

## CHAPTER 6 STRATEGIC GOALS

### INTRODUCTION

Based on the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5, it is possible to conclude that there are unmet recreation needs in Horsham Township. These needs will become more acute as the customer population continues to grow, unless the park and recreation system expands and evolves in the coming years. But to what degree should the Township’s system change in order to be responsive to that evolutionary process? This chapter begins to formulate a strategy.

This chapter presents policy guidelines that the Township, and more specifically the P&R Department, should follow to provide enhanced park and recreation services delivery. A policy framework for *what* the P&R Department should accomplish is presented through the following:

- a modified mission statement;
- strategic goals for achieving the mission; and
- general roles and responsibilities to guide both long-term and day-to-day decision-making.

### MODIFIED MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of a mission statement is to state the ideas, beliefs, and values that govern the way in which an agency, organization, or company conducts its business. The existing mission statement for the P&R Department (refer to page 27) can be dissected into three basic actions:

1. improving the quality of life;
2. providing leisure opportunities, cultural events, and recreational activities; and
3. striving to provide and maintain a natural environment.

This plan underscores the need to continue following through with these actions. However, in examining the mission statement with other ideals revealed throughout the planning process, additional fundamental values emerged that ought to be expressed:

- Working together and building partnerships – The mission statement should acknowledge that serving the recreation needs of the community is a group effort. The Township needs to continue to develop and maintain a variety of community support relationships and to collaborate with a network of other “providers” to offer a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities to deliver the best services possible.
- Providing an essential service – The provision of parks, facilities, programs, and events is considered to be a valid public function within the framework of

governmental responsibilities and duties. The mission statement should go one step further by acknowledging that parks and recreation is a necessary public service that should be provided along with other municipal services, such as police, streets, water, and sewer. The Township needs to formalize, in words, this principle to support the public interest.

- Providing recreation benefits – Parks and recreation services are valuable ingredients to the social, physical, educational, and cultural dimensions of people’s lives and they improve the community’s quality of life due to the benefits derived. The mission statement should acknowledge the basic benefits of parks and recreation. The Township needs to introduce a benefits-driven approach to its vision to heighten public awareness and support for the role of the P&R Department.
- Servicing customers – Since more than simply the resident population benefit from the parks and recreation services offered by the Township, it is important to redefine who is being served. The mission statement should broaden the scope of who is being served and acknowledge that the P&R Department is service-oriented towards “customers,” in general. The Township needs to ensure effective and efficient customer service to enhance public relations.

The importance of incorporating the above concepts into the P&R Department’s philosophy warrants that the mission statement be modified. The following is recommended as the new mission statement, which succinctly addresses all aspects of the purpose of the department in one sentence:

***The Horsham Township Department of Parks and Recreation is dedicated to serving as a partner in providing essential open space, parks, and recreation services that enhance the quality of life and deliver individual, community, environmental, and economic benefits to its customers.***

## **STRATEGIC GOALS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Out of the recommended mission statement can be distilled a series of strategic goals. There are five goals, one for each of the remaining chapters of this plan. Each goal defines the basic direction for the P&R Department today, as well as into the future. The strategic goals are accompanied by roles and responsibilities to accomplish them.

- System Plan: Create a park and recreation system that provides first quality parks and recreation facilities that are needed and used widely by customers.
  - Work with others and seek partnerships to acquire and develop the park system.
  - Coordinate facility planning with customers, community-based providers, and other public agencies.
  - Work with the Hatboro-Horsham School District to maintain or expand the availability of school facilities for public use.

- Provide a reasonably equitable distribution of community and neighborhood parks.
- Distribute recreation facilities based on existing and projected populations, with consideration given to unmet needs and expected demand in the customer service areas.
- Acquire and develop parks with facilities that reflect needs and priorities as expressed by customers during all planning and design processes.
- Ensure that adequate natural areas are protected, restored, and enhanced as part of the park system.
- Provide facilities at parks that interpret the system and teach a conservation ethic.
- Provide open space connectors, greenways, and trails as major components of the park system.
- Provide sidewalks and on-road bicycle facilities as adjuncts to the park system.
- Improve accessibility for all customers by making parks and facilities barrier free.
- Strive to achieve consistency in the style and materials used for signage, amenities, and structures within parks as a means of establishing uniform identity.
- **Maintenance Plan:** Deliver attractive and safe parks and facilities.
  - Operate and maintain the park system in partnership and cooperation with the community.
  - Supplement maintenance activities through “adopt-a-park” and “adopt-a-facility” programs for volunteers.
  - Develop a “park watch” program to monitor and support park safety and security.
  - Establish baseline standards for the proper maintenance and care of parkland and park amenities.
  - Protect and manage open space, parks, and facilities to ensure customer safety and protection of structural integrity with attention to appearance, cleanliness, and security.
  - Adopt a preventative maintenance approach to facility maintenance.
  - Use measurable maintenance objectives to evaluate day-to-day facility and preventative maintenance needs.
  - Design and construct parks and facilities to facilitate maintenance but in a manner that is sensitive to customer health and comfort.
- **Recreation Services Delivery Plan:** Offer a broad range and level of structured recreation programs for individuals and groups to participate in active and passive activities that meet customer needs and interests.
  - Collaborate with others to offer a broad spectrum of programs, when and where possible.
  - Encourage partnerships and develop formal agreements, as needed, with public and community service providers to supplement existing programming.
  - Equitably distribute programs by offering them at locations throughout the

- community, if possible, provided the facilities necessary to support the programs are available.
- Offer an appropriate balance of recreation program types in accordance with a program classification system tailored to the special interests and demands of customers.
  - Mainstream persons with special needs into programs when possible to provide access opportunities for all customers, but consider offering specialized programs, if warranted.
  - Develop recreation programs that promote fitness and wellness values.
  - Develop programs that educate customers about the environment and teach a conservation ethic.
  - Establish objectives for all programs to describe why they are offered.
  - Advertise and promote the benefits of program participation.
  - Increase communication and the flow of information using technology and the media to publicize programs, events, services, policies, rules and regulations, volunteer opportunities, and meetings.
  - Target marketing efforts to non-users to engage their interest and make them users of the system.
  - Provide scheduling services to ensure balanced opportunities for access to facilities by Township-sponsored activities, programmed activities offered by other partners, and spontaneous drop-in users.
  - Accommodate special events and other appropriate activities at parks to increase a sense of community and to help the parks function as positive recreation environments.
- **Administration and Personnel Plan:** Create a park and recreation agency that is a model of excellence and efficiency by providing quality, user-friendly customer service that consistently supplies complete and accurate information and assistance.
    - Strive to carry out the mission of the P&R Department.
    - Achieve an effective organizational structure comprised of professional P&R Department staff, the Park and Recreation Board, and working relationships with community leaders and managers.
    - Maintain an adequate staffing level with personnel that work together as a team and yet have defined job descriptions.
    - Operate the P&R Department using business-like practices with emphasis on good management, fiscal responsibility and serving customers efficiently.
    - Build the local park and recreation constituency by expanding public outreach and announcing available services and benefits.
    - Respond efficiently to customer inquiries, complaints, and suggestions.
    - Demonstrate effective use of resources by leveraging Township funds with outside funding strategies.
    - Evaluate the effectiveness of services and programs on a regular basis by measuring customer satisfaction and benefits compared to costs.
    - Evaluate management of services and facilities that are not cost-effective and explore whether partners can be used to improve efficiencies.
    - Welcome partnerships and sponsorships.
    - Encourage volunteerism as a way to extend the programmatic efforts of the

## Township.

- Invite all customers to participate in planning, designing, and advocating parks and recreation services.
- **Implementation Plan:** Follow adopted Township policies to the extent possible and practical to establish parks and recreation as a premier community service.
  - Develop and follow a detailed acquisition, development, and prioritization strategy.
  - Secure adequate levels of funding commensurate with on-going operation needs and to implement long-term capital improvement goals.
  - Maximize available resources to support the delivery of services, including the creative use of partnerships.
  - Regularly assess the leisure preferences and recreation needs of customers to ensure that the strategic plan reflects local conditions and update the plan as needed.
  - Monitor private development proposals and encourage or require the provision of appropriately sized and located open space, linkages, and recreation facilities to serve the needs of new customers.
  - Serve as an advocate and work with other public agencies to expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities to complement the park system.
  - Strive to provide expected funding, staffing, and other resources to undertake the actions outlined in this report, which are designed to realize the long-term vision of the P&R Department.

## CONCLUSION

The strategic goals and the respective roles and responsibilities assigned to each goal are reiterated throughout the last five chapters of this study. They are presented in “text box” format.

The remaining chapters represent the recommendations of this study. The recommendations suggest what should be done to better serve customers’ park and recreation needs. They provide guidance for parkland acquisition and development, operations and maintenance, recreation programming, staffing, budgeting, and other fundamental elements of accomplishing the prescribed mission statement. The Township should carry out the **recommendations** in order to fulfill the **roles and responsibilities**, which will subsequently help to achieve the **strategic goals**.

