

**Federation of Northern Chester County Communities**  
[www.northernfederation.com](http://www.northernfederation.com)

**Northern Chester County  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space  
Public Opinion Survey Report  
2010**

Revised December 2011

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## Federation of Northern Chester County Public Opinion Survey on Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Executive Summary

The Federation of Northern Chester County conducted a public opinion survey in 2010. The surveyed was distributed to a random sample of 2,008 households in the Federation's project area, namely the Townships of East Coventry, East Nantmeal, East Pikeland, East Vincent, North Coventry, South Coventry, Warwick, West Pikeland, and West Vincent.

### Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to determine the opinions, ideas, and concerns of the residents regarding parks, recreation, and open space. This information was used to help develop the **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** for Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, a 10-year guide to providing parks and recreation opportunities that meet the needs and interest of citizens within our region.

### Results

The process produced statistically reliable and valid survey results with a return of 514 completed questionnaires. The 88 that were non-deliverable due to people moving or other reasons equaled four percent, within the normal range of three to five percent. With 1,920 surveys deliverable, the 27 percent return rate exceeded the typical direct mail return rate of two to four percent.

### Survey Findings and Potential Directions for the Plan

- **Regional Perspective** – Respondents view parks and recreation regionally more than as an effort by each municipality on its own. The respondents would prefer continuing regional parks and recreation efforts.
- **High Level of Park Visitation** – The respondents are major visitors to parks. The most-used parks include Valley Forge National Historical Park (84 percent), French Creek State Park (79 percent), township parks (73percent), local creeks (63 percent), Warwick County Park (61 percent), and Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site (58 percent). Township parks should figure prominently in developing a parks and recreation strategy for the next 10 years.
- **Conservation Lands and Trails** – Respondents indicated the importance of nature-based parks and recreation with nature reserves, trails, and greenways as important or extremely important. Written comments echoed strong sentiment regarding the preservation of the region's scenic rural character.
- **Active Healthy Living** – Setting the stage for citizens to engage in active recreational pursuits is key. Activities that make up a healthy way of life were top interests and pursuits in the survey findings: walking, enjoying the great outdoors, fitness, playing and socializing in the township parks, and cycling are important to the citizens. Providing facilities, programs, and information about them is important.
- **Indoor Recreation** – Indoor recreation was listed as important/extremely important for 56 percent of the respondents, with another 29 percent being neutral about it. Only eight percent said that it is not needed.
- **Adults and Families** – These appear to be the groups most in need of recreation services. It is important to make the case that parks and recreation is for everyone—not just children and youth! Most non-respondents reported being too old or not having kids as their reasons for not participating in the survey.
- **Public Awareness** – More outreach to publicize parks and recreation opportunities and explore support for lacking facilities, such as an outdoor pool and a dog park, is needed. Increasing public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities and their benefits through one centralized source would be a most valuable public service.
- **Support for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space** – Respondents indicated their willingness to support parks and recreation through fees, charges and tax support. About 54 percent were willing to pay taxes ranging from \$2 to \$5 per person annually for parks and recreation. Only five percent was not willing to support parks and recreation at all. This is a margin of nearly 11 to 1.

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# I. Introduction

The Federation of Northern Chester County Communities (Northern Federation) conducted a direct mail survey in 2010 to assess public opinion about parks, recreation, and open space. The survey area encompassed the northernmost area of Chester County including the townships of East Coventry, East Nantmeal, East Pikeland, East Vincent, North Coventry, South Coventry, Warwick, and West Vincent. The Northern Federation wanted to determine the opinions, ideas, and concerns of the residents to serve as a foundation for decision-making regarding parks, recreation, and open space. By understanding the citizens' needs and interests, the Northern Federation will be able to direct planning and resources so that citizens benefit from the kinds of parks and recreation opportunities that are important to them.

This information will be used to develop a **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** for Northern Chester County. In addition to the public opinion survey to assess the interests of citizens as individuals, the public participation process for the development of the Plan also included interviews with key stakeholders, focus groups, public meetings, and work sessions with the municipalities. Balancing the needs of the general public with those of organized entities that provide important public service, such as community organizations, sports leagues, and conservation entities, is crucial to meeting overall community needs.

## Survey Reporting Parameters

Survey responses are reported as percentages. Percentages and numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

# II. Process

**Organization, Goals, and Survey Instrument** – The Northern Federation retained Gannett Fleming and Toole Recreation Planning to develop the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for Northern Chester County. Toole Recreation Planning conducted the public opinion survey as a component of the planning process. The Northern Federation; the Central Coordinating Committee for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan; and the consultant worked collaboratively to develop the topics to be addressed in the survey. Topics identified by the Central Coordinating Committee included: recreation interests and participation, parks, recreation facilities, priorities for parks and recreation, public awareness about recreation opportunities in the area, level of support in terms of paying for parks and recreation, and indoor recreation. The survey instrument underwent six revisions until it was fine-tuned for public distribution.

**Random Sample: Return Number Matters** – Every household in the nine townships had an equal chance of participating in the survey. The goal was to produce a high level of confidence in the survey response along with a low margin of error. The random sample included 2,000 households. The sample was stratified by township. Half of the questionnaires (1,000) were distributed equally among the nine townships for a total of 112 per township. The other half (1,008) were proportioned according to ratio of the population of each township compared to the population for the entire study area. **Table 1** presents the distribution by municipality.

<b>Table 1</b>				
<b>Northern Chester County Survey Distribution by Municipality</b>				
Municipality	2009 Population	Number Distributed		Total Distributed
		Equal	By Population	
East Coventry	6,856	112	153	265
East Nantmeal	1,946	112	45	157
East Pikeland	7,033	112	157	269
East Vincent	6,547	112	147	259
North Coventry	7,843	112	176	288
South Coventry	2,613	112	59	171
Warwick	2,781	112	62	174
West Pikeland	4,064	112	91	203
West Vincent	4,916	112	110	222
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44,599*</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>2008</b>

\* This is about 16,500 households.

- Random sample drawn: 2,000 households
- Goal: 375 completed, returned surveys

**Distribution** – Respondents received a pre-survey letter informing them that they would be getting a questionnaire the following week. The pre-survey letter informed the respondents about the project, the importance of their response, and the time frame. The survey was mailed out via first class mail along with a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped reply envelope the next week. A follow-up postcard was sent to thank respondents for returning the completed surveys or asking them to complete their survey and send it in.

### III. Survey Follow-Up

Follow-up included telephone calls to the respondents who had not yet returned their surveys. Toole Recreation Planning is licensed in the federal “Do Not Call” registry to make telephone calls to survey participants. Up to three calls were made to a random group of non-respondents asking them to complete and return their questionnaire. The phone calls yielded the following:

- **Unreachable:** 178 of the survey sample that had not returned a questionnaire were unreachable. That is, they did not respond to the survey or any of the telephone calls.
- **Refusals:** 62 non-respondents refused in telephone follow-up. Of the refusals, some were “hang ups” while others refused after listening to the purpose of the call. The main reasons given for refusals were age (“too old”), no children, lack of time, non-use of parks or lack of interest.
- **Reachable and Non-refused:** 45 of the survey sample contacted stated that they appreciated the Federation undertaking the survey and for the follow-up telephone call. Their primary focus was on pride in living in Chester County and the beautiful scenery and way of life that abounds in the northern region. Comments included lack of awareness about what is available (other than the famous parks like Valley Forge or French Creek) or where to go to get information, being concerned about safety while bicycle riding, being too busy, and the recognition that a park and recreation plan would be important. Nine respondents expressed concern about taxes, mainly about Owen J. Roberts (OJR) School District taxes.

## IV. Return

The goal was to generate 370 completed returned surveys to achieve statistical significance. The Northern Federation's survey resulted in 508 completed returned questionnaires along with six letters. Another six were returned after tabulation for a grand total of 514 exceeding the original goal by 138 surveys or 27 percent. Typically direct mail surveys generate a return rate of two to four percent. The yield produced exceeded the number required to achieve a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent +/- 5 percent.

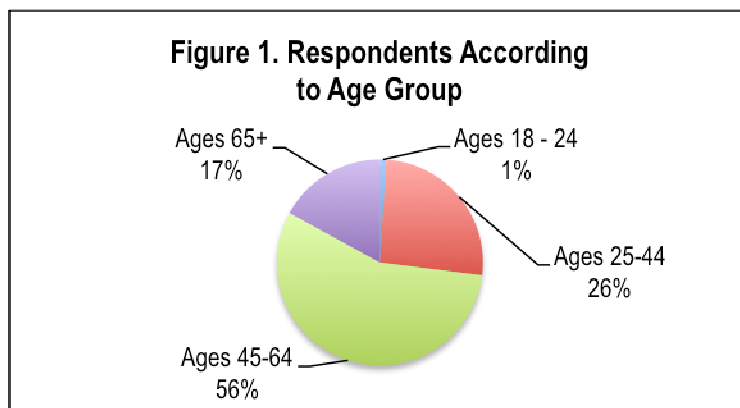
Of the 2,008 surveys mailed, 88 were undeliverable due to incorrect addresses, changes of address, refusals, and deaths, effectively reducing the sample to 1,920. The number of undeliverable surveys equates to four percent, falling into the normal range of three to five percent.

### ***Respondent Characteristics***

Respondents provided demographic information that included their gender, age group, household composition, and length of residence. Surveys were coded according to the township of residence of each respondent so the number of respondents from each township could be ascertained.

#### Respondent Age Group

**Figure 1** presents the response according to age group of the respondents. The age group of 18 to 24 had only three respondents, a typical frequency of response in park and recreation direct mail household surveys. The age group of 25-44 had a 26 percent response rate. Respondents ages 45-64 had a 56 percent response rate and 17 percent of the respondents were 65 and older.

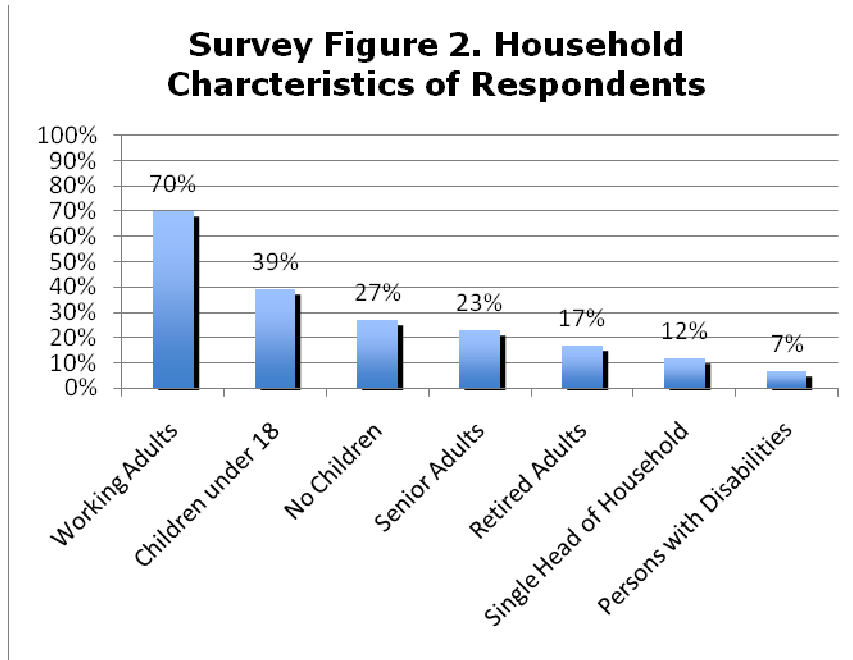


#### Gender of Respondents

Of those who answered the question about respondent gender, 45 percent reported that they were males and 46 percent females. Nine percent of the survey respondents did not answer this question.

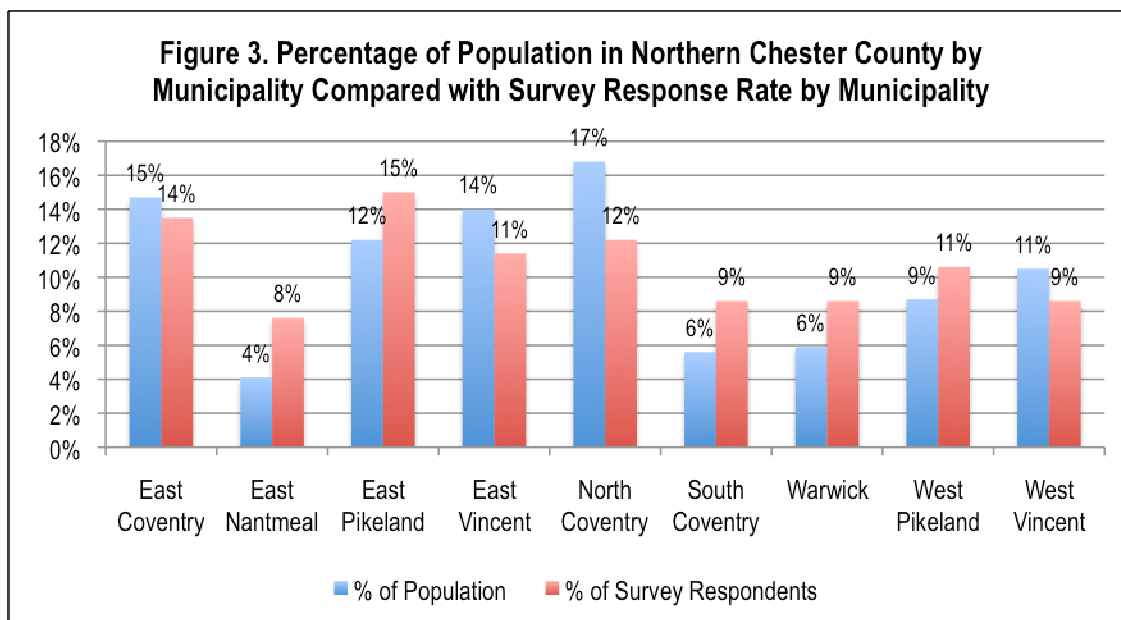
## Household Characteristics

Figure 2 presents the characteristics of the households responding to the survey.



## Respondents by Place of Residence in Northern Chester County

Figure 3 presents a comparison of the response rate by municipality compared with the percentage of the population by municipality in Northern Chester County. East Nantmeal, East Coventry, Warwick, and West Pikeland had a greater representation in survey response compared with their ratio of population in Northern Chester County. In contrast, East Coventry, East Vincent, North Coventry, and West Vincent had a lower response rate than their municipal population ratio in the region.



## V. Summary of Overall Findings

The survey is statistically valid and reliable with a level of confidence of 95 percent and a margin of error of +/- five percent. While the respondents indicated that parks and recreation meet their expectations, Northern Chester County has a ways to go in achieving a higher satisfaction level. The survey results provide a clear direction on how to get there. The 10 major findings of the survey include the following:

1. **Regional Perspective for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.** One of the most significant findings of the survey was that the respondents appear to think regionally when it comes to parks, recreation, and open space. When asked for their most preferred way to get information on this topic, one Web site for Northern Chester County was the top preference. A Web site for each township came in second.
2. **Park Use.** The respondents are major visitors of parks. The most-used parks include Valley Forge NHP (84 percent), French Creek State Park (79 percent), township parks (73 percent), local creeks (63 percent), Warwick County Park (61 percent), and Hopewell Furnace NHS (58 percent). Nationwide, about 72 percent of the population uses parks. The higher level of use at Valley Forge, French Creek, and township parks may correspond to the demographics of this community; affluence correlates positively with park use.
3. **Township Parks.** Township parks are important. About three out of four respondents said that they use township parks, a very high finding. Small parks close to home are important to 83 percent of the respondents. About 52 percent reported that parks and recreation in their community meet their expectations. Twenty-nine percent reported that facilities exceed their expectations. The national average is about 30 percent. Achieving a higher rating of exceeding expectations in the 50 percent range could reasonably be achieved through this plan by addressing things respondents want such as a continued focus on nature, access to information about recreation opportunities, walking and cycling paths, more recreation opportunities for adults and families, and indoor recreation facilities. Without indoor recreation facilities, it is very difficult to get to a 60 percent or higher very favorable impression rating by the public. Indoor recreation facilities are key to higher levels of satisfaction with public parks and recreation.
4. **Trails.** Pathways for safe walking and cycling emerged as the top facilities that respondents identified as lacking in the area. About three out of five respondents indicated that there are not enough of them.
5. **Facilities Not Available.** Two public recreation facilities that are not available in the area were identified: an outdoor pool and a dog park. Since an indoor recreation center was identified as important, a feasibility study could address both an indoor recreation center and a swimming pool to assess the viability of an outdoor or indoor pool.
6. **Nature-Based Recreation.** Recreation facilities including the improvement and/or development of new facilities should be rooted in nature and in preserving the rural character and scenic beauty. Respondents clearly show that parks, recreation, and open space are important here—and that they must be rooted in the area's rural character. In fact, 82 percent of survey respondents indicated that achieving a balance of park types and sports facilities, nature areas, greenways, and trails is important or extremely important.
7. **Active Recreation Preferences.** The top activities in which the respondents participate are related to nature and the outdoors: walking, enjoying nature and the starry skies, fitness, and cycling. Activities in which they are most interested are related to organized, structured programs such as lifelong learning. Special events are tops in terms of participation and interest. Interest in programs for adults and families are highest. Children and youth appear to have a broad range of recreation opportunities in place.

8. **Indoor Recreation Facilities.** Indoor recreation emerged with very important findings: about 56 percent indicated that an indoor recreation center is important or extremely important. Another 29 percent were neutral which indicates that with more information they would be likely to form an opinion on this subject. Only eight percent said that an indoor center is not needed while seven percent said it is not important. The ratio is nearly four to one of important/extremely important to not important/not needed.
9. **Public Awareness about Parks and Recreation.** The importance of increasing public awareness about parks and recreation opportunities was a theme of the survey findings. Lack of information was cited as the chief block to participation. Respondents indicated that they would like to get more information in a timely manner with one Web site for the Northern Chester County region as their preferred source. Surprisingly, the lack of money is not the chief problem for parks and recreation organizations: the lack of awareness is!
10. **Support for Parks and Recreation.** When asked about the level of support for parks and recreation improvements, the majority of respondents were willing to support parks and recreation in a range of choices from user fees to increased taxes. Only five percent of respondents were not willing to support parks and recreation financially. Once again, about one in three expressed a need for more information before they could commit to supporting parks and recreation financially.

## Applying the Survey Findings: Potential Directions and Recommendations

The survey findings provide guidance for Northern Chester in terms of responding to the public opinion of the citizens at-large:

- **Continue to use a regional approach to parks, recreation, and open space in Northern Chester County.** Partnerships abound here and are vital for future success.
- **Foster efforts to root parks and recreation planning, management, and operations in nature and the rural character and scenic beauty of Northern Chester County.** This means that the full range of parks and recreation opportunities from active to passive would be in effect and all would consciously involve the conservation and enhancement of the character and way of life of Northern Chester County.
- **Make active healthy living a cornerstone of the way of life in Northern Chester County.** Citizens are interested in pursuing recreation activities that add years to their life and life to their years: walking, cycling, playing in parks, enjoying nature—and not just in the summer but throughout the year. Facilities, recreation opportunities, and information about them enable people to live active, socially-engaged lives.
- **Work toward increasing public awareness about parks, recreation, and open space.** Use existing methods and partners wherever possible instead of trying to create a new tactic or entity.
- **Focus on trails as the top priority for capital improvements.** Concentrate on the large regional connections as the first level of effort. Work with municipalities in creating trails to link to the Northern Chester County spine. Strive to add pathways including perimeter and loop trails in all township parks.
- **Phase in program expansion to adults and families and in areas beyond sports.** Consider partnerships with other organizations in this effort. Focus on high quality and creating “experiences.”

- **When appropriate, conduct a feasibility study for the community recreation center including a swimming pool with indoor and outdoor options.** Timing and information are the crucial factors regarding an indoor recreation center. Include a vigorous public participation process. Retain a company with expertise and experience in indoor recreation center planning and operation. The study needs to address capital costs and most importantly address operations, management, and financing as primary elements for consideration. Consider having elected and appointed officials and other key stakeholders make visits to a variety of indoor recreation centers to see them firsthand and learn about their experiences. Involve three major organizations in this effort: the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, the Owen J. Roberts School District, and the potential YM/YWCA partners with the footprint at Ludwig’s Corner. Community sports organizations may also be key stakeholders if the center would include indoor sports and training facilities. It is important to recognize that the trend is away from single-purpose senior citizen centers and toward intergenerational community recreation centers that people use throughout their lifetime and on an expanded basis when they retire.
- **Prioritize the host of findings from this survey to focus on a selected few important ones to carry out with commitment and high quality.** Suggestions would be trails and building awareness among the public about parks, recreation, and open space opportunities and benefits. It is important to note that the findings of this survey need to be balanced with the findings of the others portions of the public participation process for this plan such as the needs of organized community groups. While the parks and recreation in Northern Chester County cannot be everything to everybody, it can be something *important* to everybody.

## VI. Responses

**Survey responses are reported as percentages.  
Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.**

The following section presents the responses to the questions, interpretation of the findings, and implications. It is important to note that the percentages are high in the responses. The private sector makes major marketing and investment decisions based upon numbers as low as 10 percent. Please note that numbers do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding and/or non-response.

The results are statistically reliable and valid for the response as a whole. The survey findings do present information on how subgroups answered selected questions. However, *findings of the subgroups are too small to be of statistical significance and cannot be generalized to that population group as a whole*. For example, reports on the findings of how respondents of a certain age group or place of residence or length of residence in Northern Chester County answered cannot be generalized to all the people in that particular category. They merely present some indication as to the direction of the respondents in that selected group.

**Question 1. Please indicate if you or members of your household participate or are interested in the following activities in our community. Circle one response for each.**

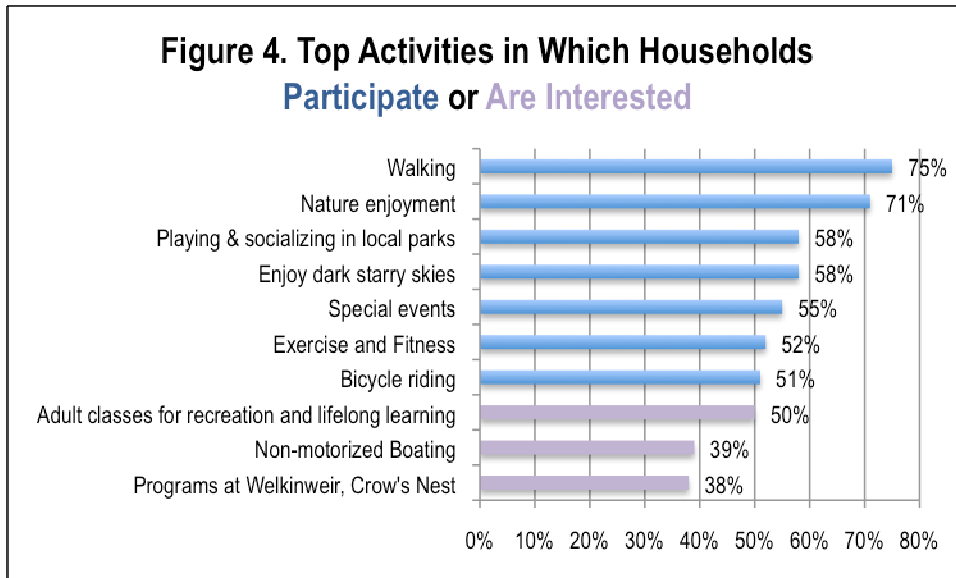
**Table 2. Participation and Interest in Recreation Activities**

	Yes, I / We participate	No, but Interested	Not Interested	Don't Know about it	NA
▪ Special events such as Community Days, Fairs	55%	29%	13%	3%	5%
▪ Playing or socializing in the local parks	58	22	18	1	5
▪ League Sports (e.g., baseball, soccer, lacrosse, football, basketball, etc.)	30	22	44	5	7
▪ Non-league Sports (e.g., golf, tennis, etc.)	27	24	39	4	7
▪ Exercise and Fitness	52	29	17	2	7
▪ Fishing	34	28	37	1	6
▪ Hunting	20	4	65	1	8
▪ Walking	75	18	7	0	4
▪ Bicycle Riding	51	25	22	1	5
▪ ATV Riding	10	14	74	2	9
▪ Nature Enjoyment	71	18	10	1	6
▪ Horseback Riding	20	30	47	3	9
▪ Enjoying the dark starry skies	58	25	15	2	6
▪ Winter Sports (sledding, cross-country skiing, skating, etc.)	41	29	27	2	7
▪ Non-motorized boating on the creeks or the Schuylkill River	29	39	30	3	8
▪ The Arts (music, arts, drama, dance)	39	34	22	4	5
▪ Volunteerism	31	37	26	6	6
▪ Organized programs for children on school holidays	14	32	47	7	6
▪ Summer camps for children	20	29	46	5	6
▪ Adult Classes for recreation, lifelong learning, or skill development	20	50	27	3	6
▪ Programs at local facilities such as Welkinweir, Crow's Nest, etc.	21	38	22	18	8
▪ Other – Results reported on page 35.					

## **Interpretation**

**Figure 4** depicts the top 10 activities in which the respondents are interested or participate. The top seven activities in which the respondents *participate* are related to enjoyment of nature and the outdoors and are activities that they can do at their own discretion. The top three activities in which respondents are *interested* involve structured, organized programs and additional opportunities. The good news for Welkinweir and Crow's Nest Preserve is that two out of five respondents are interested in programs there. However, one in five indicated that they did not know about programs at Welkinweir or Crow's Nest, while only seven percent or fewer indicated a lack of knowledge about any other activity. This is significant.

In addition, the finding that more than one out of three respondents is interested in volunteerism corresponds to the significant number of people who completed the section of the survey indicating that they would be interested in "helping out with parks, recreation, and open space," – 110 of the 514 respondents.

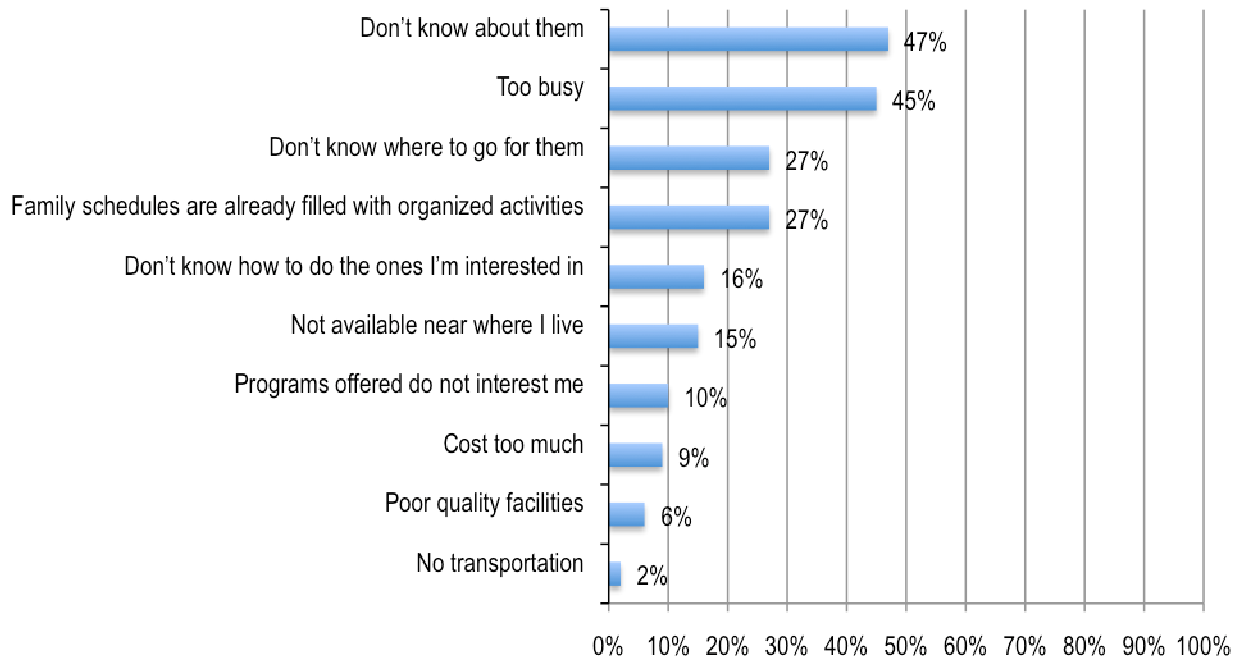


## ***Implications***

- **Provide safe places for citizens to walk, engage in active healthy living pursuits, and enjoy nature.**
- **Protect the dark starry skies.**
- **Work with existing organizations, especially the school districts, to provide information to the residents about adult classes and lifelong learning and active living opportunities.**
- **Figure out how to coordinate and promote special events in Northern Chester County to maximize opportunities, resources, and participation in these events.** Coordinating schedules and activities could help to reduce duplication, create a critical mass of events that would result in major showcasing of the Northern Chester County region, and build awareness among the citizens. Establishing a regular schedule of anticipated events including, a few signature iconic events for the region, would be a great public benefit. Create opportunities for “experiences.” The high interest in special events reflects the trend in which people are looking for “experiences” and ways to create memories with families and friends. Include Welkinweir and Crow’s Nest program information in materials about parks and recreation opportunities in the region.
- **Ensure that local parks are great!** Fun, clean, and safe. Four out of five respondents indicated that they enjoy or are interested in playing or socializing in local parks. Plan for increased boat access on the Schuylkill River via the riverfront parks. Consider partnering with other organizations in offering instructional programs on non-motorized boating in which interested citizens can experience non-motorized boating and perhaps develop an interest in it.
- **Plan summer recreation programming enhancements.** Approximately 62 percent of the respondents would be interested in summer recreation programs for children. Focus on how to deliver the kinds and quality of programs and services the residents want.
- **There does not appear to be a pressing need for organized programs for school holidays or for summer camps.** However, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in them. Such programs would be revenue-generating programs that could be considered in the future.

**Question 2. What prevents you or members of your household from participating in recreational opportunities? *Circle all that apply.***

Figure 5. Blocks to Participation in Recreational Opportunities



***Interpretation***

The major finding of this question is that nearly half of the respondents reported that not knowing about recreation opportunities is their chief block to participation. Typically, parks and recreation public opinion surveys yield “Too busy” at the number one block. While the responses of “Too busy” and “Family schedules are already filled with organized activities” had an expectedly high response of 45 percent and 27 percent, respectively, they still ranked behind “not knowing about them” as the main reason people do not participate in recreation opportunities.

Other blocks to participation are shown on page 36.

***Implications***

- **Create a “Go To” place where citizens can learn about recreation programs and activities available to them.**
- **Form a centralized clearinghouse for parks, recreation, and open space information.**
- **Strive to use an existing organization to form the clearinghouse and make the information available in a convenient and timely format.**

- **Tie the planning for creating a public awareness strategy to the findings of this survey and further exploration of citizen preferences by age group.** As shown in Question 11, respondents indicated their most preferred ways to get information about parks and recreation in Northern Chester County. The most preferred ways were on a Northern Chester County Web site, a Web site for each township, and newsletters mailed to the home. Since only one percent of the respondents were 18 to 24, methods of reaching younger age groups need to be considered.
- **Develop information about parks and recreation facility locations and distribution methods for this information.** Create a brief narrative of park descriptions. Add a legend for facilities and/or recreation opportunities that are available at each site. In addition to information about parks, include a trail map, trail head information, and locations for river access. Since it would be important to post this information on a Web site, consider making the park locations extremely easy to get to by adding a direction link to Mapquest.

**Question 3. How often do you or members of your household use parks, sites, and recreation facilities in or near Northern Chester County? Circle one response for each item.**

**Table 3.**  
**Percentage of Respondents Using Parks and Recreation Facilities in or near Northern Chester County**

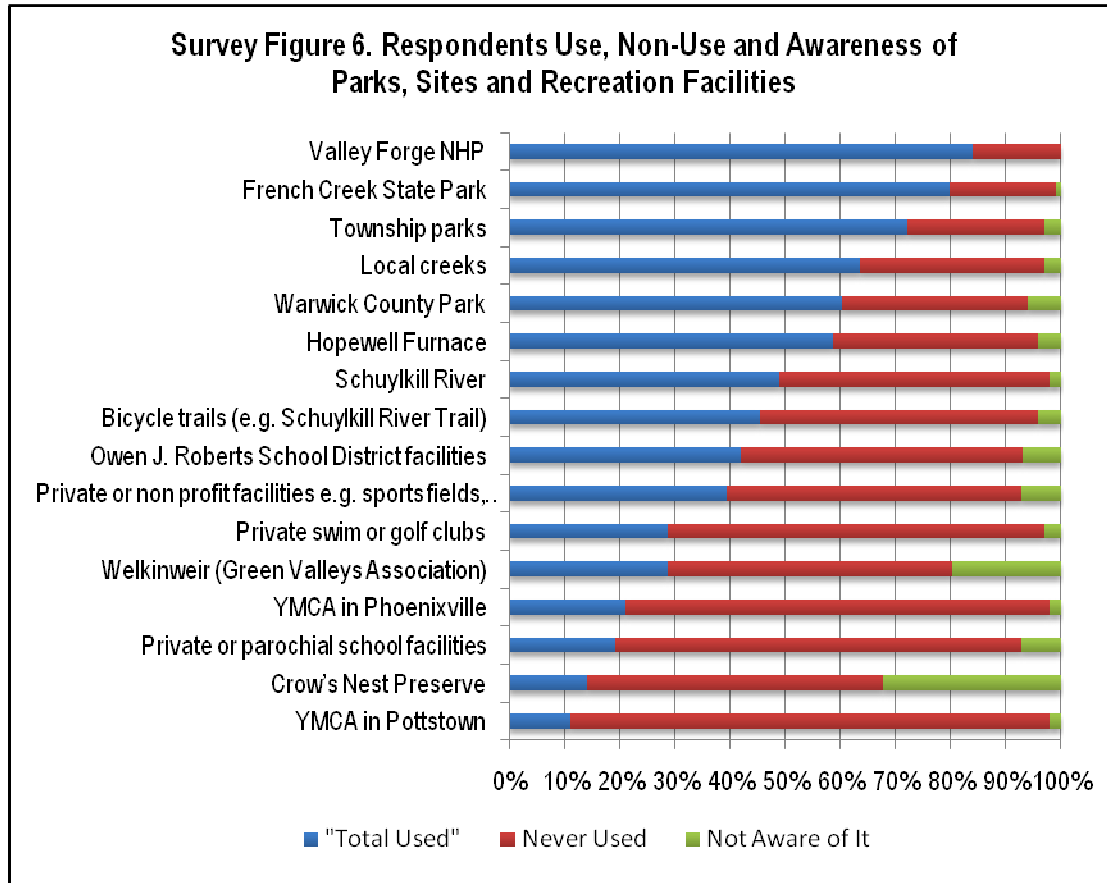
	Daily	Weekly	Seasonally	Occasionally	Total Use*	Never	Not aware of it	No Answer
Valley Forge NHP	1%	5%	21%	57%	84%	16%	0%	4%
French Creek State Park	.4	6	25	48	79	19	1	6
Township parks	3	12	17	41	73	25	3	8
Local creeks	3	6	17	37	63	33	3	9
Warwick County Park	.7	6	22	32	61	34	6	9
Hopewell Furnace NHS	0	1	14	43	58	37	4	7
Schuylkill River	.9	3	15	30	49	49	2	7
Bicycle trails (e.g., Schuylkill River Trail)	2	6	17	20	45	50	4	4
Owen J. Roberts School District facilities	4	5	6	27	42	51	7	7
Private or nonprofit facilities (e.g., sports fields, fitness facilities)	6	9	6	18	39	53	7	9
Private swim or golf clubs	1	7	9	12	29	69	3	10
Welkinweir (Green Valleys Association)	.4	1	8	20	29	52	20	10
YMCA in Phoenixville	3	3	3	12	21	77	2	9
Crow's Nest Preserve	.2	1	5	8	14	53	32	10
Private or parochial school facilities	2	2	3	12	19	73	7	9
YMCA in Pottstown	.2	1	1	9	11	86	2	10
Other results reported on page 37								

## ***Interpretation***

As shown in **Table 3**, the top six parks used by more than half of the respondents are Valley Forge NHP, French Creek State Park, the township parks, local creeks, Warwick County Park, and Hopewell Furnace NHS. The high use of the township parks and local creeks is an unexpectedly high finding, as in surveys such as this most respondents report using county parks more. Three out of four citizens report that they use township parks. The level of awareness of the parks, sites, and recreation facilities named was high overall with more than nine

out of ten respondents knowing about each facility except Welkenweir and Crow’s Nest Preserve. Responses exceeded 100 percent due to respondents circling more than one response for use of each facility, such as circling “seasonally” along with another choice.

**Figure 6** shows the combined total use, non-use, and level of awareness about parks, sites, and recreation facilities in or near Northern Chester County.



## Implications

- **Consider the township parks an essential component of the way of life in Northern Chester County.** Township parks and recreation facilities are a major asset given the fact that three out of four people use them.
- **Promote the benefits of parks and recreation as a way to garner public support.** Parks improve the quality of life and help to build a sense of community, increase property values, protect the environment, preserve natural resources, and facilitate active healthy life styles.
- **Recognize that township parks and local creeks rank among the highest facilities used.** This is a significant finding. Plans for maintaining, improving, and informing the public about these facilities would be important.
- **Lack of awareness about the existence of the township parks themselves appears not to be an issue because of the high level of reported use.** Lack of awareness appears to be centered on programs, events, and recreation opportunities based upon the chief block to participation in recreation opportunities

being lack of awareness. The level of awareness about each township park is undetermined since the parks were not individually named in the survey.

**Question 4. What township parks do you use for recreation other than organized sports?** *Please print the names of the parks you use below.*

Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

Although this question asked for township park use, the respondents listed all parks used. This appears to validate the idea that people use parks regionally and that park ownership is irrelevant to them—they think regionally about parks and recreation. Many parks are outside of the Northern Chester County municipalities and even in Berks and Montgomery counties.

**Parks Used for Activities Other than Organized Sports**

**(83 locations were named 509 times in responses)**

1. Warwick County Park (106)
2. French Creek State Park (49)
3. Towpath Park (43)
4. Kimberton Community Park (36)
5. Valley Forge NHP (30)
6. Pine Creek Playground
7. Pine Creek (34) West Pikeland
8. Marsh Creek (19)
9. West Vincent Park\* (16)
10. West Vincent Playground
11. Kieran St Park (16)
12. Reeves Park (12) Phoenixville
13. Hopewell Furnace NHS (10)
14. Manderack Playground (9)
15. Oaks – dog park (8)
16. Local roads for walking and cycling (8)
17. Schuylkill River Park (3)
18. Schuylkill River Trail (7)
19. Mountain biking (6)
20. Pottstown downtown, Riverfront Park (6)
21. We have enough large parks (6)
22. Fishing (6)
23. Camp Fernbrook (6)
24. Connie Batdorf Park (6)
25. Coventry Woods (6)
26. Charlestown Park (5)
27. Bell Tavern Park (4)
28. Blue Marsh (4)
29. East Vincent (4)
30. Evansburg (4)
31. Woody’s Woods (4)
32. Livingood Park (Elverson) (4)
33. Natural Lands Trust – Binky Lee (4)
34. Spring City (4)
35. Spring City Pool
36. St. Peters (4)
37. Struble Trail (3)
38. Welkinweir (3)
39. West Pikeland (3)
40. Green Lane County Park (3)
41. Hickory Park (3)
42. Brandywine (3)
43. Horse-Shoe Trail (3)
44. Kerr Park Playground
45. Kerr Park (3)
46. OJR School District (2) tennis courts
47. Phoenixville Y (2)
48. Boat ramp (2)
49. Affordable free-use indoor recreation areas – private clubs too expensive
50. Allentown to bicycle, Sand Island Bicycle Trail, Rodale Park to bicycle
51. Crow’s Nest
52. Eagleview
53. Bridge to Bridge Trail
54. Bicycle riding
55. Big Woods
56. East Coventry silt basins by the river
57. East Pikeland parks
58. Good Will
59. Griggs Mill
60. Have little knowledge of where to go to find out about parks
61. Kayaking

- 62. Laurels Preserve
- 63. Linfield River Park (Montco)
- 64. Lionville Parks
- 65. Lionville Youth Association (LYA)
- 66. Manatawny
- 67. Matthews Meadows
- 68. Monacacy Hill Berks County
- 69. Neighborhood for walking
- 70. Ontalaunee
- 71. Park in Chester Springs
- 72. Parks in Maryland
- 73. Perkiomen Trail
- 74. Pickering Grove Park
- 75. Phoenixville Marian Youth Club (PMYC) fields

- 76. Ridgelea Phoenixville
- 77. Ridley Creek State Park
- 78. Royersford
- 79. Schuylkill River Walk
- 80. Shamona Creek Park
- 81. Springton Manor
- 82. State Game Lands
- 83. Walk in West Chester Park
- 84. West Goshen Park
- 85. Don't use township parks because I don't know what they offer
- 86. Township parks prohibit active recreation – very sad for our children.

**Question 5. How important do you think it is for your community to have the following types of facilities? Circle one response for each item.**

**Table 4. Importance of Facility Types to the Survey Respondents**

	Not Needed	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Extremely Important	No Answer
<b>Large Parks</b> with a mix of facilities with ball fields, game courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas for general use, league use, and recreation programs	7%	5%	17%	39%	32%	7%
<b>Small close-to-home parks</b> with game courts, play areas, paths, sitting areas, and scenic features	4	3	11	49	34	6
<b>Nature reserves</b> for walking, relaxation, and nature study	1	3	9	44	43	5
<b>Outdoor sports center</b> for leagues and spectator enjoyment	9	10	33	30	18	7
<b>Greenways</b> , linear corridors of green space for natural resource and animal conservation	2	3	12	36	47	6
<b>Trail system</b> , non-motorized for use by cyclists, horseback riders, and walkers/runners	2	3	10	41	44	5
<b>Balance of all of the above</b>	3	3	12	41	41	13
<b>Indoor recreation center</b> – gym, fitness, indoor activities for all ages	8	7	29	35	21	7

**Interpretation**

As shown in **Table 4**, the major message of the respondents is that all park types are important here. Greenways, trails, and nature reserves are deemed extremely important compared with other facility types. Large parks, an outdoor sports center, and an indoor recreation center captured the largest rate of not important or not needed—but at a very low rate of 12 percent, 14 percent, and 15 percent, respectively. The two facilities that would require the most exploration and study, an outdoor sports center and an indoor recreation center, had the largest neutral responses of 33 percent and 29 percent. This is a positive finding indicating that this set of respondents has not formulated opinions about these facilities although about half or more think that they

are important or extremely important. In rank order, the respondents prefer small parks close to home (83 percent) to large parks (71 percent) and both reflect high levels of interest. The respondents view trail systems as important versus not important/not needed by a margin of 17 to 1. For every respondent that stated nature reserves are not important, 22 respondents said they are important.

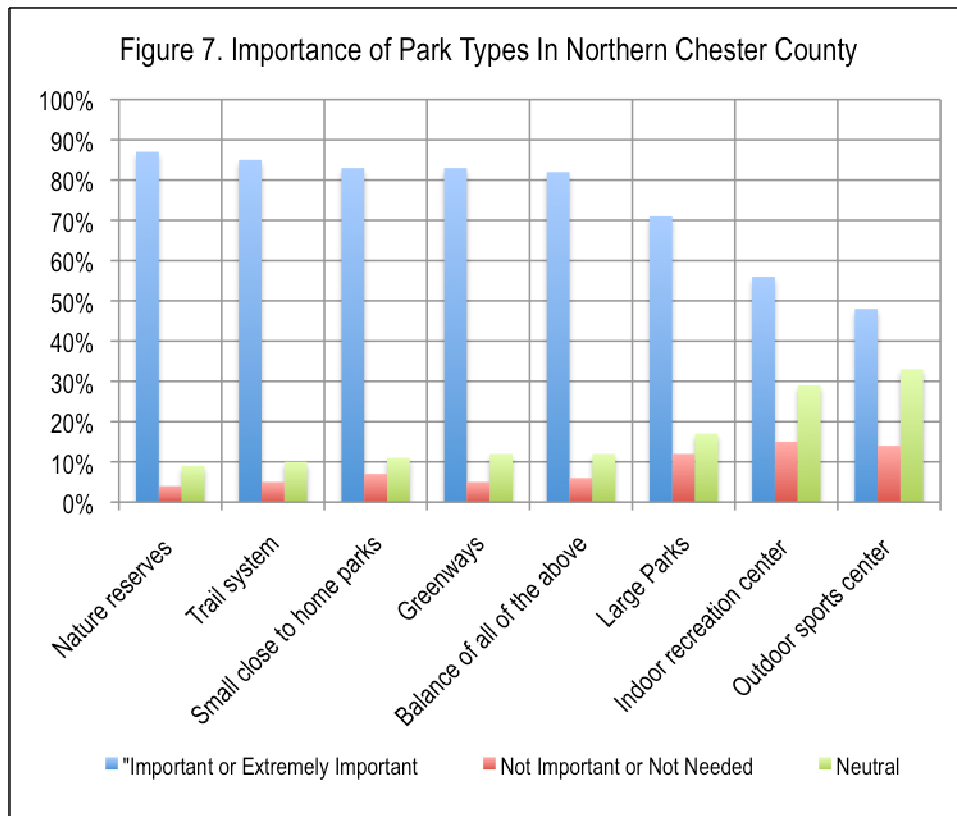
Table 5. Important/Extremely Important Park Types of Respondents by Municipality										
	All	E Coventry	E Nantmeal	E Pikeland	E Vincent	N Coventry	S Coventry	Warwick	W Pikeland	W Vincent
Nature reserves	87%	90%	79%	85%	88%	86%	81%	85%	90%	88%
Trail system	85%	88%	74%	82%	89%	81%	88%	91%	79%	93%
Small close-to-home parks	83%	92%	70%	83%	86%	83%	84%	76%	78%	92%
Greenways	83%	90%	70%	75%	74%	73%	78%	87%	81%	90%
Large parks	71%	69%	65%	76%	74%	75%	76%	67%	59%	75%
Outdoor sports center	48%	52%	29%	54%	45%	58%	69%	45%	30%	46%
Balance of all of the above	82%	78%	78%	78%	81%	90%	96%	76%	72%	82%
Indoor recreation center	56%	63%	48%	66%	49%	62%	69%	49%	44%	57%

**Table 5** presents the types of facilities that the respondents deemed important and extremely important. Note that findings in this table are not statistically valid due to the small number of respondents in each municipality. They present an indication of what is important to these respondents and that cannot be generalized to the township as a whole.

**Figure 7** shows the importance of park types to the respondents according to how important or not important they are or if the respondent felt neutral about that particular park type. The chart is dramatic in presenting how important the respondents consider park types in Northern Chester County. Written comments indicate that people may feel that there are enough large parks in the area with Valley Forge NHP, French Creek State Park, Hopewell Furnace NHS, and Warwick County Park, and would like to see parks closer to home.

### Implications

- **Focus on achieving a balance of nature-based facilities, trails, and smaller close-to-home parks with a variety of active recreation facilities.** This is important to about nine out of ten respondents.
- **Recognize that there appears to be support for both an indoor recreation center and an outdoor sports center.** The indoor recreation center was rated as important by 56 percent of the respondents while another 15 percent were neutral. For the outdoor sports center, 48 percent rated it as important with another 14 percent as neutral. The benchmark for moving ahead for public efforts that would require a vote is 61 percent. Both of these facility types are close to that mark. With effective outreach and education, the benchmark of 61 percent could be achieved. Both of these facilities would need a feasibility study to determine whether it is possible to plan, develop, operate, and support them in the long term.
- **Further explore the concept of smaller close-to-home parks in Northern Chester County.** Many factors need to be considered, such as: most people drive to use parks; the cost of maintenance of many small parks versus fewer large parks; the need for facilities that can be used for organized events, sports, and programs; and the desire of various jurisdictions to have parks located within their boundaries.



**Question 6. What do you think about the availability of the following parks and recreation opportunities in your community?** *Circle one response for each item.*

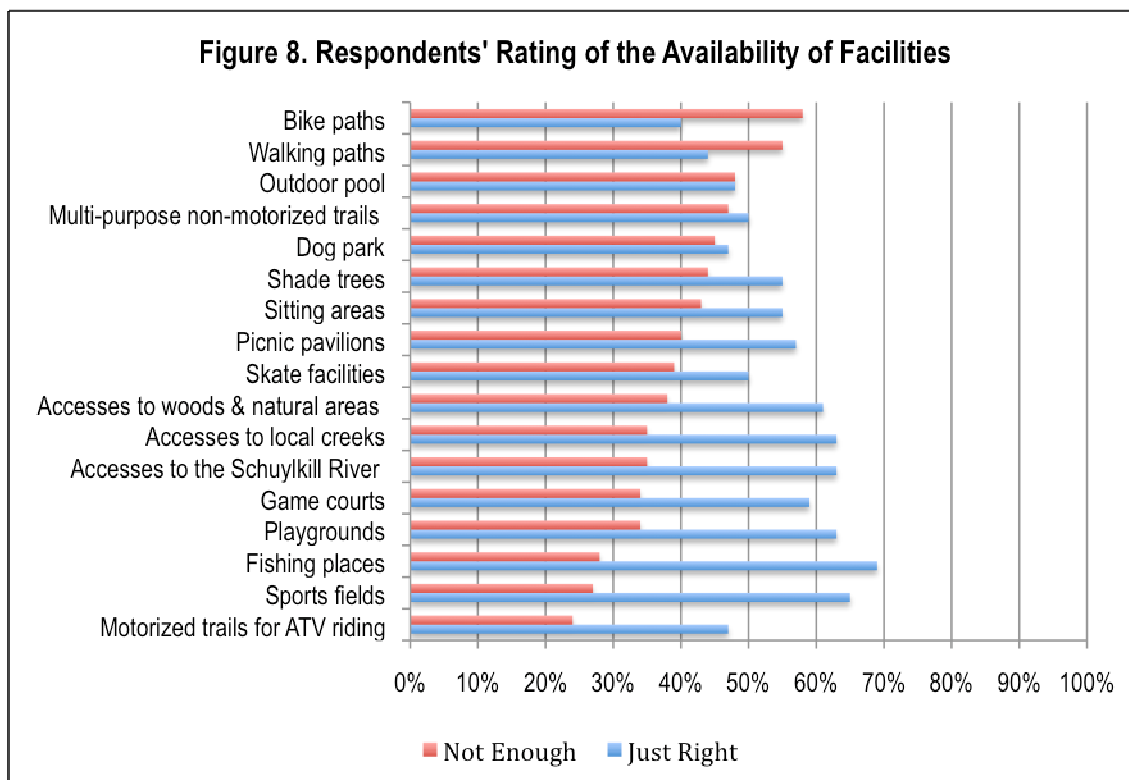
**Table 6. Availability of Facilities**

	Too Many	Just Right	Not Enough
Bike paths	2%	40%	58%
Walking paths	1	44	55
Outdoor pool	4	48	48
Multipurpose non-motorized trails – for horses, hiking	3	50	47
Dog park	8	47	45
Shade trees	1	55	44
Sitting areas	1	55	43
Picnic pavilions	2	57	40
Skate facilities for skateboards or in-line skating	11	50	39
Accesses to woods and natural areas	2	61	38
Accesses to the Schuylkill River	2	63	35
Accesses to local creeks	2	63	35
Playgrounds	3	63	34
Game courts	7	59	34
Fishing places	2	69	28
Sports fields	7	65	27
Motorized trails for ATV riding	29	47	24
Other results reported on page 38			

## Interpretation

In **Table 6**, the responses show that the majority of the respondents perceive that there are enough facilities for a variety of recreation types, from a high of fishing places at 69 percent, to multipurpose non-motorized trails and skate facilities at 50 percent. Biking paths, walking paths, outdoor pools, dog parks, and motorized trails fell short of 50 percent. Bike paths (58 percent) and walking paths (55 percent) topped the “Not Enough” category. Motorized trails at 29 percent and skate facilities at 11 percent outweighed the other 15 facility choices by a large margin on the “Too Many” response.

## Implications



- **Continue the concurrent work on proposed trails in Northern Chester County in developing the proposed bicycle pathways.**
- **Consider the three levels of bike path use in regional bicycle path planning to reach all levels of riders and enlist future generations of cyclists.** Type A: Advanced Bicyclists who are comfortable in most traffic situations, even arterial streets with high traffic volume. Type B: Basic Bicyclists who include adolescent cyclists and adults who ride only on occasion. This group is less comfortable operating a bicycle in the midst of heavy vehicle traffic, and instead desires greater protection from vehicular traffic than Type A. Type C: Child Bicyclists require substantial protection from motor vehicles, and often ride only with adult supervision. Child cyclists have the least amount of bicycling skill, and they often are unaware of the danger that their unpredictable behavior poses.
- **Offer educational programs to foster bicycle safety among cyclists and motorists.**
- **Add perimeter paths to the parks as well as loop trails within the parks.** For the public, adding paths and facilities would make parks more useful and could be the most important thing that would improve

the parks. The good news is that these are among the least expensive park improvements to maintain. Walking paths would serve most of the population throughout their lifetime and enable people to lead active healthy lifestyles. Install mile markers, seating, and water fountains. Provide restrooms in larger parks. Consider walking programs to stimulate active healthy lifestyles.

- **Continue planning to connect parks to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, business, and public transit via bike paths.** Connect local trails to regional trail networks for longer-distance cycling.
- **Work with the townships to support their efforts to secure the links needed, preferably before areas are developed.** Many communities are negotiating for trail links and actual paved paths in the land development process. Provide support for their efforts in establishing a mandatory dedication of parkland ordinance that would also cover trails.
- **Meld the feasibility study for an indoor recreation center with a swimming pool feasibility study.** Since outdoor pools ranked high in terms of needed facilities, it would be advisable to explore an outdoor pool in conjunction with a community center study. With the Northern Chester County climate, investing in a year-round facility may be a more sound decision. Research into another cold climate, Colorado, found that the two most-heavily-used months for indoor swimming pools there were January and July! Create a formalized public outreach program designed to inform the public about the facts and figures of an indoor recreation center. This should include construction and operating costs, revenues from municipal and non-municipal sources, offsetting operating costs with outside revenue sources, and the benefits of recreation centers for communities and individuals. Conduct a road tour of community recreation centers. Participants should include elected and appointed officials and key stakeholders.

**Question 7. How likely would members of your household be to participate in recreation programs for the following groups? Circle one response for each.**

**Table 7. Program Interest According to Population Segments**

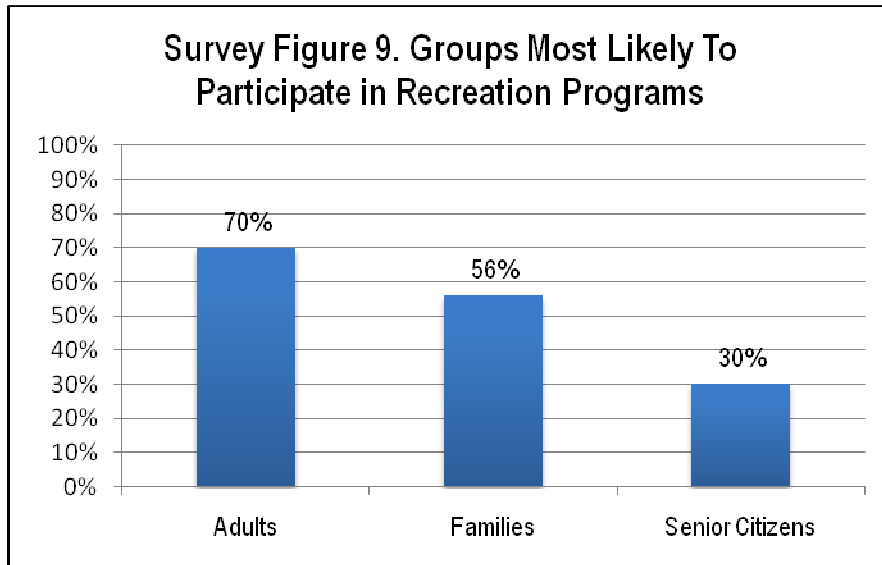
Programs for:	Very Likely	More Likely	LIKELY TOTAL	Less Likely	Not Likely	Not Applicable	No Answer
Adults	23%	47%	70%	10%	14%	7%	9%
Families	21	33	56	9	14	21	9
Elementary students	14	13	27	3	8	62	8
Middle school students	10	8	18	4	9	69	10
High school students	8	11	19	6	9	66	12
Senior Citizens	9	21	30	9	14	47	10
Pre-schoolers	10	7	17	2	9	72	10
People with disabilities	6	8	14	8	13	63	13

**Interpretation**

**Table 7** depicts how likely different population groups would be to participate in recreation programs. **Figure 9** shows that recreation programs for adults and families are the most likely to generate participation from the community. These were named about two to two-and-a-half times more frequently than the next highest group of senior citizens. The children and youth categories came in at one out of four or fewer. It appears from the survey that respondents generally feel that children and youth have recreation program opportunities. Offering programs in the area of nature, programs in the parks, and fitness and wellness special events for adults and families would

respond to citizen preferences. Adult classes for recreation, lifelong learning, and skill development are likely to draw participants. The Owen J. Roberts Evening School is the major source of these opportunities.

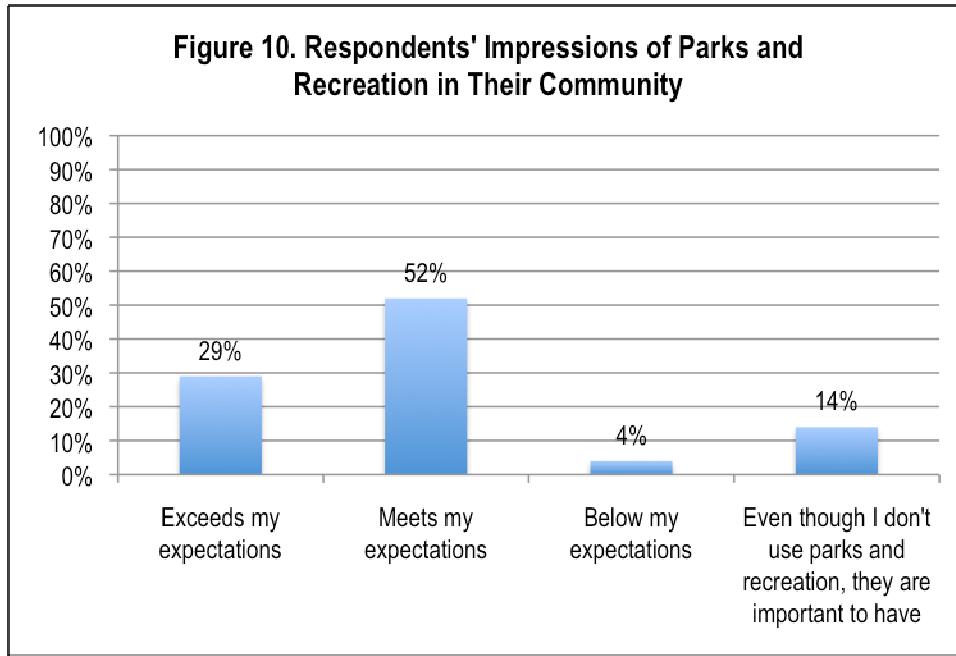
## **Implications**



- **Work in partnership with other providers.** It may be possible for some of the municipal or other partners to take the lead on identified programs for target groups.
- **Focus on adults and families as the target group for recreation programs.** If Northern Chester County decides to establish a regional parks and recreation board, it will be important to work within the parameters of “not being all things to all people,” focusing limited resources where they will have the most benefit.
- **Involve client groups in planning services.** Planning services for adults and families should be done through involvement with representatives of these groups in order to zero in on programs, schedules, hours, fees and charges, promotion and marketing, and identifying other factors that could affect participation. Use focus groups, an advisory committee, and interviews with citizens in planning services and facilities.
- **Focus on self-directed opportunities.** Self-directed recreation opportunities do not require staffing. They do require promotion of information about locations and facilities to potential participants. The self-directed recreational pursuits are also the activities that lead to energetic, socially-engaged, healthy lifestyles.
- **Provide information to adults and families on programs and activities.** Use Web sites as the primary vehicle.
- **Adopt a policy of cost recovery on programs and events.** Base the policy upon a hierarchy of participation, from broad community involvement benefitting the community at large, to the other end of the spectrum in which the activity involves a limited number of participants who solely benefit from the activity. Programs and activities that are open and benefit the community at large would be free and paid through by other means such as public and private sponsors. Programs that benefit an individual and require a higher level of staff or facility resources would require a user fee. Cost recovery and non-tax revenue generation will facilitate the provision of a growing number of recreation programs and services

from a range of participants. The level of “support” responses shown in Question 12 indicates that the respondents are willing to support a variety of ways to pay for parks and recreation.

**Question 8. What is your overall impression about parks and recreation in your community?** *Circle one response for each feature.*



**Interpretation**

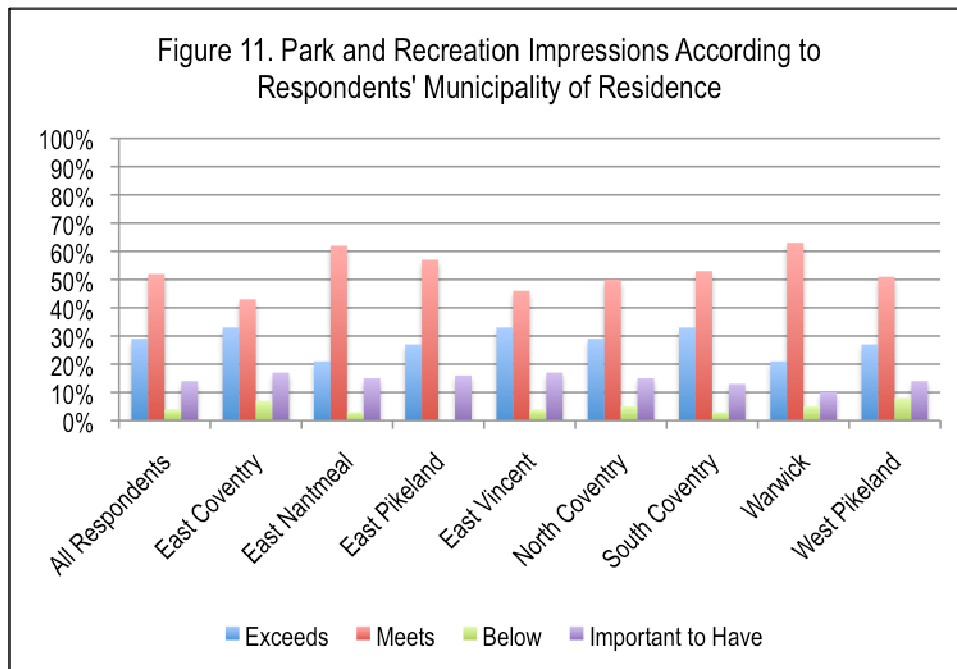
Figure 10 shows that 52 percent of the respondents reported that the parks in their community meet their expectations. This is about double the percentage of respondents (29 percent) who indicated that parks and recreation exceed their expectations in their community. Only four percent of the respondents indicated that parks and recreation fall below their expectations. Table 8 presents respondents’ impressions about parks and recreation according to age group and length of residence in Northern Chester County.

Figure 11 provides a comparison of how the respondents as a whole as well as from each municipality rated parks and recreation in their community. It would be safe to project that these respondents view parks and recreation as regionally available, as the respondents who live in municipalities without parks and recreation facilities rated parks and recreation similarly to respondents in municipalities with parks and recreation.

Table 8. Respondents’ Impressions of Parks and Recreation According to Age and Length of Residence, Compared with Respondents as a Whole

	Exceeds	Meets	Below	Important to Have
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Respondents 25 - 44	27%	59%	4%	10%
Respondents 45 - 64	32%	51%	4%	12%
Respondents 65+ Years	25%	45%	4%	26%

Resident less than 5 Years	27%	54%	4%	14%
Resident 5 - 10 Years	24%	66%	0%	9%
Resident 10+ Years	30%	49%	5%	13%



## Implications

- **Set a time frame and create a plan to improve parks and recreation to attain a 75 to 80 percent rating from the citizens indicating that parks and recreation exceeds their expectations.**
- **Provide the types of facilities and programs that the respondents desire.** Refer to the findings in Questions 5, 6, 7, and 11 regarding facilities, programs, client groups, and information. Park deficiencies appear to be related to the absence of the types of facilities that the respondents desire. Prioritize improvements according to the public's wishes. Fold in the needs of community organizations that provide important public recreation services. Create a five- to seven-year plan for capital improvements.
- **Explore how to provide indoor recreation facilities and involve the citizens in a transparent planning process with a high level of public outreach.** Link the exploration of an indoor center with the study of an outdoor pool.

**Question 9. If we could do ONE THING to improve parks and recreation in Northern Chester County, what would you want that to be? Please print your response below.**

Categories were generated based upon the 387 responses. The categories included: Awareness, Facilities, Trails, Conservation, Maintenance, Security, Programs and Activities, and Support. Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

**Awareness (52 responses)**

- More information about activities and all that is available. (5)
- Publicize available opportunities. (3)
- Awareness – not sure everyone knows what is available. (4)
- Advertise where all nature centers are within a 20-mile radius.
- Information – we just moved here and never received anything about nearby parks or recreation facilities.
- Try to use existing facilities better through creating more awareness.
- Advertise parks.
- More information about what is available – where, when, and times.
- Comprehensive guide on available facilities including trails.
- Flow of information: create one centralized place for all parks in Northern Chester County to get information on events, programs, etc.
- Make people more aware of these resources and their accessibility.
- Make everyone aware of the existence of parks and their facilities. They are not easy to find.
- Better communication to where the parks are.
- Advertise to local people.
- Advertise through mailing family activities.
- Better communication of existing programs.
- More awareness about the parks and what is offered.
- Information, information, information – what, where, community involvement, ownership, info about all of its upkeep, benefits, future generations.
- Better publicity and access to it.
- Improved communication.
- Communicate programs that are available to the public.
- New families and families with pre-schoolers need more information.
- Communicate information to new residents about parks.
- Send out information on what each park offers: parks, trails, biking.
- Awareness – have recently moved to area and have found parks only by accident.
- Publicize existing resources better.
- More notice about programs – mostly learn about them afterwards.
- Highlight facilities we do not know about like Welkinweir and Crow’s Nest
- Hold activities of high interest at the parks to entice members of the community to use them.
- I would like to know where and when more activities take place in our area.
- Have people know about them.
- More information on special events.
- One centralized place of information about parks and recreation.
- Advertise more – use signs and local newspapers.
- Improve communication regarding available programs and locations of parks.
- Too much research is required to find out where parks and recreation activities are available – improve access by advertising the types of facilities available.
- Make sure community is aware of park locations.
- Public information about locations and availability of recreation facilities.
- Better and more communication about what is available and where.
- More awareness

## Facilities (142 Responses)

- Dog park. (13)
- Dogs aren't allowed in all parks so I drive my dogs to other areas so they can run.
- Build more parks. (11)
- Add restrooms and improve (9) – decent, clean, nicer, more of them, toilet access.
- More sports fields. (8)
- Tennis courts. (7)
- Tennis courts at Warwick County Park.
- More and better playgrounds. Warwick County Park playground is good but all others are too small. It's why people go to Manderack. (7)
- More local parks with ball fields and sports fields. (5)
- Water fountains. (3)
- More soccer fields. (3)
- Lacrosse fields.
- Limit playing fields.
- More parks and recreation.
- More facilities including game courts, restrooms
- More active recreation – ball fields, tennis courts, bike trails.
- Allow dogs.
- More accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Family facilities at all parks.
- Nothing – parks are beautiful!
- Fine the way they are.
- Outdoor facilities for concerts, movies, and special events.
- Let runners and walkers have access to local school facilities. I pay \$6,000 in taxes and have no access.
- Indoor community recreation center.
- Bleachers in Connie Badorf Park.
- Make sure the parks are saved.
- More places to sit for the handicapped.
- More parks convenient for people with animals.
- RV Park.
- More tables, benches, and lights for night outings.
- More places to sit and enjoy scenery.
- More facilities.
- Camping and hunting.
- More hunting and fishing access.
- Better access to the Schuylkill for fishing.
- More parks open to hunting.
- Continue to create more facilities.
- Add more parks so the ones we have aren't so crowded.
- Have a variety of special facilities developed by municipalities in their parks but offered regionally.
- Do not make any more parks. I don't think the locals use them as much as outsiders do.
- More walking, biking, exercise, fitness, tennis, and swimming.
- Open to all outdoor activities.
- A park that can be used at night for activities and serenity – not closed at dark.
- Expand facilities and access.
- Expand and maintain existing parks.
- Take the toxic off-gassing tire chips out of Warwick Park! We will not go there because it smells and is dangerous for kids.
- Add lakes.
- More picnic areas.
- Clean them up and make more parks.
- More large parks with lots to do for all.
- Keep parks small – no monster parks. Prefer rural and natural venue.
- Public swimming with open space for hiking and enjoying nature.
- A park with access to the Schuylkill River.
- Skate Park.
- Not interested in skateboard parks because it draws trouble, would be better to keep them for walking and relaxation and water access.
- More parks in North Coventry for the young and old.
- Not in East Nantmeal.
- Parks closer to my home.
- Avoid the noisy, dense, sloppy – strive for quiet.
- More areas to sit and socialize outdoors.
- Pavilions.
- Backboard at courts in West Vincent Township Park.
- Build a soccer field in Warwick Township.
- More active recreation areas in West Pikeland.
- Build a large park with a variety of facilities for in-line skating, biking, benches, and an area for doggies.
- Put a ball field in each new development.
- Spread baseball parks all over instead of just one place.
- Our area needs more sports fields especially soccer fields.
- Separate ball fields from other types of outdoor recreation use
- More overnight opportunities.

- Design or re-design a park with beautiful wide open views of the Schuylkill River.
- Do not light parks.
- Light the parks.
- Tie housing development to new park development.
- Do not have multiple entrances.
- More variety.

### Trails (81 Responses)

- More biking/walking/hiking trails. (16)
- More riding trails. (8)
- Bike lanes along roads. (4)
- ATV trails (3) - for responsible adult riders.
- More nature reserves with trails.
- Connectivity.
- Add sidewalks and bike & jogging lanes. Many residents use vehicles for short commutes because of lack of planning and are in potentially dangerous situations. Township and builders did not plan well.
- Sidewalls connecting to trails.
- Sidewalks so my younger children can ride a bike to a park without a need for an adult to drive them there.
- Maps of trails.
- Nature walking.
- Preserve and maintain trail easements (non-motorized for horses) and greenways (use same spaces).
- Continue path along Schuylkill in Spring City.
- More walking paths near East Pikeland.
- Schuylkill River areas are **not** safe, too many perverts!
- Connect to Schuylkill Trail.
- Safer way to walk or cycle on state highways especially Route 401.
- Better marked and groomed trails at Woody's Woods.
- Finish the bike trail.
- Place walking trails out in the open rather than in the woods so that females walking alone don't have to worry about their safety.
- Walking paths in rural areas.
- Signage on trails and near trails.
- Explain that trail use is for non-motorized vehicles. There is no place for dirt bikes or ATVs in our township and they jeopardize trail use.
- Better-labeled trails.
- Allow mountain biking.
- More horse trails for fox chasing.
- Horse driving trails.
- More trails for off-street hiking and biking.
- Create walking trails that connect different points.
- Design a bike trail through the county that is safe and used for walking, biking, dog walking, and riding horses.
- Improve river trails.
- Build a linked and integrated bike/walking/hiking path system.
- More hiking trails.
- Clearly-labeled trails and maps of trails.
- Walking and bike trails and dogs permitted all hooked together.
- More places for my son to ride his bike safely in East Coventry. [Son appears to be an adult rider.]
- Soft surface trail/path for running and cycling and cross-country skiing.
- Create more non-motorized trails that connect parks, historic, and cultural institutions.
- More nature trails.
- More hiking.
- Make pedestrian connections between parks and where people live.
- Add more and safer bike paths.
- More walking and jogging trails other than the Schuylkill River.
- More walking trails to avoid walking on roads. More trails placed closer to more homes for recreational walks.
- Improved trails for bikes and running.
- Have sidewalks on back roads.
- Bike lanes.
- Extend paths to connect various trails clearly and clearly mark trails with colored lines-of-sight markers.
- More walking paths with sitting areas.
- Connect recreation areas with walking paths and make them safe for bikes.

### **Conservation (50 Responses)**

- Preserve open space, land, and habitats. (6)
- More preserved green spaces left undeveloped. (5)
- Less development, less construction. (5)
- Easy access to woods and natural areas. (3)
- Leave it natural. (3)
- Save small farms, stop development.
- Open space, green space, preservation, land, and historic buildings.
- More open space with hunting opportunities.
- More trees.
- Keep parks natural – we don't need expensive improvements.
- Low population density.
- More wilderness areas.
- Preserve open space so we can add parks later.
- Large arboretum with walking trails.
- Quiet space away from roads, parking, stores.
- Get rid of geese.
- Stock more birds and rabbits.
- Would love a nature reserve like McKaig in Upper Merion Township.
- Add more well-maintained nature parks and trails that are non-motorized.
- More peaceful spots without loud organized sports.
- More emphasis on nature.
- More land conservation.
- Seek conservation easements.
- Add a nature reserve.
- Make sure there are plenty of natural parks for walking and sitting to enjoy nature.
- Nature reserves away from the noise of ball fields and highways.
- Since our county is still rural, I view parks, ball fields, game courts, etc., as sprawl.
- We are very happy with our parks and use them often.

### **Maintenance (21 Responses)**

- Maintain the parks! (3)
- Cleanliness. (5)
- Pest control.
- Keep parks clean and safe.
- It's so overgrown along streams you can't fish.
- Improve care and amenities.
- Keep them cleaner.
- Keep the parks we have and keep them maintained.
- Spray for ticks.
- Trash clean up and safety.
- Better facility maintenance.
- Change out all synthetic plastic materials for cedar wood – use no toxic materials.
- More facilities and operation support.

### **Activities and Programs (26 Responses)**

- Activities that would appeal to retired people. (3)
- More things for children under six years.
- More free activities for children.
- More activities for adults.
- More activities.
- Music and bands.
- More things for people like summer camps.
- Set up canoe and kayak liveries for day use. Start in Reading and finish in Pottstown or Pottstown to Valley Forge.
- Add small sections of stocked streams for kid fishing only.
- Organized outdoor activities.
- More organized recreation activities.
- Promote quieter activities that gentle the soul.
- Increase opportunities for environmental education for ALL family members.
- Put kids' needs above horses.
- Access for deer hunting.
- Increase the variety of activities in parks.
- More history about the area and more info on nature.
- More organized activities – play groups, craft classes, etc.
- Have free game nights and a fair.
- More special events and community days.
- More music fairs.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks.
- Provide affordable summer sports.

**Security (9 Responses)**

- Access to park ranger via cell phone especially at Camp Fernbrook.
- No loitering.
- Keep out the undesirables. Hard to do but they wreck it for us.
- My total concern is security safeguards.
- Use signage to let people know when they are breaking the rules. Strictly enforce and take

action so that people know that breaking the rules is not a joke. Impose a fine.

- Have a police patrol.
- Visible security people.
- Add security guards to some of the parks as some of them are isolated.
- Ensure safety!

**Support (6 Responses)**

- Keep cost down.
- Stop the needless spending for the benefit of a few.
- More operating support.

- Cooperation among townships to share resources for active recreation.
- Reduce the tax burden.
- No tax increase.

Because questions 10 and 11 are so closely related, the responses, interpretation of the responses, and implications are reported together below the results of Question 11.

**Question 10. How aware are you and members of your household about the following? Circle one response for each item.**

**Table 9. Respondents' Awareness About Parks and Recreation Elements**

	Fully Informed	Would like to Know More	Not Aware
Parks in the area	36%	57%	6%
Trails for cycling	24	50	26
Recreation facilities	27	58	15
Recreation programs, events, and services	19	63	18
Where to get information about parks and recreation	20	63	17

**Question 11. How would you prefer to get information about parks and recreation in Northern Chester County? Circle one response for each item.**

**Table 10. Respondents' Preferences for Getting Information about Parks and Recreation**

	Most Preferred	Somewhat Preferred	Not Preferred
One Web site for your township	48%	30%	21%
One Web site for all townships in Northern Chester County	51	30	20
Owen J. Roberts School District Web site	14	25	61
Facebook, Twitter, or other social media	6	11	83
E-mails by topics of interest to you	25	26	49
Newsletters mailed to your home	48	27	28
Local newspapers	28	31	41
Handouts and fliers	20	28	52

## ***Interpretation***

The responses in Question 10 clearly indicate that most respondents would like to know more about parks, trails, programs, recreation facilities, and where to go to get information about parks and recreation, as shown in **Table 9**. Awareness about parks is higher than awareness about the kinds of recreation facilities and programs that would be offered in them. While trails are the top desired recreation facility, only 24 percent feel fully informed about trails. Another 26 percent say they are unaware of trails and fully one in two would like to know more. Therefore, three out of four survey respondents want to learn more about trails. Those who would like to know where to go to get information about parks and recreation outnumber respondents who feel fully informed by a margin of more than three to one. Recreation programs, services, and events are the elements of parks and recreation of which respondents are least aware. Correspondingly, not knowing about recreation opportunities was identified in Question 2 as the chief reason that prevents respondents from participating.

In Question 11, the respondents evaluated each way of getting information. **Table 10** shows the respondents' preferred sources for information. When asked how they preferred to get information about parks and recreation in Northern Chester County, 81 percent preferred being able to go to one Web site for all of Northern Chester County. One Web site for each township came in next with a 78 percent response. About 75 percent of respondents indicated that a newsletter mailed to the home was preferred. Not preferred were the social media of Facebook, Twitter, and the like; the Owen J. Roberts School District Web site; or e-mails. Local newspapers garnered only 41 percent of preferred responses. It is important to note that 73 percent of the survey respondents were age 45 and older. This is an age group less involved with social media than younger age groups. If more younger people had responded and in younger age groups, it is likely that social media may have been more highly preferred.

## ***Implications***

- **Provide parks and recreation regionally in Northern Chester County.** One of the most important findings of the survey was the respondents' preference for getting information about parks and recreation from one Web site for all of Northern Chester County.
- **Plan, launch, and manage a Web site for parks and recreation in Northern Chester County.** Provide links to this site from township Web sites and related Web sites from other parks and recreation providers, the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Chester County Parks Department, the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, Welkinweir, Crow's Nest Preserve, the school districts, private and parochial schools, day care centers, senior centers, the Brandywine and Valley Forge Convention and Visitors' Bureaus, and a host of others to be identified.
- **Strive to get a partner to work collaboratively in the planning, development, and management of a Web site for parks and recreation.** An example of a potential partner could be Chester Springs Surrounds. It is important to note that Web sites must be as "close to the customer" as possible.
- **Invest in this Web site as a primary function of parks and recreation in Northern Chester County.** Ensure that the Web site is updated in real time if possible. While this is a cost, the investment resulting in citizens participating more in recreation opportunities will yield great benefits to the citizens and the community. Use the fact that respondents said they prefer one Web site in Northern Chester County for this information.
- **Create and carry out a program to advertise and promote the Web site as the "go to" source of parks and recreation information in the community.**

- **Explore the use of social media among younger age groups.** Once the Web site is in place, the second order of business in getting information out to potential parks and recreation participants is reaching younger age groups through continually-evolving social media networks.

**Question 12. Supporting parks and recreation needs to come from a variety of public and private sources. What would you be willing to do to support parks and recreation? Circle all that apply.**

**Table 11. Support for Parks and Recreation**

Choice	Response Rate
Pay additional municipal taxes annually for parks and recreation	54%
<i>Consider paying another \$2-\$4 per person in municipal taxes annually.</i>	29%
<i>Consider paying another \$3-\$5 per person in municipal taxes annually.</i>	25%
Pay to use special types of facilities that require high maintenance	39%
Pay user fees to participate in programs	38%
Join a park friends group as a dues-paying member	15%
I would not support anything for parks and recreation increase.	5%
I need more information.	31%

**Table 12.  
Willingness to Support Additional Sources for Parks and Recreation  
According to Demographic Characteristic**

	Pay to use special facilities	Pay \$2-4 more in taxes	Pay \$3-5 more In taxes	Total willing to pay more in taxes	Pay Park Friends' Dues
All Respondents	39%	29%	25%	54%	15%
Respondents 25-44	35%	34%	31%	65%	16%
Respondents 45-64	42%	31%	27%	58%	16%
Respondents 65+ Years	38%	23%	21%	44%	11%
Male respondents	38%	32%	30%	52%	14%
Female respondents	42%	29%	22%	51%	16%
Resident under 5 Years	40%	31%	19%	50%	11%
Resident 5-10 Years	39%	34%	34%	68%	8%
Resident 10+ Years	41%	28%	24%	52%	19%

### ***Interpretation***

Even in a recession and with a pervasive anti-tax sentiment among the public, 54 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay another \$2-\$4 or \$3-\$5 annually in municipal taxes for parks and recreation. Most respondents were willing to pay a mix of methods to support parks and recreation. Only five percent of the respondents said they would not support anything for parks and recreation as indicated in **Table 11**. **Table 12** shows the responses according to age group and length of residence. It appears that those most supportive of paying for parks and recreation with taxes are people in the family-raising life stage and those who have lived here for five to ten years. The least willing to support parks and recreation are those age 65 and older.

About one in three indicated that they need more information. This finding corresponds to the lack of awareness and wanting to know more about parks and recreation opportunities as seen in Question 10.

## ***Implications***

- **Provide information to the public about the costs and investment value of parks, recreation, and open space in the community.** Promote the benefits of parks, recreation, and open space. Use facts derived from Northern Chester County wherever possible, then southeastern Pennsylvania, thirdly Pennsylvania, and then other locales. This could include real estate values, local spending, natural resource conservation efforts, and so on. An example includes: The York Heritage Rail Trail generates over \$4 million in local economic benefit annually. Recreation programs deter crime and juvenile delinquency. Open space conservation increases property values.
- **Direct municipal tax funds toward land, facilities, and programs that benefit the general public.**
- **Recognize that the residents have generously supported open space conservation.** Survey findings indicate that the citizens are very interested in recreational activities in which they also enjoy nature: walking, cycling, and playing in parks. The “Your Turn” comments included references to spending a lot of money on open space and not being able to use it for recreation as being a problem.
- **Institute a cost recovery program for special programs and events.** Adopt a fees and charges system if organized, scheduled recreation programs are held in Northern Chester County, in which the programs and special-use facilities benefit individual pursuits or facilities that require higher costs for maintenance, based upon use by individuals or organized groups. Some use by organized groups is a mix of benefitting individuals and the community at large by the nature of the service provided, in terms of benefits such as youth development, fitness, wellness, and the environment. In those cases, special policies and partnership arrangements could be developed for sharing operational costs.
- **Use this information to develop plans and make decisions about parks, recreation, and open space to benefit the community.** Continue to have public conversations about methods of paying for parks and recreation through a mix of public and private resources.
- **Recognize and work with the reality of the high tax situation in the region.** The conundrum is that tax levels are high overall but municipal investment in parks and recreation is low. Furthermore, the demographics of this community would indicate that the parks and recreation system should be premier in keeping with the quality of life in an area of this caliber. Anti-tax sentiment appears to be focused on school taxes.
- **Recognize that pooling resources regionally will yield a higher level of parks and recreation than many entities operating alone.** Given the level of support indicated in this survey, another \$2-5 per person in this region would have a marked effect on public recreation opportunities.
- **Develop a revenue strategy that includes a mix of resources including taxes, fees and charges, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising, grants, gifts, bequests, leases, and concessions.** Partnerships and strategic alliances are key aspects of most successful parks and recreation systems. Neither Northern Chester County as a whole nor each of its municipalities alone can be expected to provide all the financial support required for a parks and recreation system befitting the region. Create a 10-year funding plan for parks and recreation capital improvements. Update this plan when significant plans are established for major initiatives such as a trail system, an indoor recreation center if feasible, and major park and recreation facility improvements and development.

## **Open Ended Question: Your Turn!**

*Please use this space to add your comments.*

### ***Interpretation***

Your Turn generated 105 written comments from survey respondents. The specific comments of the respondents are shown in pages 46-51 of this report.

### ***Implications***

The comments were favorable and appreciative of the efforts of the Northern Federation and the municipalities in parks and recreation. The list has concrete suggestions for items that could be considered. Responses are included at the end of section VIII, below.

## **VII. Volunteers**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate if they would be interested in volunteering for parks and recreation initiatives. Twenty-one percent of the respondents, totaling 110 people, completed the questionnaire regarding helping out with parks and recreation. The Northern Federation can use this information as a source of new volunteers. The list of volunteers is being provided as a separate document to the Director for privacy reasons.

## **VIII. Open-Ended Questions**

Responses to questions that contained open-ended questions are listed on the following pages.

**Question 1. Other Programs or Activities of Interest**

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Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

**Activities or Interests (33 responses)**

- Mountain biking (2)
- Dog parks (2)
- Walking dogs
- Dog-friendly parks
- Active recreation opportunities
- Longer trail network
- Recreation resources such as the Schuylkill River and the county property are underutilized.
- Walking – bicycle trails
- I do many of these things – just not here.
- Camping
- Horseback riding and hunting with the hounds
- Pick-up games in township parks
- Keep character of East Coventry and surrounding areas and maintaining trail access for horses
- Living history and re-enactments
- Moved to East Coventry to enjoy dark starry skies – now too much light pollution – lost 20-30 degrees of horizon to lights.
- Concerts and plays in local areas
- More nature trails
- Craft workshops
- Need a park to roller blade and bike in
- RV camping
- Camping
- Skiing
- Use playgrounds
- Looking for companies that rent canoes and kayaks by day or weekend on the Schuylkill River.
- Roller blading
- Ice skating
- Breathing clean air and enjoying the natural landscapes
- Use the town path
- Target shooting
- This area needs more sports fields. Growth has been huge and facilities have not kept pace.
- Paint ball

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**Question 2. Blocks to Participation**

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Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

**Blocks to Participation (59 responses)**

- T
- oo old and not in best of health. (11)
- DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON (5)
- Nothing (5)
- I have lived here my entire life of 44 years and have never had a problem finding recreation.
- Where are the ACTIVE RECREATION PARKS?
- Lack of active facilities
- We are already active
- Child isn't old enough for sports now but will likely participate.
- Kids too young\*
- Currently working two jobs and don't have free time.
- Am on disability and don't get out much.
- Senior Citizen.
- Can't take dogs to park – afraid of Lyme bugs.
- Forget.
- No sidewalks or biking paths
- No bike path and roads are dangerous
- I frequently participate in all kinds of programs but grandchildren take me to

Morgantown and Chadds Ford areas to do so!

- Mostly don't know about them. Not enough notice is given and other things get scheduled.
- Never know about them!
- There are more good programs than days in the week
- No indoor pool
- Trail access that used to exist for horseback riding since the 1970s is being destroyed by development. Need future development to keep perimeters clear of trails through easements or other ways.
- Children are grown and grandchildren live elsewhere
- Must work to pay taxes to county and township which double about every three years.
- Work days and weekends and have schedule conflicts
- Need info on township parks
- Don't care
- Not interested

- Facilities we use here are poor quality
- I have a lot of interests but not a lot of time. But I am glad they are there for others especially the children.
- Not around 4-6 months of the year
- Children not interested
- Travel
- Only way to find out is county flyer at the county park
- Things are too kid-centered which does not interest me
- Not enough activities for adults without children
- Do many of the activities listed but elsewhere and would love to do them in our own community!
- Live at the beach in summer and too old and cold to play in winter
- We do not have PARKS – we have ball fields. We do have good people working on making our parks green and pleasant for everyone!
- No bike path
- Where are the county's tennis backboards?

### **Question 3. Other Parks and Recreation Facilities Used**

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Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

#### **Other Park and Recreation Facilities Used (23 named)**

- Lionville Y (3)
- Lionville Y for swimming
- Public golf courses (2)
- Cemeteries for walking
- Dog parks
- Downingtown & Great Valley HS tracks
- Elverson Y
- Geocaching areas
- Hunting
- Marsh Creek
- Morgantown Y
- Pine Creek Park
- Public golf courses that allow kids
- Public tennis courts
- High School tennis courts
- Royersford Y
- Wild edges of business parks
- PA State Gamelands #43

## Question 6. Other Parks and Recreation Facility Availability

Each response was listed once. Numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

### Respondents answered this question by pointing out the need for additional facilities including the following. (26 responses)

- More hunting (6)
- Dog park (4)
- Active recreation facilities: bike trails, ball fields, and tennis courts grouped together for active facilities
- Sprinkler park for little kids
- Linear parks
- Outdoor concert facility
- Ice skating rink
- Outdoor shooting range
- Trails with a soft surface
- Tennis courts
- Preserve land for future generations to make decisions about what to put there
- Place to walk dogs
- Community gardens
- Horse driving trails
- Natural gardens
- Sidewalks

### “Your Turn” Open-Ended Comment Question

<b>Northern Chester County Public Opinion Survey “Your Turn Comments”</b>	
Source/ Municipality	Comment
Meeting Survey	1. Start promoting Share the Road programs for bikers/walkers/cars. Start promoting alternative transportation for commuting to work – bike lanes etc. Expand the vision beyond recreation, think sustainability, grant funding
East Coventry	2. Glad to hear about it!
East Coventry	3. 75 years old. Widowed. Family grown up and moved out. Both hips replaced in a year.
East Coventry	4. We need more open space for its own sake not because it affords another organized activity use.
East Coventry	5. Lifelong resident now raising a family with a spouse who used to run in the Valley Green and misses it.
East Coventry	6. My family would like to use more of the walking/biking trails and organized sports leagues but we are now unaware of their existence. Do take advantage of the parks we are aware of – there is nothing better than to get children outside.
East Coventry	7. Ridden here since 1975 (referring to horses)
East Coventry	8. Reduce spending vs. increasing taxes/fees!
East Coventry	9. Who in their right mind would not like to see everything noted happen if the money was there to pay for it but nothing should happen if taxes have to be raised – Seniors are trying desperately to hold on to their properties and live and die with dignity rather than be on the taxpayers (government rolls). Seniors have done their share. If the young want these for their families it’s theirs to pay.
East Coventry	10. Our family has been farming this area for more than 100 years. Now cemeteries are the only

**Northern Chester County  
Public Opinion Survey “Your Turn Comments”**

Source/ Municipality	Comment
	quiet place to go. If you want parks and recreation, put a leash on developers that have already raped this area. While you’re at it, put a lid on Owen J’s taxes.
East Coventry	11. I think current parks are great but (more) could be done to fully utilize the space. Bring park to East Coventry area. Thank You!
East Coventry	12. I believe open space should try to be kept. Farmers are selling off property. Children and teens need places to go and opportunities for a variety of different recreations. Nature should be enjoyed and respected. I enjoy my time with my nine year old when we go to the park and fishing.
East Coventry	13. East Coventry seems to move very slowly. Almost no news is good news. Two examples are Pizza World property and East Coventry Pool, Fickes Lock and 724 – two eyesores. Dumping ground for DECADES. Also miles of bike paths east of the township and west of the township but no access in East Coventry.
East Coventry	14. Would like to see a place to go ATV riding and more areas to hunt or just be able to take a hike.
East Coventry	15. Thank you for asking for our opinion!
East Coventry	16. Your Hard work is really appreciated
East Coventry	17. This is an attractive area. There are lots of rec area ballparks, trails, etc. At our ages of over 70, I still like to walk, hike and canoe
East Nantmeal	18. Thanks for this opportunity. We enjoy our local parks very much. Our son attends Camp Hill Special School and they frequent all parks and feel welcome.
East Nantmeal	19. No one should have to pay user fees to use or participate in public park programs. I believe taxes or special event days make money!
East Nantmeal	20. Feel it should be up to the people that choose to participate to pay their way. I’m quite tired of paying for everybody to just mess things up and figure someone will pay for it!
East Nantmeal	21. If you are going to spend money, don’t waste it on typical “suburban” improvements like pools, ballfields, skate parks etc. Spend it on pure natural open space.
East Nantmeal	22. I wish there would be more places to hunt deer and other game other than private land. It is just getting very difficult to find a place to hunt.
East Nantmeal	23. Help promote small and large game restoration with state and federal info and monies. Stop creating playgrounds everywhere. Need more nature type activities and undisturbed areas. Help landowners understand the benefits of hunting and fishing access.
East Nantmeal	24. We don’t use the parks much because we have enough land and facilities to keep us busy – but we do believe parks are important and would like to find the time to attend some of the nature type activities – maybe when we retire!
East Pikeland	25. Like the idea of preserving open space by creating parks (nature centers would be nice) vs. turning open space into plops of McMansions in a field
East Pikeland	26. Not interested in anything. Increase services for taxes already paying. Forget farther expansion of spending form nonsense. A frustrated taxpayer.
East Pikeland	27. Don’t allow private businesses on our parks and recreation land. e.g.: landowner lets a business exist by East Vincent’s Revolutionary War cemetery. Visitors are now sharing the same parking lot with this business. It looks horrible. They destroy the lot and the sound of nature can rarely be heard. East Vincent Township is fining this person until they leave.
East Pikeland	28. Obviously this survey is not of interest to us.
East Pikeland	29. Thank you for reaching out to us. Please help keep us informed of the general response and

**Northern Chester County  
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Source/ Municipality	Comment
	programs for improvements in the future.
East Pikeland	30. I find it very strange that as a runner of many years I can go to the Conestoga High School, turn on the lights for up to 55 minutes and run/speed work but in my own township high school, the track is locked!! Due to supposed kid destruction/damage!!! For that I get to be ripped off for \$6,000 with no return. Amazing based on my lack of return for 6K, you tell me why I should be interested. Not your fault, just another messed up system.
East Pikeland	31. Many of these questions were family or younger person oriented. I just enjoy having open space, tress, and places for wild life to be enjoyed – not so much organization.
East Pikeland	32. My household is not interested in any new parks, facilities etc. that will increase our taxes. Living in East Pikeland we already pay 1.25% local tax and taxes in Chester County are already high enough.
East Pikeland	33. Absolutely overwhelmed by this flier. In all over 40 years we have never received such a great invite/info/convenience/conveyance etc. Like this! We want to thoroughly and thoroughly ... <b>THANK YOU</b> (Age 77 over ten-year resident. Willing to pay more & join in
East Pikeland	34. We moved here in 1987 and had no knowledge of anything available for us or our children. Everything was learned too late. Play area came to Kimberton finally and dogs not permitted. By now too late for kids – perhaps grandkids? No safe cheap water in Kimberton Creek: makes dogs smell like fish.
East Pikeland	35. There are other schools in Chester County with Web sites and recreation areas other than Owen J. Roberts.
East Vincent	36. Personally I think there are plenty of ballfields. However my kids are grown. The park near the Spring City Police Station could use a little attention. It looks like a great place to sled though more benches might mess that up. Need access to Schuylkill River and information about other existing areas and how to get to the river.
East Vincent	37. I am close to the Park on the Ridge. It is beautiful and maintained well. I notice it is used everyday. There are sports played here but no baseball fields. In this time of scarce money, we must be careful
East Vincent	38. This is a rural township. I would like to see it remain that way. The farmers needs our support and open space is critical to maintaining a slower and healthier life for people – the natural world recreation is fine as long as they do not diminish the natural landscape and ecological health of the land. Wildlife should be protected and our waterways capable of supporting diverse life forms.
East Vincent	39. I am opposed to using anyone’s private property for trails, greenways, etc.
East Vincent	40. I believe the park system is very good. Current funding should be sufficient.
East Vincent	41. My wife and I enjoy the East Vincent Park very much. It is well kept and right across the road from us. As a farmer when I see a survey on open space I think of farmland, not mentioned in this survey. Parks are nice but too many of them will cost too much. Farms produce food.
East Vincent	42. Open space preservation is part of the reason we live in Chester County where we do and why we are okay with paying such high taxes. Keep it open! ☺
East Vincent	43. I would like to see more open space and less development. I believe we need more activities for our young people to keep them out of trouble and more places for senior adults and people with disabilities to get together.
East Vincent	44. I feel I find out about special events either too close to the day or even <u>AFTER</u> it occurs. ☹

**Northern Chester County  
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Source/ Municipality	Comment
East Vincent	45. I love living in Chester County even though I do not like living in PA. My wife’s family history is traced to Chester County all the way back to William Penn’s second voyage. I do not plan on leaving. All I can hope for is value put on open space and less on Targets & developments.
East Vincent	46. I want to thank you for your parks, trails and facilities. Although I get lost on trails sometimes, I still have a great time. Thanks, Chester County!
East Vincent	47. No motorized tracks or trails ever. All parks, trails, program activities that depend in taxation of any sort must be on a ballot simultaneously throughout any federation. (Note: Still willing to pay \$3-5)
East Vincent	48. I am currently involved in open space (private) programs. Parks programs are important to me.
North Coventry	49. Parks are great! Love Valley Forge! I’ve heard about an Outdoor Range at French Creek Park. I would like to find out more about this. I think that is a great idea and would like to see more in the area.
North Coventry	50. I believe that Chester County does a great job on their parks and recreational activities.
North Coventry	51. Whitmarsh Township has a great newsletter that they send out 2-4 times a year. It is very informative and kept us aware of what was available.
North Coventry	52. Leave open space open
North Coventry	53. The parks need to be user friendly and monitored from time to time to keep trouble away. Most people that use parks are good people. They clean up after themselves and are friendly and that’s the way it should be. I just don’t want it to become a hangout for problem kids and people to ruin it. That’s why I said it should be maintained from time to time, just a drive through from police or parks and recreation so people know it is being watched.
North Coventry	54. Public parks are very important to any community, however there is an extremely bad problem of people trespassing on private property, using other people’s property without permission. Perhaps we could start imposing fines on these morons and use that money for the parks that would support upkeep for them.
North Coventry	55. Thank you for your work and efforts to improve recreational facilities and <u>open space</u> .
North Coventry	56. I would like to know where I could find all info about parks for kids in the area.
North Coventry	57. A dog park would be tremendous. Volunteer support needed for a dog park. So many dogs here. Place for dogs & owners to gather and socialize.
North Coventry	58. We are no longer young but hope for more parks, walking and nature trails open space and recreational opportunities for our children, grandchildren and future generations
North Coventry	59. My opinion doesn’t matter. Why don’t you ask the wildlife if they would like their habitats destroyed for human amusement park.
North Coventry	60. Any additional parks and rec activities would be welcome. Summer camp with themes.
North Coventry	61. Do not raise taxes to pay for any more things of this nature. Right now we need to lower taxes not raise them!
South	62. If you asked most people involved with youth sports, they will tell you that we need more

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Source/ Municipality	Comment
Coventry	baseball, football, soccer & lacrosse fields. I feel that the elementary schools in this area all have ballfields that are available to the aforementioned groups.
South Coventry	63. I cannot help at this time – one in college, another going to college in two years. Work, work, work. Financially strapped.
South Coventry	64. Do not consider adding ANY new or additional taxes of any type to the taxpaying public for any new or considered proposals or programs – we can’t afford it. Anything new needs to stand on its own in terms of service and be supported by reasonable user fees.
South Coventry	65. Thank you for asking.
South Coventry	66. Local parks especially in South Coventry are being promoted by a few interested individuals for personal financial gain as well as to increase their power in the community. These parks are an attractive nuisance in the community which will invite activities that will increase lawsuits and more expense for the already over taxpayer.
South Coventry	67. We love our parks and welcome any improvements.
South Coventry	68. I’d love to have a bike trail in the Big Woods.
South Coventry	69. Northern Chester County is a beautiful place to live and we have been very impressed with its parks and open space.
South Coventry	70. No tax increase for any of these activities. In fact, stop property tax on senior citizens
South Coventry	71. Please remove the tire chips form Warwick Playground. They are toxic and should not be where kids play. We’d love to use the equipment there but go to French Creek instead.
Warwick	72. Preserve open space, forests and prevent overdevelopment and “urban spread” by creating too many facilities when nature has already done that for us.
Warwick	73. I would think instead of more parks with a lot of maintenance, that wider roads with bike path or sidewalks would be used more and cut down on accidents. This would encourage more people to exercise in their own community.
Warwick	74. My wife and I moved to Warwick Township in 2004 and we’ve come to realize that the most valued asset is open space, peace, quiet and tranquility. A nature reserve, more trees and public gardens would be highly welcomed and valued.
Warwick	75. Horse riding trails wide and clear to drive horses.
Warwick	76. My husband would like to see some land in Warwick Township made into a soccer field.
Warwick	77. We would like to help out but we are old & not in the best health.
Warwick	78. I enjoy the parks in my area just the way they are. I think open space parks should be kept as natural as possible.
Warwick	79. Living for 32 years above Warwick Park, I am now moving to Florida. As past president of the Friends of Warwick Park and an active member, I participated in many fundraisers since 1997. I have hiked in the park and when my daughter was little went to many events with her. She also enjoyed the playground.
Warwick	80. This area is great. We are lucky to have French Creek State Park, Crow’s Nest preserve, Warwick County Park and Camp Fernbrook so close to home. We are looking forward to the new trail that begins at St. Peter’s Village and ends at French Creek (I think). Well where it goes, we will be on it!

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Warwick	81. Most important to me is preserving open space without development of any kind. Also concerned about stopping new lighting and preserving night skies.
Warwick	82. Would like to see the old rail trail from St. Peters to RT. 345 be repaired to allow hiking, biking, and horse riding. We need places to go, not always relying on development and to set aside recreation areas.
West Pikeland	83. Saving/preserving open land from being overbuilt is critical to saving Chester County. Take a drive through Delaware County to see how over construction destroys a county. Control builders- Limit construction!!!
West Pikeland	84. We moved from Wayne. We walked at McKaig in Upper Merion or Skunk Hollow in Radnor everyday with our kids and dogs. Here, although we are surrounded by more land and open space, there is nowhere for the entire family to go including dogs to walk. Also we have many creeks around but I don't know how I can access them for my kids to play in water.
West Pikeland	85. More bicycle paths please. Complete more of the Schuylkill River Trail system.
West Pikeland	86. Lived in Chester County for 25 years. Every year the local political said there would be tennis courts. Where? Have I missed them? We buy ground to protect open space by can't get ground for soccer or tennis courts.
West Pikeland	87. Preserve and conserve township open spaces!
West Pikeland	88. Kids have taken a back seat to horses for too long now. If you don't provide opportunities for kids to participate, they will find their own activities (not all of them good). The value of your home would also diminish if other families buy here. We need to play where they go to school so they can be with their friends.
West Pikeland	89. I do not know about other Northern Chester County Townships but West Pikeland needs to have more active recreation; tennis courts; basketball courts in our park. It is severely underused.
West Pikeland	90. Open Space should not be used for anything other than open space. More preservation needs to be done to keep the countryside open and protected.
West Pikeland	91. We keep purchasing open land without tax dollars but we have ZERO parks for “active recreation”. We have tons of new families but still old residents running things. <u>That needs to change.</u>
West Vincent	92. Although the quieter forms of recreation like tennis, racquetball are not compatible with trees, walkways, trails, water interests, the team sports need their own space. It should be a requirement of the new developments that ballfields, community gardens and recreation halls be a part of the planning within the space of the development. They are doing that in towns like Swarthmore and even Pittsburgh with less room.
West Vincent	93. As our area (West Vincent) has a large horseback riding population and we have lost so much of our trail land to developers, we would like to see additional trails dedicated to riders, hikers and non-motorized vehicles added to our area – as many other countries have done!
West Vincent	94. Open Space preservation is a priority to me. Use township tax funds to do this and make new developers install ballfields etc as part of this planning and development
West Vincent	95. I would like to see a county golf course.
West Vincent	96. I would like to see as much land, woods, walking and sitting trials to enjoy nature. We have

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	a valuable resource in our land – let’s strive to keep it that way.
West Vincent	97. Parks and recreation facilities need to be safe and healthy environments, especially for children and vulnerable populations. So no toxic materials such as arsenic, copper-treated park tables where we eat. No herbicides, pesticides. Create a buffer zone around parks where farmers are prohibited from spraying any toxic substance period. Encourage schools to adopt a park; to be responsible for aspects related to beauty, improving the aesthetic will encourage people to “hang out” because they feel “re-charged”. Utilize consciously the healing benefits of nature. Thank You.
West Vincent	98. I am a senior citizen & I enjoy taking my grandchildren to parks and playgrounds. My husband & I would like more safe walking trails.
West Vincent	99. It would be helpful to have clearly marked recreation areas and even though it is too late and probably not relevant to this study, traffic should be addressed to improve the quality of life.
West Vincent	100. West Vincent Township probably needs more playing fields. However, for a community encompassing the number of square miles that it occupies, it will probably be necessary to provide additional parking space (appropriately landscaped) to house the motor vehicles that people use to transport themselves to their children’s games. Well-designed recreational spaces enhance the desirability of the community. They may cost \$ to build and maintain but they may indeed be worth the expense if they are well managed.
West Vincent	101. My township is overspent and in debt. I will not vote for supervisors who continue to waste our money on anything we can live without, regardless of its merit.

