

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

This section is intended to serve as the official "recreation plan" for Bally and Bechtelsville until a more detailed parks, recreation and open space plan is prepared. This section of the comprehensive plan describes the policies and recommendation designed to guide future growth of the two boroughs' park and recreation system.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

Bally

Bally Borough has two publicly accessible recreation sites totalling 8.0 acres in area. Leonard Melcher Park, which includes the Borough swimming pool, is located on 4.6 acres. The Goodwill Fire Company ballfields, situated adjacent to Leonard Melcher Park, encompass approximately 3.4 acres. Both the park/pool complex and the Fire Company ballfields serve the entire Borough, as opposed to specific neighborhoods.

The National Recreation and Park Association suggests municipalities should have 10.5 acres of active, publicly accessible parkland per 1,000 residents. Bally's 1990 population of 973 persons and its projected year 2000 population of 1,009 suggest the Borough should have 10.6 acres of parkland. The Borough is 2.6 acres short of this guideline at present. NRPA guidelines further specify that municipalities should have up to 2 acres of neighborhood-serving parks as part of their 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Bally has no neighborhood parkland.

Bechtelsville

Bechtelsville Community Park (7.4 acres) and the recently acquired railroad rights-of-way (2.4 acres) are the Borough's publicly-accessible parkland. As the name implies, Bechtelsville Community Park serves the entire municipality rather than a particular neighborhood. The Borough has plans to improve the old railroad bed although no improvements have been made to date. Bechtelsville has no neighborhood parks. Bechtelsville, with a projected population for the year 2000 of 906 residents, should have 9.5 acres of parkland according to the NRPA guidelines. Currently, the Borough has a surplus of .3 acres according to this guideline.

ENHANCING THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

The following recommendations are designed to help enhance parks and recreation in Bally and Bechtelsville by:

- Expanding recreation program opportunities;
- Improving local parks and the recreation facilities within these parks;
- Coordinating the administration of local parks and recreation systems;
- Ensuring that parks remain safe, attractive and well-maintained;

- Employing a full range of funding techniques to implement desired improvements; and
- Better informing area residents about recreation opportunities in and around the two boroughs.

RECREATION FINANCE

Bally

- Establish mandatory dedication provisions in the Bally Borough Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The amount of the land donation required from residential developers by the Borough should be commensurate with the demand for recreation typically created by the average-sized Bally Borough household. National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines suggest this amount should equal 1,150 square feet per household in Bally Borough. The guideline of 1,150 square feet per household is determined by using the following rationale:
 1. NRPA recommends up to 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons.
 2. 10.5 acres contains 457,380 square feet,
 3. 457,380 square feet per 1,000 persons is the equivalent of 457.38 square feet per person, and
 4. 457.38 square feet multiplied by 2.51 persons (1990 average household size) equals 1,148 square feet per household; round to 1,150 square feet.

- Charge a fee in lieu of mandatory land dedication under the Bally Borough Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. This fee on a per lot basis should equal the approximate market value of 1,150 square feet of undeveloped, residentially-zoned property in the area, the amount of land Bally Borough would require to be dedicated for recreation for each proposed dwelling unit, as described above. The fee can be part of a fee schedule that is periodically reviewed by the Borough. Alternatively, the value of the fee can be set on a case-by-case basis using an appraiser selected by the Borough and funded by the developer.

Bechtelsville

- Establish mandatory dedication provisions in the Bechtelsville Borough Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The same methodology described above applied to Bechtelsville's average of 2.85 persons per household suggests that Bechtelsville should require residential developers to donate 1,304 (round to 1,300) square feet per lot.
- Establish a fee in lieu of mandatory dedication under the Bechtelsville Subdivision and Land Ordinance. This fee should equal the value of 1,300 square feet of residentially zoned land in the Borough, as described above. As noted above, the fee can be part of a fee schedule or appraised on a case-by-case basis.

RECREATION MAINTENANCE

- Conduct regular safety inspections at both Boroughs' recreational facilities to ensure compliance with U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission playground safety standards.
- Be aware of municipal obligations under the Americans With Disabilities Act to provide suitable access for all to publicly sponsor recreation programs and facilities.

RECREATION COMMUNICATIONS

- Prepare a brochure describing parks, recreation facilities and recreation programs available to local residents. Use municipal mailings and/or other techniques to deliver this brochure to all area households in an effort to better publicize the area's recreation opportunities.
- Local recreation providers should consider a range of ways to communicate recreation information. Several alternatives which should be considered and/or continued include a centrally located message board, a short recreation flyer/newsletter in a tax, sewer or water bill, announcements on cable television "community bulletin boards" and announcements on a local radio station.

- Finally, the boroughs should continue to publish their award winning newsletters that include information about recreation as well as other municipal news. Bally's quarterly newsletter is mailed with the water and sewer bill. Bechtelsville's annual newsletter is mailed separately to residents.