



# Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan

February 20, 2018



This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and/or Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.



# Acknowledgements

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Mr. Tony Amadio

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# Introduction and User Guide

## Introduction

With Royal Dutch Shell's commitment to building an ethane cracker plant in Beaver County, and projections for significant spin-off industries and development, Beaver County has an opportunity to plan for and guide future growth and prosperity within the County. One component of that planning includes charting a course for the future of recreation, parks and open space in the county.

With increased employment opportunities on the horizon, we must look at factors that influence investment in the Beaver County. First and foremost, with the investment in the ethane and associated industries, employers will be looking to attract and retain talented individuals to employ. Second, those employees will need close and convenient housing from which that can live, work, and play.

So what can Beaver County do? We can look at what attracts people to an area, what they were interested in, what they consider necessary to maintain their quality of life and what investments should be made to respond to their needs.

A National Realtor Association Community and Transportation Preferences Survey conducted in 2015 indicates the following preferences when deciding where to live:

- 84% desire sidewalks and places to take walks
- 81% desire access to the highway
- 78% desire to be within an easy walk of other places and things in a community such as shops and parks
- 74% desire to be within a short commute to work
- 63% desire to have public transit nearby
- 76% desire bike lanes and path nearby
- 76% desire separated bike paths or trails

In 2016, Abodo, a Madison, Wisconsin-based online rental marketplace, published a report "Living the Millennium Dream: 2,000 Millennials Chose the Perfect City & Its Most Important Features." The report was based on a survey of more than 2,000 people born between 1982 and 1998, as well as walkability data from Walk Score, school systems and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Respondents were asked to rate the most desirable qualities of a city.

Respondents rated the qualities they desire (in order of importance) as follows:

1. A thriving job market
2. Affordable rent
3. Affordable home prices
4. Parks or hiking trails
5. Local restaurants (non-chain)
6. Quality pizza
7. Top-rated public schools
8. Movie theaters
9. Walkability
10. Revitalized downtown
11. LGBTQ-friendly
12. Ethnic food
13. Green or farmers market
14. Concert or music venues
15. Quality public transportation
16. Mall or town center
17. Local coffee shops
18. Affordable clothing stores
19. A nearby lake, beach or river
20. Local college or university

Recognizing the Millennial generation is entering the workforce, Beaver County has the opportunity to attract and retain them by providing them with the quality of life they desire.

The surveys referenced herein, and many others, indicate that parks, trails, walkability, and bikeability, are high priorities for this generation. Therefore, providing quality recreation, park and open space in Beaver County will complement upcoming job opportunities and position Beaver County as desirable place to live, work and play.

## **Beaver County in the near future**

The point of planning is to provide a road map that steers the County in the direction it wants to go. Some adages apply:

*“If you don’t know where you are going, you will end up someplace else.”* – Yogi Berra

*“The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.”* – John F. Kennedy

This comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan supplies the specific actions that Beaver County should take to “get where it wants to be.” And where is that?

- The County wants to serve the needs of existing residents of all ages.
- The County wants to attract new residents, particularly families with young children, and recognizes that recreation opportunities are a key way to do so.
- The County wants to attract Millennials in general (people born from roughly between late 1980s and early 2000s). Societally, this generational cohort is highly interested in walkable and bikeable communities, opportunities to be out in nature, and the chance to live, work, stay and play all in close proximity and preferably without need for a car.
- The County hopes to foster and build upon the economic growth and general development that is expected to result from the proposed Royal Dutch Shell ethane cracker plant. The plant will bring 6,000 jobs during construction and 600 permanent positions. In addition, an additional 13,200 jobs are projected over the next ten years in industry that will develop around the cracker plan and approximately 3,800 in support jobs such as contract maintenance, small business and hospitality industries.

The content of this plan reflects those goals and aspirations. It provides rationales and specific steps for moving forward to achieve the kinds of changes the County desires. What follows in this Introduction and User Guide are details that explain how to read this plan report and summarize its main points.

## **A Framework for Decision-Making**

This plan is not law or a regulatory document. It recommends an approach to maintain and provide a parks and recreation system that serves all Beaver County residents throughout their lifetime with diverse recreation opportunities. It suggests recommendations and strategies to maintain and provide residents with quality recreation opportunities.

This plan will serve as a reference for County officials, staff, and advisory boards; partner organizations; and other interested parties. It is a guide, not a mandate, for future actions and decisions. Implementation of recommendations contained herein will require further discussion, public involvement, and approval for the actions to be undertaken.



As the plan was being prepared, the current financial status of Beaver County was taken into consideration. Many of the recommendations proposed within this plan rely on funding sources outside of the County's General Fund to implement. Recognizing that existing staff have many duties and responsibilities to undertake, the County should determine which of the recommendations proposed herein are priorities to implement and allow staff to advance those efforts. When implementation requires funding, it should be the staff's responsibility to assemble funding for the selected priorities by bringing in grants, sponsorships, donations, matching funds, and in-kind services to the projects. Upon raising sufficient funds to meet the targeted goals, the projects can advance and be implemented.

## User Guide

### *A Comprehensive Plan in a New Format*

This plan is a new take on the long-standing technique of comprehensive recreation, park and open space planning. It is an action-oriented description full of details, how-to's, and useful references.

This plan is the record of the work that was done by the citizens, elected officials, appointed officials and professional staff of Beaver County in 2015-16. They are the ones who identified the issues that are important to address in the coming years; this plan summarizes the community's thought process and provides practical next steps and tools for moving forward.

The plan is written in plain language, not jargon or technical writing.

### *Plan organization*

**Introduction:** This section includes a summary of the plan, a description of its implementation, and acknowledgement of the groups and individuals who contributed ideas, guidance and expertise.

**Key Issues:** The heart of the plan are the Key Issue sections that represent the major topics that are recommended to be addressed in the coming years. The first two sections were identified as the top priorities to be implemented. The sections are:

1. **Beaver County Park Upgrades**
2. **Beaver County Trails, Greenways, and Blueways**
3. **Beaver County Recreation Administration and Operations**
  - Funding
  - Marketing
  - Staffing/Operations
  - Maintenance Plan
4. **Other Recreation and Park Opportunities**
  - Partnership, Collaboration, Cooperation, Communication
  - Economic-based Recreation
  - General Parks and Recreation

**Tiers:** The strategies set forth in this plan are categorized by "tiers" that reflect the importance, impact, cost and feasibility of each.

1. **Tier 1 strategies** have high Impact, are very important and are feasible. Only Chapter 1 - Beaver County Park Upgrades includes Tier 1 strategies.
2. **Tier 2 strategies** have lower impact or lower feasibility than Tier 1, but are important. These appear in Chapter 1 - Beaver County Park Upgrades; Chapter 2 - Beaver County Trails, Greenways, and Blueways; and Chapter 3 - Beaver County Recreation Administration and Operations.
3. **Tier 3 strategies** are either low impact but high feasibility or high impact but low feasibility. These appear in Chapter 1 - Beaver County Park Upgrades; and Chapter 4 - Other Recreation and Park Opportunities.

**Appendices:** Additional, helpful information or extra detail is available in the appendices of this workbook, under separate cover. They include:

- Examples or samples that help convey ideas mentioned in the Plan.
- Background information that supports the decisions and recommendations of the Plan.
- Contextual information that could be helpful to a reader who wants to know more.

## What Makes this an Implementable Plan?

In order to ensure that the recommendations of this plan can be implemented, each issue and subsequent recommendation has been evaluated against its support from the public and its likelihood of implementation. The following are indicators of likely implementation.

### *Project Impact*

The potential impact of a particular project is measured by its likelihood to:

- Draw large numbers of people
- Be used by a variety of user groups
- Provide additional opportunities for park users
- Complement other park uses
- Meet the needs of new user groups

A project that meets multiple of these criteria is considered to have a much higher impact.

### *Cost and Funding Options*

While cost estimates are provided for many of the proposed projects, some of the narrative and summaries rank projects as low, mid, or high cost as depicted in the chart on page I-9.

Some projects are eligible for grants from a variety of outside sources. These grants effectively reduce the County's direct cost for the project. Net cost, that is total cost minus funds derived from grants, depict a more accurate picture of actual project cost.

### *Partnership/Collaboration Opportunities*

Partnerships and collaborative efforts can enhance the impact of a project and/or reduce its cost. Either way these strengthen the ability to develop and sustain the project.

## *Revenue Production or Economic Impact*

These factors consider direct revenue produced through user fees or indirect economic impact derived as a result of the project. An example of direct revenue are fees collected by the County the rental of picnic shelters. Economic impact are revenues that support county businesses as a result of tournaments, special events, or facility use. Either enhances the longer term viability of a project.

## *Opportunity To Implement*

The most implementable projects are those that have strong community support; necessary funding in place; support of elected officials; appropriate staffing and administrative structure; and long-term sustainability. These types of projects become top priorities.

## *Public Support*

Residents identified their support for projects in a variety of public input forums including public meetings, digital questionnaire, blog comments, key person interviews, and written or verbal input. While all issues described in this report have been identified through the public input process as being important to them, some are identified as showing stronger public support than others.

## **What To Do First?**

Throughout this study, many recommendations have been made for improving recreation and parks in Beaver County. Implementing each of these recommendations requires staff time and funding. Recognizing that Beaver County is in the process of re-establishing its financial footing, the following rationale was developed to guide the implementation of the recommendations presented herein.

Tables on the following pages summarize What to do next - Capital Project Implementation Summary – Years 1 through 5 and the overall plan - Projects Classified by Impact, Cost, Revenue Production, and Implementation Opportunity.

## *Capital Project Implementation Summary – Years 1 through 5*

In the near term, years 1 through 5, the County should focus on projects that can be quick successes and implemented at low costs. These projects must be funded with availability funding while minimizing the use of funds from the County's General Fund Budget.

Capital Project Implementation Summary - Years One through Five appears on Page I-7. The county should work on these projects first, in budget years 2018-2022. The capital projects on this chart are first steps toward successful implementation of bigger, longer-term projects in Beaver County Parks.

The implementation recommendations are designed to ensure that the county can strategically move through the initial stages of getting projects completed. Fiscal year 2018 begins the process with replacement of the pedestrian bridge in Bradys Run Park near the lodge, potentially funded with county vehicle registration funds; expansion of the Old Economy Disc Golf Course to 18 holes, funded with county hotel tax revenue; and using vehicle registration funds to plan for park road improvements to be completed in 2019. In each of the following four years, a combination of planning, construction projects, and grant applications prepare the county to move systematically toward complete implementation.

The timetable proposed throughout the chart, sets forth a clear plan to ensure that the proper planning is completed, and grants applied for, in a timely manner to keep construction projects on track for the years in which they are proposed. Forgoing the recommended planning efforts or grant applications will delay the construction process.

By the end of the five-year process, Beaver County will have installed a new pedestrian bridge, constructed two new picnic shelters at Bradys Run Park, replaced the playground in Brush Creek Park, expanded the disc golf course at Old Economy, and completed two phases of road improvements throughout the county parks. As depicted in the table, the total investment of approximately \$1,543,000 in county park upgrades will have cost the county about \$369,000 of general fund money.

In addition to these capital projects, there operational and programmatic recommendations that should be early implementation projects. These include:

- Development of Memorandums of Understanding with various user organizations which defines the responsibilities and expectations of the organization and the responsibilities and expectations of the County related to the organizations use of the County's park land and facilities.
- Adopting and implementing a trail wayfinding sign system in all County Parks.
- In Bradys Run Park, install a trailhead parking area and mowing a natural surface trail around the perimeter of the valley, in the area of Shelter 16
- In Bradys Run Park, removing existing picnic shelter numbers 1, 9, 10, 11 & 16 which have been identified as having very low demand and being in poor condition.
- In Bradys Run Park acquire a trail easement from adjacent private property owners to allow the existing Wildwood Road Loop Trail to traverse their properties.
- Initiating and advancing discussions with PennDOT and the local municipalities to establish bicycle lanes along Route 51, between the Beaver County YMCA in Rochester to the main entrance into Bradys Run Park.

### *Projects Classified by Impact, Cost, Revenue Production, and Implementation Opportunity*

Projects Classified by Impact, Cost, Revenue Production, and Implementation Opportunity appears on Page I-9. This chart summarizes the big picture, the many projects that are recommended throughout this report. Beaver County should recognize that while some of these are obviously major undertakings, they can be broken into feasible next steps, as shown on page I-9. It is anticipated these projects will occur in years 5 through 10 or beyond.

While both charts organize the implementation projects into tiers, the County must be ready to adjust priorities and respond to opportunities when they are present. Projects can be elevated or lowered in timing, depending on factors such as available funding, project readiness, project demand, etc.

This plan does not mandate or require actions. It does not preclude adding new projects based upon trends, evolving needs, and opportunities. The intent of the plan is to provide an overall framework and guidelines to improve the quality of life in Beaver County through parks and recreation. This implementation section should be a "living document," one that sets high goals, but responds to fiscal and political realities.

Beaver County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

Capital Project Implementation - Years One through Five

Project	Impact	Cost	County General Fund	Other Sources	Proposed Funding Source	Comments
<b>Budget year 2018</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>		<b>\$185,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>		
Install new pedestrian bridge near the Lodge		\$165,000	\$0	\$165,000	County Vehicle Registration Fund.	No General Fund monies needed
Develop a plan to repair the roads within Beaver County Parks. Develop a five-year schedule for planning, engineering, and repairs.	Proper planning will ensure successful implementation of the road and parking repairs required in all County parks.	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000	Beaver County Vehicle Registration Fund	No General Fund monies needed
Old Economy Park Disc Golf Expansion - addition of 9 holes to create 18 hole course	Direct & indirect economic development from tournaments.	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000	Potentially Act 13, Hotel Tax & in-Kind	No General Fund monies needed
<b>Budget year 2019</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>		<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>		
Complete Phase 1 road improvements in County Parks.		\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	Vehicle Registration Fee funds - \$250,000	No General Fund monies needed
Apply for a DCNR Development Grant to replace shelters 14 and 15.	Address a major safety issue with the playground	Staff time only	\$0	\$0	PA DCNR Community Conservation Fund	
Design and develop the Trail Demonstration Project from Beaver County YMCA to Bradys Run Park.	Important first step in getting trail on the ground in Beaver County	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	Act 13 Impact Fees	Secure donations from Local Municipalities, Business Community, and organizations
Begin the planning and fundraising process for the the Bradys Run Inclusive Play Area, Environmental Center, and Miracle Field.	Staff time only		\$0	\$0		
<b>Budget year 2020</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>		<b>\$568,000</b>	<b>\$174,000</b>	<b>\$394,000</b>		
<b>Continue the Road Improvement Project</b>		\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000	Beaver County Vehicle Registration Fund	No General Fund monies needed
Shelter Renovations Part of Phase 1 - Bradys Run County Park. Replace shelters 14 and 15	First step in Bradys Run Park Shelter Upgrades. Critical to the long-term park improvement plan.	\$188,000	\$94,000	\$94,000	DCNR Grant, Act 13 Impact Fees. Beaver County Vehicle Registration Fund. Naming rights.	Consider selling naming rights to local businesses and organizations to generate construction funds. No General Fund monies needed
Apply for grant to replace the playgrounds at Brush Creek Park	Address a major safety and sanitation issue in the park	Staff time only	\$0	\$0	PA DCNR Community Conservation Fund	No General Fund monies needed
Begin engineering plan for Bradys Run infrastructure improvements.	Infrastructure upgrades are required for the long term use and sustainability of the park.	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$0		
Continue the planning and fundraising process for the the Bradys Run Inclusive Play Area, Eco Center, and Miracle Field.	Staff time only		\$0	\$0		No General Fund monies needed
<b>Budget year 2021</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>		<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>		
Apply for a DCNR Planning Grant to Master Plan the Bradys Run Inclusive Play Area, Environmental Center, and Miracle Field.		Staff time only	\$0	\$0		No General Fund monies needed
Replace the playgrounds at Brush Creek Park		\$300,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	PA DCNR Community Conservation Fund	
<b>Budget year 2022</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>		<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>		
Develop the Master Plan for the Bradys Run Inclusive Play Area, Environmental Center, and Miracle Field.		\$70,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	PA DCNR Community Conservation Fund	
Apply for a DCNR Grant to upgrade three restrooms at Brush Creek Park.		Staff time only	\$0	\$0	PA DCNR Community Conservation Fund - Estimated cost \$241,000	No General Fund monies needed
<b>Budget years 2018 - 2022</b>						
<b>Anticipated Budget Amount</b>						
	Beaver County General Fund	Beaver County Act 13 Impact Funds	Beaver County Vehicle Registration Fund	Grants and other Sources	Grand Total	
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	\$359,000	\$275,000	\$610,000	\$299,000	\$1,543,000	
<b>Five - year Average</b>	\$71,800	\$55,000	\$122,000	\$59,800	\$308,600	





Beaver County Parks Improvements Summary

Projects Classified by Impact, Cost, Revenue Production, and Implementation Opportunity

Project	Impact	Cost	Revenue/Economic Impact	Implementation Opportunity	Comments	Estimated Cost
1 BR Inclusive Family Play Area w Miracle Field and Environmental Center	High Impact	High Cost <sup>1</sup>	Mid Revenue	High	Strong Partnership Opportunities	\$800,000 Play area \$700,000 Ballfield \$1.5M Environmental Center
2 BR Park Trails	High Impact	Low Cost <sup>2</sup>	Economic Impact	High	Collaboration w Trail groups is highly recommended	
3 BR Shelters Restrooms Playgrounds	High Impact	High cost	Ongoing/Increased Revenue	High	Phased over a period of years	
4 BC Playground Replacement	High Impact	Mid-cost	No Revenue	High <sup>3</sup>	Safety issues move this to a higher priority	\$300,000
5 OE Barn Rehabilitation	High Impact	High Cost	Ongoing/Increased Revenue	Mid <sup>4</sup>		
6 BR Lodge Upgrades	Mid impact	Low Cost	Ongoing/Increased Revenue	High	High use w low annual upgrade costs	
7 OE Disc Golf Expansion	Mid Impact	Low Cost	Low Revenue	High	P/P Partnership with disc golf organization	\$30,000
8 BC Restroom Upgrades	Mid Impact	Mid Cost	No Revenue	Low	Three restrooms are included in the initial upgrades.	\$241,500
9 BC Shelter Additions	Mid Impact	Mid Cost	Low Revenue	Low	Phased over a period of years	
10 BC/BR Ballfield Rehabilitation	Mid Impact	High Cost	Low Revenue <sup>5</sup>	Mid	See the 2008 Master Site Plans; possible P/P partnership	See master site plans
11 OE Shelter and Playground Improvements	Mid Impact	High Cost	Ongoing/Increased Revenue	Mid <sup>6</sup>	Phased over a period of years	
12 County Parks road repairs	Long-term Impact	High Cost	Required to support other improvements	Phased with project development	Revenue from increases vehicle registration fees	
13 BR Infrastructure improvements	Long-term Impact	High Cost	Long-term park sustainability	Long-range	Must be done before Beach Improvements	
14 Second Sheet of Ice at BR Recreation Facility	High Impact	High Cost	High Revenue	Low <sup>7/8</sup>	P/P Partnership could be considered	\$5-6M (Feasibility Study estimate)
15 BR Beach Improvements	High Impact	High Cost	Potential Revenue Generator	Long-range	P/P Partnerships	

<sup>1</sup> Costs can offset by exceptional grant opportunities

<sup>2</sup> First phase is low cost; construction phases are high cost

<sup>3</sup> Safety issues classify this as a priority need

<sup>4</sup> Classified as mid due to high cost

<sup>5</sup> Opportunities for tournaments

<sup>6</sup> High road infrastructure costs are associated with this project

<sup>7</sup> All supporting analysis and documentation is in a separate feasibility report prepared for Beaver County

<sup>8</sup> Due to the complexity and anticipated cost of this project, there is still additional information or analysis needed before making a decision whether or not to proceed. A proposal has been submitted to the County for the Completion of this work.

Cost Legend	
Low Cost	<\$100k
Mid Cost	\$100 to \$500k
High Cost	>\$500k



## Introduction

Beaver County has a long history of providing a broad spectrum of recreational facilities and activities through its County Parks. Currently, the County owns five county parks.

**Buttermilk Falls Park**, a nine-acre, natural area featuring a 40-foot scenic sandstone formation and waterfall is located in Homewood Borough. It is a passive park with limited man-made amenities.

**Bradys Run Park** is the largest of Beaver County's parks, boasting nearly 2,000 acres of woodlands, hills, streams, a lake, and a host of recreational amenities. Recreational facilities include the Bradys Run Ice Arena and indoor tennis courts, as well as many outdoor recreation facilities. These include picnic shelters, ballfields, trails, sport courts, playgrounds, a skateboard facility, walking track and much more. Bradys Run is the most used of the county parks and is located north of Beaver Borough in Chippewa and Brighton Townships.

**Brush Creek Park**, located in the northeast portion of the County in North Sewickley and Marion Townships, comprises about 640 acres. The park features plenty of woodlands, fields, a lake, and other natural features as well as soccer, and baseball fields/sport courts, playgrounds, picnic groves, and a remote control airplane field.

**Old Economy Park**, located in Economy Borough, comprises about 340 acres of woodlands, fields, and recreational facilities. The only County-owned swimming pool is here, along with picnic shelters, rental barn, tennis courts, softball field, sledding slopes, and a nine-hole disc golf course.

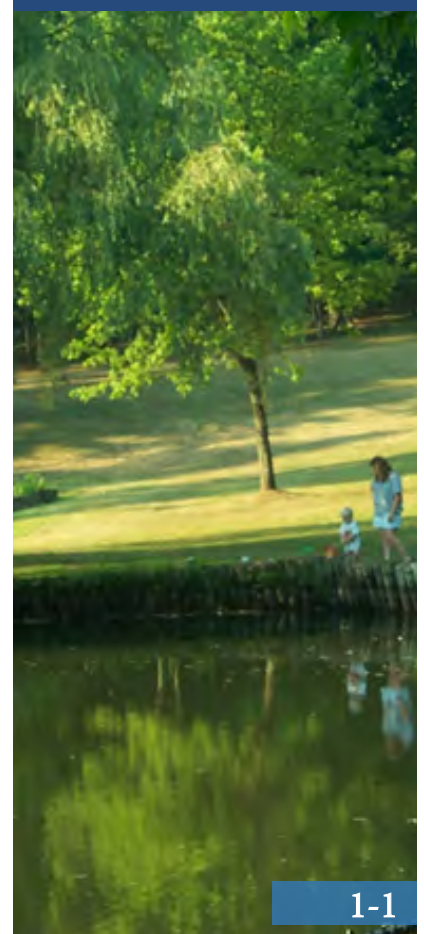
**Bridgewater Crossing** is the County's newest park comprising just under an acre of land along the Ohio Riverfront at the mouth of the Beaver River. It is located in the Borough of Bridgewater. The park features spectacular views of the Ohio and Beaver rivers, their waterfront communities, and bridge crossings. It includes parking, a viewing area, and a dock. Immediately to the northeast is an additional 1.67 acre parcel of parkland that is owned by the County's Corporation for Economic Development. Being contiguous with the County Park, it offers a riverwalk, multiple viewing decks, a featured garden area, and open green space.

## Talking Points

- There is high demand and high use of all county parks/facilities.
- Five of the six most-used recreational facilities in Beaver County are county parks or individual features at county parks: Bradys Run,

## Vision

Beaver County will be recognized across Pennsylvania as being among the top tier of county parks in innovation, quality, creativity, service, safety and maintenance. Beaver County will meet the recreational needs of current residents of all ages, and its services and facilities will serve as a means of attracting new families and children to the County.



Brush Creek, and Old Economy Parks and the ice arena and Brady's Run walking trail.

- Deferred maintenance has placed many park facilities in need of significant repairs.
- County residents have shown a great interest in upgrading and maintaining Beaver County parks to make them more usable, functional, safe, and attractive.
- Beaver County officials need to balance the affordability of park upgrade and expansion with the impact such facilities can have on county residents.
- There are opportunities for county parks to offer economic impact and revenue production.

## *Validation*

The need to improve, upgrade, and enhance county park facilities was ranked very high among all forms of public input gathered as part of the planning process. As well, the consultant's analysis of the parks identified a significant amount of deferred maintenance for many facilities and amenities. The consultant's evaluation of the parks shows the following as the most significant deferred maintenance:

- Except for four new restrooms that were installed at Bradys Run in 2015, all restrooms in the parks are in poor condition and need to be rehabilitated or replaced. Some are still portable rental restrooms.
- Most of the playground equipment in Bradys Run Park has been removed over the last several years, leaving the only usable the playground located adjacent to shelter 15.
- Roofs, concrete floors, rain gutters, posts and pillars, parking and access at most shelters are in need of replacement, repairs, or expansion. Electric and water service do not meet current demand. Shelters and amenities are not ADA compliant.
- With a couple of exceptions, there is insufficient electrical, sanitary sewer, and potable water service available to Bradys Run Park facilities.
- The horse rings have deteriorated dramatically and their amenities are beyond repair. The facility no longer meets design or usability standards for horse trailers, stalls, and programming. Use of the facility has diminished significantly in recent years. Interviews with users suggest they are using more current facilities elsewhere in the county.
- At the baseball/softball complex, ballfield fencing, backstops, bleachers, parking facilities, and restrooms are in need of replacement or upgrade. Some fields need to be reoriented to improve drainage to meet current design standards. Baseball fields at Brush Creek Park are located in areas with poor drainage.
- County-owned roads in the parks are crumbling and incapable of handling current demand.
- Very few of the park facilities are compliant with current ADA standards.



# Implementation

The following pages describe the recommendations and implementation strategies to address the issues related to Beaver County Park upgrade and expansion needs.

## *Project Tiers*

The Beaver County Parks chapter provides strategies and implementation steps in the Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 categories.

1. **Tier 1 strategies** have high Impact, are very important and may have high cost but are feasible in steps.
2. **Tier 2 strategies** have lower impact or lower feasibility than Tier 1, but are important.
3. **Tier 3 strategies** are either low impact but high feasibility or high impact but very low feasibility.





## Bradys Run Park

# Develop an Outdoor Family Recreation Area with Inclusive Playground, Discovery Center, Outdoor Classroom, and Miracle Field

An innovative and inclusive outdoor family recreation area with an inclusive playground, environmental discovery center, and outdoor classrooms will replace the existing horse arena area. This project will likely provide the highest impact in the park in terms of additional use, community involvement, and use of outside funding sources. Conversations have already been had with Beaver County Waste Management, Public Works, and Recreation and Tourism Departments. All strongly support the project and are ready and willing to participate.

### Tasks

- Remove horse arena and all supporting facilities
- Remove shelter 2
- Construct a large destination playground that is inclusive for persons of all abilities.
- Construct a picnic shelter, shade structures, picnic tables, and benches along Bradys Run and around the playground area
- Develop a pervious surface parking area to support the new facilities
- Provide natural screening to block the view of the recycling area
- Develop parking spaces for 3 or 4 horse trailers to be located at the southeast end of the Ice Rink parking lot
- Add a restroom that may be able to connect to the sanitary sewer at the Ice Rink
- Partner with the County Department of Waste Management to develop an environmental education center and program
- Construct a Miracle Field (to be located in Bradys Run Ball Field Complex)



## Tier 1 Project

High Impact

High Cost

Mid Revenue Production

**Strong Partnership Opportunities with:**

Beaver County  
 Human Services  
 Waste Management  
 Public Works  
 Recreation and Tourism

**Grant Opportunities:**

PA State Grants  
 PA DCNR and DCED  
 DEP 902 Grants  
 Commonwealth  
 Finance Authority  
 Federal Land and Water  
 Conservation Fund

**Private Grants :**

Pittsburgh Pirates  
 Charities  
 Miracle League  
 Playground  
 Manufacturers  
 Keep American Beautiful

**Likely Local Support:**

Private Foundations  
 Businesses  
 Private industries that receive tax incentives for "Green" initiatives  
 Local Service Organizations

## Vision and Description

The vision for this featured project brings together multiple user groups focusing on families and children, youth development, recreation, conservation, and education. The inclusive playground will provide a much needed integrated children's recreation facility that affords great opportunities for children and adults, regardless of their abilities. This, coupled with a brand new, community-based, interactive environmental discovery center, focusing on sustainability and recycling, will transform the entrance to Bradys Run Park into a highly visible, attractive, extraordinary recreation and education facility. The two together will draw year-round users from across the county and beyond.

### *Environmental Discovery Center, Inclusive Playground and Outdoor Classrooms*

The environmental discovery center, inclusive playground and outdoor classrooms will educate and train children and adults about a host of environmental issues while promoting recreation and education. In addition to the environmental discover center the area will include and inclusive playground and several outdoor classrooms to be used for educational programming. A hands-on discovery area will provide opportunities for learning and experience. The multi-faceted facility will engage the community in understanding what sustainability and recycling are and how they work. This design will intrigue and interest all age groups and be targeted to stimulate all populations in an inclusive setting.

This area will also include the following educational components along the discovery trails:

- Rain gardens
- Backyard Gardens
- Pollinator Gardens
- Butterfly Gardens
- Hydroponic garden
- Composting area
- Vermiculture area
- Meadows
- Riparian buffers

A 1.5-acre play area, to include a large multi-activity, inclusive playground; a series of smaller interactive play components; lawn areas, rain gardens; and a shelter, be developed near the Route 51 entrance to Bradys Run Park.

A unique addition to the inclusive play area will be an adaptive playground/physical education area that is part of the environmental discovery center described above. The layout of the equipment will stimulate sensory awareness through the colors and textures. Special needs accessibility will be a key target (while integrated with the general population), providing opportunities for a holistic approach to development. As an outdoor setting, the play area will offer a host of sensory development opportunities as well as challenges targeting both gross and finer motor skills. A multitude of sensory therapeutic features will be built into the playground.

The environmental discovery center will be part of an overall restructuring of the County's Waste Management Recycling site that is located in Brady's Run Park. It will include a more efficient electronic recycling building, a reconfigured material sorting facility, recyclable drop-off area,

**Inclusive play** offers opportunities for all children to play alongside one another, supporting the physical, social and cognitive development of all children, and benefits everyone.

Children with disabilities benefit from opportunities to enjoy the benefits of active play, including social skills and health.

At the same time, children without disabilities learn valuable lessons about the world, including that everyone has similarities and differences. Children develop concepts related to tolerance, diversity and acceptance. Inclusive play environments provide a wider range of play materials and activities allowing children to interact with each other and the play environment.

composting location, and a Polystyrene/Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Building. See Chapter 1 Appendix A - Environmental Discovery Center for more information.

This project seeks to engage the community. The overall goals for every aspect will be to unite and connect the people of Beaver County. The Environmental Discovery Center/Brady's Run Park Recreation Area focuses on drawing people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, and a broad range of ages, ethnicities, and physical abilities. There will be opportunities for stakeholders to invest in ownership of the various designated areas including the gardens, accessory buildings, and playground. In bringing groups and individuals together, the project will provide opportunities for private financial support for related to materials, operations and learning opportunities.

Overall, this project is unique in the no-boundary approach embodied by the inclusive design. The atmosphere will be inviting and engaging for everyone who enters the area. The Environmental Discovery Center/Brady's Run Recreation Area addresses a shortage of inclusive opportunities within the County and serve as a showcase for sustainability and recycling education. The avenues are endless and will place Beaver County into the future with its forward, innovative thinking.

### *What Connecting Looks Like:*





## *Working Together*

The coordination of the inclusive play areas and the Environmental Discovery Center opens a variety of funding opportunities ranging from grants to partnerships to supporting corporations, businesses, community organizations and foundations. The broad base of user groups, county resources, community partners, and funding agencies will lead to this being one of the highest impact facilities through all of the Beaver County parks. Thousands of people will be impacted annually through this unique facility. All of these factors add up to better quality of life for Beaver County residents.

## *Funding the Environmental Discovery Center, Inclusive Playground, and Outdoor Classrooms*

The following is a summary list of potential funding opportunities for the Environmental Discovery Center, Inclusive Playground, and Outdoor Classrooms

- Create a Development and Fund-raising Committee
- Develop a fund-raising plan
- Potential sources of funding
  - PA DCNR Recreation Grant
  - Commonwealth Finance Authority - Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP)
  - County Act 13 Funds
  - County Budget
  - Service, civic, church, fraternal, community, and service organizations
  - Private trusts and foundations
  - Business, corporate, commercial, and industrial contributions
  - Schools, youth, recreation, and sports organizations



Many of the potential funding sources listed above may be applicable for the Environmental Discovery Center and Recycling Area.

These and others may provide funding as well:

- Keep American Beautiful
- PA Department of Environmental Protection 902 Grants
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Private industries that get tax incentives for “Green” initiatives

**Eco Center estimated cost - \$1.5 million**

**Inclusive Play Area estimated cost - \$800,000**





This concept drawing graphically depicts the proposed layout of the new inclusive recreation and education area. The environmental education components are proposed to be located in the southeast portion of the area, and the playground in the northwest, with a buffer of lawn and pavilion in between. Easy access to the existing recycling area remains with a visual buffer obscuring its view from other parts of the road and park. Upgrades are recommended to the road to ensure its long-term sustainability. Parking is proposed along the northwest edge of the area.



**Bradys Run Park:  
Outdoor Family Recreation Area with Inclusive Playground,  
Environmental Discovery Center & Outdoor Classroom Concept Plan**





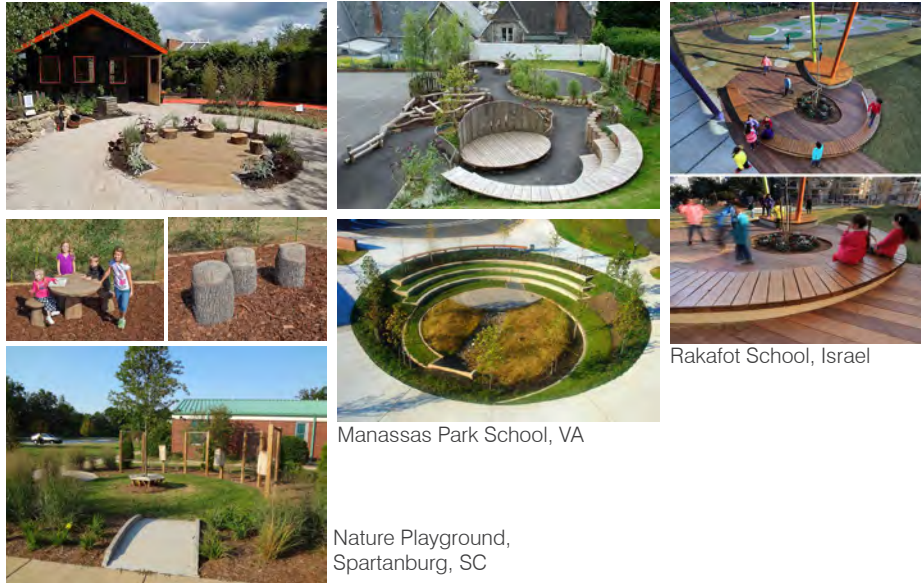


# Bradys Run Park Family Recreation Area Environmental Discovery Center & Outdoor Classroom

Beaver County

Learn.

## Outdoor Nature Classroom

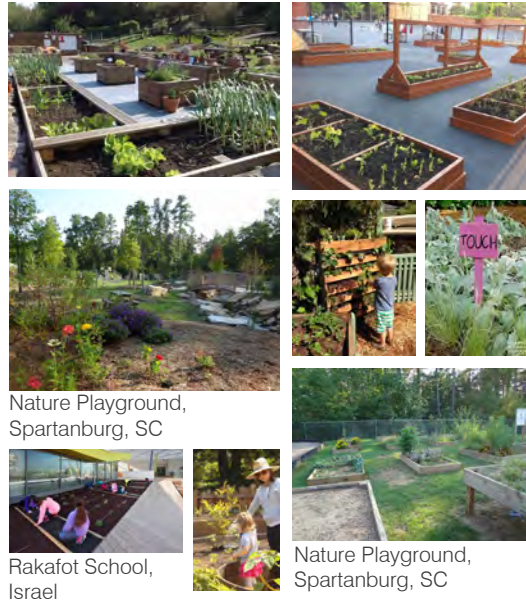


Rakafot School, Israel

Manassas Park School, VA

Nature Playground, Spartanburg, SC

## Edible Garden Education

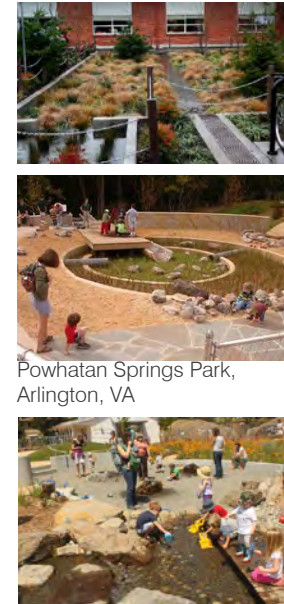


Nature Playground, Spartanburg, SC

Rakafot School, Israel

Nature Playground, Spartanburg, SC

## Rain Garden



Powhatan Springs Park, Arlington, VA

Nature Playground, Spartanburg, SC

Mary's Garden, Children's Museum of Sonoma County, CA



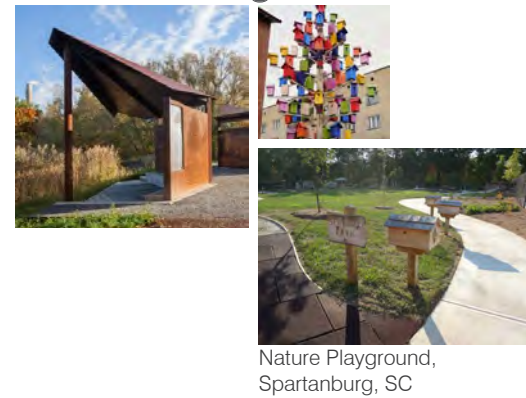
Interact.

## Butterfly Garden



Ladywell Park, South East London

## Bird Watching



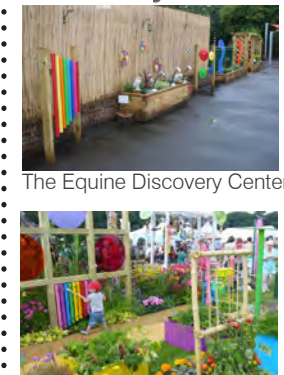
Nature Playground, Spartanburg, SC

## Insect Garden



Mary's Garden, Children's Museum of Sonoma County, CA

## Sensory Garden



The Equine Discovery Center

Play.

## Playground



Nature Playground, Bentonville, AR





# Making the Miracle Happen

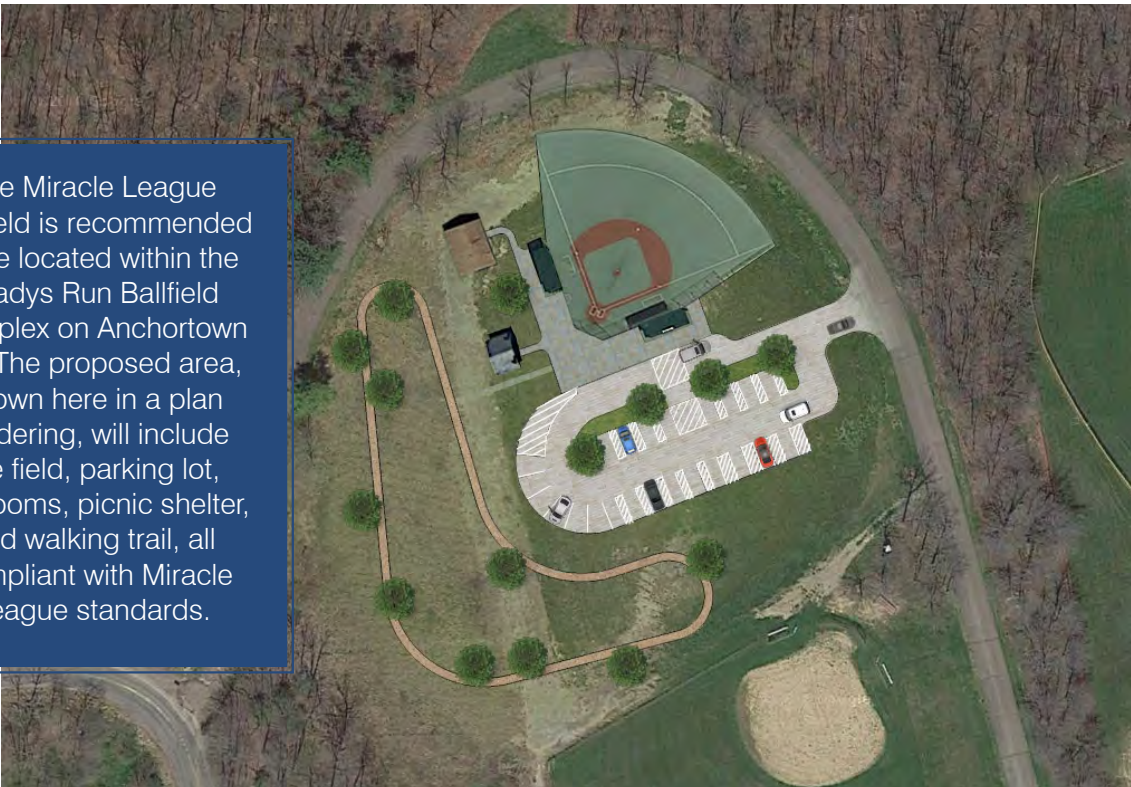
## *Miracle Field*

The internationally renowned Miracle League works with communities to create special facilities that meet the unique needs of kids and young adults with disabilities. In Western Pennsylvania, they often partner with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Pirate Charities, as well as other organizations to help fund, construct, and program these facilities. While many people think of Miracle Leagues as just ballfields. In many cases, the League has partnered with a national playground manufacturer to develop playgrounds in conjunction with the Miracle Fields and Leagues. The proposed Miracle Field will include a walking trail, restrooms and picnic shelter located in the Bradys Run Baseball Complex in the northern section of the park.

The first step in developing Miracle League facilities is to recruit a small committee that is committed to a grass-roots, community-based effort to move the project forward. The Miracle League National Organization, as well as existing leagues, will offer great resources in getting the project started.

The Miracle League organization offers to work closely with the County and design consultant to design and construct facilities that best meet the County's needs. Its consulting and planning staff are ready to help the County:

- Build a community-based support team
- Initiate grass-roots local fund-raising for the Miracle League complex
- Construct the Miracle League Field and Playground
- Organize the program
- Play ball and have fun



The Miracle League Ballfield is recommended to be located within the Bradys Run Ballfield Complex on Anchortown Rd. The proposed area, shown here in a plan rendering, will include the field, parking lot, restrooms, picnic shelter, and walking trail, all compliant with Miracle League standards.

Implementation details are located in Chapter 1 Appendix B -Miracle Projects. This includes recommendations for the organizational setup, league development, community outreach and fund raising, events and activities, field development, field planning, and working with the Miracle League organization.

### *Funding the Miracle League Field*

Fund raising will need to be a significant component of “making the miracle happen.” A comprehensive fund-raising plan that seeks to draw commitments from many types of agencies, organizations, and people will need to be developed. As part of this plan, we are making the presumption that Beaver County will be a key partner in making this happen. Simply by providing the land on which these facilities will be built is a huge contribution. As well, it would seem reasonable that the County would serve as the legal applicant for state grant requests from DCNR, DCED, DEP and other state agencies.

In discussions with others in Western Pennsylvania who have established Miracle Leagues and constructed facilities, all have been successful. There is good reason to believe that Beaver County and its residents can be successful in raising the necessary funding for their project. They can “Make the Miracle Happen.”

#### **Miracle Ball Field estimated cost - \$700,000**

The following is a summary list of potential funding opportunities for Beaver County’s Miracle Project.

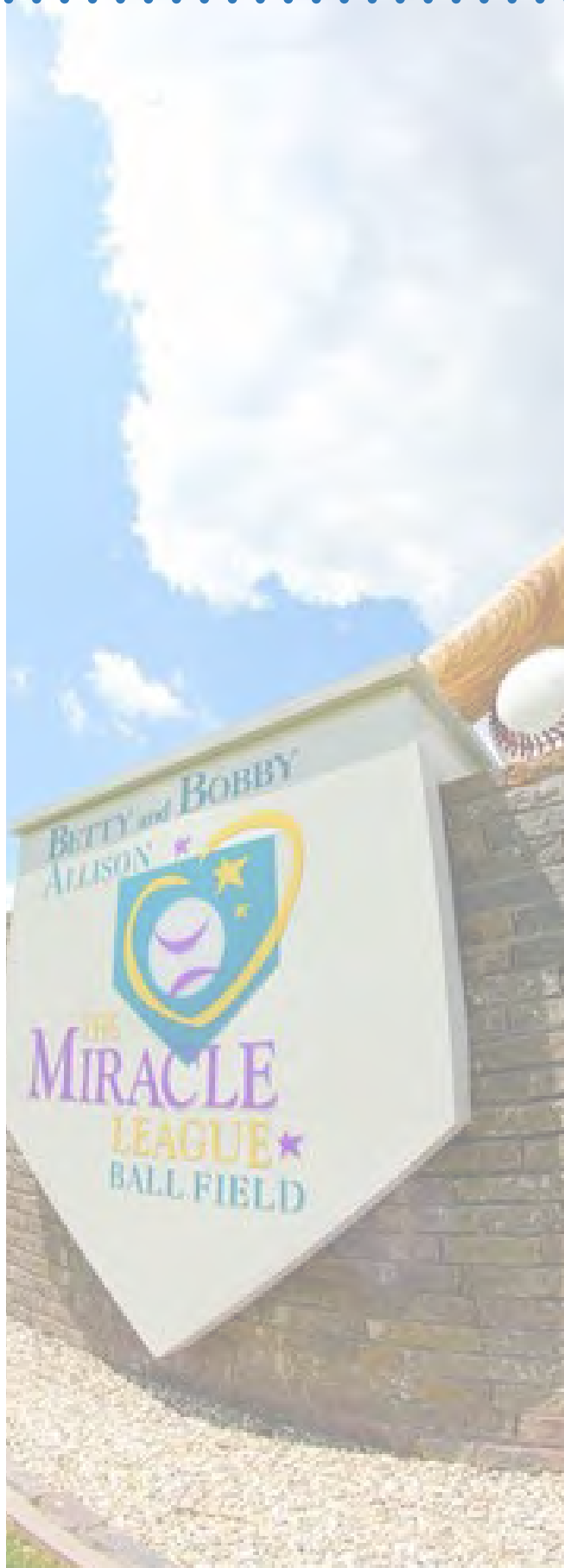
- Create a Development and Fund-raising Committee
- Develop a fund-raising plan
- Potential sources of funding
  - Miracle League and its partners
  - PA DCNR Recreation Grant
  - Commonwealth Finance Authority - Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP)
  - County Act 13 Funds
  - County Budget
  - Pirate Charities
  - Service, civic, church, fraternal, community, and service organizations
  - Private trusts and foundations
  - Business, corporate, commercial, and industrial contributions
  - Schools, youth, recreation, and sports organizations

Additional fund-raising strategies and sources are provided in Chapter 1 Appendix B-Miracle Projects.



# Bradys Run Park Miracle League Field

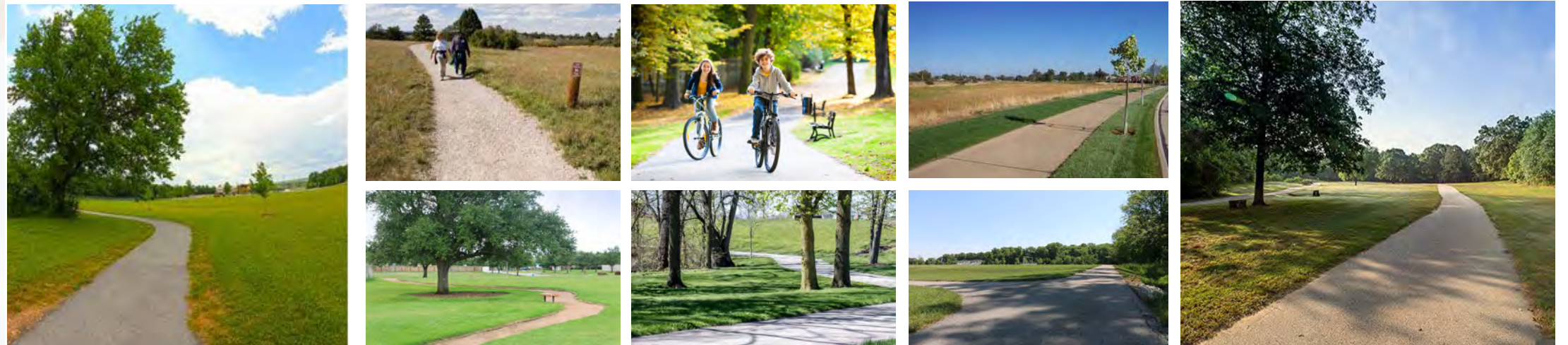
Beaver County



Play.



Exercise.

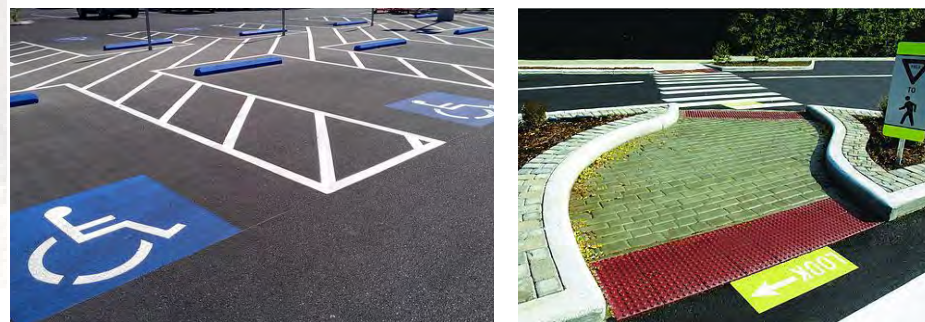


Relax.



Restrooms

Access.











# County Park Trail Management

## Trail Descriptions

Bradys Run Park, at nearly 2,000 acres, is Beaver County’s largest park and contains approximately 12 miles of trail, the largest amount of designated trails within a county park. That said, the longest trail, the Wildwood Loop, comes in at 2.75 miles in length, substantially shorter than is desirable by walkers and hikers seeking an outing. A typical hike may be anywhere from ½ mile to 5 miles, a run may be from 1 mile to 10 miles, a horseback ride may be 7 to 15 miles, and a mountain bike ride can be 10 to 25+ miles. In most cases there is not a sufficient number of trails in the park to dedicate individual trails to a single use, nor is there sufficient land to develop such trails. Therefore, nearly all trails need to be shared among multiple uses.

At Brush Creek, several trails exist on the property. However, only a few are recognizable as park trails. Recognizable trails include: a 0.79-mile lawn surface trail in the mine reclamation area at the northern end of the park; and a 2-mile earth surface trail along the eastern Brush Creek Valley slope from the covered bridge to Route 588. A lack of signage and trail maintenance makes it difficult to know how much of the remaining 3.15 miles of trails are established park trails. Many trails appear to have been created by hikers, mountain bikers, ATV riders, or park neighbors. Only trails very near the creek are discernible as park trails. There is no clear definition of the intended uses of any of the trails.

### Implementation Strategies

**Strategy #1** - Define uses and expectations for each trail, ensuring a balanced system that provides for equestrians, mountain bikes, downhill bikers, hikers, and others. Develop trail restrictions where necessary to promote safety, sustainability, and usability. See the “Trail Uses and Expectations” section below, as well as Chapter 1 Appendix C - County Park Trails for additional details, recommendations and description.

### Trail Uses and Expectations

We recommend the trails be considered multipurpose in nature, accommodating a variety of trail uses. At times, especially during peak use periods or special events within the parks, there may be conflicting uses of the trails. However, most often there are a sufficient number of trails to accommodate the typical day-to-day use of the trails without encountering major conflicts.

We recommend that conflicts along the trails be managed by establishing expectations, by providing trail-use etiquette information on park literature and at kiosks, and by promoting primary and secondary uses of the trails by making visitors aware of what type of uses they may encounter while along a particular trail.

## Tier 1 Project

High Impact

Low Short-term Cost

High Long-term Cost

Strong Economic Impact

Strong Partnership Opportunities with:

Beaver County  
Public Works

Recreation and Tourism  
Mountain Bike Group  
Downhill Mountain Bikers

Equestrian Riders  
Hikers and Walkers

Trails Pittsburgh  
WPIAL Bike Team

Grant Opportunities


PA DCNR  
PA DCED  
Commonwealth  
Finance Authority

## Trail Use Classifications

Based on our review of the trails within Bradys Run Park, we recommend the following trail uses be adopted for each of the existing trails:

Trail Name	Trail Uses							
	ADA	Walking	Running	Hiking	Bicycling	Mountain Bike	Single Track Mountain Bike	Equestrian
Calland Arboretum	Secondary	Primary		Secondary				
Lake Trail		Primary	Secondary	Secondary		Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Logstown				Secondary		Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Multi-Purpose Trail	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary		Secondary			
North Slopes				Secondary		Primary	Secondary	Secondary
Secondary Loop Trails			Secondary	Secondary		Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
South Drive				Secondary		Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
South Slopes				Secondary			Primary	Secondary
Walkers Loop	Primary	Primary	Secondary					
Wildwood Loop				Secondary		Secondary	Secondary	Primary

 - Denotes primary trail use.

 - Denotes secondary trail use.

**Strategy #2** - Identify and develop trailheads at appropriate locations throughout the park. See the “Trailhead Kiosk Content and Location” section below, as well as Chapter 1 Appendix C - County Park Trails for additional recommendations, information and detail.

### Trailhead Kiosk Content and Locations

Kiosks should be constructed in key locations where visitors typically access the trails. These locations should be referred to as trailheads. The style and size of the kiosk should be based on the volume of visitors that passes through the location to access trails.

Typically, kiosks provide:

1. Location map to allow the visitor to orient themselves to their location within the park and the trail network.
2. General information about the trails including: emergency response, trail etiquette, and Leave No Trace information (pack-in, pack-out policies).
3. Acknowledgment of partners. This is also an opportunity to generate revenue. Sponsors can be those that contribute financially to construct or maintain a trail or trails, and organizations that provide volunteer and in-kind services towards constructing and maintaining trails.
4. Interpretive information as deemed by the Recreation and Tourism Department and its partners. Typically this information provides environmental education.
5. Trail accessibility description. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that every trail be identified along with the following parameters associated with it:
  - Length of trail
  - Surface type
  - Typical & maximum width
  - Typical & maximum running slope
  - Typical & maximum cross slope
6. Warnings, safety, and closure messages.

Proposed Trailhead Locations		
Type	Location	Provides Access to:
Primary	Walkers Loop	Walkers Loop
Primary	Four Winds Recreation Center	North Slopes
		South Drive
		South Slopes
		Wildwood Loop
		Multi-Purpose Trail
Secondary	Beacom Drive	North Slopes
		South Drive
		South Slopes
		Wildwood Loop
Secondary	Shelter No. 3	Multi-Purpose Trail
Secondary	Shelter No. 7	Multi-Purpose Trail
		Lake Trail
Primary	Beach Access	North Slopes
		Logtown
		Lake Trail
Primary	Destination Playground/ Four Seasons Pavilion	South Slopes
		South Drive
Secondary	Calland Arboretum	Calland Arboretum

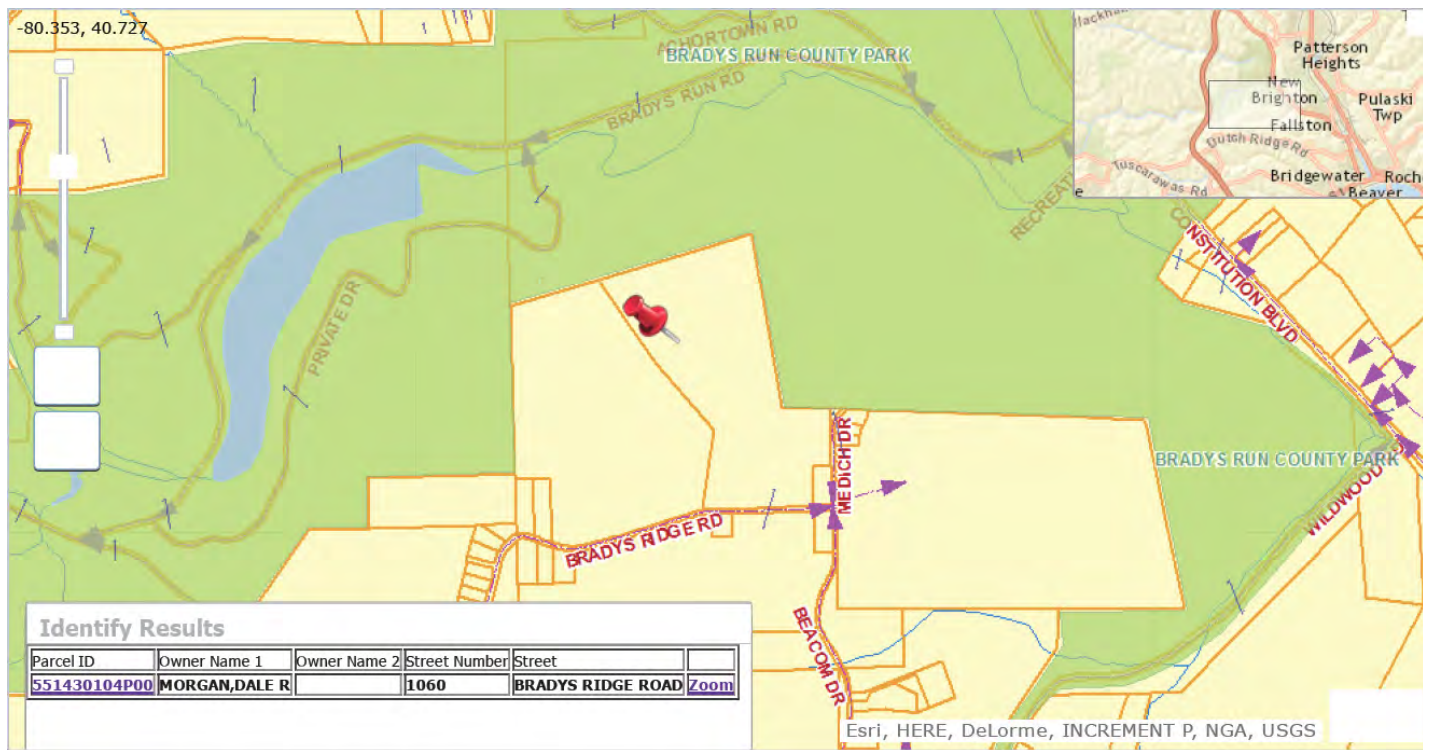
The purpose behind providing this information is to allow visitors to determine, based on their abilities during the day and time of their visit, whether they can access the trail.

**Strategy #3** - Strengthen the role of the County in management, maintenance, and oversight of all

trails located within the park system and enter into a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the County and each trail organization. This should help to promote cooperation and coordination among all user groups. Increased trail programming could be a natural outcome of these partnerships as the organizations move to sponsor, support, and operate various trail-related activities.

A sample MOU is in Chapter 1 Appendix C - County Park Trails that further defines the respective roles of both the County and the trail organizations.

**Strategy #4** - Negotiate a property easement with owners of property parcel number 551430104P00, located in Brighton Township on the south side of Bradys Run Park, to permit the Bradys Run South Trail to traverse a portion of the property.



**Strategy #5** - Complete the multi-use bike trail in the park to connect the Four Winds Recreation Center with the Four Seasons Pavilion. At the eastern end, the multi-use trail terminates in the vicinity of Shelter No. 3. We recommend it be extended to connect to the Four Winds Recreation Facility, which is located further east. Also, on the western end it terminates near Shelter No. 7. We recommend it be extended to connect to the Lake Trail which continues to the Four Seasons Pavilion.

**Strategy #6** - Develop the Bradys Run Hollow Walking Trail (former Shelter 16 area). We recommend the former Shelter 16 area be converted to an accessible loop walking trail. The proposed accessible loop will be approximately one-half mile in length. We also recommend a trailhead be developed to provide access to this trail near the intersection of Park and Bradys Run Roads. This accessible loop walking trail should extend around the perimeter of the valley floor. Further, we recommend maintaining the entire valley floor as a tall grass meadow, in lieu of mowed lawn as is the current practice. A 10-foot-wide paved walking trail with 3- to 4-foot-wide mowed shoulders is recommended.

This proposed accessible walking loop would reduce the demand on the existing Walkers Loop Trail, located along SR 51. Further, the proposed trail would be the only trail within the park to pass through and around a tall grass meadow environment. The trail can also serve as an opportunity for environmental education and exploration. Therefore, we recommend the Beaver County Conservation

District be consulted as the plan to develop this trail is implemented.

**Strategy #7** – Develop the Wildwood Trail Loop. This corridor is a critical component of the overall Bradys Run Park Trail system as it serves as a portion of the overall perimeter trail and potentially part of an 8-mile loop proposed for the park. The corridor is undeveloped and maintained as a clear trail route by volunteers. The corridor is also used by the Beaver County Conservation District as a route to access the district’s maple syrup harvesting tanks, which have a capacity of 350 gallons and may weigh more than 2800 pounds. A small section of the corridor extends outside of the park boundary and onto two adjacent private properties. Rerouting the trail to stay on park property is not an option given the steep terrain that the corridor crosses over.

Based on conversations with County Parks and Recreation Department staff, County Department of Public Works staff, Beaver County Conservation District staff, trail users, and volunteers who maintain the trails, we recommend the following improvements to this corridor:

- Negotiate property easements with owners to secure continuity of the Wildwood Loop Trail. This should be accomplished by having a small group of trail users and the County Recreation Director meet with the land owners to discuss the issues and gauge the landowners’ willingness to consider an easement agreement. Initially this should be done without presenting any agreement; it should be merely a discussion. It might take several meetings before the relationship is sufficiently built to allow discussion of a formal agreement. Once the parties get to that point, an actual easement agreement should be discussed in an effort to try to develop a mutually beneficial document. We strongly recommend using the Pennsylvania Land Trust’s Model Trail Easement Agreement as the starting point for the formal agreement between the County and the property owners.
- Given that the County Conservation District has maple syrup harvesting tanks along the corridor that need to be accessed by vehicles from time to time, we recommend constructing a 10-foot-wide paved trail. The trail should have the ability to support a minimum load of 5 tons, as tractors are utilized by the Conservation District to retrieve the maple syrup tanks. Schedule 80 PVC sleeves should be installed beneath the trail surface to allow maple syrup collection lines to be routed beneath (across) the trail.
- A paved connector trail should be constructed from the Wildwood Loop Trail to the existing trailhead located at the termination of Beacom Drive, the former Shelter No. 1 area.

**Strategy #8** - Develop standardized trail signage, trail markings, and Emergency GIS locators.

**Strategy #9** - Implement the trail recommendations found on pages 59-61 of the 2008 Brush Creek Master Site Plan.

**Strategy #10** - Create and fund a county staff position within the Parks and Recreation Department whose focus would be on trails and active transportation within the county parks as well as the county-wide trail system. The County could apply to PA DCNR for a grant funded Circuit Rider to fill this position and/or County Tourism and Hotel Tax funding. See discussion and recommendations in Chapter 2, Project 1.







# Bradys Run Park

## Shelters, Restrooms, Playgrounds

The following is a plan for the replacement or upgrade of Bradys Run picnic shelters and related amenities. These upgrades rank high as a priority due to their ability to produce revenues in the range of \$25,000 to \$40,000 annually.

As part of the upgrade schedule, the following are recommended:

- Increase rental fees by \$10 per rental
- Advertise the availability of shelter rentals
- Implement and fund a comprehensive maintenance plan so as not to encounter significant deferred maintenance issues in the future
- Prepare a life cycle repair and replacement schedule for all components of the shelters, restrooms, playgrounds, and related amenities

The shelter, restroom, and playground replacement schedule calls for replacements to be focused by the following three phases. Each phase should be implemented over a two- to four-year period.

**Phase 1** calls for upgrades in two areas. The first is near the front of the park where the existing horse arena is currently located. This proposes the demolition of shelter #2 as part of the new development of that area. It will be replaced with another shelter or shade structures. The second area is at shelters 14, 15, and the new Four Seasons Shelter where parking areas will be upgraded and the two older shelters will be replaced.

**Phase 2** is focused in the middle of the park, where shelters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 will be replaced, a new playground will be added, and additional restrooms will be constructed as necessary. However, shelter 18, near the dog park, and its nearby restrooms, in the southwestern-most area of the park, will be replaced in this priority as well, since it is one of the more highly used shelters.

**Phase 3** picks up the remaining five shelters in the park and includes restroom replacement associated with them.

In addition to the priority upgrades, five shelters have been identified as being ones that are in extremely poor condition, located in remote areas of the park, and no longer serve the needs of County residents. They should be demolished as soon as possible. None of them are in service at this time.

The chart and accompanying drawings on the following pages describe anticipated constructions style and projected costs. Refer to Chapter 1, Appendix D for a complete assessment of the existing shelters.

### Tier 1 Project

High Impact

Low Annual Cost

High Cost for major Replacements

On-going Revenue Production

Addresses Deferred Maintenance

Funding Sources

County Budget

PA DCNR

PA DCED/

Commonwealth

Finance Authority

## Beaver County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan

### Bradys Run Park Shelter, Restroom, and Playground Replacements

Shelter No.	Priority	Size	Capacity	Type	Action needed	Playgrounds and Restrooms
No. 13 - now named Four Season Pavilion	Completed			4 Season	Four Season Shelter –ADA access; additional nearby parking	Existing playground is located across the street. Construct a new parking lot between 4 Season and 14.
No. 2	1	16' x 40'	96	Removed	Demolish as part of Family Recreation reconstruction. Replace with shade structure or shelter near new playground.	New restrooms are available near Shelter 3; new inclusive playground being added as part of major improvement.
No. 14	1	18' x 36'	88	Standard	Replace; develop a new parking area to be shared with the Four Season Shelter. Additional parking is available across the street.	Existing playground is located across the street. Construct a new parking lot between 4 Season and 14.
No. 15	1	25' x 48'	144	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Existing playground is located nearby.
No. 4	2	30' x 40'	176	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Develop a new playground in the vicinity of shelter 5. Install additional restrooms as demand dictates.
No. 5	2	20' x 40'	176	Enhanced	Replace and ADA compliance	
No. 6	2	25' x 50'	168	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	
No. 3	3	40' x 30'	176	Enhanced	Replace as one of the enhanced shelters., ADA compliance, parking	New restrooms have been installed; new inclusive playground being added as part of other proposed improvements.
No. 7	2	40' x 20'	144	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Restrooms available at shelter 8 and 6.
No. 18	2	24' x 32'	112	Enhanced	Replace as one of the enhanced shelters; ADA compliance	Replace existing restrooms.
No. 8	3	24' x 50'	144	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Replace existing restroom.
No. 12 Arboretum	3	18' x 36'	88	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Replace existing restroom.
No. 17	3	24' x 32'	96	Standard	Replace and ADA compliance	Restrooms available at shelter 15.
Fishermen's	3	24' x 36'	48	Standard	Upgrade as described in Chapter 1 Appendix D and ADA compliance	Replace existing restroom.
Ballfield - 2 shelters	3	24' x 32'	104	Standard	Upgrade and ADA compliance	Repair existing restrooms at ballfield complex.
Shelters 1, 9, 10, 11, 16					Demolish	

New **standard shelters** will be approximately 20' x 40'. They will feature standing seam metal roofs to provide more longevity and begin to create a color theme for the park.

The illustrated shelter uses steel posts, arched trusses, pine decking, and a metal roof with gutters. Arched trusses (or metal beams) eliminate opportunities for birds to roost or nest in the shelter. This also eliminates additional maintenance requirements to clean up after the birds.



Convenience outlets and lighting will be provided. They will be suitable for smaller gatherings and will hold about 14 picnic tables with a total capacity of about 112.

**Estimated cost for each standard shelter, including removal of existing shelters - \$94,000, based on 2016 construction.**

The **enhanced shelters** will be approximately 30' x 60' with wood columns and decking, stone column bases, fireplace, convenience power and lighting. They will feature standing seam metal roofs to provide longevity and reinforce the color theme for the park. They will be suitable for larger gatherings and will hold about 32 picnic tables for capacities of up to 256.



**Estimated cost for each enhanced shelter - \$199,000, based on 2016 construction.**

Bradys Run Park already includes the Four Season Shelter and the Lodge as rental facilities that are available for uses year-round. With these shelters, the park will offer three varying styles, sizes, and uses of shelters for county residents to use year-round. These styles, will also be the standard for Brush Creek and Old Economy Parks as well.

**Issue 14 “County Park Road Repairs and Parking Upgrades”** found later in this chapter addresses the need to upgrade roads and traffic flow as well as to improve parking.

## *Shelters 14, 15, and the Four Seasons Pavilion Parking Improvements*

Shelters 14 and 15 are proposed to be replaced with shelters that conform to the design standard presented herein.

During the public input process, and throughout the winter of 2015 (the first operating season of the Four Seasons Pavilion), residents indicated that additional parking, in close proximity to the Four Seasons Pavilion is necessary to adequately meet the winter use needs of the Four Seasons Pavilion. We identified an opportunity to provide a parking area for approximately 50 vehicles between the Four Seasons Pavilion and Shelter 14. This parking area can assist in meeting the parking needs of both areas. A concept plan and photorealistic renderings of the proposed parking area are located on the following pages.

The opinion of probable construction costs projected here assumes improvements are constructed through a public bid process utilizing the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's prevailing wage rates.

**Unit prices for construction were assigned based on the consultant's experience with construction costs in 2016. These costs are based upon publicly bid projects that pay prevailing wage rates. The cost projections take into account the following:**

- The condition of the property at the time of construction will be similar to its condition in 2016.
- Projects will be bid through a competitive bidding process utilizing state or federal prevailing wage rates.
- Opinions of probable construction costs should be confirmed / revised upon completion of preliminary design.
- To budget for inflation costs for improvements that will occur after 2016, we recommend a 3% annual increase for each year thereafter.
- In Pennsylvania all projects, valued at over \$25,000 and using public funds, are required to pay workers in accordance with the Commonwealth Department of Labor and Industry's Prevailing Wage Rates

It is important to note that costs are based on 2016 construction figures. Projects constructed in future years should factor in an additional 3% per year for inflation. Additional increases may be necessary to address the escalation of steel and fuel prices as their costs are escalating at unprecedented rates.

As noted, volunteer labor, in-kind services, and donated materials and services can reduce the overall project cost from costs projected here. Additionally, alternate sources of funding, including grant opportunities, may assist in offsetting construction costs.

The following tables summarize our opinion of probable construction costs for implementing the physical improvements described herein and shown on the concept plan.

**Projected Cost using pervious asphalt and asphalt surface - \$266,000**

**Projected Cost using pervious pavers and asphalt surface - \$330,000**





**Bradys Run:  
Shelter 14 and 4 Seasons Pavilion Parking**

BEAVER COUNTY











# Brush Creek Park Playground Replacement

## Playgrounds

Playground replacement is the critical improvement required at Brush Creek Park. The only existing playground is located at the most northern section of the park, east of Glendale Road.

In 2017 two playgrounds: one for 2- to 5-year-olds and one for children age 5 to 12, were removed as they presented serious safety hazards and were not in compliance with current playground safety standards. The County should plan to replace these playgrounds in the parks capital improvements budget.

The two play areas should be combined into one and placed where the larger playground currently stands. Even though the playgrounds are located in a combined area, there should be a specific designation and signage identifying areas for use by children ages 2-5 and one for children age 5-12.

The new playground should be inclusively designed, meet all current playground safety standards and must be ADA compliant.

This plan also proposes construction of a picnic shelter near the playground and replacement of the existing restroom facility. See recommendations 8 and 9 on pages 1-38 and 1-39.

**Estimated cost of playground replacement: \$350,000**

## Tier 1 Project

High Impact

Mid Cost

No Revenue Production

Addresses Deferred Maintenance

Funding Sources

- County Budget
- DCNR Grants
- DCED Grants





# 5

## Old Economy Park Barn Rehabilitation

### Background

The barn is certainly a recognizable landmark as one enters the park. The lower level is in generally good condition and holds up to 150 people at tables and chairs. There is a kitchen area with some food service equipment. There are toilet rooms in a side wing addition that are generally ADA-compliant. The upper level of the barn is currently used for storage.

Structural analysis of the floor framing indicates that there is sufficient live load capacity for assembly use on the upper floor. See Chapter 1 Appendix D - Shelters, Restrooms and Buildings.

We recommend that the floor of the barn be replaced, missing siding be replaced, the exterior painted, new lighting added, and accessible toilet rooms and a serving kitchen be created in the side wing. This would position the barn to serve as a site for meetings, classes, programs, receptions, etc. in the warmer months of the year.

On the lower level, we recommend improving the finishes and lighting in the toilet rooms, and adding better ventilation and more sinks to the kitchen area. If year-round use of the lower level is contemplated, insulation could be added to the rebuilt floor/ceiling, and the existing concrete block walls insulated.

Best use of the facility would allow for only one activity in the barn at a time. Use of both floors at the same time could present potential conflicts with noise, excessive activity, conflicting uses, and parking.

### Tier 1 Project

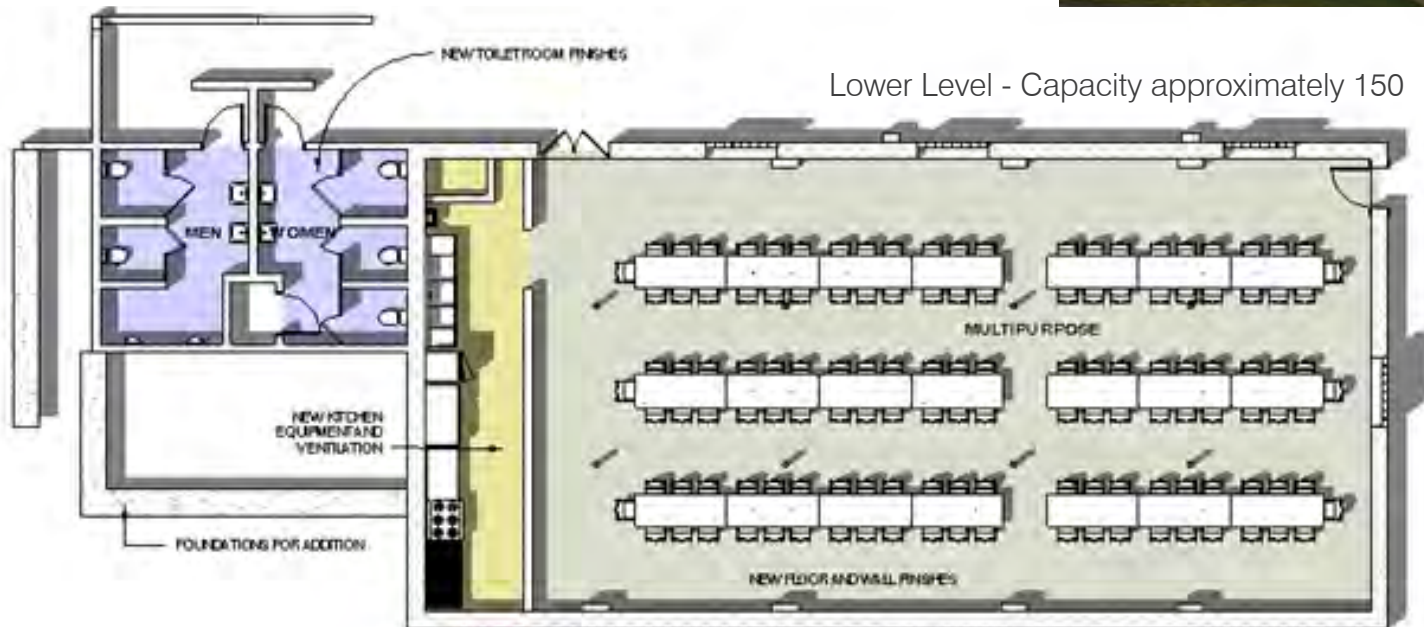
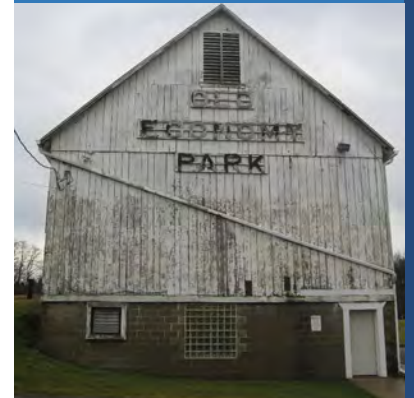
High Impact

High Cost

On-going Revenue Production

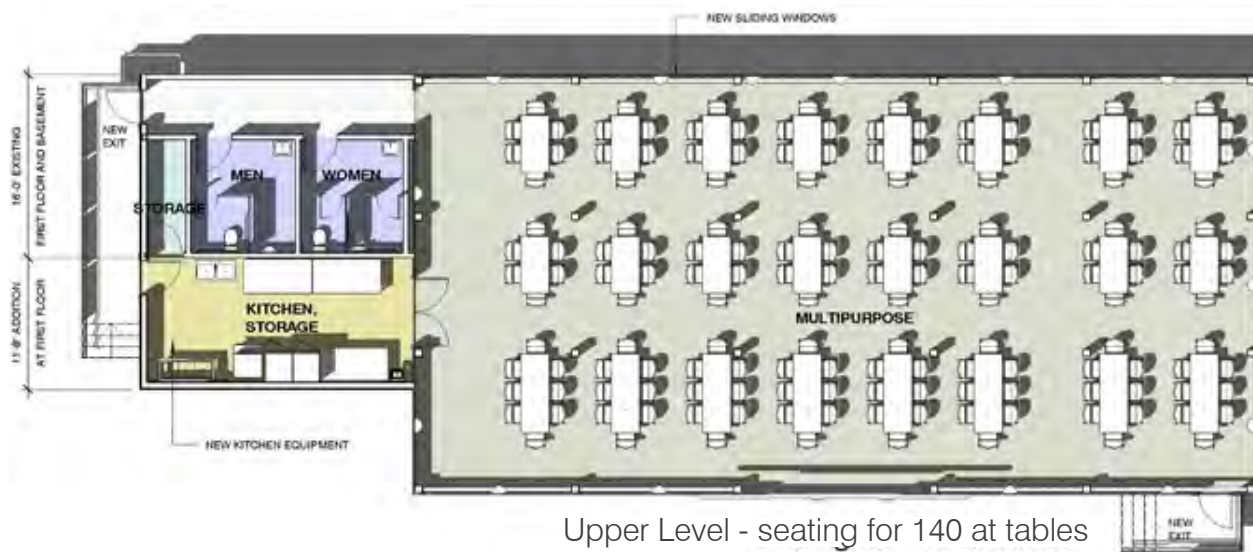
Funding Sources

- County Budget
- PA DCNR Grants
- PA DCED Grants



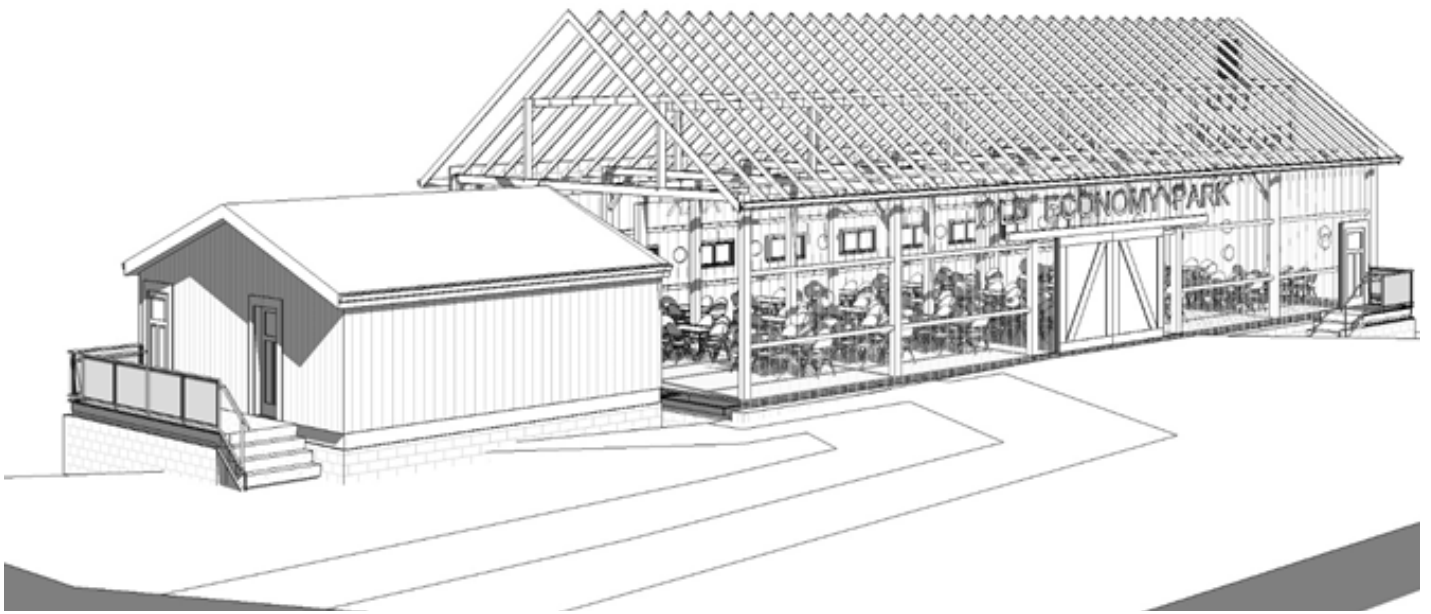
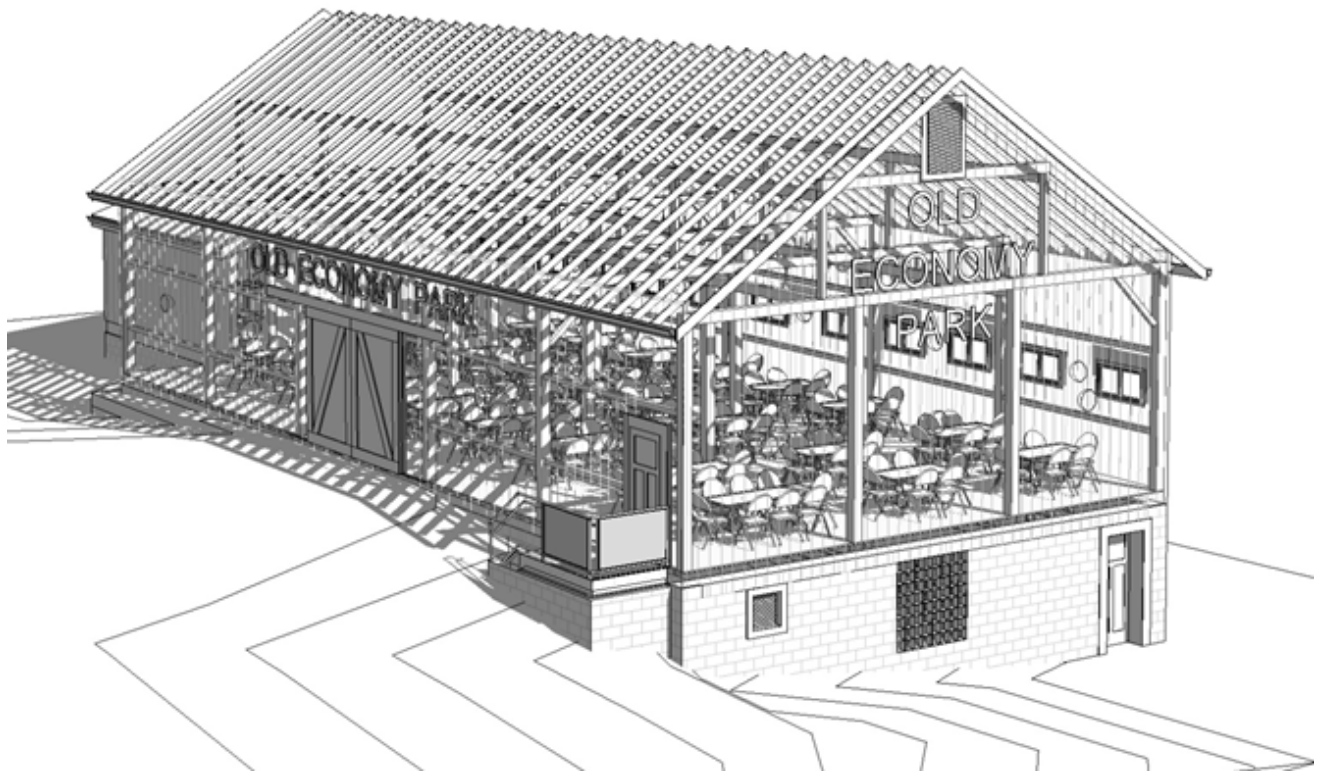
The lower level of the barn seats about 140 at tables. The multipurpose room has a good ceiling height and is well-lit from glass block windows. Existing finishes are a concrete floor and painted concrete block walls. We recommend routine repainting of the walls and installing a new vinyl tile floor to improve cleanliness and appearance. The existing kitchen area provides a prep sink, griddle, range, refrigerator, prep tables, and an exhaust hood. We recommend that a hand sink and dish wash sink be added and that the existing hood be replaced with a Class 1 hood. This will permit a wider variety of food to be prepared or reheated safely in this kitchen. The space currently has unit heaters, and we recommend that these be retained and supplemented if increased winter use is experienced.

The existing toilet rooms on the lower level provide capacity for 225 women and 300 men, more than the planned capacity of the lower level multipurpose room. Because they are open when the lower level is in use, these toilet rooms also have capacity to serve other users of the park. The layout of these rooms generally meets ADA requirements. We recommend that the finishes and lighting be upgraded to be easier to clean and improve the appearance.



The upper level of the barn is presently unfinished storage space. The existing floor structure provides adequate live load capacity for assembly uses. We recommend it be renovated into a three-season event and gathering space. The finished floor is in poor condition; we recommend that it be replaced with new wood flooring, using the existing floor joists and steel beams below. The existing timber barn frame will be cleaned, and new lighting installed. The exterior will be painted. The existing windows are in poor condition; we recommend replacement with operating windows. This multipurpose room provides seating for 140 at rectangular tables, 108 at round tables and as many as 280 in chairs-only. It will be suitable for parties, receptions, reunions, gatherings, business functions, lectures, nature programming, summer camps, and more.





To support these uses, we are illustrating replacing the upper level of the small wing to the left of the barn (above the lower level toilet rooms). This will be a wood-framed structure with insulated walls and roof, with siding to coordinate with the barn. This provides toilet rooms for 150 women and 150 men. A small kitchen is proposed to support a catering operation, with sinks, refrigeration, and ice maker and work tables. There is a storage room for tables and chairs, and those may also be stored in the kitchen. This level of this wing will be heated and cooled.





The capacity of the upper level necessitates at least two means of egress, so new exits are illustrated. It is likely that the barn doors will frequently be open when this space is in use.

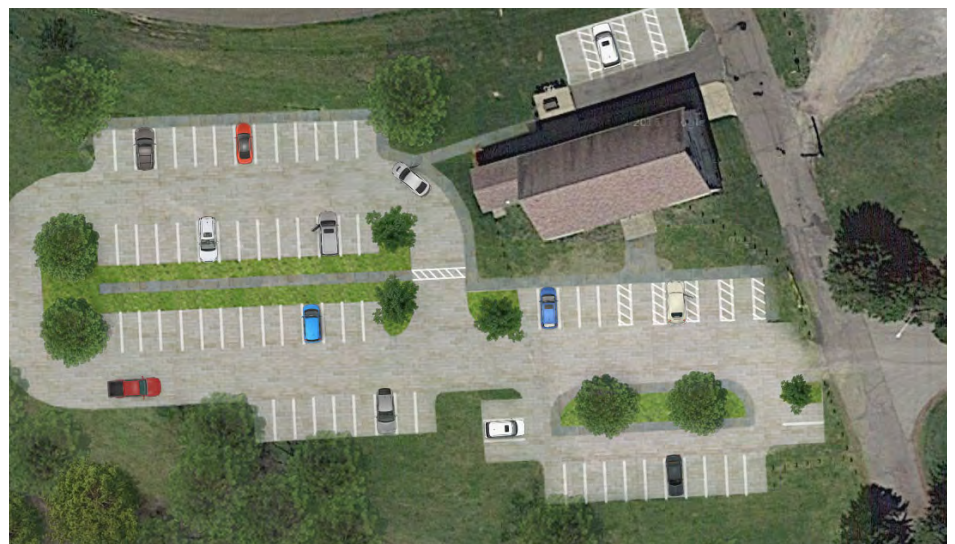
Additional parking will be required for the increased use of the barn. The diagram below depicts the proposed layout and location for 74 spaces with 8 of them being ADA compliant. Additional parking could be developed across from the street from the barn in front of the maintenance building. Constructing the additional parking will require the removal of the existing ball field and play equipment currently located west of the barn.

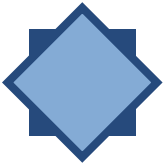
### *Estimated costs*

**Barn Upgrades, upper and lower levels – \$502,000 based on 2016 construction costs**

**Parking expansion - \$439,500 based on 2016 construction costs**

All estimates provided are based on 2016 construction and should be escalated 3% annually to the mid-point of actual construction. Estimates include site, general, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing construction but do not include furniture or food service equipment. See the detailed estimate in Chapter 1 Appendix D - Shelters Restrooms and Buildings for more information.





## Tier 2 Projects

### Mid Impact Projects



## 6 Bradys Run Lodge Upgrades

Mid impact; Low cost; High revenue



The Lodge is used frequently and hosts the Maple Festival event every spring. Park staff have replaced the exterior siding, added stone to the lower part of the exterior walls, added pine paneling to the interior, insulated the exterior walls, constructed toilet rooms and a dish washing room, and built an arched stone wall at the serving line.

Kitchen equipment consists of work tables, a triple-bowl sink, ice maker, exhaust hood, and refrigerators. During the Maple Festival, volunteers bring in a portable sink, and use three large coffee urns and an additional water heater.

The building has several unit heaters in the multipurpose room and baseboard heat in rooms containing plumbing. The toilet rooms are newer but do not comply fully with ADA.

We recommend that the toilet rooms be reconfigured to provide an accessible stall in each. In the women's room, the existing oversized stall will be enlarged. In the men's room, the line of water closets will be re-spaced. The renovated toilet rooms will accommodate 300 women and 450 men. The planned capacity of the multipurpose room is 450 persons. Finish materials will be repaired and new lighting installed in the multipurpose room to reduce glare, brighten the space, and improve energy efficiency.





We recommend that additional food service equipment (prep sink, griddles) be installed, to reduce reliance on temporary equipment. This would allow this kitchen to serve other events more easily.

If increased winter use is contemplated, more unit heaters could be installed for occupant comfort. While insulating the roof is usually desirable if a building is heated, payback in energy savings would be lengthy unless the building is occupied more often during the winter months. New lighting that reduces glare will improve the aesthetics of the space.

**Renovation costs for Brady's Run Lodge are estimated at \$209,000, based on 2016 construction costs.**

We propose the work be completed by the Public Works staff during off seasons, which will significantly reduce the cost of upgrades. Parking continues to be an issue at the lodge. The 2008 park master plan recommends construction of formal parking at Bradys Run Lodge and the adjacent picnic grove (includes paved handicapped-accessible parking). This should be balanced with the desire for grassy areas around the lodge. A pervious paving surface should be used for all parking areas.

**Projected costs are identified in the 2008 Master Site Plan.**



## **Old Economy Disc Golf Course**

**Mid impact; low cost; low revenue**

- Add 9 holes to the Old Economy Disc Golf Course to create an 18 hole competition course.

A regional Disc Golf Course designer from Wexford has provided an analysis, design layout, and cost estimate for the development of an additional nine disc golf holes at Old Economy Park. This would make the Old Economy Disc Golf Course the first and only 18-hole course in Beaver County. According to the proposal, area volunteers have also offered to assist with the construction.

Upgrading to an 18-hole course increases the opportunity to hold regional disc golf tournaments at this location. In August of 2015, the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) held the World Champion tournament at local courses in Allegheny and Butler Counties. The PDGA is bidding to host the 2020 World Amateur Disc Golf Championship in western Pennsylvania. The PDGA would like the Old Economy Disc Golf Course to be one of the three courses utilized for this championship tournament. This tournament will draw visitors from around the world. The economic impact of such a tournament for the community would be significant.

**Anticipated Cost: \$60,000**



## **Brush Creek Restrooms**

**Mid impact; mid cost; no revenue**

The existing pit toilets in Brush Creek were constructed in the late 1960s/early 1970s and are not ADA compliant. The new restrooms will be ADA compliant along with their access routes from accessible parking spaces. Further, the existing restrooms are utilitarian and are not accommodating or appealing to park users due to their appearance, condition, and odor.

Our recommendation is to replace four pit toilet restrooms in high traffic/visitation areas of the park. The new restrooms will utilize the National Park Services "sweet smelling technology." Further, the proposed restrooms will be relocated as necessary so they are downwind from existing recreation

facilities. Finally, the proposed restroom improvements will increase the amount of time residents are willing to spend within the park as they will have access to quality restrooms to meet their basic needs.

A future phase of restroom replacements will address the pit toilets that remain after the completion of this project. In 2014 four restrooms were improved in Bradys Run Park. The County intends to continue the restroom replacement program to address deficiencies and the concerns expressed by residents throughout the County park system, including Old Economy and those restrooms in Bradys Run Park and Brush Creek Park that are yet to be improved.

This Plan proposes that the first phase of restroom replacement at Brush Creek Park include the restrooms located at the soccer fields, Picnic Grove #1, the Lake Restrooms, and the Playground Restrooms (Picnic Grove #7).

In 2014, Beaver County had submitted a grant application to the PA DCNR for this project. The State's response was that they wanted the Comprehensive Recreation Plan completed before they would consider providing funding. The County should resubmit the application to DCNR indicating that the restroom replacement remains a priority for the County.

**Anticipated Cost - \$421,000 at 2016 construction costs.**



## **Brush Creek Picnic Shelters**

**Mid impact; mid cost; low revenue**

Past practice and/or policy at Brush Creek Park has not permitted development of picnic shelters due to what was thought to be a deed restriction prohibiting such facilities. The consultant researched the potential restrictions from DCNR whose predecessor, DCA, provided state funding for acquisition of the park with a Project 70 grant. The result of our research is that there are no restrictions based on state funding that would exclude construction of shelters.

This Plan proposes the construction of three picnic shelters, following the standards recommended herein, with one to be located near the soccer fields, one at the baseball fields, and one near the playground and covered bridge.

**Estimated cost for the standard shelters - \$94,000, based on 2016 construction costs.**

**Estimated cost for the enhanced shelter - \$199,000, based on 2016 construction costs.**



## **Bradys Run and Brush Creek Ball Field Improvements**

**Mid impact; high cost; low revenue**

The 2008 master site plans propose changes and upgrades for the ballfields at both Bradys Run and Brush Creek Parks. These upgrades are recommended as Tier 2 priority projects as originally proposed in the master plans.

The one proposed modification to the master site plan for Bradys Run is for the development of a Miracle League Field to be added within the ballfield complex.

A concept drawing and written description of this field is found in the Bradys Run Park Outdoor Family Recreation Area with Inclusive Playground, Discovery Center, Outdoor Classroom, and Miracle Field of this report. Refer to Tier 1, Recommendation 1 on page I-9.

Upgrading the ballfields to tournament caliber will attract teams, leagues, and tournaments from across the region. An ongoing series of baseball and softball tournaments can certainly have the impact to boost the local economy through the use of local overnight accommodations, eating establishments, fuel, supplies, and equipment purchases, and more. Ball tournaments can have a significant economic impact in the community. Improvements may include artificial turf, field lighting, dugouts, new fencing, additional parking, and other amenities.

Tournaments can also produce revenue for the county through field rental, and team fees. A public/private partnership should be considered to enhance the baseball and softball programs, improve the fields, and stimulate revenue for the County.



## **11 Old Economy Shelters and Playground Improvements**

**Low impact; high cost; ongoing revenue**

Recommendations:

- Add the two picnic shelters, following the standards proposed herein, proposed in the 2007 Old Economy Park Master Plan (one 15' x 25', one 25' x 35')
- Improve existing shelters according to the standard style proposed in the Plan for Bradys Run shelters

**Anticipated costs are identified in the 2008 Master Site Plan.**





## Tier 3 Projects

### Other Projects

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## 12 County Parks Road Repairs and Parking Upgrades

Long-term impact, high cost

The level of use of park facilities can be directly correlated to the condition of the access roads that lead to them. People tend to avoid facilities that require travel over poorly maintained or deteriorated roads or have poor and limited parking space. With the investment proposed in upgrades to all Beaver County Parks, it is necessary that the County consider the condition of the roads and parking areas throughout the parks.

The roadways in each of the county parks provide access to many of the facilities located within the parks. Bradys Run and Old Economy Parks both have state or municipal roads as well as county-owned park roads that provide access into or through the parks. All of the roads in Brush Creek Park are county-owned. Each of the state and municipal roads are bituminous surface. Some of the county roads are bituminous while others are aggregate.

Bradys Run Road, the primary thoroughfare through Bradys Run Park was resurfaced by the state in the summer of 2016. It is now in good condition. Anchortown Road, also a state road, which carries traffic from Bradys Run Road up the hill to the ballfield complex, is in need of repairs or upgrades. The remaining roads are aggregate.

Master Plans that were developed for each of the County's parks in 2008 address road and parking concerns. They should be the starting point for implementing improvements. We recommend that the County Public Works Department analyze each road to determine the best course of repair and upgrade. Some could remain aggregate while others may be better with a bituminous surface. A comprehensive plan should be developed to improve all county-owned roads and parking areas throughout the three county parks.

County park roads identified through this plan that are in need of repair or significant upgrades include:

- The road to shelter 12 in Bradys Run Park;
- The main park road at Brush Creek Park;
- All County Roads in Old Economy Park;
- Silver Mine Road in Old Economy Park is also in need of repairs.

The County should coordinate with PennDOT District 11-0 on the design and construction of improvements to state-owned roads within the County's Parks.

Effective April 1, 2018, the County will begin to receive additional revenues from an increase in the PA Vehicle Registration Fees. The increased fees could provide as much as \$750,000 annually to be used specifically for road repairs and upgrades. Beaver County park roads should be a high priority for the use of these funds.

**The County should also plan to upgrade parking facilities that are not otherwise described in this Plan.**

## 13 Bradys Run Infrastructure

Long-term impact, high cost, long-term park sustainability

Ongoing and future development of Bradys Run Park will require a significant upgrade in electric, water, and sanitary sewer infrastructure.

The County should:

- Contract with a municipal engineer to evaluate necessary long-term upgrades needed for electric, water, and sanitary sewer lines throughout the park.
- Develop a concept plan and cost estimate
- Analyze differences between sanitary sewer lines versus composting toilet facilities
- Consider the possibility of running the main underground lines along Brady's Run Road and including a multi-use trail lane
- As recommended in the Ice Rink Feasibility Study evaluate the feasibility of extending natural gas service to the ice rink, and beyond to the herein proposed environmental discovery center.

## 14 Second Sheet of Ice at Bradys Run Recreation Facility

Concurrent with the Beaver County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan, Hancock Architecture teamed with Ice Management Group to conduct a feasibility study of the addition of a second sheet of ice at the Bradys Run Ice Arena.

We have reviewed the report and highlight the following recommendations that are found within it.

### *Recommendations from the Demand Analysis*

1. Develop a "bottom-up" income statement for the existing facility with the existing schedule, an income statement for a single rink with a modified schedule, and an income statement produced for a twin rink.
2. Develop Pro Form income statements comparing:
  - Financial results using the current single rink with the existing schedule
  - Projections for a single sheet with a more efficient schedule
  - Projections for a twin rink

### *Recommendations from the Financial Feasibility Analysis*

1. Proceed with the design, costing, and financing plan for both options, as the repayment of the anticipated bond costs will be an important part of the decision making process.
2. Regardless of the decision to move forward with one of the options or maintain the status quo, two items should be addressed:
  - Electric consumption is excessive (\$70,000-75,000 per year too high): an energy conservation program should be initiated.
  - An actionable business plan needs to be developed, with a focus on better scheduling the ice time and better marketing the activities offered at the facility by a well-trained staff.
  - Evaluate the pros and cons of converting from electric to natural gas.

Ice Management Group has submitted a proposal for the completion of these recommendations. The County should verify that the proposal accomplishes all the recommended work described above.

### *Additional Recommendations Based on Review of the Plan*

1. Implement methods to become as efficient as possible within the existing facility. Do not wait for implementation of the bigger plans to move toward greater efficiency. Begin with tightening scheduling and programming; identifying ways to reduce energy use; stimulating new uses; developing new opportunities during down times, both in and out of the ice season; and enhancing marketing of the programs and facilities.
2. Consider serious alternatives for the potential loss of the tennis courts and walking track if a second sheet of ice is constructed. This could result in the displacement of nearly 2,000 tennis players a month and as many as 4,000-6,000 walkers monthly from October through March.

## **15 Bradys Run Lake Beach Improvements**

**High impact; high cost; potential income generator; cannot occur until recommendation 13 is addressed**

Upgrades to the beachfront were identified as a top priority in the public input. Desired options included beach improvements, public-private partnerships for concessionaires to operate snack stand or restaurant, and recreational rentals such as boats, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, bicycles, etc. Unfortunately, the absence of adequate water supply, electric service, sanitary sewer, and natural gas limit such entrepreneurial opportunities. As well, the difficult terrain makes ADA compliance and adequate parking difficult. Further, the small size of the lake, approximately 25 acres, is not sufficient to maintain the interest of recreational paddlers for a long time.

These limitations move this project to a lower priority. The existing buildings are deteriorating from lack of use and care. Sufficient maintenance and improvements should be done to sustain these building while giving consideration to addressing the previously identified constraints that would allow the bigger project to move forward.

## **16 Other recreational facilities identified through the public process**

The following additional facilities were requested through the public input process.

- A remote control flying site could also be developed. See Chapter 1 Appendix E - Remote Control Flying Site Layout
- Pickle ball courts
- Upgrade and cover the existing outdoor skate rink for roller derby
- Splash/spray parks
- Mountain bike skills park/MX course



## Introduction

This chapter on greenways and trails focuses on opportunities throughout Beaver County but outside of the Beaver County Parks. Chapter 1, Project 2 addresses trail issues within the county parks. It should also be noted that this chapter focuses primarily on land and water-based trails as these were the issues that came to the forefront through the planning process.

Beaver County has been actively pursuing trail planning for over a decade. In 2007, the County adopted its first greenways and trail plan, setting the stage for creating a system of trails throughout the County. Much background is provided as part of that plan, with clear direction on how to move forward.

Over the ensuing 10 or so years, multiple plans and feasibility studies have continued to address specific trail segments throughout or connected to Beaver County. A list these plans can be found in the Chapter 2 Appendix A - Current and Previous Initiatives.

As a result of the 2007 Greenways and Trails Plan, Beaver County received a DCNR grant to hire its first shared Greenways and Trails Coordinator in cooperation with Lawrence County. The position showed some successes in the first years of operation but ultimately Lawrence County chose to end its relationship with Beaver County, withdrawing its support. At that time, Beaver County amended the responsibilities of the position to include more county planning work and at the end of 2015 eliminated the position. Therefore Beaver County currently has no staff person focused of greenway or trail issues.

In recent years, the Ohio River Trail Council has been the single most focused organization, fostering planning efforts all along the Ohio River corridor. As well, numerous municipalities, trail organizations, and agencies have considered planning and development of local trails while also looking beyond county borders to connect to regional and national trails.

The eventual result of this is that much planning has been completed but development of trails has not followed due to the limited capacity and powers of the Ohio River Trail Council.

## Trail planning and implementation in Beaver County

The Ohio River Trail Council has worked diligently to create a grand vision for both land and water trails along the Ohio River segment that traverses Western Pennsylvania. Beaver County is a significant part of that vision.

The recommendations of this Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan are not intended to supersede any of the planning efforts completed by the Council.

Rather, its purpose is to support and facilitate the process of moving from planning to implementation.





## Talking Points

- The 2007 Greenways and Trails Plan proposes trail connections to nearly every municipality in Beaver County.
- There is no single point of contact within the County to maintain the vision the County has cast for an interconnected system of trails or to move plans from ideas to reality.
- Much planning has been done but few trails have been built.
- As identified in the public input component of this plan, there continues to be high demand for multi-use trails throughout Beaver County.
- Multi-use trails can improve the safety of non-motorized transportation, have a significant economic impact in Beaver County, offer tremendous recreational opportunities, and improve the health of County residents.
- Momentum from outside the county to connect to Beaver County:

- The North Country Trail west into Ohio and north to Lawrence County
- Ohio River Trail to Ohio's Little Beaver Creek Greenway to the west
- Raccoon Creek State Park trail to Ohio's Tomlinson Run State Park
- South to Hillman State Park, Montour Trail, and Along the Ohio River to Pittsburgh. This also provides connections to central PA, Maryland, and Washington D.C.

- Beaver County has opportunities to not only provide trails but also to build trails that connect larger trail systems.

- The proposed trail development in Beaver County would ultimately connect residents to the Great Allegheny Passage, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, and the larger system

of the Industrial Heartlands Trails that connects 1,400 mile of trail in five states. The Ohio River Greenway Trail in Beaver County will add about 25 miles as a significant component of the larger trail corridors. It is also proposed to connect other local trails in Beaver, Bridgewater, Rochester, New Brighton, Beaver Falls and more, to the larger regional network. This creates opportunity for Beaver residents to connect to places like Pittsburgh, Erie, Ashtabula, Cleveland, Morgantown, and even Washington, DC.

- There are plenty of opportunities to enhance recreational access to the County's waterways. In particular to the Ohio and Beaver Rivers, and Raccoon Creek.
- Recreational access to the rivers can strongly complement residential, commercial, and industrial uses of the waterfronts.



## Validation

- Walking and biking trails are the most requested recreational facilities identified through this plan's public process. Walking, biking, hiking, and water trails rank as four of the top five most needed facilities.
- A common phrase from the public was, "enough planning; it's time to see trails on the ground."
- Residents talked frequently about wanting a series of interconnected trails throughout the county.
- According to the Recreation Questionnaire, recreational trails ranked as the second most important recreation facility to families in Beaver County. No. 1 was parks.
- Trails also ranked No. 2 when residents were asked what attracts them to parks, outpaced only by rivers, streams, or lakes.
- Safety of cyclists was of significant concern to county residents, particularly along State Route 51. Bicycle fatalities have occurred too often along the highway. Alternate bicycle routes could dramatically reduce such accidents.
- Trail development should include both land- and water-based trails.
- According to the 2014 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan, 83% of residents believe on-road bike lanes should be increased or improved, while 67% asked for more or improved bicycle paths and trails. On-road bike lanes and bike trails/paths rank No. 2 and No. 4 respectively among the most-needed outdoor recreation facilities in Pennsylvania. The report shows that walking and bicycling rank as top recreational activities for persons age 49 to 67. Sidewalks, streets, and trails are the preferred locations.

## Implementation

Implementation of trail plans (some already completed, some not) is a massive undertaking that will be well worth the effort. It is also one that will require substantial management and coordination. If the Beaver County Commissioners adopt the vision for trails and choose to move forward in fulfilling that vision, research shows that the economic impact would be significant.

The proposed implementation strategies identified in the already completed plans set the stage for first steps in putting trails on the ground in Beaver County. With support from the County, and collaboration among the municipalities and trail organizations, Beaver County residents could experience tremendous recreational, transportation, and economic benefits.

The implementation strategies propose first steps in moving forward from existing plans. They also propose to define Beaver County's role as a key player in moving the trail vision forward.

## Project Tiers

The Beaver County Greenways and Trails chapter provides strategies and implementation steps in the Tier 2 category. These represent high Impact; high cost; strong economic impact; and excellent partnership opportunities.





# Tier 2 Projects



## Getting Started - Action Plan

**Strategy #1** - Define the role Beaver County will play in trail and active transportation planning and development.

It is the recommendation of this Plan that the County would:

1. Provide vision, direction, and leadership in fulfilling the county-wide trail and active transportation vision
2. Assist in prioritizing trail development
3. Facilitate bringing municipalities and trail organizations together to work toward implementation
4. Lead the overall coordination among the county, municipalities, trail organizations, state, and federal agencies
5. Offer additional leadership on larger projects such as bridge crossings, state road improvements, riverfront access, and large easements
6. Allocate a portion of its Act 13 funds annually as matching monies for trail and active transportation development
7. Create opportunities to connect the county-wide trail and active transportation system with each of the county's parks
8. Establish design and construction standards to be used for trails within the county
9. Promote recreational access for shoreline activities and water entrance along the County's rivers, streams, and lakes
10. Utilize the County Assessment Office to identify and track properties located along potential trail corridors that may be available for acquisition through sheriff sale

## Tier 2 Projects

High Impact

High Cost

Strong Economic Impact

Excellent Partnership Opportunities

Local municipalities

Ohio River Trail Council

Trail Organizations

Beaver County Parks

PA DCNR

PA DCED

PennDOT



It is recommended that the individual municipalities and/or trail organizations would:

- Lead and undertake trail and active transportation planning and development at the local level
- Own, develop, operate, manage, and maintain their respective trails and related amenities
- Coordinate with the county, as well as other municipalities and trail organizations to facilitate connection of trails, active transportation, shared maintenance, design standards, bridge connections, and other functions that promote local trails and active transportation
- Participate in the sharing the overall vision for trails and active transportation in Beaver County
- Ensure a plan and system of maintenance that will sustain the trails and active transportation infrastructure are functional, safe, and attractive

**Strategy #2** - Create a new position of Greenway, Trails and Active Transportation Coordinator within the Recreation Department. The Coordinator should serve as the County's point person to manage its role (as described in Strategy #1) in fulfilling the Vision for county trails and active transportation. The job description should be based on, but not limited to, items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 in Strategy #1. Position could potentially be funded with Tourism and Hotel Tax Funding (Act 18).

**Strategy #3** - Partner with the Beaver County Planning Commission and Corporation for Economic Development to serve as the County liaisons in coordination of trail and active transportation planning and development with Industries, riverfront property owners, and state agencies.

**Strategy #4** - Develop a strong coalition among municipalities and trail organizations, with Beaver County and the Ohio River Trail Council taking the lead.



**Beaver County's role in implementation of a county-wide trail and active transportation system.**

## Land-based Trails

### *Begin Implementation of the trails*

As part of the Ohio River Trail Council's recent planning efforts, the council has identified a number of potential trail and active transportation opportunities beyond those identified in the 2007 Beaver County Greenway Plan, including the Ohio River southern shore route, extending from Monaca Borough to Coraopolis Borough in Allegheny County.

The 2007 Greenway Plan excluded this route, at the recommendation of County staff, due to current and planned industrial activities and uses along the riverfront being promoted by the Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development. That said, the corridor is utilized by the cycling community for transportation. State Route 51 is currently identified as BicyclePA Route A. See Chapter 2 Appendix B - Ohio River Greenway Bicycle Routes. Over the past five years several fatal crashes involving cyclists and motorists have occurred in this corridor. This obviously elevates the need to provide a safe, comfortable, and convenient route along the corridor.

Although the corridor is industrial in nature, and there are heavy industries located along the river banks, low speed, and lower volume roads provide the opportunity to provide the desired connections by moving bicycle traffic off of State Route 51, and onto the riverfront roadway network. Establishing bicycle infrastructure within this corridor will provide a safer and more comfortable alternative transportation route between the communities located along the south shore of the Ohio River. The route would be primarily a transportation corridor, and have less value as a recreation and economic development opportunity until the communities along the riverfront are positioned to provide the amenities and goods and services desired by bicyclists.

#### **Beaver County Trail Benefits**

Active transportation  
Economic impact  
Health, wellness, recreation  
Linking community resources  
Connecting beyond the County

**Strategy #1** – Focus County trail and active transportation development efforts on implementing a demonstration project based on the following goals:

1. Meet the needs for an alternative transportation corridor
2. Provide economic development opportunities
3. Provide health, wellness, and recreation benefits
4. Connect local recreation facilities via bicycle and pedestrian routes

The recommended trail corridor runs from the Beaver County YMCA, located along Junction Stretch in New Brighton Borough, and Fallston Borough, then parallels State Route 51 to the entrance into Bradys Run Park in Patterson Township.

This is proposed as a demonstration project because we believe the park, the local business districts and their attractions are mutual generators of visitors to one another. By connecting the park, the local business districts, and their attractions to each other, we believe, there is the potential to increase economic activity within the business districts, and to increase visitation to Bradys Run Park. Further, anecdotal evidence from those who frequently travel by car along the corridor indicates the route is already being utilized by bicyclists. We believe that if improvements are made to bicycle infrastructure along the corridor, to establish a safe and convenient route, bicycling activity in the corridor will grow significantly.

Further, this corridor has the opportunity to connect a number of community business and resources.

### *Description of Proposed Route*

#### **Beaver County YMCA to Bradys Run Park**

From the intersection of the Veterans Memorial Bridge and State Route 51, we believe State Route 51 can be improved to include bicycle lanes along the existing shoulders of the road. Given State Route 51 is under the jurisdiction of PennDOT, all aspects of planning and design to include bicycle lanes along State Route 51 from this intersection to the entrance into Bradys Run Park will need to be coordinated and approved by PennDOT District 11-0. Along the majority of the length of State Route 51, the right-of-way appears to be approximately 60 feet wide, with vehicular travel lanes centered on the width of the right-of-way. State Route 51 has an average annual daily traffic count of approximately 10,000 vehicles per day. Given the average annual daily traffic volumes, we recommend consideration be given to providing buffered bicycle lanes where possible.

The posted speed limit for the southern and northern portions of this route is 45 mph, while the posted speed limit in the center portion (the business district) is 35 mph. From the Veterans Memorial Bridge to Beaver Street, a distance of approximately 1,100 feet, there are four vehicular travel lanes; for a distance of approximately 750 north of Beaver Street, heading south, there is a left turn lane in addition to the two travel lanes. Approximately 230 feet south of the SR 51 and Beaver Street intersection SR 51 passes over a bridge (conveying Bradys Run into the Beaver River. This bridge is approximately 65 feet long and

#### **Direct Connections**

- Beaver County YMCA
- Hanks Frozen Custard, Beaver Falls
- Riverside Drive Street Business District:
  - Brusters Ice Cream
  - Jerry's Curb Service
  - Kelly's Irish Pub
  - Mario's Dockside Grille
- Fallston/Constitution Boulevard Business District:
  - Bradys Run Grille & Guest House
  - Grand Valley Inn
  - Zooky's Sports Tavern
  - Bradys Run Farm Market
- Bradys Run Park

#### **Indirect Connections**

- Bridgewater Bridge Street Business District
- Bridgewater Borough National Register Historic District
- Bridgewater Crossing
- Beaver Borough Riverfront Park
- Beaver Station Cultural & Event Center
- Beaver Borough Historic District
- Beaver Borough Business District

#### **Future Connections**

- Rochester Borough Business District
- New Brighton Borough Business District



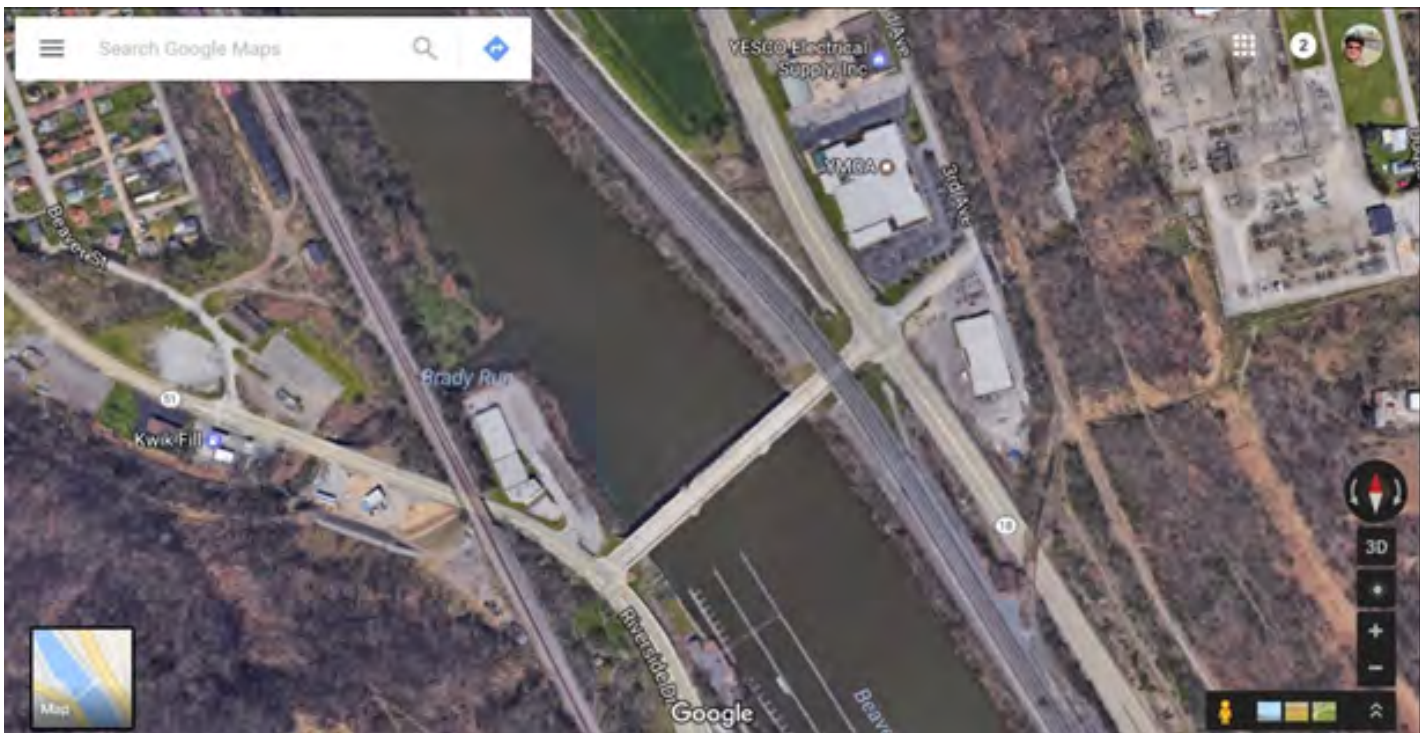
45 feet wide. Because the bridge carries four lanes of traffic there is limited room for bicycle lanes. An analysis needs to be conducted to determine if vehicular traffic patterns can be modified to free space for bicycle lanes, or the bridge deck would need to be expanded by approximately five feet on each side to provide sufficient space for bicycle lanes. For the remaining distance, to the jug-handle entrance into Brady Run Park contains two vehicular travel lanes.

A quick desktop analysis indicates the southern 1,000 feet, from the intersection of the Veterans Memorial Bridge and State Route 51 to Beaver Street will require redesign to accommodate bicycles. The remaining stretch, approximately 12,000 feet, should be able to accommodate bicycle lanes without redesign and reconfiguration.

Because of the complexities with the first 1,000 feet of the corridor, we recommend performing a more detailed analysis to determine how to best incorporate bicycle lanes along this section.

### **Beaver County YMCA to Bridgewater Bridge Street Historic District**

Because the proposed corridor is 2-plus miles in length, it is recommended the route be designed to accommodate bicycle travel through the corridor. The Beaver County YMCA is located in New Brighton, at the intersection of YMCA Drive and State Route 18 at the Veterans Memorial Bridge. Upon its reconstruction in 2014, the Veterans Memorial Bridge was designed to include a 10-foot wide shared use path which parallels the southern side of the bridge.



Upon reaching the western side of the Beaver River, there is a three-way intersection between the Veterans Memorial Bridge and State Route 51. The intersection with State Route 51 is a traffic signal controlled intersection with crosswalks providing for passage over all travel lanes. Traveling south, an existing 10 feet wide shared use path extends approximately five hundred and fifty feet to Riverside Drive. Riverside Drive contains a small business district with food and recreation attractions. Riverside Drive, a low volume, low speed road (25 mph) continues south, through a mixed-use residential district, extending south approximately one mile, to Fulton Street.

A quick left of Fulton Street leads one past the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department and the



Keystone Bakery Building, which has been redeveloped as a mixed use office and commercial space, leads one to Bridge Street. Bridge Street is and continues to be the Borough's historic business district. Because of the low volume and low speed of traffic along this corridor, we recommend it be marked and signed as a shared roadway for bicycling. Marking it as such accomplishes two goals:

1. Identifies the corridor as a bicycling route.
2. Establishes the expectation for motorists to expect to encounter bicyclists along the route.

The first 1,000 feet of Riverside Drive, from the intersection with State Route 51, to the intersection of Sharon Road is under PennDOT's jurisdiction. The remaining portion from Sharon Road to Bridge Street is under the Borough's jurisdiction.

From this point there are opportunities to extend the route to Bridgewater Crossings, Beaver Borough Riverfront Park, Beaver Station Cultural & Event Center, the Beaver Borough Historic District, and the Beaver Borough Business District.

The recommendations for Beaver County YMCA to Bridgewater Bridge Street Historic District connection should be implementable at a low cost. Implementation will need to be coordinated with PennDOT, Rochester Township, Fallston, and Bridgewater Boroughs.

### **PennDOT Connects Policy**

Given PennDOT's jurisdiction over the bulk of the proposed corridor, it is very important to ensure the municipalities in which the proposed improvements are located are aware of and support these recommendations. They should be prepared to discuss the proposal with PennDOT when they are contacted about future improvement projects within their respective corridors. These municipalities include:

- New Brighton Borough
- Bridgewater Borough
- Fallston Borough
- Patterson Township
- Brighton Township
- Beaver Borough
- Rochester Borough

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation recently adopted the PennDOT Connects Policy. This policy requires PennDOT to consider the community's needs at the beginning of a planning process. Specific areas to be discussed during collaboration include, but are not limited to:

- Safety issues/concerns
- Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations
- Transit/multimodal considerations
- Stormwater management
- Presence of/impacts from (current/future) freight-generating land uses
- Utility issues
- Transportation operations considerations
- Emergency services accommodations

- Planned development
- Long range transportation plans
- Regional planning studies, e.g. corridor studies, resource management studies, watershed studies, etc.
- Consistency with current community comprehensive or other plans
- Consistency with current and/or proposed zoning
- Other proposed transportation improvements
- Impacts on the natural, cultural, or social environment
- Right-of-way considerations
- Anticipated public opinion
- Community or cultural events in the candidate project area
- Maintenance Agreement requirements

See Chapter 2 Appendix C - PennDOT Connects and Chapter 2 Appendix D - Route 51 Corridor Photos

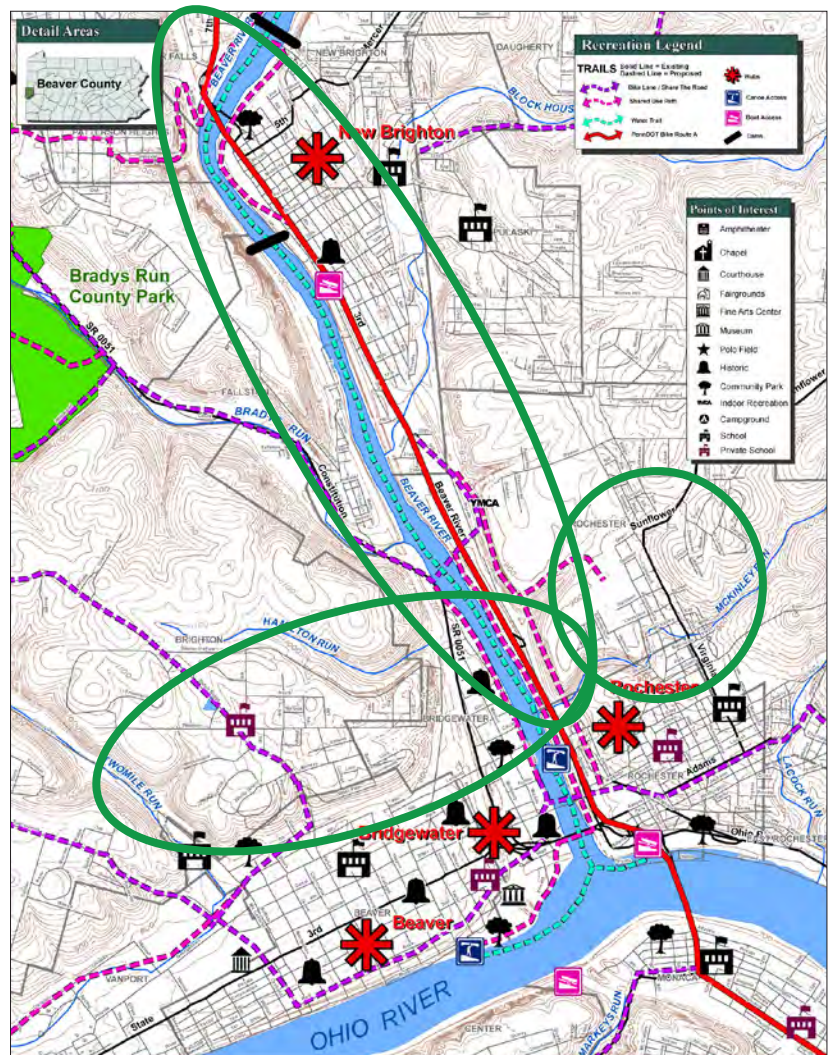
**Strategy #2** – Implement pre-development strategies for three trail projects identified in this Plan as top priorities.

**Beaver-Bridgewater-Rochester Trails** – Development and connections of the three trails to connect these riverfront municipalities via a multi-use trail system.

- Complete the final Feasibility Study to connect New Brighton to Aliquippa
- Bring the communities together to develop a specific plan for implementation
- Create a step-by-step implementation plan

**South Heights to Aliquippa** – Alleviate the safety concerns of State Bicycle Route A

- Work directly with PennDOT to develop strategies to move State Bike Route A off State Route 51 between South Heights and Aliquippa.



## Midland to Ohio Line

- Secure funding to acquire the parcel of property needed for completion of the trail. Coordinate trail development with Columbiana County, Ohio.

**Strategy #3** – Create and implement a plan to connect the North Country Trail on State Game Land #285 via an ADA compliant trail to the North Fork Little Beaver Creek. Provide ADA compliant fishing access.

This would be a joint project that would be implemented through a partnership with the North Country Trail and the PA Game Commission. Some initial discussion has already been held between the two organizations.

## 3 Water Trails and Access

Currently the Upper Ohio River Water Trail consists of the 69-mile stretch of the Ohio River from Pittsburgh, PA, to Newell, WV, and East Liverpool, OH. This includes the entirety of the river as it travels through Beaver County. In Beaver County, the Ohio River Water Trail also includes three miles of the Beaver River from Beaver Borough north to the Townsend Dam in Fallston, and four miles of Raccoon Creek.

**Strategy #1** – Enhance ramp and dock launches to provide better access for non-motorized boats and identify additional locations for non-motorized boat launches.



Current Beaver County access points to the Ohio River

- Leetsdale Ramp Launch – Mile 15 (located in Allegheny County just south of the Beaver County border)
- Freedom Beach Launch – Mile 23
- Rochester Ramp Launch Riverfront Park – Mile 25
- Bridgewater Crossing Dock – Mile 25
- Monaca Ramp Launch – Mile 26
- Shippingport Ramp Launch – Mile 34
- Ohioville Lock 57 Ramp Launch – Mile 39

### Recommended additional launches:

- Two between Freedom Launch and Leetsdale
- One northeast of Montgomery Lock on the north bank of the river



## Current Beaver River Access Points

- Bridgewater Riverfront Park Dock Launch – Mile .5
- Bridgewater Beach Launch – Mile 1.1
- New Brighton Ramp Launch – Mile 1.8
- New Brighton Fishing Park Ramp Launch – Mile 2.8

### Recommended additional launch:

- Beaver River upper pool at Beaver Falls above the Townsend Dam

## Raccoon Creek access points

- Independence Marsh access near the Beaver County Conservation District. Need to be updated and better maintained.
- East end of Raccoon Creek State Park

### Recommended additional launch:

- Rock Bottom public access area (Potter Township)



**Strategy #2** – Encourage local municipalities to implement the waterfront recommendations of existing municipal feasibility studies, master site plan, and waterfront improvement plans.

These would include but not be limited to:

- Beaver Borough Riverfront Park
- Monaca Gateway
- Rochester Riverfront Development Plan
- Ohio River Greenway Trail Feasibility Study – North and South Shores







## Introduction

The administration of the Beaver County parks and recreation falls primarily to two county departments: the Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works.

The County Recreation and Tourism Department manages and encourages use of the parks through programs, activities, partnerships, promotion, operations, and working with the public “for the overall enjoyment of residents and visitors” (Beaver County Parks and Recreation Mission Statement). They work with the Department of Public Works to ensure attractive, safe, and usable facilities; to provide enhancements to better meet the recreational needs of users; to recommend new facilities or amenities as recreational trends and demands change; and to stimulate revenue production.

The Beaver County Department of Public Works is responsible for general maintenance, upkeep, and repair of all county parks as well as basic construction and renovations in addition to all of their other responsibilities throughout the county.

Operational and maintenance funding is provided from the County’s general fund for each department. The Recreation and Tourism Department is also actively involved in securing funding for park upgrades and development through solicitation of grants from various, state, federal, non-profit, and private sources.

As the County moves forward with the implementation of this plan, it must ensure that a solid and comprehensive administrative structure is in place to manage the parks and recreation system. As they look to improve and expand park facilities, County Commissioners will need to warrant that the resources such as staffing, knowledge, experience, equipment, and finances are available.

Five administrative issues were identified through this planning process that merit consideration for the future: maintenance planning, staffing, funding, programming, and marketing.

## Goals and Objectives

- Promote County parks and recreation facilities
- Diversity of amenities
- Meet leisure needs
- High degree of excellence
- Expansive programming
- Strong professional leadership
- Coordination with other County agencies
- Efficient administration
- Well-maintained facilities
- Reasonable pricing
- Access to all residents

(Adapted from Beaver County Park and Recreation Mission)



## Talking Points and Validation

- Much deferred maintenance throughout all county parks has resulted in the need for costly improvements
- Revenue production has become a greater opportunity with many of the park facilities and programs
- The County is doing little, outside of user fees and rentals, to produce revenue in the parks
- The financial benefit of parks and recreation has become an important issue in recent years
- Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Association 2015 Annual Report highlights the fact that “Pennsylvania’s local and regional parks annually produce \$1.6 billion in economic activity.”
- Recreation and Tourism Departments currently share a director
- Most current recreation programming is being provided by outside groups and organizations.
- Promoting and marketing county parks and recreation has not been a priority of the county since at least 2006

## Implementation

The following pages describe some general background and present recommendations or implementation strategies for each topic.

### *Project Tiers*

The Beaver County Recreation Administration and Operations chapter provides strategies and implementation steps in the Tier 2 category.

**Tier 2 strategies** in this chapter address administrative or operational needs within the County departments, and are both feasible and important.



## Tier 2 Projects

### Mid Impact Projects

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## Maintenance Planning

**Strategy #1** – Create a maintenance plan specific to each park in the Beaver County park system. This will ensure that County park facilities are cared for in the most efficient, cost-effective, and productive manner and will save the County money over the long-term. A sample plan is included in Chapter 3 Appendix A - Park Maintenance Plan Recommendations.

The Park Maintenance Plan should establish clearly defined maintenance standards that will:

1. Keep recreation facilities safe, reduce liability risks, and plan for prevention of accidents
2. Ensure the usability, cleanliness, and good appearance of all facilities
3. Plan for routine and preventative care, cyclical and periodic maintenance, and corrective repairs
4. Provide a method of staff accountability that ensures tasks are being completed according to established specifications and within appropriate time frames
5. Control maintenance costs and make them more predictable

The County should begin to break away from the short-term maintenance strategies it currently uses within the parks and consider a more comprehensive, long-term planning strategy that plans for care, maintenance, repair, and replacement of all physical assets over the full anticipated life of each.

To accomplish this, the County would need to identify each physical asset such as pavilions, buildings, play equipment, fencing, ballfields, roads, etc. and develop both an annual and a 10-year plan for maintenance, care, rehabilitation, and eventual replacement. This type of planning should be tied directly to the proposed maintenance plan described above and should include a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.

## Tier 2 Projects

All implementation components of this chapter are identified as Tier 2 priorities.

All address administrative or operational needs within the County departments.

Some of the recommended strategies can be completed using existing county staff. However, County Commissioners will need to determine if it is the best choice or if it will be more efficient and effective to hire outside consultants.



A maintenance plan is typically comprised of four planning components.

1. Develop an **annual maintenance plan** that primarily focuses on routine and preventive care. This component will provide for the ongoing daily and seasonal maintenance needs of the park. Corrective repairs would also be included in this component of the plan. They need to be addressed as equipment breaks, vandalism occurs, unusual or unplanned incidents arise. Details and examples of such a plan is in Chapter 3 Appendix A - Park Maintenance Plan Recommendations. Establish a plan for **cyclical and periodic maintenance**, that is, regular maintenance where its frequency is one year or greater. This might include gravel replenishment, trail painting, sign replacement, and certain swimming pool equipment maintenance.
2. Prepare a **long-term routine for major maintenance or repairs** that are needed at frequencies greater than every two years. These would include, but not be limited to, such things as roof replacement, asphalt sealing, electrical upgrades, and picnic table replacements.
3. Plan for **major rehabilitation and or replacement** of facilities. This will include replacement of bridges, picnic shelters, playground equipment, and the like.

Components 3 and 4 should be included in the County's long-range capital improvement plan.

### **Projected cost of creating plan - \$18,000**

**Strategy #2** – Require and ensure staff are trained in various aspects of park maintenance. This can be done either as a requirement of employment or provided through schools, workshops, seminars, and classes once on the job. The park foreman and leads should attend park maintenance management training that is recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The closest is held at Olgebay Park in Wheeling, W.V., in January or February each year. The NRPA offers scholarships towards this training with funding from Stihl, Inc.

The National Recreation and Park Association and the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society provide regular one and two-day training sessions in most areas of park maintenance. NRPA also provides publications dealing with current maintenance issues in parks and recreation as well as some online training.

Training should include ballfield maintenance, turf care, vehicle and equipment maintenance, building and facility maintenance, swimming pool operations, pesticide application, playground safety, and other areas as needed.

It is also recommended that the County maintain their two certified Pesticide Applicators, from the PA Department of Agriculture in Category 23 for parks. Further, other staff members should be certified as a pesticide technician, to allow them to apply pesticides under the direction of the certified applicator. Last, the County should maintain one staff person as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. Training and certification is available through the PA Recreation and Park Society. It may be appropriate to train other staff in specific areas as determined by their specific job assignments.

### **Projected cost – an average of \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually**

## Staffing

Staffing for Beaver County Recreation and Tourism is unique as they are managed by the County's Recreation and Tourism Director. This individual is tasked with managing the use and programming of all County parks, which includes individual facilities. As well as conducting tourist promotion efforts within and for the County.

Other full-time County staff in the department includes a Business/Facility Manager and four maintenance positions. Part-time staff includes a maintenance position and four clerks. Seasonal ice guards are employed for public sessions and events, while all other programs are staffed by outside organizations.

The shared directorate system undoubtedly has worked well for many years. However, as responsibilities, projects, facilities, and demands continue to grow within each of the departments, it is apparent that the management system will need to be evaluated in order to keep up and meet the ongoing demands and expectations of the County, its residents and visitors.

The Recreation Center Maintenance Staff (aka - Public Works) is responsible for the care of Bradys Run Indoor Recreation Facility and Action Park. This includes basic and routine custodial tasks, maintenance and minor repair of the building, its facilities and grounds. Staff assigned to the Recreation Center report to the Recreation Director rather than to Public Works. Like the directorate system, this area may also be in need of evaluation and reorganization with the possibility of it being moved under the direction/supervision of the Public Works Department.

Programmatically, the uses of the Beaver County parks and the facilities within have a direct effect on park maintenance. It is the County's Public Works Department staff that is currently tasked with maintaining and ensuring that all remaining park facilities, excluding aforementioned, are safe, maintained, upgraded and prepared for recreational and public use.

The following staffing strategies should be considered if the parks are to continue to meet the expectations and demands of county residents.

**Strategy #1** – Evaluate the existing staffing structure as it pertains to Recreation & Tourism.

Serious consideration must be given to restructuring the staffing/organizational charts of these Departments in order to meet their expanding demands.

In 2016, the County's Sales, Use and Hotel Occupancy Tax ("Bed Tax") was increased from 3 percent to 5 percent, potentially resulting in a 66 percent increase in budget and expanded marketing efforts. At the same time, the department shifted its operating strategy. Until recently, the Beaver County Tourism Department operated as a membership-based organization. That is, the tourism office focused its efforts on marketing the tourism-based activities of its membership. As of September 2016, it was no longer a membership-centered. Rather, it is now an inclusive organization that seeks to market all tourism efforts throughout the County.

These changes place significant new demands and responsibility on the Tourism Department staff. Tourism is one of the great economic engines in Beaver County and as such may soon require a different structure, up to and even a separate full-time director.

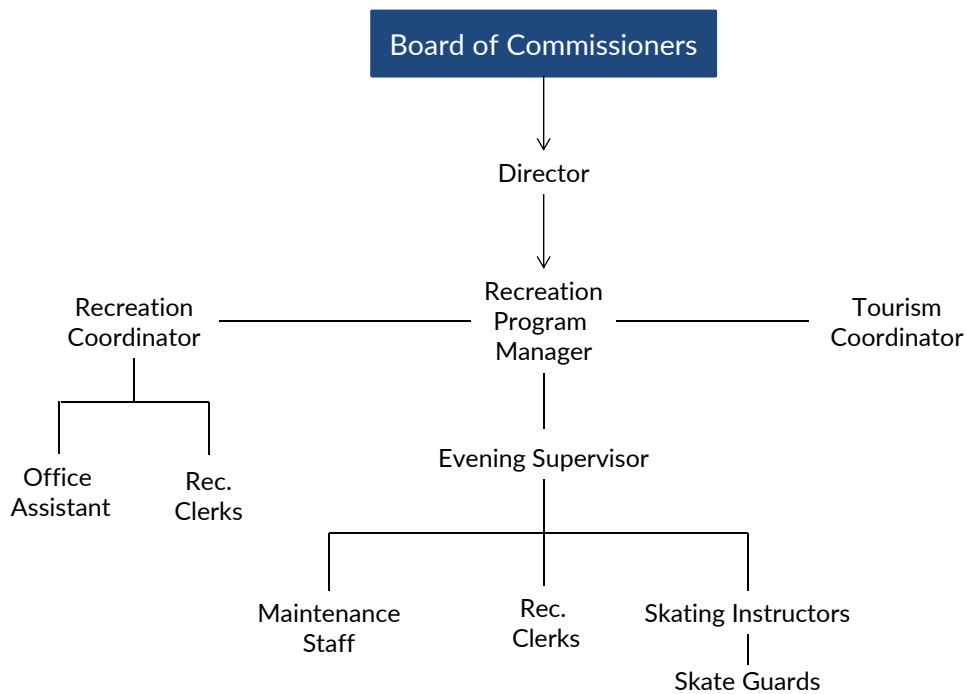
This Plan demonstrates that demand is great for expansion and enhancement of County Parks and their facilities, encouraging and expanding recreational opportunities, and the creation of a county-

wide trail and active transportation system. With the Recreation and Tourism Director being responsible for its implementation, his or her workload could increase by as much as 60 percent. The Recreation Director will continue to be responsible for all the tasks currently assigned in the job description. As well, he or she will be responsible for many tasks associated with carrying out the recommendations and implementation strategies of the Recreation Plan.

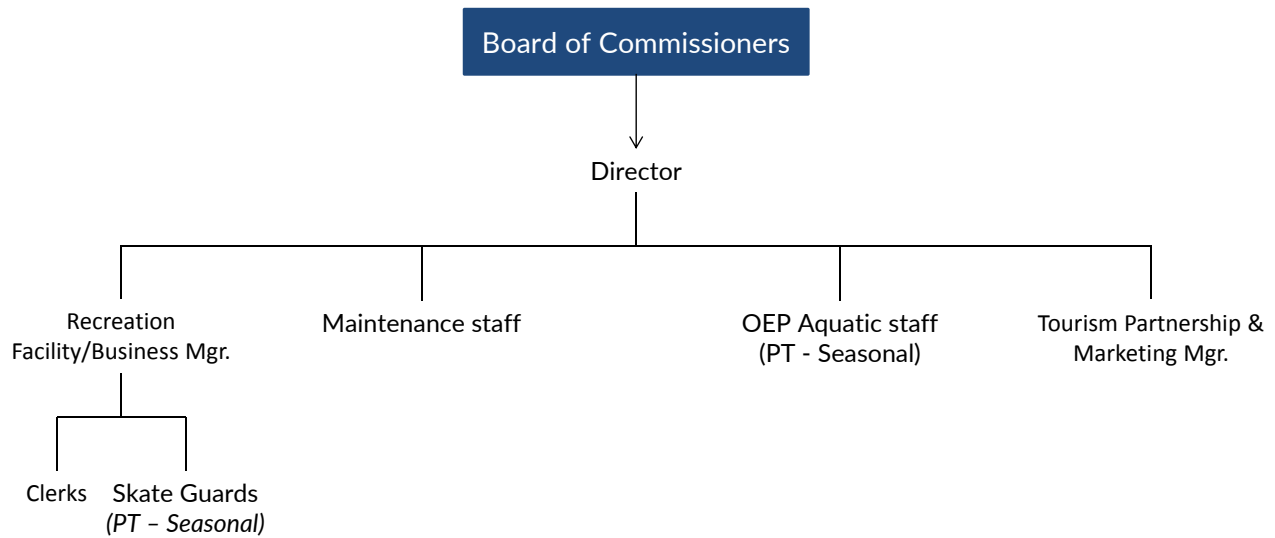
Three positions are recommended to return the Department to the staffing levels of 2003. These positions include: 1) Recreation/Ice Coordinator, 2) Active Transportation/Greenways & Trails Coordinator, and 3) Part-Time Office Assistant.

Associated costs will be covered by the increased revenues.

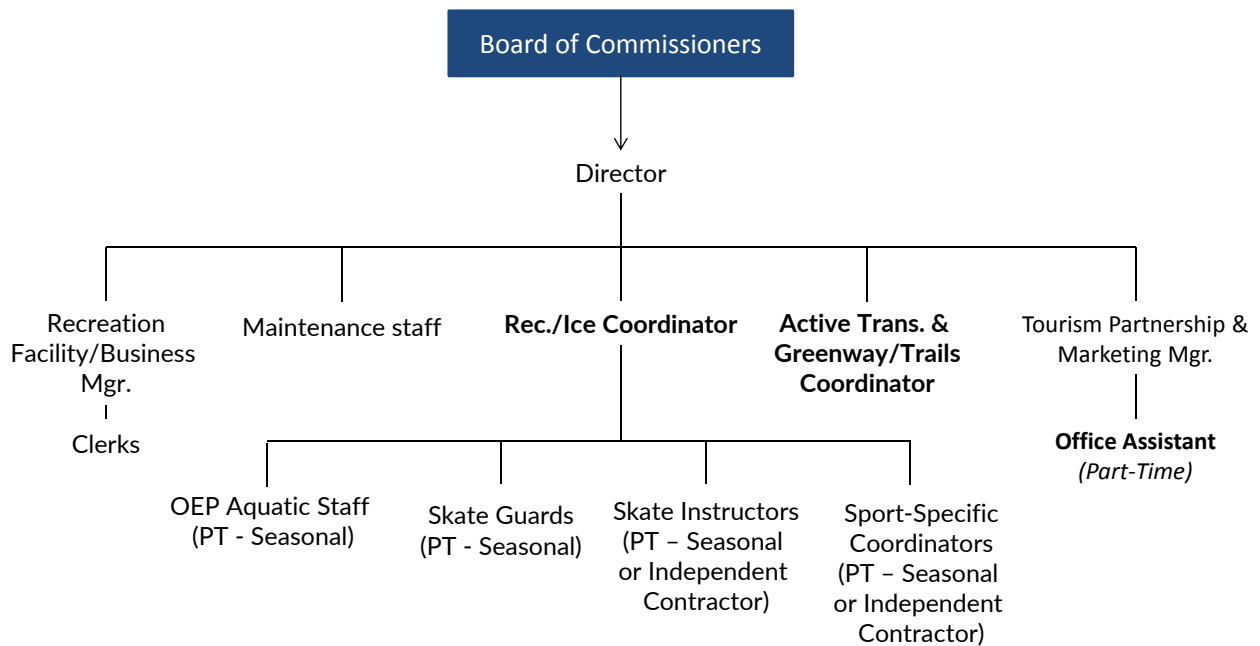
## Beaver County Recreation & Tourism Dept. 2003 Staffing Level



## Beaver County Recreation & Tourism Dept. Present Day Staffing Level



## Beaver County Recreation & Tourism Dept. Proposed Staffing Level



**Bold - proposed new positions**



**Strategy #2** – Maintain a strong cooperative working relationship between the Recreation and Public Works Departments. This recommendation is that while the two departments would remain separate, the County would explore ways to blend the workings of the departments so as to stimulate a strong cooperation between the two. As a starting point, we recommend four implementation strategies.

The Recreation and Tourism Director and Public Works Director should:

1. Meet together on a regular basis to address ongoing projects and regular work.
2. Coordinate closely on all construction, major renovation, and ongoing development projects to ensure they are meeting user needs, as well as construction and maintenance standards.
3. Work together to prioritize and establish both short- and long-term plans for implementing the Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan.
4. Recognize that while each department is tasked with different roles, they must work closely together to ensure the best results for County residents.

**Strategy #3** - Per the recommendation of the Trail chapter of this plan, the County should create a new position of Trail and Active Transportation Manager within the Recreation and Tourism Department. The Trail and Active Transportation Manager will serve as the County's representative in managing the future of a non-motorized trails and active transportation system throughout the County. Chapter 2 describes the position in greater detail. Position could potentially be funded with Tourism and Hotel Tax Funding (Act 18).

**Projected Cost** –Salary and benefits will need to be determined by the County.

**Strategy #4** – Implement the staffing recommendations of the Ice Rink Feasibility Study in an effort to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the ice operations.

**Projected costs will be identified in that Plan.**

**Strategy #5** - Other recommendations in this chapter propose increases in marketing, programming and administrative tasks that may require additional staff to perform. When the proposed marketing plan, discussed on page 3-13, is implemented or recreational programming to be expanded, an additional part-time recreational assistant will be needed.

## Funding

Beaver County has traditionally provided funding for ongoing operations through its typical budgetary process. Over the years, this has served the parks well. However, based on the findings of this study that shows substantial deferred maintenance throughout all county parks, it is evident that funding levels have not kept pace with ongoing maintenance, upgrades and care of the parks.

Adequate funding will be a critical component of ensuring the future of parks and recreation in the county. In these times of tight budgeting, the County should consider a number of issues that affect funding.

A balanced approach to funding parks and recreation offers the greatest opportunities to residents while reducing the financial burden on the County. While County support will continue to be the staple of funding for ongoing operations, many other options are available to assist with a variety of needs.

**Strategy #1** – Allocate adequate funding to care for and maintain the County Parks according to the proposed Maintenance Plan described earlier in this section. Develop and adhere to a 10-year capital improvement plan that is also based on the recommended Maintenance Plan.

**Projected capital costs are described in each project section.**

**Strategy #2** – Utilize a balanced approach to funding operations and development. While County dollars will be the mainstay of funding, there are many other sources that could supplement both operations and development. These could include but not be limited to:

- Fees and charges
- State and Federal Grants
- Local support
- Shared projects
- Cooperative funding
- Leveraging of funding sources
- Gifts, foundations, private sources
- Fund raising
- Community Parks Foundation
- Public/private partnerships
- Selling of advertising and naming rights
- Bonds
- Natural resource extraction

**Any costs associated with this strategy will be offset by the funds received.**

**Strategy #3** – Create and adopt policies addressing the selling of naming rights to facilities and/or amenities; the receiving of designated donations for specific projects; soliciting advertising within County Parks; and fund raising for programs and capital projects.

**Projected Cost - Staff time and legal reviews**

**Strategy #4** – Employ development and operations practices that will produce revenue for the County and/or will result in positive economic impact.

**Strategy #5** - Measure the cost recovery, financial, and economic impact of facilities, programs, amenities, and parks as a means of validating some of the value of County parks. Consider contacting a local college/university and pertaining with their business program to develop of a cost recovery analysis and strategy.

## Grant opportunities

While some grants are available for programming and/or operations, most are focused on facility development and land acquisition. Many grant sources are available to help the county fund planning, acquisition, and development of parks and recreation facilities. Additionally, numerous organizations and agencies provide grant funding for recreational programming.

In Pennsylvania, there is currently more grant funding available for parks and recreational than at any time in the past 30 years. DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Program alone has distributed an average of \$33 million annually over the past three years.

These have included the Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, PA Heritage Areas Program, PA Recreational Trails Program, Snowmobile and ATV Fund, Growing Greener 2, and the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Along with DCNR Grants, Marcellus Shale Drilling funds have been distributed via Act 13 through DCED's Local Government

Funding, the Marcelles Legacy Funds, and the Commonwealth Finance Authority Recreation and Conservation Fund. And more than a dozen other Commonwealth programs are currently providing grants for parks and recreation.

A host of other organizations and agencies also make grants and other resources available for recreation programming and facilities. A list of potential funding sources and ideas is provided in Chapter 3 Appendix B - Funding Opportunities for Recreation Projects.

## Other Funding

It is important to consider multiple funding sources for most major projects. Beaver County should identify the possible groups, organizations, or grants agencies that may have an interest in a specific project.

Creativity is key to finding and leveraging funding sources with one another. The intent is to use funds from other organizations and agencies as match for one another thereby securing the greatest amount of funds from others while reducing the direct investment of County funds.

Often local recreation, conservation, trail, and other community organizations are willing to raise funds to be used for upgrades to facilities that interest them. Such funds can serve as part of the local match for grant funding.



Naming rights, sponsorships, contributions, public-private partnerships, privatization, and other shared ventures can create tremendous opportunities to increase financial support for county projects, increase capacity to build and operate facilities and programs, and strengthen community ties.

It is also helpful to consider funds that may already be allocated for use in or near a park that may be used as a source of matching funds. For instance, if a water or sewer line is being planned through a park, tapping into that line could mean that the money spent for its installation is an eligible match for a park project. The same could be true of parking areas, roads, trails, trailheads, and other projects.

The County should consider soliciting such endeavors as they move toward implementation of the Plan's strategies. These types of collaborations can allow for the distribution of responsibility for funding, management, operations, programming, or maintenance of specific projects. Funding agencies often look more favorably upon projects that are developed through partnerships than those prepared by an individual entity.

Businesses, industries, non-profits, community organizations, service clubs, and others often see great value for both the community and for themselves in supporting park, recreation, and trail projects.

See Chapter 3 Appendix B - Funding Opportunities for Recreation Projects for additional information.

### *Cost Recovery and Economic Impact*

Some County recreation and park facilities certainly have a tremendous opportunity to generate increased revenues and/or have a dramatic positive affect on the local economy. These include the ice arena, picnic shelters, baseball/softball complex, mountain bike trails, Four Seasons Pavilion, and Bradys Run Lodge and the barn at Old Economy Park.

Revenue-producing facilities provide income derived through rentals or use fees, programming, and partnerships. These bring funds directly to the County to help offset expenses, and in some cases can produce revenue in excess of expenses.

This plan identifies a number of new opportunities for income potential within the parks. While these revenues should not be expected to pay all the operations cost for the parks, they are certainly helpful in covering some of the County's costs. Tracking this revenue over a period of years will allow County Commissioners to see trends in where revenues come from and compare current years with past years to understand the net cost of park operations.

Other facilities, while not producing direct revenue for the county, have a clear economic impact as residents and visitors alike expend money for food, lodging, retail purchases and much more. Among the facilities that have the greatest potential to impact the local economy are the ice rink, a county-wide trail system, mountain bike facilities, tournaments, and special events that draw large numbers of visitors to Beaver County. While these may or may not produce direct revenue for the County, the indirect revenues generated can and will have an impact on the local economy. This could also be the case with larger public/private partnership proposed as part of this plan.

It would serve the county well to track and verify these impacts.

### **Projected Cost - No significant additional costs**

#### **Potential Partnership Projects Proposed in the Plan**

Miracle Field and  
Playgrounds

Environmental Discovery  
Center and Recycling

Baseball/Softball/Complex  
Enhancements

County Trail Network

Riverfront Access and  
Recreational Development

Shelter Upgrades

Ice Arena Renovations  
and Operations



## Programming

Beaver County currently relies on outside organizations to provide the majority of recreation programming that takes place in the County's parks and facilities. At the ice rink, user organizations operate most ice related programs such as hockey and figure skating instruction, leagues, competitions, tournaments, special events and more. The County offers public skate sessions, skate rentals, and facility rentals. The same is true for the indoor tennis facility. Outside organizations conduct leagues, instructions, tournaments, and more. For both facilities, the County rents space to these groups for their activities. Baseball, softball leagues, and tournaments are also operated by outside organizations.

All programming in the parks, except at the Old Economy Swimming Pool, are provided by various civic organizations. Such events include mountain bike races and rides, 5 and 10K road races, equestrian events, festivals, special events, fund raisers, and more.

By contracting programs or renting facilities to outside organizations, the County receives rental revenues or fees for use of the facilities, while not having to do the work of operating the events. There is little direct program expense to the County that is not reimbursed by the rentals and fees. However, the County incurs overhead costs for maintenance, operations and staffing. Programming is driven by groups and organizations who have the people, the desire, and the know-how to make them work. The County does not need to hire program staff, purchase equipment, or supplies, or provide detailed management. The down-side is that programming is limited to that which others desire to conduct and that the revenue received by the County is limited to the amount paid in rental.

**Strategy** – Maintain the current system of primarily using outside organizations to provide recreational programming over the next five years. Continually evaluate the success of the programming and the demand from residents. Even so, publicity by these groups is weak to nonexistent, while space and instructional staff is limited or unavailable. These factors present challenges to running and expanding programs under the current format. The County may choose to supplement programming by operating some through the Recreation Department. If the system continues to work satisfactorily, it should be continued into the future. If, however, it is not meeting the residents' programmatic demand or is no longer cost effective, the County should look to other options.

**Projected Cost - No significant additional costs**

## **Marketing/Awareness**

### *Background*

The County's recreation programming operating strategy since 2007 has been and remains centered on renting space to long standing outside user groups who offer programs in the County's facilities. If this remains the focus, then efforts should be concentrated on building awareness for general use within Beaver County since all programming would be under the control of such groups. The challenge will be creating a campaign and putting on the ground resources (i.e. digital marquee, updated website) that informs residents where to get information, on-line reservation of facilities (courts, shelters, etc.) and on-line registration and payment for public ice sessions or drop in tennis.

### *Public Meeting & Study Committee Findings*

In the Beaver County Recreation Questionnaire responses, we see that 50 percent or more of the respondents prefer to find out about Beaver County Parks through dedicated websites, Facebook, email, and word of mouth. A second tier of responses (25 to 36 percent) indicates use of newspapers and brochures as the preferred method to find out about parks and recreation opportunities in the County. Input from the public meetings and the study committee described the current difficulties in gaining general information due to a serious lack of available information.

Many described the need for the County to do a better job of promoting, marketing (awareness), and informing residents about the Beaver County Parks along with general recreation opportunities. The consensus was that most people do not know much about the facilities and happenings of the Beaver County Parks & Recreation.

It would be beneficial at this point in time to develop a more collaborative, direct, and focused awareness campaign to inform County residents and others of the opportunities and benefits of the Beaver County Parks.

Investment in a well-designed awareness campaign can have a direct, positive impact on use, support, participation, and revenue for the Beaver County Parks. The campaign should use multiple communication methods to specifically target and reach the diversity of residents, visitors, and user groups.

**Strategy** – Develop a community awareness campaign to promote facility use and increased participation.

Improve the existing Beaver County Parks and Recreation website by adding the ability to reserve facilities or purchase presale general admission to public sessions, leverage a Recreation Facebook page, Twitter, and Google+ accounts to publicize park facilities, amenities, programs activities, uses, news, and support. Steps to be taken:

1. Consult with County IT Dept. to evaluate potential add-on software to address specific opportunities
2. Purchase add-on software and train staff on use of new software or social platforms
3. Inform public of new way of facilities booking or prepay sales opportunities

## Promoted Post

Push via Social Media (Facebook, Twitter) for general public use as outlined below. These posts should be targeted and link back to the section of the County Website/Rec Page for those interested in getting more information.

<u>Promoted Activity</u>	<u>Time of Year</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Total</u>
Indoor Tennis	Sept – Apr	2x's / mo.	\$5,000
Skating Activities (especially public session & stick time)	Sept – Apr	2x's / mo.	\$5,000
Facility Rentals (Shelters, Lodge, Barn, Four Seasons)	Jan- Dec	1x / mo.	\$4,000

## Print

Facilities & Parks Brochure	ASAP	1x/year	\$1,500
Beaver County Times	Jan – Dec	TBD	\$8,000
Church Bulletin Advertisements	Aug – Apr	TBD	\$5,000
Placing ads (school district publications / Sports teams / PTO / Newsletters, etc.)	Sept – Apr	TBD	\$4,000

## One-Time

Digital Marquee Cost - \$40,000

Upgrade and add digital marquee(s) at the front entries of Bradys Run Park that can communicate activity to those driving by.

Software Add-Ons to County Website Cost - \$5,000

Parks & Facilities Brochures Set-up and Design Cost - \$1,000

(Photographer, Graphic Designer, etc.)

## Cross Promotion/Cooperative Marketing

Encourage user groups such as trail organizations, sports leagues, special needs groups, conservationists, ice skaters, and tennis associations to promote the Beaver County Parks & Recreation via their Facebook and Twitter sites.

It can be as simple as this at really no cost.

1. Group/Organization creates an event on their Facebook page.
2. If we both like each other's pages we can both benefit by sharing that event, thus promoting the parks and recreation activities by keeping them in front of numerous eyes.

## Project Costs

Based on the outline presented the projected cost should be about \$30,000 - \$33,000 annually for marketing/awareness (This could/would involve printed program guides, flyers, digital ads, radio, new software, etc.); with one-time costs around \$40,000 - \$46,000 (marquee, brochure design and software add-ons).

This cost projection does not include any additional staff costs. See staffing outlined on pages 3.5 - 3.8.





## Introduction

The first three chapters of this report focus on issues identified by residents, staff, and elected officials as critical to Beaver County's operation and support of parks, recreation, and trails. Through the planning process, these issues ranked as the highest priorities for County involvement, leadership, and implementation. They impact the lives of County residents considerably.

Many of the recommendations in the first three chapters are classified as Tier One or Tier Two priorities. That is, they have strong community support, high demand, and a reasonable likelihood of implementation within the coming ten-year period. All require substantial County commitment either for implementation, on-going management, or both. They rank as the higher priorities for implementation.

However, County residents also identified three other over-arching issues that will dramatically improve the parks and recreation opportunities throughout Beaver County. They are:

1. Strengthening partnerships, collaboration, cooperation, and communication among recreation providers and supporters around the County
2. Focusing on Recreation that supports the Beaver County economy
3. Bolstering local parks and recreation through Beaver County

These three issues are the focus of this chapter. While the County will likely play a role in tackling these concerns, leadership, implementation, and operation lies with local municipalities, organizations, and businesses.

### Talking Points and Validation

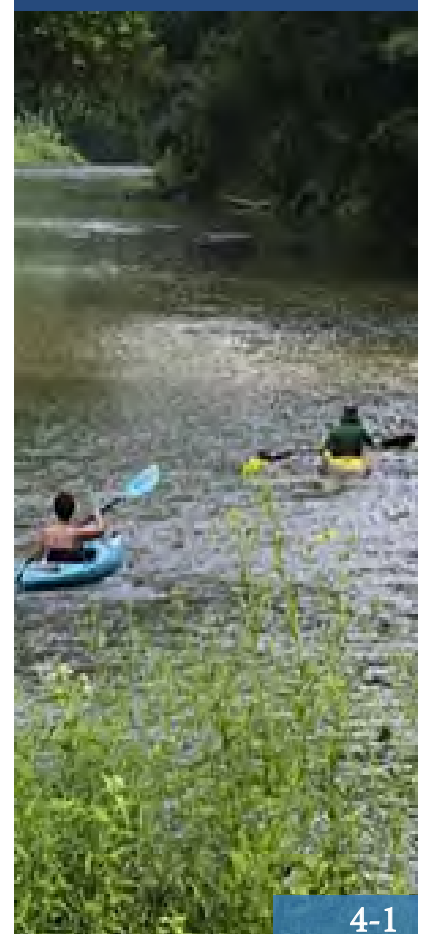
- Diversity among Beaver County municipalities creates great community opportunities yet also produces considerable challenges in recreation.
- The county's urban areas face different recreational, social, and economic issues than its rural municipalities. See Chapter 4 Appendix A - Urban Parks.
- Parochialism tends to prevent municipalities from working together or sharing recreational resources.
- Shell's cracker plant will stimulate the Beaver County economy, thereby presenting greater opportunities for local parks and recreation development.

*Leadership, implementation, and operation lies with local municipalities, organizations, and businesses.*

Partnerships, collaboration, cooperation, and communication

Recreation that supports the Beaver County economy

Local parks and recreation

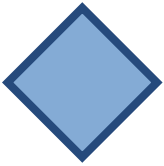


- Beaver County's riverfronts and waterways offer great opportunities for both local and regional recreation; however, access to the rivers is extremely limited.
- The breaching of the dams at Hereford Manor Lakes (owned by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) created a significant loss of outdoor recreation in the County. Former users have been forced to go elsewhere, such as to Moraine State Park, which is approximately 14 miles away.
- Public/private partnerships could stimulate both recreational and economic development.
- There is a deficiency of park maintenance across many municipalities in the County.
- At least four of the County's outdoor swimming pools have closed in the last decade, leaving just three outdoor pools to serve the entire County. Spray parks were strongly indicated as a good local option to municipal swimming pools.
- The County-wide recreation questionnaire and public meetings demonstrate a strong support for the maintenance, enhancements, and expansion of local parks and recreation facilities.

### *Project Tiers*

The Other Recreation and Parks Opportunities chapter provides strategies and implementation steps in the Tier 3 category.

Tier 3 strategies are either low impact but high feasibility or high impact but low feasibility. All projects in this chapter are classified as Tier 3 projects due to the uncertainty of implementation by non-County municipalities and entities.



# Tier 3 Projects

## Uncertainty of Implementation by non-County Entities



### Partnerships, Collaboration, Cooperation, and Communication

Ongoing communication among municipalities, local organizations, county commissioners, and the state tends to build harmony. It can also help to reduce duplication, promote cooperation, encourage municipalities to work together, and position them to offer the highest quality recreational opportunities.

**Strategy #1** - Develop a comprehensive list of recreation facilities.

In coordination with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) has develop a program entitled “explore PA local parks.” As a part of PRPS’s new “Good for you; Good for all” marketing initiative, it provides a comprehensive listing of all local parks across Pennsylvania.



“Inspired by the belief that local parks and recreation improves the lives of all Pennsylvanians, it is the mission of the “Good for You, Good for All” campaign to increase usage of parks and recreation facilities across the state, while equipping local providers with tools to raise awareness and increase support in their communities.”

Information about using the online program is available at [www.goodforpa.com](http://www.goodforpa.com).

This plan, along with the previous 2007 Beaver County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan, provided “Explore PA local parks” with base information about parks across Beaver County.

Each municipality should review that data already entered on <http://goodforpa.com/countyparksfinder/> to verify all local parks are included with all facilities and amenities. If parks or individual facilities are missing from the data, the municipality can update the site. This can be done every time there is a change at a park, thereby providing the most up-to-date inventory of all Beaver County parks.

### Tier 3 Project

Develop a comprehensive list of recreation facilities

Strengthen coordination and coordination among rec departments

Promote county wide awareness of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Evaluate opportunities for municipalities to join together to create regional recreation organizations.



**Strategy #2** - Strengthen cooperation and coordination among recreation departments across the County.

It is certainly helpful to recognize that recreational opportunities can be shared across municipalities rather than to limit uses of local facilities. Certainly it is true that not all facilities or programs can be shared, nor should they be, but often sharing, cooperating, or coordinating can boost opportunities for local municipalities that might not otherwise be available to local residents. Coordinating and cooperating can reduce the cost of duplicating facilities and services.

We recommend that local recreation providers initiate a loosely structured organization that would meet quarterly to discuss programming, staffing, operations, grant opportunities, park development, sharing of facilities, regional publicity, facilities, and more. Ultimately the organization could host joint meetings, activities, speakers, functions, grant workshops, etc.

The Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Alliance (WCPRA) is a good example of recreation providers working together. Meeting every other month, their mission is “To unite and support area professionals and promote parks and recreation services in Westmoreland County through cooperation, networking, joint programming efforts, and regional development.” More information can be found at <http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/index.aspx?NID=2321> .

**Westmoreland County Park and Recreation Alliance lists their benefits as:**

- Working with other municipal representatives to solve issues impacting the progress of parks and recreation in the County
- Working together to develop new recreation facilities and enhance existing areas
- Accessing the expertise of county wide parks and recreation professionals
- Sharing resources
- Exchanging ideas, successes, and works-in-progress
- Learning about new resources and opportunities within the County
- Avoiding duplication of services
- Making new friends in the profession
- Having access to bulk purchasing opportunities
- Participating in regional development projects

This coordination will also prepare municipalities to partner as a group to approach potential funders by demonstrating a united effort in planning for recreational development.

**Strategy #3** - Promote countywide awareness of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space



This planning effort helps leaders to recognize that many residents are unaware of the multitude of recreational opportunities within Beaver County. This includes local parks and recreation systems, state and county parks, as well as local and regional trails. As the County, its municipalities, organizations, businesses, and non-profits improve, expand, and enhance parks and recreation opportunities, they become a part of the branding of the countywide system.



Utilizing Pennsylvania's "Good for PA" branding initiative is a starting point for Beaver County. Go to <http://goodforpa.com> for more information.

**Strategy #4** - Evaluate opportunities for municipalities to join together to create regional recreation organizations.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania supports and promotes regional recreation commissions as a means of building capacity to improve municipal recreation opportunities. See Chapter 4 Appendix B - Regional Efforts.

## 2 Recreation that supports the Beaver County economy

Beaver County is a "parks, recreation, and trails"-focused place to live and visit. Beaver County Parks, regional trail connections, riverfront recreational development, green space, and local parks enhance the quality of life and stimulate the local economy. County governments, businesses, and organizations should work to exploit the recreational resources of the county to supplement its economy.

**Strategy #1** - Focus on recreation-based economic development.

- **Waterfront/riverfront recreational opportunities** such as parks combined with restaurants, downtowns, commercial areas, and more promote economic growth.

In terms of County-owned facilities, Bridgewater Crossing is a great place to start. Look immediately for ways to tie the park to the local communities of Beaver and Bridgewater, as well as to communities across the rivers. The park could serve as the focal point of a Riverwalk that ties Beaver and Bridgewater together. It could even be the provocation that stimulates a system of river walks in Rochester and Monaca as well. With a pedestrian connector across the Beaver and Ohio Rivers, such a Riverwalk could invigorate the downtown areas, enhancing existing small businesses, encouraging new ones, while drawing people into the communities.

- **Regional trail development** - Longer trails (12 miles and up) are great economic engines especially when they pass through local municipalities, downtowns, cultural areas, and/or recreational sites. Connectivity to other trails leading beyond the region boosts economic impact as well.

The Ohio River Trail Council has set the stage for development of trails throughout Beaver County. Many are proposed to connect to regional trail systems connecting to Pittsburgh, Ohio, and points north. The County should formalize its commitment to the regional trail structure.



Chapter 2 of this report defines recommendations for priority trail development and Beaver County' role in the process.

- **Naming rights connected to major high quality recreation facilities** provide credence to a facility and community. This should be considered for the Bradys Run ice rink, inclusive playground, environmental discovery center, ballfields, and the Old Economy barn upgrades.
- **Promote existing facilities** that can attract regional users to county parks such as the Bradys Run ballfield complex and mountain bike trails; ice arena and indoor tennis facility; and the radio controlled model airplane facility at Brush Creek. Also to proposed new or upgraded facilities such as the inclusive play area, and environmental center at Bradys Run Park; and the barn and disc golf course at Old Economy Park
- **Foster private investment** in recreational facilities and activities. This could include naming rights, partnerships, privatization, sponsorships, donations of services, and much more.

**Strategy #2** - Consider how the Trail Towns, River Towns, and Boomtown USA concepts can be used to incorporate recreational assets as part of community development. Each of these are designed to take advantage of local economic opportunities. [www.trailtowns.org](http://www.trailtowns.org)

**Strategy #3** - Solicit public/private partnerships in recreational development of the riverfront; branding and maintaining local culture such as town centers, local character, identity, history, and culture.





**Strategy #4** - Inter-weave parks, trails, river walks, arts, culture, and more among riverfront housing, commercial, and industrial development.

**Strategy #5** - Develop a high quality indoor/outdoor entertainment venue for concerts, theater, and special events that will attract locals and visitors. Focus on young adults but ensure usefulness for all ages and interests.

**Strategy #6** - Rehabilitate Hereford Manor as a major recreational and conservation attraction. Locals and visitors to this facility brought a significant economic impact in the past. A new, well designed facility will certainly improve upon that. This will require a strong grass roots effort to win over the support of state agencies.



### **3 Local Parks and Recreation**

Local parks and recreation was identified as a critical component of the lives of residents in Beaver County. Residents and committee members shared their thoughts about the needs and demands. Some of the top concerns are:

- The need for better cooperation among all county parks and recreation agencies including the Beaver County Parks
- The need for upgrading and/or expanding municipal parks
- A shortage of certain types of recreational facilities
- Difficulty in maintaining and caring for existing parks
- Insufficient funding for local parks
- Lack of understanding of grant opportunities
- At the public meetings for this plan, representatives from each of the cities expressed their



concerns for urban recreation. Both indicated that their cities face particularly critical issues in maintenance of parks, lack of funds for local investment, outdated and unsafe facilities and equipment, significant deferred maintenance, and closed recreation facilities. As well, they see the need to meet the leisure time needs of their population groups that have excessive leisure time and little to occupy it. This places a high demand on existing facilities, even as municipalities are having difficulty maintaining and replacing what they have.

- Concern about the loss of outdoor swimming pools in the County

To respond to these issues, this plan recommends the following strategies.

**Strategy #1** – Upgrade and enhance local parks. Local park upgrades should be based on good planning and design. Many communities already have Master Site Plans and/or Comprehensive Recreation and Park Plans in place. These should serve as the basis for renovations to existing parks and justification for new parks or facilities. If existing plans do not support the current needs of the community, the plans should be updated or, at least, a statement of justification should be developed to describe the deviation from the plan. Communities that do not have plans in place should work with DCNR to develop plans that can be quickly implemented.

PA DCNR has several grant programs available to assist with the funding of park upgrades. Beaver County communities should take advantage of these.

1. Small Community Park Development Grants
  - For communities with populations of 5,000 or less
  - \$20,000 grant with no match required (restricted to the purchase of materials)
  - An additional \$20,000 available that requires a \$20,000 match.
  - Maximum grant amount is \$40,000 for a total project of \$60,000.
2. Small Community Pilot Project Grants
  - For communities with populations of 2,500 or less
  - Park size is limited to 5-8 acres
  - 100% of planning costs up to \$10,000 is provided
  - Move directly to development upon completion of planning
  - Restrictions apply
3. Community Park Rehabilitation and Development Grants
  - Open to all communities for municipally owned parks
  - Typical grants are less than \$250,000
  - Requires a 50% local match of the total project cost
4. Master Site Plan Grants
  - Open to all communities for municipally owned parks
  - Required for most DCNR funded development grants
  - Requires a 50% local match of the total project cost

All communities intending to submit a grant application to DCNR for funding should attend one of the Grant Workshops facilitated by the DCNR Staff. Additional DCNR grant information is available in Chapter 3 Appendix B - Funding Opportunities, as noted previously.

Communities that choose to develop or rehabilitate their parks without use of DCNR funding should

still commit to collecting public input concerning the proposed project and complete a professional design of the development or renovations.

**Strategy #2** - Urban parks and recreation – Aliquippa and Beaver Falls are the County's two cities and classified as urban areas. We propose that the cities connect with the PA Urban Alliance, which is supported PA DCNR and facilitated by the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society.

Tim Herd, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society understands urban issues. He states in an article he wrote for *City Parks Blog*, "One of the most important features of an attractive, vibrant urban area is an engaging park system." He goes on to state that the Urban Alliance seeks to , "...help urban areas increase the effectiveness of their own essential public services of parks, recreation and green connectivity that, in turn, stimulate economic growth, foster social stability and enhance environmental quality."

The Urban Alliance provides a multitude of resources to assist cities and urban communities in better understanding the issues that face most urban communities and opportunities that are available to address these issues.

While the Alliance is still relatively new, it is actively working on several fronts to address significant issues in Pennsylvania's urban areas. Herd's blog describes the following actions of the Alliance.

1. **Maintenance.** The Alliance is working to develop a Pennsylvania Community Parks Maintenance Institute to help cities more efficiently invest the capital they have for the greatest impact in meeting the maintenance and sustainability of their facilities, infrastructure, and resources.
2. **Funding Capacity.** Through an association of environmental stakeholders, the Alliance tracks, advocates and shares information on federal and state legislation that affect funding for parks, recreation, conservation, trails and other community-related needs.
3. **Best Practices.** The Urban Alliance is developing an online resource for best practices and resources for developing, managing, and maintaining urban parks and recreation facilities.
4. **Statewide Branding and Marketing.** The "Good for You, Good for All" campaign began in 2016 with the launch of GoodForPA.com and a related eToolkit for providers and partners—which consists of a statewide case statement, graphics, and other materials for local use. Promotions direct users to the website where they can gather information on the "goodness" of local parks and recreation while also exploring more than 5,600 local parks in an interactive statewide map.
5. **Planning.** Pennsylvania has recently released its new five-year Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in which it has prioritized its resources to address five key priority areas: Health and Wellness, Local Parks and Recreation, Tourism and Economic Development, Resource Management and Stewardship, and Funding and Financial Stability.

All of this is good news for Pennsylvania's cities and urban areas. For more information go to [www.prps.org](http://www.prps.org) .

**Strategy #3** - Ensure the long-term sustainability of Beaver County's existing outdoor swimming pools: Beaver Borough, Old Economy County Park, and New Brighton Sunrise Pool. This Plan recommends that each pool, if they haven't already done so, conduct a business analysis to evaluate both current and future income and expenses. Such an analysis will position each of the pool owners to clearly understand existing conditions and to anticipate future expenses and needed revenue.

**Strategy #4** – Work together with communities across Beaver County. See Strategy #2 in "Partnerships, collaboration, cooperation, and communication."

**Strategy #5** – Maintain an active affiliation or membership with PA DCNR, PRPS, and NRPA. Utilize their membership services, conferences, workshops, resources. Each of these organizations provides valuable resources and benefits to local departments. Networking opportunities through each organization’s membership connects local parks and recreation leaders with others from across Pennsylvania and even the country. Conferences, workshops, and regional gatherings provide exceptional education opportunities in everything from grant management to maintenance planning, programming to swimming pool operations, trails to leadership.

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) is the primary organization promoting quality recreation and park opportunities for all Pennsylvania citizens. It is a tremendous support for local municipalities and parks and recreation agencies. PRPS provides education, training, technical assistance, and other support to local, county, state, and federal recreation and park providers. The Society can be of tremendous value to the Commission.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) serves as the national voice for parks and recreation across the U.S. It provides tremendous support to local parks and recreation agencies. Membership in both of these agencies is essential to assure that local agencies are keeping abreast of current programs and issues in parks and recreation.

The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources establishes policy for outdoor recreation, is the primary provider of parks and recreation grants in the state, and facilitates statewide conversation on current outdoor recreation issues.

As well, DCNR has published seven handbooks for municipalities and parks and recreation agencies that provide practical guidance for creating a park board, financing municipal parks and recreation, understanding multi-municipal recreation agencies, recreation programming and much more. These can be found on the DCNR website at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/brcpublications/> .