

Appendix A—Historical Perspective

Needs Assessment

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE : 2000-2005

Newsletter Survey Results

To measure the level of interest Township residents currently have in various recreational activities, a recreation survey was included in the Township's newsletter mailing in the summer of 2005. Questions contained in the 2005 survey remained essentially unchanged from the Township's year 2000 recreation survey. The return rate of the 2005 survey was 3.9%, a slight increase from the year 2000's return rate of 3.8%.

The major shift in public opinion between the 2000 and 2005 is an increased level of interest in active / organized recreational activities. Specifically, youth league baseball, youth league basketball, youth league soccer, adult league basketball and youth league softball now are among the top 15 activities in which Township residents are "Very Interested". Another activity that gained popularity is playground use, which also emerged in the 2005 top 15 activities list. A likely cause for this increase is the arrival of new families with children in the Township, particularly in subdivisions such as North Pointe. Similar to the year 2000, "Walking / Hiking" remained the favorite recreational activity, as well as the activity in which residents had the highest level of interest. Laurel Park was the most frequently visited recreational venue in the Township, followed by Pat Livezey Park, Magill's Hill Park, New Hope - Solebury High School, the New Hope - Solebury Elementary Schools and Delaware Canal State Park.

SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP PARK & RECREATION PLAN UPDATE

ACTIVITIES WITH HIGHEST LEVELS OF INTEREST

2000 TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER SURVEY			2005 TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER SURVEY		
(297 surveys returned, 3.8% return rate)			(334 surveys returned, 3.9% return rate)		
ACTIVITY	VERY INTERESTED		ACTIVITY	VERY INTERESTED	
Walking / Hiking	211	71%	Walking / Hiking	171	51%
Concerts	185	62%	Baseball - youth league	165	49%
Trails	159	54%	Sledding & Tobogganing	158	47%
Bicycling	155	52%	Basketball - youth league	156	47%
Festivals	148	50%	Swimming	134	40%
Educational Programs	147	49%	Ice Skating	129	39%
Swimming	140	47%	Trails	127	38%
Ice Skating	138	46%	Concerts and Musical Programs	118	35%
Sledding	137	46%	Soccer - youth league	116	35%
Educational Center	117	39%	Playground Equipment - innovative	115	34%
Picnic Tables	114	38%	Bicycling	103	31%
Fitness Apparatus	111	37%	Summer Youth Program	101	30%
Stage programs	108	36%	Educational and Cultural	96	29%
Golf	107	36%	Basketball - adult league	91	27%
Fitness Course	101	34%	Softball - youth league	90	27%
			<i>Indicates activity not present in year 2000 Survey Top 15 Activities</i>		
			ACTIVITY	FAVORITE ACTIVITY	
			Walking / Hiking	84	
			Baseball - youth league	72	
			Basketball - youth league	66	
			Bicycling	65	
			Soccer - youth league	58	

Appendix A—Historical Perspective

National Recreation and Park Association Guidelines

In the past, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) advocated a uniform national standard for parkland within a community – such as 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Recently, this approach was discarded by the NRPA in favor of a less arbitrary standard called “Level of Service” (LOS). According to the NRPA, the LOS is a “needs driven, facility-based and land measured formula”. It provides individual communities with an accurate calculation of the minimum acceptable amount of land needed to accommodate the recreational facilities desired by their populations. As a function of the current supply and demand of recreational facilities within a particular community, the LOS approach allows that community to plan for future recreational facilities.

To determine current demand for park facilities within Solebury Township, a statistically-valid telephone survey of Township residents was conducted in September of 2005. Results of this survey are entered into the LOS formula, which produce a LOS standard that responds to the unique recreational needs of Solebury Township.

Telephone Survey Results

The firm Reed Haldy McIntosh, Inc. administered Solebury Township’s telephone survey and contacted 200 households within the Township through a random sampling process. Residents were asked the frequency in which they participated in recreational activities and the locations in which these activities occurred. Trail-based activities (including activities such as walking / hiking and bicycling) were the most popular activities in the Township, with 76% of survey respondents reporting they engaged in these activities within the past year. Playground usage was the second-most popular activity, with 56% of survey respondents reporting use within the past year.

In general, the telephone survey shows that actual participation in organized recreational activities is less than the level of interest in those activities as measured by the newsletter survey. For example, the 2005 newsletter survey reports that 49% of respondents are “very interested” in youth league baseball. However, the telephone survey (which is statistically-valid) finds that only 9% of households in the Township participate in youth league baseball. This discrepancy is likely explained by a respondent’s level of interest in an activity not necessarily translating into actual participation in that activity. Another reason for the discrepancy may be that participants in organized recreational activities responded to the newsletter survey at a higher rate than residents not involved in organized recreational activities. According to the telephone survey, the organized recreational activity in Solebury Township with the highest participation level is youth league soccer (16% of households participating). Youth league baseball has a 9% participation rate and youth league basketball, youth league softball and youth league football have a participation rate of 5% or below.

The telephone survey provided demand data specific to Solebury Township for each recreational activity inquired about. For example, out of 200 households sampled, the survey determined that 45 people participate in youth league soccer at Pat Livezey Park and those 45 people averaged 5.9 visits per year. This information is critical in calculating demand for recreational facilities and in turn, the population able to be served by that facility.

Appendix A—Historical Perspective

2005 TELEPHONE SURVEY		
(200 households)		
ACTIVITY	% HOUSEHOLDS PARTICIPATING	
Walking / Hiking	73%	
Nature Trails	40%	
Bicycling	34%	
Sledding / Tobogganing	27%	
Use an Educational Center (nature study)	27%	
Jogging	25%	
Playground	19%	
Golf	17%	
Tennis	16%	
Swimming	16%	
Youth League Soccer	16%	
Mountain Biking	15%	
Youth League Baseball	9%	
Horseback Riding	7%	
Inline Skating / rollerblading	6%	
Youth League Basketball	5%	
Youth League Softball	3%	
Youth League Football	2%	

Facilities Needed

Using existing scheduling data for athletic fields to determine availability of individual facilities and demand data provided by the telephone survey, population served per year at recreational facilities was calculated as per the NRPA formula. To review the NRPA formula and methodology, please refer to the Appendix of this report.

These calculations indicated that the Township does not have adequate youth league soccer, youth league basketball and youth league softball facilities to accommodate its estimated year 2005 population of 8,600 (DVRPC). The estimated 2005 population of New Hope Borough increases the total population to 10,920. By the year 2020, the population of both municipalities is estimated to be 14,310. However, the inclusion of New Hope Borough's population does not result in a need for

recreational facilities over and above those facilities that the Township needs to serve its own residents.

The NRPA calculations indicate that in 2005, the Township is able to serve a population of 6,958 with its current youth league soccer facilities. As a result, an additional two (2) soccer fields (providing 1,300 yearly visits each) are needed now. By the year 2020, another soccer field will be needed, bringing the total additional soccer fields needed by 2020 to three (3).

According to the NRPA calculation, Solebury Township can serve a population of 7,556 with its current youth league basketball facilities. Since more visits to a basketball facility are required than the Township currently can provide and due to the fact that the Township has no dedicated indoor basketball facility, it is clear that a dedicated indoor facility is needed. This facility will meet the Township's need through the year 2020.

Though the NRPA calculation is a useful tool in determining recreational facility need, it should not be the only indicator considered. Particularly, the first-hand knowledge and opinions of those involved with the Solebury Township Parks and Recreation Department should be examined with the same amount of relevance. While the NRPA calculation indicates that the Township has a deficit of softball facilities, the steering committee for the 2005 Parks and Recreation

MINIMUM POPULATION SERVICE REQUIREMENT SERVICE REQUIREMENT (2005, Township-Wide)

	POPULATION SERVED
Youth League Soccer	6,958
Youth League Baseball	17,842
Youth League Softball	8,542
Youth League Basketball	7,556
	(Yellow Indicates Deficit)
	(Blue Indicates Slight Deficit)

POPULATION (DVRPC)

	2005	2020
Solebury Twp:	8,600	11,980
Solebury & New Hope:	10,920	14,310

Appendix A—Historical Perspective

Plan Update believes that a full-size, 90' baseball field is needed instead and that current facilities for the softball program are adequate. Committee members feel that the true demand for youth baseball facilities is not accurately represented in the telephone survey due to difference in interpretation of such terminology as "youth" league and "adult" league baseball. As a result, respondents wishing to indicate participation in Connie Mack baseball, for example, may have indicated that members of their households participated in "adult" league baseball. The intent when writing the telephone survey was to consider all Township-administered baseball programs as "youth league".

In addition to facilities deemed to necessary by the NRPA calculation, best management practices and the accommodation of future sports programs are also factors in determining facility need. Ideally, four to six (4-6) additional multi-purpose fields could be utilized for soccer and football, as well as potential programs in lacrosse and field hockey. Establishing these additional multi-purpose fields would allow the Township to implement the management practice of "field resting" for field sports. Field resting places a field "off-line" for one year to rehabilitate the field's surface.

In summary, the number of additional active sports facilities needed by the Township is as follows:

	2005	2020
Indoor basketball facility	1	No additional need
Soccer / Multi-purpose field	2	1
Multi-purpose field (for field resting / best management practices)	1-2	2-4
Baseball field (full-size)	1	No additional need