

A 10 Point Blueprint

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1. **Build on Success** - Build upon the success already in place in Northern Chester County. The Federation is a unifying group with a productive track record that models regional collaboration. Continue to support the things that work well (conservation and land protection) while moving into action on areas where there are community needs (active recreation, connection to the great outdoors, trails and collaboration on the organization of recreation and service delivery). Continue to strengthen working relationships with expert partners: prominent land conservation organizations, such as French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Green Valleys and Crow's Nest, private recreation providers.
2. **Foster Active Healthy Lifestyles through Recreation Participation** - Identify an appropriate level of recreation service in Northern Chester County. This could be a blend of organized activities such as league sports, community events, fitness and wellness, nature and family based recreation. Recognize that self-directed recreation will be the most important form of recreation here – people just need to know what, how and where to do things at their own pace. The Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation is a driving force behind getting people active. The role of public recreation in Northern Chester County can be to motivate people to engage in basic recreation activities to build life-long leisure interests.
3. **Enlist Providers in Creating a Common Vision for Recreation Northern Chester County** - While conservation has strong roots here, the fledgling initiative is community recreation. Many recreation activities are in place but are fragmented in scheduling, promotion, evaluation and renewal. Welkinweir, Green Valleys, Crow's Nest, Warwick County Park, sports leagues and clubs offer programs. The community festivals that attract large numbers are important community builders. Foster what organizations are already doing well for their target audiences while providing a forum for them to maximize recreational benefits across the region.
4. **Enrich Parks as Multi-Purpose Destinations.** This is in keeping with the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation PSU Study. Recognize that people drive to parks in Northern Chester County given the rural nature of the community. These parks can be regional, can offer sports facilities, can be multi-uses and can even be mission driven sites such as Woody's Woods for nature. Consider the development of a model park project in partnership with the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation – this could be a very cool project and achievement with enduring results.

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5. **Add more sports facilities.** Community and scholastic sports leagues have high levels of participation, but others desire informal and impromptu access to sports facilities as well. A range of facilities is needed from recreational quality to tournament caliber—each with appropriate design and maintenance standards. We will strive to recommend which facilities are best used for community recreation, which should be improved and what new facilities should be added.
6. **Create recreational travel connections.** Focus on getting people to existing trails, e.g. the Schuylkill River Trail, for positive trail experiences. At the same time, expand the trail system. Consider establishing a regional trails committee. Look at a system of trails including loop trails in parks, linear or “walking parks”, off-road trails, and on-road cycling routes. Not all trails need to serve all trail users, but each user should be able to use continuous parts of the system. Start with pilot projects featuring trail segments that have the support to be built.
7. **Develop a strategy to increase public awareness about recreation opportunities.** Begin with township newsletters as a primary vehicle. Expand into social marketing and use of the Internet. Target specific groups. The younger generations of children and families have been emerging a primary target groups. Consider an idea like “RECquest” based upon the idea of Mapquest where people go online to get info about recreation opportunities. The key is designating a lead organization (ideally a single position) to be responsible for posting current information. Several organizations are in place that might be potential vehicles, e.g. Chester Springs Surrounds.
8. **Address park maintenance.** Develop a planned park maintenance management system that includes natural resource management, sustainability and sport turf management. Long term the cost of operating and maintaining facilities is 75 percent of the lifetime cost of a park (40 years as benchmark).
9. **Develop a capital and operating financing strategy.** While there has been significant capital investment in land acquisition and park development, operational funding may be lagging. Funding should come from a mix of sources—public, private, and individual. Government cannot do it alone. We will be setting some goals on financing depending on the recommendations that are generated for parks, recreation, conservation, trails and outreach/promotion.
10. **Organize to manage and deliver services that promote and implement the plan.** Several organizations are in place that may house this operation. Consider that staff may be needed if the level of service that is possible is to be attained. The Federation has the potential to get “revved” up on recreation if we revisit the organization’s mission, vision and goals.