

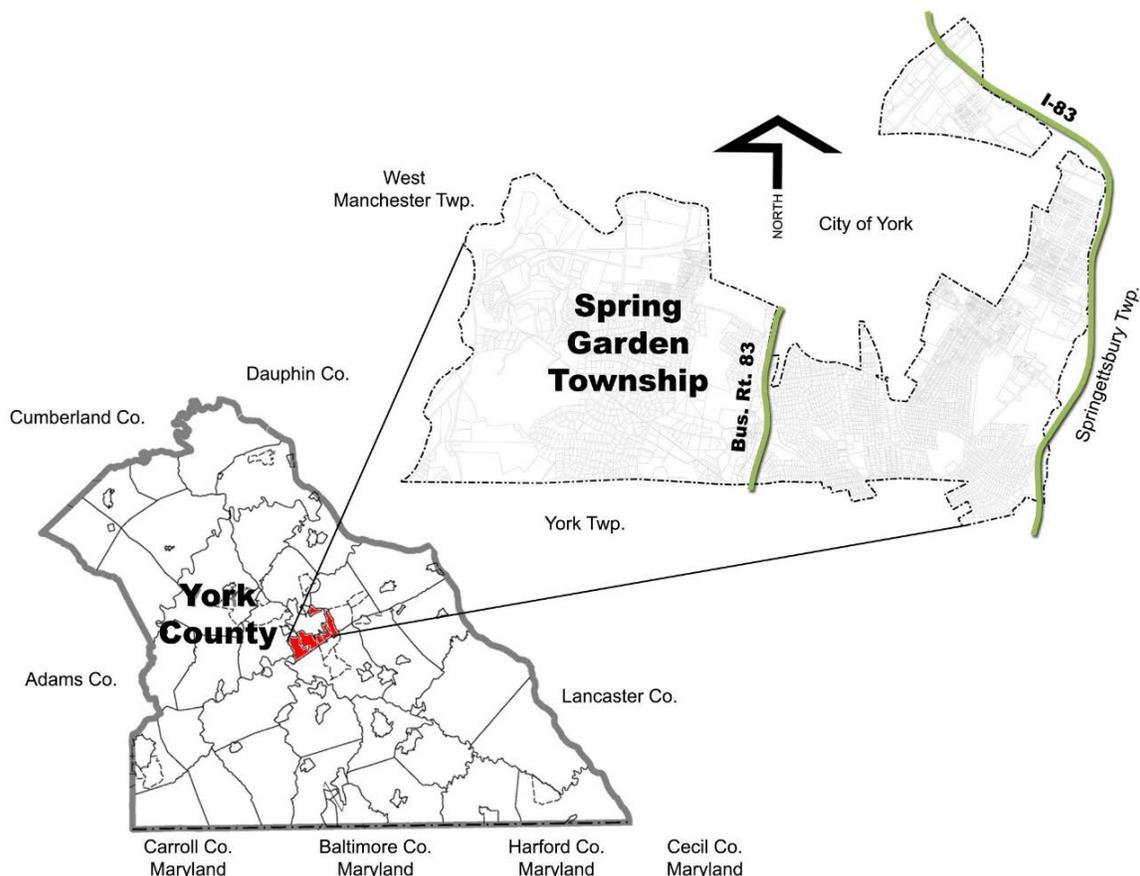
Chapter 2 - Community Profile

Chapter 2 - Community Profile

Understanding the context and character of Spring Garden Township is vital to creating a plan for parks and recreation that will be successful in serving citizens. The community profile explores the community's locations, history, demographics, and findings of the public involvement process for this Plan.

Location and Configuration

Spring Garden Township is located in central York County, Pennsylvania, and is a first-ring municipality outside of the City of York. Spring Garden Township encircles York City spanning from the Codorus Creek south of the City to Codorus Creek, north of the City. The adjoining municipalities are West Manchester and North Codorus Townships to the west, York Township to the south, Springettsbury Township to the east and north, and North York Borough and Manchester Township to the west. The Township is made up of neighborhoods to include Brockie, Wyndham Hills, Grantley, Farquhar Estates, Tri Hill, Violet Hill, Hillcroft, Mount Rose, Elmwood, Windsor Park, and others. The Windsor Park neighborhood is separated from the remainder of the municipality by a small segment of the City of York. U.S. Route 83 is somewhat parallel to the north and east boundary of the Township and Business Route 83 bisects the municipality south of the City.



History

Spring Garden Township was part of Hellam Township from 1739 to 1822 when it was split off and named after the suburban area north of Philadelphia. The area of what is now Springettsbury Township was part of Spring Garden Township from 1822 to 1891. In 1891 the courts acted on results of an election poll that decided to separate the western suburban area of Spring Garden Township from the agricultural interest of Springettsbury to the east.

Municipal Government

Spring Garden Township is a First Class Township. Five elected officials serve the Township as the Board of Commissioners, representing the five wards of the municipality. In accordance with the Pennsylvania First Class Township Code, the Spring Garden Township Board of Commissioners is charged with the general governance of the Township; the execution of legislative, executive, and administrative powers in order to ensure the sound fiscal management of the Township; and securing the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the community.

The Board of Commissioners fulfills its duty by adopting resolutions and ordinances, hiring staff to provide services, establishing fees and charges, adopting a budget, establishing tax rates, and appointing advisory and special purpose boards and commissions to help oversee legislative activities and certain operational functions.

Demographics

Spring Garden Township is a suburban community with a 2010 population of 12,578. Between 2000 and 2010 Pennsylvania grew by 3.4 percent and York County grew by 13.9 percent. Spring Garden Township's population grew at 5.0 percent, slightly more than the state as a whole but slower than York County. Spring Garden Township is an established community with relatively less open land available for development than the County.

Table 3-1
**Pennsylvania, York County, Spring Garden Township
Population Changes 2000-2010**

Area	2000 Population	2010 Population	Numeric Change 2000-2010	% Change
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,702,379	421,325	3.4%
York County	381,751	434,972	53,221	13.9%
Spring Garden Township	11,974	12,578	604	5.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

What Change is Significant?

The U.S. Bureau of the Census considers a change of 2.5 percent to be significant.

Population Projections

The York County Planning Commission has developed population projections for the municipalities. Table 3-2 presents population projections for York County and Spring Garden Township through 2030. The Township is projected to increase by 2.6. This is much lower than York County’s projected growth of 16.1 percent.

Table 3-2
York County and Spring Garden Township
Population Projections through 2030

Area	2010 Population	2020 Population	2030 Population	# Change 2010-2030	% Change 2010 - 2030
York County	434,972	464,424	504,958	69,986	16.1%
Spring Garden Township	12,578	12,651	12,904	326	2.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, York County Planning Commission

Age

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median age for York County is 40.1, while Spring Garden Township is slightly younger with a median age of 38.8.

Since 2000, Spring Garden Township’s population of citizens’ ages 44 years and under has declined slightly. The Township’s biggest gain in population by age group was the 55 to 64 age group. Planning for services for young families and active seniors is important in Spring Garden Township to address these population shifts.

Table 3-3
York County and Spring Garden Township
Age of Population 2000-2010

Age Group	York County		Spring Garden Township	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Under 5 yrs.	6.1%	6.1%	4.7%	4.3%
5 – 24 yrs	26.1	25.6	31.6	32.9
25 – 44 yrs.	30.3	25.5	22.9	20.1
45 – 54 yrs.	14.6	16.0	13.1	13.3
55 – 64 yrs.	9.4	12.8	9.2	12.7
65 – 74 yrs.	7.1	7.5	7.9	7.9
75 – 84 yrs.	4.8	4.6	7.6	5.9
85 yrs +	1.6	1.9	3.0	2.9
Median Age	37.8 yrs.	40.1 yrs.	38.3 yrs.	38.8 yrs.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Race

Spring Garden Township was less diverse than York County as a whole in 2010 with 91.8 percent white, compared to 88.5 percent white in the County. African Americans made up 3.3 percent and Hispanic or Latino made up 3.5 percent of the Township population. The Asian population was 1.7 percent.

Education

The 2000 U. S. Census indicated that 22.9 percent of Spring Garden Township residents, 25 years and older, had a Bachelor's degree. An additional 12.6 percent had a graduate or professional degree. Residents of Spring Garden Township are more educated than the County as a whole where 12.5 percent held bachelor's degrees and 5.8 percent held graduate or professional degrees. Education data is not available for 2010.

Income

The median income for persons over 16 years old based on 2014 inflation adjusted dollars for Spring Garden Township is \$74,238 based on the 2010-2014 American Communities Survey, while the same statistic for York County is \$55,550. Spring Garden Township is more affluent than other communities in the County.

Housing

The median value of a house in Spring Garden Township according to the 2010 U.S. Census was \$168,900 and median rent was at \$1,078 per month. In the County, the median house value was \$170,900 and median rent was \$838 per month. The 2010 U.S. Census found that 87.9 percent of the Township's housing stock was owner occupied in 2010, while 75.5 percent of the County's housing stock is owner occupied.

Public Participation

This planning project included a four-part public participation process: a Study Committee, interviews, public meetings, and an on-line public comment survey.

Study Committee

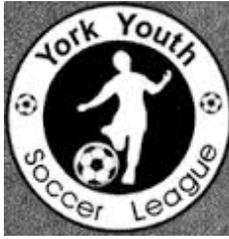
The Study Committee was established to guide the planning process and provide feedback regarding project findings. The six member Study Committee was comprised of representatives of the Spring Garden Township Recreation Commission and the Recreation Director. The Study Committee met several times throughout the plan development to discuss project findings and planning considerations and to review the draft report. The Study Committee provided guidance and direction on the plan, identified key stakeholders for interviews, and shared feedback and ideas for consideration.



Key Person Interviews

The planning process included interviews with key stakeholders in the community and region. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain information, ideas, concerns, and suggestions from individuals and organizations regarding parks, trails, recreation facilities, and recreation programs.

Interviews took place throughout the planning process and included members of the Recreation Department, adjacent and nearby municipalities, York County Rail Trail Authority, York Suburban School District, youth sports providers, and others.



Public Meetings

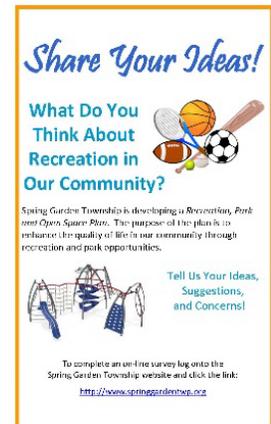
Two public meetings were held to obtain input from citizens regarding their leisure interests, park and recreation opportunities, and existing park use. The first public meeting was held early in the planning process. A second public meeting was held to share the mission, vision, goals, and recommendations of this **Plan**. Both meetings were held at the municipal building and attended by citizens and the Study Committee.



Online Public Comment

Spring Garden Township offered citizens the opportunity to comment on parks and recreation via an online questionnaire posted on Spring Garden Township's website. A total of 252 responses were received, which indicated the following:

- **The number one reason respondents visit parks is to Experience Nature (77.83%), followed closely by Fitness and Wellness (75.22%).** The next highest response is to Socialize with Friends (55.22%). Self-directed recreation in the outdoor setting is why residents visit parks.
- **Respondents indicate that Spring Garden Township should prioritize Maintaining Parks and Recreation Facilities (70.18%) over the next ten years.** When high priority and medium priority are combined, maintaining parks and recreation facilities is the highest priority at 97.7%. The second highest priority is Improving Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities (50.45%), and 93.18% when high and medium priorities are combined. The third priority of respondents for high and medium priority combined is Expanding Recreation Programs and Services (80.65%) followed closely by Developing the Mt. Rose Avenue Property (76.24%). Respondents are indicating that they want Spring Garden Township to invest in existing parks and facilities and to take care of what they have. This response does not jive well with the reasons respondents visit parks because:
 - The setting of the parks is suburban and do not include opportunities to experience nature.
 - The parks are too small to introduce trails and other facilities that promote fitness and wellness.



- The parks do not have the features that draw diverse users and are not designed to promote socializing with friends.
- **The majority of respondents never visit Spring Garden Township parks.** Relatively significant number of respondents do not know about the majority of the municipal parks – with Tri-Hill Park being the most recognized park site and Custis Field being the least recognized. Respondents do indicate that they visit other parks in the region (% = daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonally combined) to include Heritage Rail Trail County Park (86.08%), William Kain/Nixon County Parks (83.35%), Parks in Other Municipalities (74.69%), and York Water Co. Land on Country Club/Grantley Roads (61.08%). The most popular park in Spring Garden Township, Tri-Hill Park, received a combined visit total of 53.26%. The visits at Tri-Hill Park appear to be driven by the special events held there, as the majority of the visits are seasonal (30.98%). Additionally, more respondents may be aware of Tri-Hill Park because it is the home of the police department, recreation department, and public meeting rooms. Residents do not know about Custis Field because it is a single-use park for youth baseball. The Other category garnered 40 responses for Springettsbury Township and 29 responses for York Township
- **Respondents rated the parks and recreation facilities in Spring Garden Township at below average for every metric listed.** On a weighted score the overall average was 3.07 out of 10, with ten as excellent and zero as poor.
- **Preferred activities (Very Important score of >50%) to provide in the Mt. Rose Avenue Property include:**
 - Restrooms – 83.59%
 - Running/jogging/walking paths – 79.49%
 - Enjoying nature – 69.27%
 - Children’s play equipment/area – 66.67%
 - Sitting and relaxing – 66.49%
 - Picnicking – 58.95%
 - Exercise/fitness – 54.12%

The ranking stays the same if the scores for Very Important and Somewhat Important are combined. Respondents preferred self-directed, outdoor activities, over programmed activities. Preferences relate directly to the responses to the first question – what are you looking for when visiting parks.

- **Responses to Availability of Recreation Programs in Spring Garden Township was “Don’t Know” across all demographics.** This indicates that recreation programs are not widely utilized in the Township.
- **Adult respondents (>80%) indicated interests in the following Recreation Programs: Exercise and Fitness, Concerts, Self-Improvement and Education Classes.** Highest interest for Pre-School Children (35.94%) and School Age Youth (71.88%) was Summer Day Camps. Highest interest for Teens was League Sports (42.86%) and Seniors was Trips (42.42%). The surveys were complete primarily by adults.

Findings of the Public Participation Process, Research, and Review of Current Conditions

Each method of obtaining public input found a consistent message from the citizens of Spring Garden Township. The following summarizes the input from the public meetings, on-line survey, key stakeholders, and observations from field work and assessment of current condition.

Parks – The six municipal parks offer similar recreation facilities (playgrounds, basketball courts, pavilions), are small with little or no room for expansion or introduction of additional facilities desired by residents. With the exception of three youth baseball fields, the parks do not offer athletic fields to accommodate youth programs. The parks require investment in accessibility accommodations, updated playgrounds, and visitor amenities. The lack of diverse recreation offerings focuses park use to residents in the immediate neighborhood. Primary park visitors are mothers and young children using the playgrounds and teens and young adults playing basketball.

Schools – York Suburban School District schools within the Township have similar challenges as the parks, with maximized sites and minimal room for expansion. The school district opens their fields, courts, and gymnasiums to community use.

Community Sports – Various organizations, including the Spring Garden Township Recreation Department, provide youth sports programming for Spring Garden Township residents. The programs use the three municipal youth baseball fields but must travel to parks in other municipalities or use York Suburban School District facilities for older youth baseball, lacrosse, softball, soccer, football, and basketball. Youth participation in lacrosse and soccer is growing, baseball is steady, and softball is growing throughout York County, but is declining in Spring Garden Township. Indoor recreation venues are needed and programs rely on the use of school gymnasiums.

Trails – Respondents to the internet survey ranked using running/jogging/walking paths and enjoying nature as the highest preferred activities to accommodate in the Mt. Rose Avenue Property. There was an extensive discussion at the first public meeting regarding trail opportunities and the desire to have safe places to walk and bicycle in Spring Garden Township. Trails will also provide opportunities for park visitors to experience nature and participate in fitness and wellness activities, listed as the top two experiences residents are looking for when visiting parks.

Programs and Services – The Spring Garden Township Recreation Department provides important public recreation services which include sports leagues coordination, the summer park programs, and special events like the Fall Fest and Easter Egg Hunt. The current program offerings focus on children and should be expanded to include adults, senior adults, teens, and families. Program revenue goals should be initiated. Program registration and policies should be more user friendly.

Maintenance – Maintenance activities should be formalized in a written maintenance management plan to improve work scheduling, tracking, and budgeting. Playgrounds should be routinely inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.

Mt. Rose Avenue Property – There is extensive interest and anticipation regarding the development of the Mt. Rose Avenue Property as a community park. The site offers a setting

that can accommodate the recreation facilities and opportunities preferred by residents. The size of the property will accommodate the development of athletic fields and courts which cannot be accommodated within existing parks, providing a home base for Spring Garden Township youth sports organizations.

Community Analysis

Strengths

Spring Garden Township is a first ring community outside the City of York and is densely developed with minimal open, undeveloped areas. The Township has a relatively stable population that is anticipated to grow minimally over the next several decades. Spring Garden Township residents are more educated and have a higher income than the County as a whole.

Challenges

The developed nature of the community provides minimal opportunity to expand recreation facility offerings. Recreation programs and facilities should align with changing trends and interests. Citizens' interest in natural areas and trails do not align with the existing parks site opportunities and acquisition of additional land and rights-of-ways for trails will be a challenge.

Opportunities

This **Plan** provides an assessment of recreation opportunities that are based on a foundation of community input, assessment of current conditions, and consideration of local and regional interests and trends. This assessment provides information for elected official as they consider the future of parks and recreation in Spring Garden Township.