the same sign design at each park is a desirable practice, the current naming practice is confusing. This study recommends utilizing the Department or township logo on the signs along with the Department or township name.

The formal name of the park area behind the township building is also unclear. In fact, the building itself bears more than one name.

In an effort to keep residents informed of township-sponsored recreation programs, senior activities, and special events, an activity guide should be developed and distributed on a seasonal, or other, basis. This activity guide should include descriptions and contact information for community-based organizations that provide recreation or cultural activities to township residents, e.g. youth athletic associations and Curtain Call West.

Given the limited number of residences in Findlay, the township should consider direct mailing of the guide to each household. While there is a cost associated with this method of distribution, it is the only way to assure that each household is provided the information.

A brochure should also be developed which promotes the township's park system, Department services, and recreation facilities, including information on the activity center.

An annual report should be generated at the closing of the calendar, or fiscal, year. An annual report is valuable both as a public relations and fundraising tool. It is the best method for the department to document its achievements over the past year – highlighting its areas of program/revenue growth and major improvements to recreation/park facilities. Copies should be distributed to the Board of Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Township Manager, and made available to the general public upon request.

An annual report should include at the least following information:

- Names of Township Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members, department staff and interns
- Agency mission statement, goals, and objectives
- List of achievements and goals fulfilled during the past year by the department and advisory board
- Full statement of annual department budget, revenues, expenditures and disbursements
- List of programs and special events offered and registration/attendance totals for each
- Facility usage, revenue, and volume table
- Acknowledgement of volunteer efforts and list of volunteer support organizations with names and phone numbers of officers
- Recognition of donations of funds, in-kind services, and materials
- Map showing locations of recreation facilities
- Goals for the following year

An annual report also provides an excellent reference tool for the department for planning purposes.

#### **PERSONNEL:**

During the course of this study, Findlay Township added a new full-time professional recreation programmer to the Department's budget. The township is to be applauded for its vision and its commitment to parks and recreation for its residents. This move is consistent with the recommendations to be presented in this study. Recommendations for personnel changes for the township are presented for the short-term (immediate) and long-term (growth).

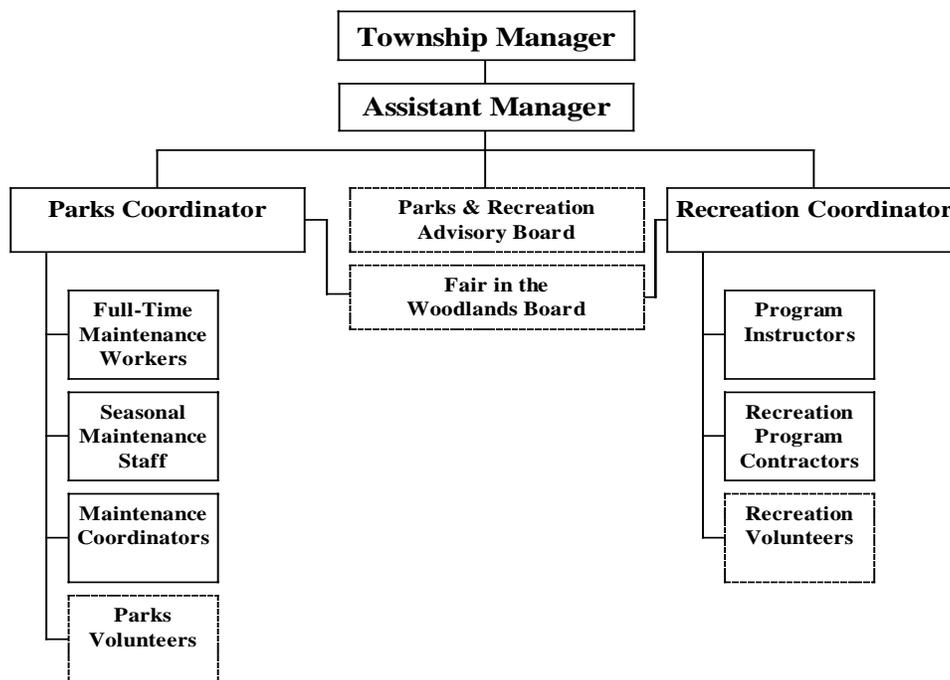
This study recommends that the township stay with its new personnel alignment for the immediate future. With a full-time, professional recreation programmer the township can immediately move to implement the recommendations made for Recreation Programming and Public Awareness. Similarly, the newly redefined Parks Coordinator and assistant will be able to focus their work solely on park maintenance and begin to implement the recommendations this study makes for playground safety, risk management, and maintenance planning. The new job descriptions for the three full-time Department positions can be found in Appendix E.

Figure [5.1] reflects the new organizational hierarchy of Findlay Township's Parks and Recreation Department. This study makes two recommendations to the changes the township has already made to the full-time positions.

First, it is recommended that the township change the title of the Assistant Parks Coordinator to Parks Maintenance Worker, Parks Operator, Parks Laborer, or another title the township may feel is appropriate. As Findlay continues to grow in population and additional acres are added to its park system, the Parks Department will, out of necessity, grow with it. The title of Assistant Parks Coordinator may prove problematic when the next park maintenance worker is added.

Second, the primary responsibility for program registrations should be assigned the new Recreation Coordinator. As program offerings begin to expand, the questions related to recreation programs will become much more diverse and, often, on-the-spot decisions will need to be made by the person taking the registration. Those decisions will be best made by the Recreation Coordinator. As a backup, administrative secretarial staff should still assist

Figure 5.1 Findlay Township Parks and Recreation Short-Term Organizational Chart  
**Parks & Recreation Short-Term Organizational Chart**



with registrations when the coordinator is not available. Since job descriptions are currently being redefined, thought should be given to which township position would be best suited to handle activity center, picnic pavilion, and ball field reservations.

In the long-term, the administration of the Parks and Recreation Department will need to be address. If the township adds a new community park, year-round aquatic facility, and/or a ball field complex as is being discussed, or other recreation facilities in the future, the needs of the Department will become too demanding and complex for the Township Manager to oversee directly. At that time, a professional director for the department will be required. In addition to supervising all Department staff and facilities, the director would be responsible for budget development and control, public relations, grant-writing and administration, project management, planning, prescribing and enforcing departmental rules and regulations, monitoring compliance of Department contracts, preparing bid specifications, and serving as administrative liaison to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

To best serve township residents and to meet the growing needs of the Department, a dedicated secretary will also be needed in the long-term. This position would not only handle the clerical needs of the Department, but would also function as receptionist, cashier, and administrative assistant to the Director. Additionally, this secretarial position would relieve other secretarial staff and the Recreation Coordinator of duties associated with program registrations and facility reservations.

**FINANCE**

**Budgetary Impact:**

The Parks and Recreation personnel budget would need to be increased as follows to accommodate the additional Department staff positions recommended by this study for the short and long terms:

**Figure 5.2 Findlay Township Parks and Recreation Long-Term Organizational Chart**

**Parks & Recreation Long-Term Organizational Chart**



**Fees and Charges:**

The fees charged for recreation programs are currently set to cover direct operational costs. It is recommended that fees are set at a level to cover direct costs plus any administrative costs related to the program. To assure that all township residents can participate in Department-offered programs, regardless of their ability to pay, a system should be established to assist those of limited financial resources. A sliding-scale fee structure or a partial scholarship, funded by contributions of area businesses, can meet this need.

Rental charges for the activity center, picnic pavilions, and ball fields should be market-based. These facilities should be promoted aggressively to increase utilization and revenue income. A promotional brochure should be developed which describes Findlay’s rental facilities and their location; provides general information on rules, rental procedures and rates; and includes attractive photographs.

This study recommends that the township develop a formal fees and charges policy. This policy would guide Department staff in the setting of program fees and rental charges to assure a consistent and defensible rate structure for all township offerings. The policy would

also clearly define those circumstances when fees can be waived or reduced and would establish a percentage, or fixed surcharge, for nonresident participants and renters.

**Funding:**

Alternate funding can be found in the form of government grants, foundation grants, and through fundraising. Grant funding that may be of interest to the township can be found in Figure 5.3.

Some foundations donate to departments of local governments; however, they may require the organization to have 501 C3 non-profit status. Foundations with regional affiliations and a presence in Pittsburgh can be found in Figure 5.5.

Other locally-based foundations include: Allegheny Foundation, Benedum Foundation, Giant Eagle Foundation, Pittsburgh National Bank Foundation, PPG Industries Foundation, Schwab Spector Rainess Foundation, W. P. Snyder Charitable Trust, and the Westinghouse Foundation.

**Figure 5.3 Parks & Recreation Budget Projections**

<b>Short-Term Recommendations – Financial Impact</b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary Range (Year 2001 Costs)</b>	<b>Budget (Midpoint plus 35% Benefits Package)</b>
Recreation Coordinator	\$ 16.37 to \$ 19.98 per hour	\$ 51,035
Annual Total:		\$ 51,035

<b>Long-Term Recommendations – Financial Impact</b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary Range (Year 2001 Costs)</b>	<b>Budget (Midpoint plus 35% Benefits Package)</b>
Director of Parks & Recreation	\$ 19.98 to \$ 23.59	\$ 61,172
Recreation Coordinator	\$ 16.37 to \$ 19.98 per hour	\$ 51,035
Secretary	\$ 12.36 to \$ 19.12 per hour	\$ 44,198
Annual Total:		\$ 156,405

Fundraising with local businesses can underwrite township special events, sponsor individual recreation programs, and provide private dollars that can be leveraged as a part of a local match for grants, see Figure 5.4. Some highly successful special events can be structured as major fund-raising vehicles for other parks and recreation purposes. To facilitate fundraising, this study recommends that the township develop a written policy and plan covering the solicitation, acceptance, and use of gifts, in-kind services, and donations.

While significant financial and in-kind support can be garnered through township fundraising, the millions of dollars needed to develop a major recreation facility, such as a swimming pool, requires a capital campaign that is best lead by a professional fundraising corporation. These companies can employ a variety of fundraising strategies and can be contracted to raise a specified dollar amount for a percentage of the funds raised.

**Figure 5.4 Alternate Funding Sources**

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Community Conservation Partnership Grants	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)	Rehabilitation & development of parks & recreation facilities; acquisition of land for park & conservation purposes; & technical assistance for feasibility studies, trails studies, & site development planning.
Community Development Block Grants	Department of Housing & Urban Development through the commonwealth to counties & local Council of Governments	Wheelchair access/ADA compliance in park & recreation facilities
Community Revitalization	PA Department of Community and Economic Development	Support for local initiatives that promote the stability of communities. Assists communities in achieving & maintaining social & economic diversity to ensure a good quality of life.
Growing Greener	DCNR	Funding used to augment Community Conservation Partnership Grant program above.
Heritage Parks Grants	DCNR	Promote public-private partnerships to preserve & enhance natural, cultural, historic & recreation resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism
Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants	National Park Service, Department of the Interior through DCNR	Acquisition & development of outdoor recreation areas & facilities for the general public.
PA Council on the Arts (PCA)	PCA through the Office of the Governor	Provides for arts programming &/or arts services; (Wheelchair) Access to the Arts.
PA Recreational Trails Program	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) & the Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21) through DCNR	Develop & maintain recreational trails & trail related facilities for motorized & non-motorized recreational trail use.
Rails-to-Trails Grants	DCNR	Planning, acquisition, or development of rail-trail corridors.
Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21)	PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT)	Projects related to surface transportation – must address a transportation need, use or benefit.
Urban Park & Recreation Recovery Program	National Park Service, Department of the Interior	Rehabilitation of recreation areas & facilities, demonstration of innovative approaches to improve park system management & recreation opportunities, & development of improved recreation planning

**Figure 5.5 Alternate Funding Sources**

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Interests Related to Recreation</b>
Alcoa Foundation	Cultural Needs
Armco Foundation	Youth, Local Government
Anne L. & George H. Clapp Charitable & Educational Trust	Youth, Senior Citizens, Human Services, Historical, Conservation
Consolidated Natural Gas Company Foundation	Youth, Senior Citizens, Human Services, Historical
Copperweld Foundation	Youth, Senior Citizens, Government, Conservation, Sports
Vira I. Heinz Endowment	Youth, Senior Citizens, Human Services, Historical, Conservation
Wallace P. Hough Charitable Trust	Mentally/Physically Challenged
Mellon Bank Foundation	Youth, Historical, Economic Development
Richard King Mellon Foundation	Youth, Human Services, Conservation
Howard & Nell E. Miller Foundation	Youth, Cultural Needs
Mine Safety Appliances Company Charitable Foundation	Youth, Senior Citizens, Human Services, Historical, Conservation, Local Government
Alexander C. & Tillie S. Speyer Foundation	Historical, Conservation
Scaife Family Foundation	Youth, Senior Citizens, Human Services, Conservation
Robert & Mary Weisbrod Foundation	Senior Citizens, Conservation

**RECREATION PROGRAMMING**

The results of the categorical analysis of existing programs available to Findlay residents from Figure 16, responses received to the needs assessment survey, input from the Planning Commission, and comments gathered from the two public meetings formed the basis from which recommendations were developed for recreation programming. While following trends and programming for them is an important part of a recreation programmer’s job, the analysis of recreation programming, for the purposes of this study, was focused on the categories which form the core of any comprehensive recreation program. Effort should be focused on “filling in the gaps” in programming, which are not adequately addressed by current offerings, taking into consideration all program sources available to residents.

Program recommendations are presented in two different ways: program areas that bridge across the age categories, or are of a general need, and age specific recommendations following the age groupings delineated in Figure 4.17, 4.17a. The program areas identified in title case follow those listed in Figure 4.17, 4.17a.

**General Programming Recommendations:**

Across the board, several program areas are provided only for select age groups or presently not covered. Those areas include: Arts, Performing Arts, New Arts, Self-Development Programs, Outdoor Recreation, and Travel and Tourism. Additionally, no programs were identified that specifically addressed those individuals with special needs.

The desire for cultural programs was exceptionally high as found in the needs assessment survey (88.9% Agree/Strongly Agree). The need for a community beautification committee was identified at a community meeting.

**Preschool:**

Literary Programs and Sports, Games, and Athletics are currently covered by outside organizations. Swim instruction is likewise provided for this age group. Program areas that should be developed for preschoolers include Arts and Crafts, Performing Arts, and age-appropriate physical development opportunities. Some opportunities are provided for social interaction in existing special events.

**Youth:**

Literary Programs; Sports, Games, and Athletics; and, to a lesser degree, Aquatics are currently covered by outside organizations. Some opportunities are provided for social interaction in existing special events, through the YMCA’s Indian Guides and Princesses, and scout groups. Program areas that should be developed for this age group include Arts and Crafts, Performing Arts, age-appropriate physical development opportunities, and Outdoor Recreation.

**Teens:**

The desire for recreational opportunities for this age group was strongly voiced in needs assessment survey (95.4% Agree/Strongly Agree) as well as the need being evident from the analysis of program offerings for teens. Sports, Games, and Athletics is covered well from a variety of sources in the community, beyond that, very little is available to teens with the exception of the Teen Reading Club and some volunteer opportunities. Teenagers have a high need for social opportunities and many have the desire to challenge themselves through “extreme” sports. Social and Outdoor Recreation for this age group should be given a high priority in the

township’s annual recreation plan. Additionally, programming in Creative, Performing, and New Arts groupings should be developed. The township might consider forming a “Teen Council” to help guide the development of recreational programs for this age group; this will ascertain that programs and activities of specific interest to teens are pursued – assuring some level of success.

**Adult:**

Literary Programs; Wellness; Volunteer Services; Sports, Games, and Athletics; and, to a lesser degree, Hobbies are currently covered by outside organizations. Program areas that should be developed for this age group include Arts and Crafts, Performing Arts, Aquatics, Self-Development Programs, Social Recreation, Travel and Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation.

**Senior Adult:**

Literary Programs; Volunteer Services; Travel and Tourism; Social Recreation; Wellness; and, to a lesser degree, Hobbies and Sports, Games, and Athletics are currently covered by the township and outside organizations. Program areas that should be developed for this age group include Arts and Crafts; Performing Arts; Self-Development Programs; Aquatics; and Outdoor Recreation.

**Other Program-Related Recommendations:**

A *program evaluation* should be completed by each participant in township-offered recreation programs. The results of the evaluations should be summarized and used as a planning tool for improvements to existing programs and to find out what improvements resident feel would be

of value in their total recreation department experience, e.g. the ease of the registration process, other programs that they would like to see offered, etc. A sample program evaluation can be found in Appendix F.

A *program costs sheet* should be developed to assist the recreation programmer in determining the direct cost per participant for each program offered by the township. This will be an invaluable tool when setting fees for each program and in compiling an annual recreation plan. A sample costs sheet form can be found in Appendix F.

An *annual recreation plan* should be developed which assures coverage of all program areas for each age category. This plan should include specific program activities for each age group with direct costs, fees and projected income, prospective attendance, and site locations identified for each program. The annual recreation plan should be reviewed and updated each year, based on the successes and/or failures of the past year and on changes in program offerings by other organizations in the community. The plan should be used as a budget development tool for both expenditures and revenue.

An inventory and analysis of recreation services available to township residents should occur on a periodic basis, both to identify program areas that are not sufficiently covered and to assure that the township is not duplicating services provided by another community organization. A “living”, long-range programming plan should be developed from this inventory, which is consistent with Findlay's philosophy and current and projected demographics. This plan should include a plan of operation, including priority listing based on need, and details of implementation procedures.

It is essential that the township’s recreation department stay “in tune” with the resident’s

programming desires. Actively soliciting this information will assist the department in offering activities residents will attend and support. In addition to the program evaluations, other inexpensive ways to gather this information include:

- *Surveys*: Distribute and collect surveys when speaking to groups/organizations; place surveys with drop-in boxes at the Findlay Township Activity Center, the Western Allegheny Community Library, and busy township stores and businesses.
- *Key Communicators*: A stratified series of community-wide, regional, neighborhood, and block/street representatives, composed of select, respected, and knowledgeable individuals. Key Communicators can provide grass roots input, disseminate accurate information, and provide a sounding board for the testing of new ideas.
- *Focus Groups*: Groups of no more than twelve participants that focus on an issue. Members are selected for their unique perspectives or because they represent a “cross section” of the population(s) to be served.

## **PLAYGROUND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Playgrounds are a fundamental part of the childhood experience. They should be a place where fun, socialization, physical development and risk-taking can be experienced free from hazard. Unfortunately, more than 200,000 children are treated in U. S. hospital emergency rooms each year for injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when children fall from the equipment onto the ground.

## **Risk Management Plan:**

In *Essentials of Risk Control, Volume I*, published by the Insurance Institute of America, “risk control” is defined as “any conscious action taken by an organization and intended to reduce the frequency (number), severity (dollar amount), or unpredictability of accidental losses.”

The key to success in risk reduction and control is designing a playground risk control program that is specific to the Township of Findlay. Five major factors should be considered when designing a playground risk control program:

- Development of an Action Plan by systematically identifying hazards, determining priorities, and assigning dollars to those priorities.
- Addressing known problems by correcting known hazards. Good maintenance procedures can go a long way in reducing losses.
- Preventing accidents from occurring in the first place. Be proactive and concentrate efforts on actions that will prevent accidents.
- Implementing proactive steps by providing adequate training for maintenance staff, acting immediately on complaints, and repairing equipment only with parts provided by the equipment manufacturer. Perform playground inspections on a consistent basis with the frequency established by the township.
- Documenting all activities including written inspection reports and corrective actions.

## **Equipment Action Plan:**

Removing hazards and updating any playground requires an action plan. It is recommended that the township develop a two-phase action plan, as follows, to meet this need. Those phases are:

- *Short Term Actions* – addresses immediate action items based on the problems, deficiencies, and substandard conditions noted in the audit reports.
- *Phased Replacements and Revisions* – covers the future replacement of equipment and development revisions that can wait to be phased in over time.

Budgetary constraints are almost always a factor. As such, a realistic timeline should be developed for the second phase.

### *Short Term Actions:*

In this phase, actions should be taken to promptly address broken, missing, damaged, worn, and/or improperly adjusted/installed parts of the play equipment in each of the township’s playgrounds.

The Short-Term Action plan should also include the removal of equipment that was cited as imminently dangerous in the audit report. It is better to have no equipment in a playground than to have equipment that is unsafe and contains serious safety hazards to the children that would use it. Plans should be made in phase two for the replacement of this equipment.

Manufacturers of non-compliant equipment should be contacted for retrofit kits or retrofit instructions during the Short-Term Action phase. If retrofit kits or instructions are not available from the manufacturer, the township may suggest a modification plan to the manufacturer for their approval. Under no

circumstances should the township modify existing equipment without the manufacturer's approval as this greatly increases the township's liability exposure and may compromise the safety of the play equipment. Offending pieces of playground equipment should be removed if a manufacturer's approved retrofit cannot be made.

Current contact information for playground equipment manufacturers, and/or their representatives, is provided in Appendix F for equipment that was identifiable and where such information was available to the consultant. Township files should also be reviewed as an additional source for this information and for other pertinent information on existing playground equipment.

#### *Phased Replacements and Revisions:*

In this stage, planned replacement of safe, but outdated, playground equipment takes place over a scheduled time period; this time period can extend over a number of years.

A number of considerations can be used to determine the priority of scheduled improvements: age of the equipment, its overall condition, and the extent to which it varies from the requirements of the most current safety standards. It should be noted here that no piece of playground equipment is "grandfathered" for any reason. All new and existing play equipment must conform to the most recent set of standards and guidelines to be considered as compliant. Overall playground design should be considered and included when developing the phased revisions.

While Short Term Actions should take precedence and be instituted immediately, the Phased Replacements and Revisions plan should be reviewed and revised when establishing the annual Capital Improvement Program.

Revisions to the plan should be based on periodic inspections and changing uses of the playground.

#### **Playground Inspections:**

The frequency with which a playground should be inspected depends on several factors – the most important being level of use.

*Safety Audits*, which determine current conditions and compliance with current safety standards, need to be completed only once, unless significant changes are made to the playground; a Certified Playground Safety Inspector should perform these audits. Following the Safety Audit, corrective action should be taken on the list of hazards that were identified.

*Annual Inspections*, in-depth evaluations of play area health and safety issues, should be completed each spring, at a minimum. Annual inspections should be performed by appropriately trained personnel.

*Periodic Inspections* assess material wear and deterioration and the need to replenish loose-fill safety surfacing. This type of inspection should be performed on a regular basis – monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly, depending on play area needs and conditions. Periodic inspections should be performed by appropriately trained personnel.

*Daily Inspections* are conducted to ensure that a play area is free of hazards, especially due to vandalism. These inspections should be completed each time the maintenance staff visit a park.

Publications, which provide an extensive selection of inspection forms, are listed in Appendix F. The Township of Findlay can utilize these or develop their own forms for playground inspections.

While the type of inspections and frequency with which they are completed is suggested, it should be remembered that the more frequently the playground equipment is inspected, the better the opportunity to spot any potential problems.

## **MAINTENANCE:**

As is the case in most park systems, the maintenance workload in Findlay's parks frequently exceeds the Department's ability to get the job done. Maintenance managers cannot afford to operate from crisis to crisis and must continually seek better ways to maintain park areas and recreation facilities. The development of a comprehensive, systematic *maintenance plan* is one of the best means of ensuring that park and facility maintenance is completed at maximum efficiency and effectiveness. A maintenance plan provides the data on which effective decisions can be made. While the plan can assist the maintenance manager in many ways, perhaps the two most important are scheduling (identifying the workload, monitoring work functions, assigning resources, justifying personnel needs) and decision making (establishing priorities, providing information to handle complaints or lawsuits, developing standards, estimating the impact of additional land and facilities, justifying budget requests).

The task of developing a maintenance plan is both difficult and time-consuming, but well worth the effort in the end. A maintenance plan will only function effectively when it is developed to reflect local needs, conditions, resources, priorities, and capabilities. That said,

much of the process of developing the plan can be universally applied. A well-formulated maintenance plan should include most, if not all, of the following twelve steps. It is important to involve all maintenance staff from the beginning of this planning process. Without employee understanding and cooperation, the plan is destined to fail.

*Step 1: Establish maintenance goals and objectives.* Make certain that the goals and objectives are clear, realistic, achievable, and focused on problems and priorities that are of particular interest to the Department. They should reflect what maintenance is trying to accomplish.

*Step 2: Inventory resources.* Develop a detailed inventory of all resources and facilities for which park maintenance is responsible. All components must be quantified and precisely described. It is usually easier to inventory components if a few basic maintenance categories are established. This background data must be retained and continually updated as improvements and changes are made to existing resources and facilities.

*Step 3: Establish qualitative standards.* Once the inventory has been completed, maintenance standards should be established for each item listed. In simple terms, a qualitative maintenance standard is a clear and accurate description of how an area, resource, facility, piece of equipment, or support component should look after a maintenance task has been performed. A qualitative maintenance standard reflects the minimum level of maintenance that is acceptable for each task.

*Step 4: Identify maintenance tasks.* Using the completed inventory information and maintenance standards, identify and list all planned and unplanned maintenance tasks for which the Department is responsible. The list should include tasks that are performed on a recurring basis (e.g. mowing, litter pickup, playground inspections) and unforeseen tasks (e.g. emergencies, vandalism). Projects and major one-time improvements must also be considered.

*Step 5: Describe tasks.* Task descriptions should provide enough detail that any staff person can understand how each task is performed. Statements for routine maintenance tasks should contain verbal descriptions that match the previously established qualitative maintenance standards.

*Step 6: Determine task frequency.* Tasks should be reduced to their simplest component, and task frequencies established at the minimum level (annual, seasonal, monthly, weekly, daily, etc.). Task frequencies can be considerably different for similar features in different park locations.

*Step 7: Determine time to accomplish task once.* Probably the most effective way to estimate the time needed to complete a particular task is to ask the person who does it. If at the end of a reporting period an estimate is found to be inaccurate, it should be revised.

*Step 8: Project personnel needs.* For each task, the personnel projections include the total number of hours needed to accomplish that task system-wide over a given period of time (usually one year). This can be projected by multiplying the number of units involved by the number of hours needed to accomplish the task once. For example, to calculate the hours needed to drag and line the ball fields: 5 fields x 2 hours/field/week x 12 weeks = 120 hours. As not all tasks can be anticipated, work, such as vandalism and emergency repairs or special events, can be accommodated in the plan by allocating a block of hours to that particular task area.

*Step 9: Organize tasks by month or by week.* After the personnel needs have been projected for each task, the individual task should be allotted, by the week or month, to the ideal time of year for its completion. This process can be like a game of chess, attempting to spread the workload evenly throughout the year while fitting in the seasonally-based tasks.

*Step 10: Analyze available personnel.* All available full-time, part-time, and seasonal parks department staff must be included in this analysis. Overtime, sick leave, vacation, other types of leave, and a contingency for position turnover should all be considered. If available personnel time exceeds the total recurring workload, time will be available for one-time projects and improvements. If available personnel time is found to be less than the number of hours needed to accomplish all identifiable recurring tasks, then additional personnel must be found or service levels must be reduced.

*Step 11: Identify projects and improvements.* Provided personnel time is available to perform all recurring tasks, one-time projects and improvements should then be identified, analyzed by estimating the hours and resources needed to complete each one, and the list prioritized.

*Step 12: Implement and evaluate the plan.* Tasks and projects can now be scheduled into the weekly or monthly calendar. Task data, such as site and hours, should be recorded daily on each task performed. This data should be analyzed regularly by comparing it to the projected hours for each recurring task. Unanticipated tasks, such as emergency repairs, should also be tracked in block form. This will permit refinement of the schedule for the following year, plus provide a valuable database to use in estimating the maintenance impact of additional parkland and facilities.

To better request and track work within the Department, a simple “Service Request” form should be employed. An example of this type of request form can be found in Appendix F. A multi-part Service Request form can be used to assign needed repair or maintenance work, track the time and resources used to complete the tasks, and document the work for future reference. This will assist in updating the maintenance plan and in providing documentation for risk management purposes.

To better track the department’s equipment and properly plan for its replacement, the Department should employ the same “Vehicle and Equipment List Worksheet” utilized by the township’s Department of Public Works. The worksheet should be updated each time a piece of equipment is acquired or removed from the pool. The “Condition” description of each piece should be updated on a regular basis, to ensure

the worksheet is ready planning tool. A sample of this equipment worksheet can be viewed in Figure 4.14.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:**

Throughout 1997 and 1998 a “Recreation Peer Study”, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, was conducted which involved the communities of Findlay Township, North Fayette Township, Oakdale Borough, and the West Allegheny School District. The purpose of this study was to explore the potential of an intergovernmental agreement for the delivery of joint recreation programming. This was to be accomplished through the establishment of a West Allegheny Recreation Commission and implemented through the hiring of a “Circuit Rider” commission employee. Each of the three communities and the school district were to have voting representation on the commission. Funding for the circuit rider was to have been proportional from each of the three communities, based on a per-capita formula, with in-kind support from the school district in the form of free facility use. However, due to a lack of final commitment, the joint venture was not adopted.

While this attempt at intergovernmental cooperation failed for the delivery of recreation services, it may be desirable to explore this avenue again for the development of a year-round aquatic facility. Should the Township of Findlay decide to complete a feasibility study on a community pool, consideration should be given to adding the exploration of regional cooperation and funding for this facility to the scope of work.

**West Allegheny School District:**

75.5% of the respondents to the needs assessment survey felt the West Allegheny School District should play an integral role in providing recreational space and facilities to the citizens of Findlay Township. As the township begins to develop its recreation program, access to recreation facilities such as gymnasiums and a swimming pool will become essential. While the school district currently uses the Findlay Township Activity Center as a performance hall for its “Curtain Call West” productions and annual art show, the township does not currently utilize school district facilities for its programs.

The Recreation Program Coordinator and the Board of Supervisors should work with the West Allegheny School Board to put in place a Joint Use Agreement covering use of facilities. A sample agreement can be found in Appendix F. The typical arrangement for this type of agreement gives each party first priority for the use of its own facilities and offers the other party second priority. Each party is responsible for maintenance of its own facilities and rental fees are not charged. However, direct costs (e.g. custodial services, special set-up needs, vandalism or damage from abuse), are assessed the user. Each party provides a certificate of insurance to the other and pledges to enforce the rules of the other party when using their facility. This cooperative arrangement provides maximum benefit of publicly supported facilities to towns.

## **PARKS AND FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recreation needs assessment survey and the input sessions conducted in the summer of 2000 indicated that the highest priority features to be included as activities within the Township of Findlay are swimming, picnicking, jogging/walking, hiking, biking and sight-seeing. These favored activities are consistent with the 1990 Region 10 Pennsylvania State Survey. Refer to Section IV – Population and Recreation Standards.

The information generated from the public meetings, the survey, and an inventory of existing facilities point toward a plan for the next ten years that emphasizes the following:

- The acquisition and development of a new, centrally-located community park complex
- The upgrading of existing facilities
- The identification and development of a greenways system that will provide links to the Montour Trail

This study recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department use the NRPA standards, as defined in Section IV, as a flexible guide for planning, developing and upgrading its facilities.

By using this hierarchy standard, the township park system can be categorized as a system of four neighborhood parks, one mini-park, one special use facility, and Leopold Lake.

Although Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) offers township residents a variety of recreation opportunities and is the home of well-attended events, it

lacks the extent of facilities that make up a “community park”. The availability of facilities like a swimming pool and a baseball complex are examples of features that could draw more people to the park.

In addition, the survey revealed a distinct difference among the number of residents from Clinton visiting the park each year versus the number of residents from Imperial and Westbury. Approximately 57% percent of respondents to the survey indicated they used the Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) at least once per year. Only approximately 21% indicated they used the park more than six times per year. This suggests that Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) is used primarily by residents as a neighborhood park.

## **PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARK**

According to the survey and statements given at the public meetings, the majority of residents in the Township of Findlay desire a centrally-located and more inclusive community park.

This study recommends the following:

- Acquire suitable, centrally-located land for a community park complex. One possible site is land adjacent to Leopold Lake currently owned by the Pittsburgh International Airport. Negotiations with the airport authority to acquire this land or another suitable site should continue.
- Develop a Master Plan for the proposed park which should include

the following recreation priorities identified in the recreation survey and from public input sessions. Based on the survey, an indoor community center with a swimming pool, indoor basketball/volleyball courts, and community rooms; an outdoor baseball complex with tournament capabilities for Findlay Athletic Association (F.A.A.); multiple use fields; adequate, accessible parking; picnic shelters; walking and hiking trails; natural areas and open space; and greenspace corridors to link with other township destinations.

- Develop a plan to include trail access to future commercial/office development on land owned by the Pittsburgh International Airport.
- This would provide businesses with a strong incentive to locate in the area.

### **PROPOSED COMMUNITY POOL COMPLEX**

An all-season swimming pool complex is the facility that generated the most comments on the needs assessment survey and was the hottest topic of discussion at both public input sessions. Because of high public interest in such a facility, this study recommends the following:

- Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the costs to the community for building, operating and maintaining such a facility. Explore opportunities with neighboring communities to develop the pool complex through an

intergovernmental cooperation agreement.

### **EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

A neighborhood park is the social focus of a neighborhood and is located within walking distance for park users. It should be developed to provide both active and passive recreation activities that are geared specifically for the unique needs of the community it serves.

The following is a summary of recommendations for the existing parks in the township. Specific recommendations concerning playground equipment safety can be found in the Playground Safety Recommendations of this study.

### **Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton)**



As noted in the inventory of existing facilities, Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) is used by nearly seventy percent of all Findlay Township residents. Many noted events such as the annual Christmas Festival of Lights and the Fair in Woodlands are held in this park each year. It is a large

neighborhood park with two ball fields (one lighted), picnic shelters, a hiking trail system, a natural amphitheater and the newly constructed Rainbow's End Memorial Playground. This study recommends the following:

- Develop a Master Site Plan prior to upgrading or renovating this park. After the F.A.A. has moved to the proposed community park baseball complex, develop the lower ball field as a soccer/football field and designated field for informal baseball or softball games.
- Provide for accessible and adequate parking to accommodate facilities and events that will continue to be held at the park.
- Implement the improved signage design package as suggested in Public Awareness section of this study.
- Provide an accessible walk to the Cardinal Pavilion from the Municipal Building parking lot.
- Develop an accessible trail link between the existing Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) and the Community Center ball fields.
- Designate Clinton Park and the Community Center ball fields as separate parks each with their own identity.
- Make all facilities and parking areas ADA accessible and compliant.
- Remove playground equipment that is unsafe and non-compliant with existing safety codes.
- Renovate the nature facilities such as the fitness trail and the amphitheater.
- Develop trail links to Youthtowne and Leopold Lake (Clinton Block Trail), thus connecting the park with

the proposed network of township trails.

- Update the existing playground at the Municipal Building to comply with current CPSC recommendations.

### **Elm Street Park**



- Develop a Master Site Plan prior to renovating or upgrading of park.
- Improve the Imperial Pointe Bikeway by developing a link from the parking lot to the lower elevations at an accessible gradient.
- Renovate the existing tennis courts and provide accessibility to restrooms.
- Reconfigure basketball courts side-by-side for simultaneous play.
- Update existing playground to comply with current CPSC recommendations.

## Aten Road Park



- Develop a Master Site Plan prior to renovating or upgrading of park.
- Consideration should be given to Township and Allegheny County plans for the development of a transportation corridor linking RIDC Park with the McClaren Road interchange.
- Reprogram play area. Relocate play area activities from current location to nearby Old Ridge Ball Field.
- Consider park expansion to the woods adjacent to the parking area. Develop multi-purpose athletic fields.
- Develop a trail link from Industry Drive Extension through the RIDC to Aten Park.

## Old Ridge Ballfield



A little over thirty percent of this park is developed for recreational use. It should

be renovated to and used as a neighborhood park and playground for residents of Westbury. Also, according to the needs assessment survey, the residents of Westbury strongly desire more open space. The following are suggested recommendations:

- Develop a Master Site Plan prior to renovating or upgrading of park.
- After F.A.A. League play is moved to the proposed new community park and baseball complex, allow ball fields to return to informal neighborhood play
- Eliminate the majority of parking to provide for greater recreation space and/or open space.
- Provide picnic shelters and tables.
- Develop a playground for the Westbury neighborhood.

## Existing Westbury Tot Lot



- Eliminate the play equipment and convert the tot lot to passive use and a gathering area by providing a gazebo, benches and trees, etc.
- Explore options for a tot lot development and gathering area in the 3/4-acre parcel adjacent to the Westbrook Townhome Complex. Provide benches, trees, arbor, play equipment, etc.

## Leopold Lake



Leopold Lake is a small, three-acre parcel centrally located in Findlay Township along Route 30. According to the public meeting minutes, this is the site the township wishes to develop as a community park if additional acreage can be acquired. In the event that another site is acquired for the community park, the following recommendations pertinent to the lake are as follows:

- Continue to negotiate with the Pittsburgh International Airport for additional land to provide a greenspace buffer to protect the sensitive environment around the lake. Provide hiking/biking trails to commercial development at airport.
- Develop a more aesthetic entrance into Leopold Lake from Route 30, including the incorporation of the new signs characterizing the site as part of the Findlay system.
- Develop a trail link from the Montour Trail to Leopold Lake and from Leopold Lake to Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton), (The Clinton Block Trail).
- Provide wheelchair accessible parking and access to the lake.

## Trails and Bikeways



- Explore the feasibility of creating a township-wide trail system with links to the Montour Trail.
- Develop a plan to include trail access to future commercial/office developments on Pittsburgh International Airport property.
- Provide a linear park/trails to connect additionally acquired recreation land with the rest of the park system.
- Develop an accessible trail link between Findlay Township Community Park (Clinton) and the Community Center Ballfield.
- Improve the Imperial Pointe Bikeway by developing a link at an accessible, gradient from the parking lot to the lower elevations of the Elm Street Park.
- Provide a link from Clinton to the Montour Trail using the existing Clinton-Enlow Road right-of-way on airport property and Enlow Road.

### **GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

Greenway corridors are linear open space areas established to conserve natural and man-made corridors such as streams, old railroad rights-of-way, roads, etc. These

generally long ribbons of green space can also take on a variety of shapes and are often comprised of wetlands, gamelands, steep slopes and flood plains. Greenway corridors can link parks, historic sites and trails together to form a regional network.

The “1997 Township of Findlay Comprehensive Plan” proposed such an open space system to preserve and conserve environmentally sensitive land in the township.

There are many different kinds of greenway corridors. The types that are significant to the Township of Findlay are:

- Scenic and historic roadways that offer the primary means of visual access to the general open space of Findlay.
- Recreational greenways featuring trails based upon man-made features such as railroad beds or limited access roads.
- Comprehensive greenway systems, usually based on natural corridors, but sometimes arbitrarily designed to link together parks, schools and historic and other cultural nodes.
- Environmentally sensitive areas along natural corridors such as streams, rivers, wetlands and steep slopes.

The benefits from the establishment of a greenway corridor system can include:

- **Environmental Protection:** Greenway corridors protect wetlands, stream valleys and steep slopes; provide habitat for native and migrating wildlife; reduce the probability of landslides and flooding; and improve water quality.

- **Education:** Greenway corridors are ideal sites to provide students of all ages with the opportunity to study natural systems.
- **Property Values:** Greenway corridor designation often enhances property values and can attract people to live in the community.
- **Improved Recreational Opportunities:** Greenway corridors can provide trails for many different kinds of recreational experiences such as hiking, cycling, jogging, walking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.
- **Linkage Opportunities:** Greenway corridors can be woven into a system that creates linkages between parks, historic sites, gamelands, trails, etc. for both the benefit of recreational users and wildlife.

Greenway corridors, as they pertain to the Township of Findlay, have focused primarily on recreation uses – the provision of paths or trails for fitness, cycling and walking/jogging rather than for strict conservation of natural resources. Yet, the possibility of environmental damage and intensive land use makes protection of the natural resources and the rural character of Findlay of vital importance to its residents. This study recommends that a feasibility study be conducted on all existing and proposed greenway corridors to ensure protection of natural features while providing for the maximum recreation opportunity. This study can determine whether greenways are suited for limited pedestrian only uses, like walking or hiking or if more intense uses like cycling or horseback riding can be accommodated without risking damage to the environment. Location and development of trailheads

should also be analyzed for impact on the natural resources.

Greenways and trail corridor development require a well-planned strategy to obtain funding for land acquisition. Several approaches may be employed.

- Form a non-profit advocacy group made up of public officials and private citizens to promote open space conservation and trail development and to pursue funding.
- Form a non-profit land trust to preserve natural features and sensitive resources by acquiring and holding land in perpetuity.
- Develop greenway corridors on a special project basis through the Parks and Recreation Department or Municipal Planning Commission. A good example of this is the Montour Greenway.

## MANDATORY DEDICATION

This study recommends that the Township of Findlay adopt a mandatory Dedication Ordinance.

Projected population increases in the Township of Findlay over the next 15 years will bring increased demand for new recreation opportunities.

One method to acquire the land necessary to provide for the anticipated increased demand is mandatory dedication. One of the questions in the Findlay Township Park and Recreation Questionnaire asked if Findlay Township should require developers to dedicate land or provide fees for new or improved park facilities. A majority, (80%), of respondents answered yes to this question. The authority to provide this requirement is contained in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC); however, a municipality must develop definite standards for determining open space dedication requirements. One element fundamental to this approach is providing a logical, reasonable, and legally defensible calculation of how much land is to be dedicated for each proposed dwelling unit.

One accepted standard for local parkland is 10 acres for each 1,000 persons in the community. Using this acreage per 1,000 population ratio, a mandatory land dedication calculation can be derived. The year 2000 average household size reported for Findlay Township is 2.45 persons per household. A unit or per lot standard can be derived by dividing the 1,000 population figure by the average household size as follows:

1,000 population divided by 2.45 persons per dwelling unit = 408 dwellings.

The amount of land dedication for each dwelling unit or proposed lot can then be computed by dividing the recommended acreage (10 acres) by the average number of dwellings (408) that make up the 1,000 population figure as follows:

10 acres divided by 408 dwellings = 0.025 acres per dwelling.

It is important that land to be dedicated must be compatible with the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan and that it be suitable for the intended park or recreation purpose. At a minimum, the mandatory land dedication ordinance should address the following suitability factors:

- The site should be of suitable size, shape, slope and dimensions to accommodate the recreation activities identified in the Comprehensive Recreation Park and Open Space Plan for that location.
- The site should abut a public street for sufficient distance to provide good ingress and egress.
- The site should be accessible to the development required to dedicate the land and to the general public.
- The land should not be encumbered by undo amounts of rights of way, streets, easements, restrictive covenants, mining conditions, stormwater management facilities, overhead or underground utilities,

and should be environmentally hazard free.

- Less than half of the site should be within the one hundred year flood plain and no more than 25 percent should be composed of wetlands as defined by any state or federal agency.
- The site should have access to the same improvements required in the subdivision (e.g. storm drainage, utilities, etc.).
- The site should be reviewed for historical or archaeological significance.
- Land should be dedicated in fee simple to the Township, subject to acceptance, or deeded in fee simple or less than fee simple permanently restricting the open space for recreational use by the public and allowing for public use and improvements for open space or recreational purposes (e.g., a conservation easement to a conservation organization).

Example ordinances from other municipalities are included in Appendix D.

### **FEE-IN-LIEU OF LAND**

When mandatory dedication of land does not provide a usable tract of land or if adequate, developable parkland exists in that service area, a fee-in-lieu of option offers greater flexibility for the Township and the developer. The developer must voluntarily agree to the fee-in-lieu as the Township cannot

require a developer to pay fees in-lieu-of land dedication. Fees should be based on the fair market value of the land required to be dedicated and fees thus collected must be placed in a separate interest bearing account clearly identifying the land for which the fee was received. Fees must be spent within a three-year period for new facilities, for improvements to existing facilities or to acquire land for recreation. In addition, to avoid legal challenges, the fees being spent should be directed toward facilities which will serve the new residents where the fees were collected.

The NRPA has established service areas for the various park types. For example, the service area for a neighborhood park is a 1/2 mile radius and for a community park it is a 3 mile radius. Thus, if a developer agrees to pay a fee-in-lieu of dedication for its share of neighborhood park land, the monies should be spent within 1/2 mile of the development site and if for its share of community park land, the monies should be spent within 3 miles of the development site.

The fair market value of the land required to be dedicated should be determined by a professional appraiser who is retained by the township to analyze recent real estate transactions and to derive generalized estimates of the value either on a township-wide or on a neighborhood basis. A method for resolving disputes over the fair market value of the land should be provided such as through a special appraisal committee made up of one professional appraiser appointed by the township, one appointed by the developer and one appointed jointly by the other two appraisers.

If each dwelling unit or lot is required to dedicate .025 acres of land (see Mandatory Dedication, above), then a fee per unit or lot can be established by simply multiplying the value per acre by .025 acres. For example, if the appraised value per acre were \$8,000, then the fee per unit would be \$200 ( $\$8,000 \times .025 = \$200$ ).