CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

All of the recreation facilities owned by Moon Township were visited and evaluated during the planning process. Items such as type, quantity and general condition of the facilities as well as access and conformance to The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards were cataloged.

NRPA has been involved in developing guidelines and standards for parks, recreation and open space for many years. The NRPA document entitled, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines,* has been established as the national guide that addresses the minimum standards a community should be striving towards in terms of recreation, parks and open space. According to the NRPA, there are ten classifications for parks and open space. Table 4-1 lists these classifications and their descriptions.

In order to determine what facilities Moon Township may need for future planning, a thorough analysis of the available facilities was completed. Table 4-2 lists the recreation facilities owned by the township as well as the NRPA classification for each. Table 4-3 lists the facilities owned by the school district and Robert Morris University, as well as one facility (RMU Island Complex) that is owned by Robert Morris University, but is located in Neville Township. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 graphically depict where the recreation facilities are located in Moon Township. In addition, Figure 4-3 shows regional attractions located around Moon Township. An analysis was also done using the NRPA standards for park service area.

Moon Township owns facilities that fall into two of the NRPA categories, neighborhood and community parks. There are, however, areas within the township that fall into the school-park, natural resource area and private park / recreation facilities categories, but they are not owned by the township. These facilities are listed in Table 4-3.

CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

Table 4-1: Parks and Open Space Classifications

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria and Service Area	Size Criteria
Mini Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than a 1/4 mile distance in a residential setting	Between 2500 ft. and one acre
Neighborhood Park	Remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	1/4 to 1/2 mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers	Five acres is considered minimum size (5 to 10 acres is optimal)
School-Park	Depending on the circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property	Variable– depends on function
Community Park	Serves a broader purpose than the neighborhood park.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and 1/2 to 3 miles distance	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres
Large Urban Park	Serves a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal/
Natural Resource Areas	Land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable
Greenways	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer strategically located sites .	Strategically located community—wide facilities	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable—dependent on specific use	Variable
Private Park / Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable—dependent on specific use	Variable

CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

Table 4-2: Moon Township Recreation Facilities

Name of Facility	Size (acres)	Amenities Present
Neighborhood / Mini Parks		
Amherst Play Lot	.2	Parking lot with three spaces, fenced playground with a whirl, a bench, a Kompan play structure, three bay swing set, metal slide and a sand box.
Cedar Dr Play Lot	5.9	Playground with a slide, swing sets, Timberform play structure, double spring rider, climber/chinning bars, grill
Meade Drive Play Lot	1.9	Playground with a Kompan play structure, swing set, spinning pole, multipurpose field, a grill, picnic table, and a bench
Loch Shin Park	2.9	Playground with a metal slide, Timberform play structure, two 2-bay swing sets, see saw, basketball court and benches.
Overlook Park	1.5	Parking area for 10 cars, basketball court, playground, picnic table, Moon Crest Community Center
Whispering Woods	7.8	Little League ball field, parking area, playground
Community Parks		
Moon Park	236.0	Baseball field, two softball fields, dugouts, 3 soccer fields, duck pond, Parks and Recreation Dept. office, 2 basketball courts and a volleyball court, playgrounds (one handicapped playground area), 6 shelters, sandbox, horseshoe pits, 4 tennis courts, ARL Amphitheater, nature trails, water fountains, batting cages
Robin Hill Park	144.0	Parking lot with 80 spaces, carriage house serving as the senior center, Nimick House, Amphitheater, two 2 1/2 mile trails, benches, herb garden, exterior restrooms, Log House
Olson Park	146.0	Small parking lot at entrance, farm house (occupied by municipal employee), garage, archery range, sanitary sewers, trails (hiking and ATV)

Table 4-3: School, University, Non-profit and Privately Owned Facilities

Name of Facility	Size (acres)	Ownership	Amenities Present
School-Parks			
Allard Elementary	8.5	School District	Multi-purpose field, playground, gymnasium
Bon Meade Elementary	23.0	School District	Gymnasium, multipurpose room, art room, computer room, library, music room, playground equipment, history garden, vegetable garden, basketball court, open grass play area, open asphalt play area
J.H. Brooks Elementary	5.7	School District	Gymnasium, library, music room, computer room, playground equipment, ball field
Moon Area Junior High School	30.9	School District	Gymnasium, gymnastic area, fitness room, auditorium
Moon Area High School	23.1	School District	Pool, gymnasium, secondary gymnasium, wrestling room, computer labs, small and large auditoriums, football stadium, four baseball fields, seven tennis courts
Richard J. Hyde Elementary	13.9	School District	Library, small gymnasium / cafeteria, playground equipment, two basketball hoops, five soccer fields
Robert Morris University	218.0	Robert Morris University	Sewall Center for Leadership, two soccer fields, pavilion, nine lit tennis courts, parking, softball field, football stadium and athletic building (opening in 2005)
RMU Island Sports Complex (located outside the project area)	32.0	Robert Morris University	Café, pro shop, one Olympic ice rink, one collegiate ice rink, two ice/ sport courts, one 8-lane running track, fitness / weight area, meeting room, 18-hole miniature golf course, golf dome (five golf pros, locker rooms, 42 tees, indoor sand trap, putting area, two indoor soccer areas, lacrosse field, batting cages), walking trail around tip of Neville Island
Sports Complex			
Baker Field	19.8	Moon Baseball Association	2 Little league ball fields, dugouts, batting cages, concession stand / restrooms, parking area
Natural Resource Areas			
Hollow Oak Land Trust (HOLT) Areas		Non-Profit	Designated open space in four areas of the township
Private Park / Recreation Facility			
Airport Ice Arena		Private	2 Ice skating rinks (with seating for 450 and 900), locker rooms, extreme skate park, restaurant, private meeting / party facilities, pro shop
Bon Air Golf Course		Private	18-Hole golf course
Londonbury Pool		Private	Swimming pool
Montour Heights Country Club		Private	18-Hole golf Course, clubhouse, tennis courts, swimming pool
Scally's Complex		Private	9-Hole par 3 golf course, 9-hole par 3 pitch and putt course, driving range, pro shop, batting cages, miniature-golf course, snack bar
Western Area YMCA		Non-Profit	Basketball courts, handball courts, workout rooms, tennis courts, baseball field
Wyngate Pool		Private	Swimming pool

CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

Neighborhood Parks

Moon Township owns six neighborhood parks. A short description and location is provided for each park.

Amherst Play Lot, Mackin 2004

Amherst Play Lot

Amherst Play Lot is located on the corner of Sharon Drive and Wyndhurst Drive. The play lot is actually two small parcels serving a relatively large neighborhood. It consists of a level play area, a small stream and a short walking path to the surrounding neighborhood, which provides additional access to the play lot.

Cedar Drive Play Lot

Cedar Drive is a five acre site that is predominately a walk to play area with no adequate parking. Most of the parklet is an open flat grass area with the exception of the far side that is wooded and drops over the hillside.

Cedar Drive Play Lot, Mackin 2004

Loch Shin Play Lot, Mackin 2004

Loch Shin Park

Loch Shin Play Lot is located in a housing plan in the northwest corner of the township. It is primarily a walk to play area with no parking and is accessed through an undeveloped lot with a steep semi-paved path leading to a leveled area at the upper end of a ravine.

Overlook Park

Overlook Park is located in the Mooncrest development with a beautiful view overlooking the Ohio River. It is a small park approximately one to one and one half acres in size. The parking is extremely limited at this site. The township has acquired an existing building adjacent to Overlook Park and is currently rehabbing this structure to serve as the Mooncrest Community Center. This community center will provide a police substation, Knowledge Connection (associated with the Carnegie Library), a satellite Moon Township Parks and Recreation Department office and community space. The township is working with the Mooncrest Community Association to determine the best uses for this community center.

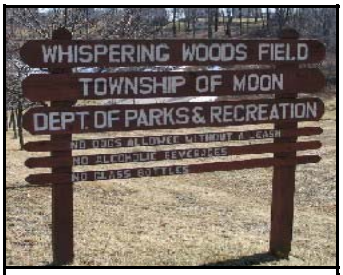
Overlook Play Lot, Mackin 2004

CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

Meade Drive Play Lot, Mackin 2004

Meade Drive Play Lot

Meade Drive Play lot is a small parklet located off Meade Drive near the intersection with Scottsdale Drive and serves a portion of a housing plan located in the northwest corner of the township. The play lot is accessed through a 15' wide by 150' long easement between two homes. The easement is fenced on both sides and has a paved drive the full length of the fencing. There is signage at the entrance to the play lot. There is a small parking lot for one to two cars at this site.



Whispering Woods Ball Field, Mackin 2004

Whispering Woods

Whispering Woods is a small park located at the junction of Spring Run Road and Spring Run Road Extension. A fairly steep entry road provides access to a level area that makes up the park.

Community Parks

Moon Township owns three community parks. A short description and location is included for each. More information regarding the parks can be found in Table 4-2.

Moon Park, Mackin 2004

Moon Park

Moon Park consists of approximately 236 acres located at the intersection of Beaver Grade Road and Ewing Road. The 36 acres located at this intersection is leased property from the airport. The remaining 300 acres along Ewing Road is a series of rolling hills leading to deeper valleys on the north eastern and eastern sides of the property. This park is the main active recreation facility where most of the play equipment, shelters and athletic courts are located. ARL Amphitheater is also located here and this is where concerts and movies are held.

Robin Hill Park

This facility is a 144 acre community park located along Thorn Run Road. Robin Hill is a long tract of land that is developed near the road, but the remainder is predominately wooded hillsides and valleys. This park is mainly a passive area that contains trails and a rustic amphitheater as well as the Nimick House where large gatherings such as weddings are held.

Robin Hill Park, Mackin 2004

Olson Park, Mackin 2004

Olson Park

Olson Park is primarily an undeveloped piece of land that is located in the northwestern corner of Moon Township along Flaugherty Run. It consists primarily of heavily wooded hillsides and a small stream through the valley that divides the park in half.

Trails

Trails are an intricate part of a community's overall development of recreational opportunities, facilities and programs. According to most recreation surveys, trails usually rank first or second as the most desired recreation facility. When considering the development of trails, the type of trail must first be determined and then will it be appropriate for the selected location. Following is a list of possible trail types:
Each of these trails has their place in meeting the recreational needs of a certain percentage of

- Walking Trail
- Jogging Trail
- Mountain Bike Trail
- Motorized Trail-ATV or trail bike
- Equestrian Trail
- Nature Trail
- Interpretive Trail
- Natural vs. Developed Trail (ADA Accessible)
- Brail Trail
- Water Trail
- Bicycle Trail
- Hiking Trail

the population in the community. However, topography, space requirements, noise, conflicting uses and site restraints all dictate the types of trails that can be developed in various parts of the community.

Moon Township has an excellent start in developing a trail system throughout the community.

Robin Hill Park trails are geared towards nature / semi-interpretive and designed primarily for walking or hiking. Also, the presence of old oil wells along the trail adds to the heritage of the park. The following is a list of the trails in Robin Hill Park:

- Log Cabin Spur
- Beech Trail
- Black Cherry Spur
- Ridgeback Trail

Moon Park trails are primarily for walking or hiking and would be classified as very natural

traversing through several different ecological niches in the park.

Olson Park is currently undeveloped, but trails in this park would provide a fantastic nature study. The vast variety of fauna and flora in this park provides for some great wildflower trails, sensory trails (smell), ecological change trails, stream trail, bird watching and adventure trail as you traverse different types of terrain.

Moon Township is fortunate to also have access to the Montour Trail along the townships entire southeastern border. The Montour Trail is one of the nicest and most popular developed trails for walking, jogging and bike riding in the region. The Montour Trail is a multi-use non-motorized recreational rail-trail that will ultimately extend 47 miles from Coraopolis to Clairton. Currently, multiple sections of the trail totaling over 40 miles are completed. New sections are being added each year.

The trail is paved with a smooth surface of crushed limestone, which makes it ideal for all forms of non-motorized use: bicycling, walking, running, cross-country skiing, and nature appreciation. In certain sections, horseback riding is also permitted, but not on the improved trail surface.

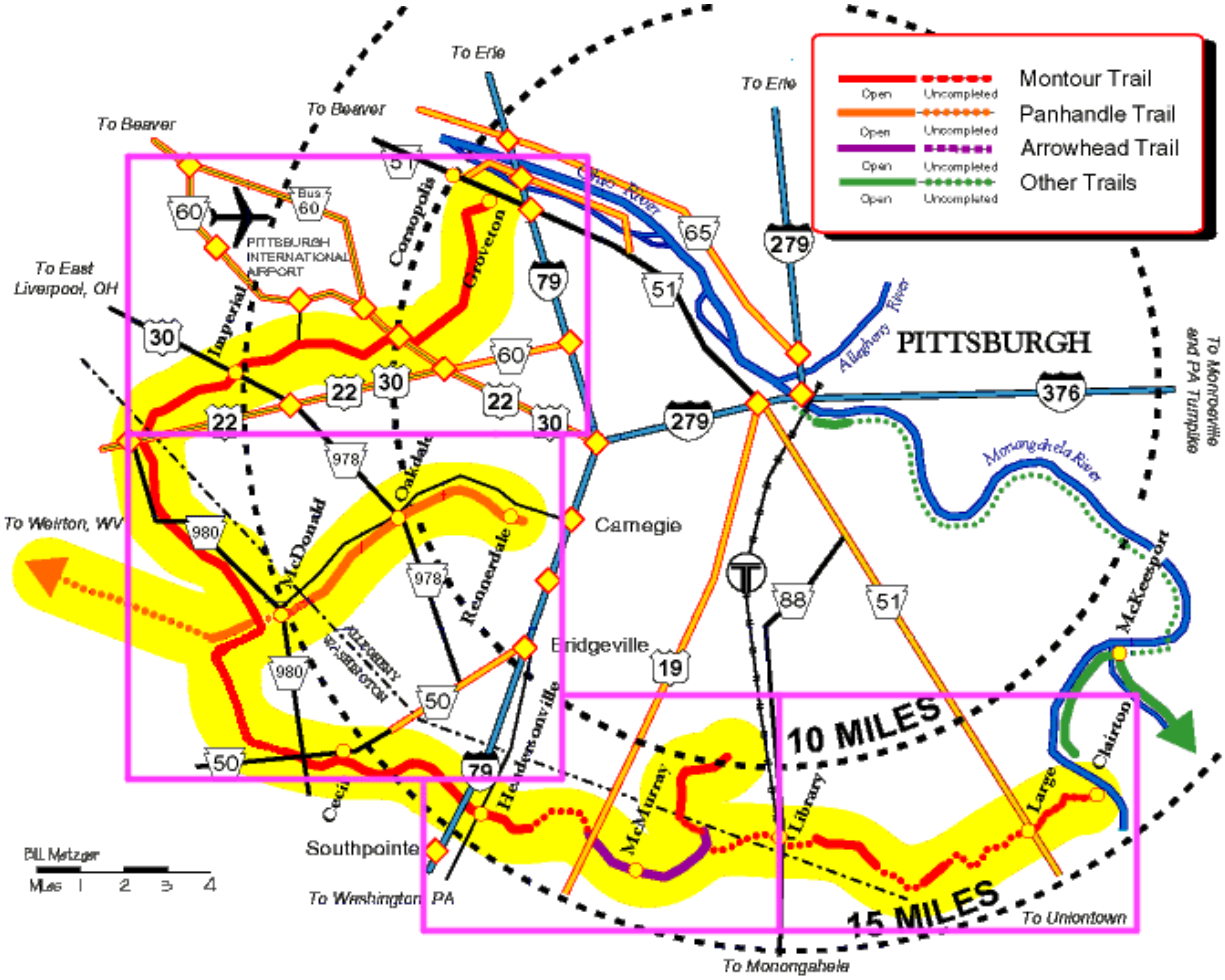
The Montour Trail is part of the Panhandle Trail, which stretches 29 miles between Carnegie, PA, and Weirton, WV.

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) is a non-profit group which builds, operates, and maintains the trail. MTC relies on corporate, foundation and government grants and private donations for funding. The Board of Directors heads the organization and there are nearly 1000 members at this time. All work of the MTC is done by volunteers, including maintenance and light construction (http://www.montourtrail.org/index.shtml).

Figure 4-5 shows the alignment of the Montour Trail as well as its connecting trails.

CHAPTER 4—RECREATION FACILITIES

Figure 4-5: Regional Trail System



Open Space

Open space is explained by Dr. Beryl Johnson, a local environmentalist, as any area of land that is valued for the protection of natural resources such as stream corridors, slopes, wetlands, woods, major rock outcrops, soils, native vegetation and wildlife habitats. Any area of land used for active or passive recreation that has little impact on the environment and scenic corridors are also included in the definition of open space. The topography of ridges, steep slopes, wooded valleys with streams, rock outcroppings and river views create a unique scenic open space environment that provides residents with a high quality of life. In addition these slopes and wooded stream valleys provide a natural storm water drainage system for the township, which enables the township to avoid the cost of installing extensive and costly storm sewer systems. These natural characteristics need to be protected.

Open space is an essential recreation facility that the residents of Moon Township feel is important to their quality of life as well. Figure 4-5 displays where there is currently open space in the township as well as proposed areas for open space. A community survey was mailed to 1,000 residents in May 2004. When asked what the township should financially support, the third highest answer was open space (out of a possible seven choices). Also when asked what type of recreation facility is important to quality of life the second highest percentage of people felt open space was either very important or important (out of a possible five choices). The full results from the public survey can be found in Chapter 2.

While the township does currently own open space (Olson Park is the largest), the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provides various tools that can be used to protect additional open space. The MPC authorizes zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO) to contain provisions to encourage innovation and promote flexibility, economy an ingenuity in development and to increase the permissible density of population or intensity of particular uses. These techniques can include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Clustering**

  Clustering is an alternative zoning method that assists a community in preserving common open space while continuing to encourage desired development. Residential lots are located in groups by reducing the lot area and the building setback requirements while still adhering to the overall permitted density requirements or allowing a modest density incentive. The remaining area of the development is then available to be incorporated as open space. Clustering provides the municipality with attractive housing developments while allowing for the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive areas (Governor's Center for Local Government Services, 2003).

- **Conservation Zoning**

  Conservation zoning is an improvement on cluster zoning in that it requires open space to be set aside first and the development then happens around the preserved open space. Conservation zoning standards would require the adoption of similar standards in the

subdivision and land development ordinance (Governor's Center for Local Government Services, 2003). This option may not be as feasible for Moon Township due to the fact that the majority of the township is already developed.

- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)**

  TDRs allow a land owner to sell the development rights of his / her land. This means that the seller of the rights will not develop their land, and the buyer will be allowed to increase their development densities in another portion of the municipality that is more suitable for development. In other words, the development rights are separated from the land and sold from an area that is to be protected to an area where development can be accommodated and is desirable. TDRs can cross municipal boundaries if the municipalities are participating in a joint zoning ordinance or if there is a written agreement between the affected municipalities (Governor's Center for Local Government Services, 2003).

- **Mandatory Dedication and Fee-in-Lieu of Dedication**

  Section 503 of the MPC provides a municipality the authority to require a developer to dedicate land to the public that is suitable for intended park and recreation purposes. The municipality may accept from the developer the following:
  - Payment of fees in lieu of dedication of land,
  - The construction of recreational facilities,
  - Private reservation of land, or
  - Any combination of the above

  An ordinance must be in effect that contains the standards for determining land to be dedicated or the amount of the fee in lieu. The requirements and standards should be in accord with an adopted recreation plan and funds should be utilized within three years or refunded with interest.

  The township recently adopted a mandatory dedication ordinance. To ensure that the township receives usable land through this ordinance the following criteria should be used when describing what type of land is acceptable:

  - Location: the land should be central to the development if it is a neighborhood park
  - Access: at least one side should front on a public street (the frontage should be approximately one lot wide)
  - Size: at least one acre of land should be suitable for development
  - Shape: the land should be suitable to accommodate the recreation facilities required by the neighborhood
  - Soils: the land should be suitable for the development of recreation facilities
  - Slope: there should be no more than a 10% slope across the entire parcel (less if sports fields are planned)
  - Utilities: sewer, water and power should be accessible

Currently the township does include language in their zoning ordinance regarding Cottage Developments being required to designate common open space as part of their development. The township also encourages planned residential and cluster developments to provide open space. These types of developments are voluntary, however.

National Recreation and Park (NRPA) Standards

As was mentioned earlier, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has been the organization that sets the standards for parks and recreation in the United States for more than 100 years. NRPA's 1983 publication entitled, *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, used population as the baseline for determining how many fields, parks, facilities (such as community centers and swimming pools), etc. are needed in a community. Funding organizations such as the Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) often use these standards as a guide when deciding which communities receive funding for various projects.

In 1996 NRPA released the update publication, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, which allowed communities to document a need and support for a facility or park rather than relying on population statistics only. The new standards make it easier for municipalities to build facilities and parks based on residents' desire and need, but the formulas used are very complex and are not within the scope of work for this project. For the purposes of this document, the 1983 standards will be used.

Tables 4-4 and 4-5 compare Moon Township's existing park acreage to NRPA's standards. As can be seen from these two tables, Moon Township is currently lacking in neighborhood parks, and almost every type of recreation facility, with the exception of basketball courts and soccer fields . The amount of community park land that the township is providing, however, is adequate even into the year 2020.

These NRPA standards are based on the "average" community's needs, however, and should be used as a general guideline only. Community surveys and user counts should be incorporated into any analysis regarding provision of future park and recreation facilities.

Figure 4-4 shows the areas of the township that are served by neighborhood and community parks. As can be seen, Moon Township is completely serviced by community parks. While there are no service areas in the southern portion of the township for neighborhood parks, this area is less populated and Moon Park more than adequately covers the area.

Table 4-4: Park Land Acreage Comparison with NRPA Standards

Type of Park	Acres / 1000 Persons	Existing Acres	2000 Need	2000 Surplus/ (Deficiency)	2010 Need	2010 Surplus / (Deficiency)	2020 Need	2020 Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Neighborhood Park/ Playground	2 - 4	20	44 - 88	(24 - 68)	92-184	(72-164)	96-192	(74 - 168)
Community Park	10 - 16	526	220 - 352	306 - 174	450-736	76-(210)	480-768	46 - (242)

Assumptions: 2000 Population: 22,290 2010 Population: 45,653 2020 Population: 47,581

Table 4-5: Recreation Facility Comparison to NRPA Standards

Activity / Facility	One facility/ x 1000	Existing	2000 Need	2000 Surplus/ (Deficiency)	2010 Need	2010 Surplus/ (Deficiency)	2020 Need	2020 Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Ball Fields	2,500	7	9	(2)	18	(11)	19	(12)
Basketball Courts	5,000	5	4	1	9	(4)	10	(5)
Football Fields	20,000	0	1	(1)	2	(2)	2	(2)
Picnic Shelters	2,000	5	11	(6)	23	(18)	24	(19)
Soccer Fields	10,000	3	2	1	5	(2)	5	(2)
Tennis Courts	2,000	4	11	(7)	23	(19)	24	(20)
Volleyball Courts	5,000	3	4	(1)	9	(6)	10	(7)
Swimming Pools	20,000	0*	1	(1)	2	(2)	2	(2)

** There are membership only pools in the township but none that are open to the public*

Assumptions: 2000 Population: 22,290 2010 Population: 45,653 2020 Population: 47,581

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

With the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1992, municipalities now have a legal as well as moral obligation to provide a reasonable level of accessibility to park facilities and programs for individuals with disabilities.

For any public accommodation, which would include park district facilities and programs, the ADA requires that all:

- Newly constructed buildings and facilities must be readily accessible
- Renovations or alteration of existing buildings and facilities must be readily accessible
- Barriers to accessibility in existing buildings and facilities must be removed when it is "readily achievable"

Moon Township should investigate all of its facilities to ensure proper ADA compliance. An ADA checklist should be created as well that covers access, equipment, safety, etc. This checklist should be used annually to ensure that all of the Moon Township recreation facilities are in compliance with ADA standards. It is also recommended that Moon Township Parks and Recreation Department staff keep apprised of new developments and standards in accessibility. Recommendations for each specific park are located on pages 4-13 through 4-19.

Comparison with Similar Municipalities

In order to compare Moon Township with comparable municipalities from the region, table 4-6 compare the parks and recreation facilities in Moon Township, Cranberry Township, Peter's Township and Ross Township.

Moon Township has approximately 546 acres of park land, which is very comparable to Peters Township, almost three times as much as Ross Township and over 100 more acres than Cranberry Township (with the addition of their third park). It seems that the amount of park land that Moon is providing is sufficient compared to other municipalities in the region. In

terms of the facilities present at the parks, Moon is providing much of what the other communities are providing except that all three have a community center, Cranberry and Peters has either an indoor or outdoor pool and Cranberry has a municipally owned golf course. Moon is also lacking in the number of ball fields it owns compared to the Peters and Ross Townships.

Table 4-6: Recreation Facility Comparison

	Cranberry Township	Peters Township	Ross Township	Moon Township
Parks	2 at 196 acres*	7 at 438 acres	21 at 187 acres	9 at 546 acres
Ball fields	6	10	18	7
Basketball Courts	2	0	12	5
Boccie Court	0	0	1	0
Community Center	1	1	1	0
Daycare Center	1	0	0	0
Concession Stands	2	1	1	1
Fishing Area	0	1	1	0
Football Field	1	1	0	0
Golf Course	1	0	0	0
Horseshoe Court	0	1	0	5
Indoor Pool	0	1	0	0
Lake / Beach	0	1	0	0
Outdoor Pool	1	0	0	0
Pavilions	6	6	10	5
Playgrounds	2	7	16	6
Senior Center	1	0	0	1
Soccer Fields	4	0	2	3
Shuffleboard	0	0	1	0
Stadium	1	0	0	0
Teen Center	1	0	0	0
Tennis Courts	5	4	5	4
Trails	2	1	4	7
Volleyball Courts	3	0	2	3

*Recently purchased additional 120 acres to be developed into 3rd park

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Parks

A Master Site Plan should be completed for Robin Hill Park and Moon Park. This will allow these two major parks to complement the overall park system within the township. In addition this will help the township in avoiding duplication of services, equipment and programs as well as provide an opportunity to apply for additional grants from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). A conceptual site plan for the third major (but yet undeveloped) park in the township, Olson Park, is included in Appendix I of this plan. A master site plan should be created for Olson Park as well. The conceptual plan will be a starting point, and also aid in applying for grants to fund the master site plan. Themes should be developed for each of the parks to be incorporated into the master site plans. A suggestion for the themes of the parks is Moon Park - active, Robin Hill - heritage and Olson - natural. Coordinated signage should also be incorporated for all of Moon Township's recreation facilities. The thematic concept and signage for the parks would add marketing value as well as allow residents to have quick identification of the parks based on their interests.

In May of 2003, the Township Supervisors approved the Mooncrest Restoration Plan. This plan provides goals and recommendations for the Mooncrest neighborhood in Moon Township. There are two playgrounds within Mooncrest, Cedar Drive and Overlook. The strategies from the Restoration Plan for these two parks have been included with the recommendations from the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan.

The parks and recreation department should also ensure that there are proper areas within the Moon Township parks system to accommodate various users including people and pets. The department should also provide adequate separation between the uses to ensure safety of all park visitors and pets.

Throughout the planning process the need for an indoor community center and water access was repeatedly mentioned as a high priority from Moon Township residents. The township completed an indoor community facility survey, in 2002. Phone interviews with 302 Moon Township residents were conducted as part of this process. Results from this survey showed that over half of the respondents would be willing to pay property tax for the construction and operation of an indoor community center that had their most preferred features, and they would be willing to pay more than $4.00 per visit for an adult to use the facility. An indoor swimming / aquatics center had the highest percentage (45%) of respondents rate it as one of the top three potential features they would be most likely to use in a new indoor community center. The results from this survey coupled with the input received during the planning process indicates that Moon Township should investigate the construction of an indoor community center. Without an indoor community center the township is lacking in space to provide programs, which also limits the revenues the parks and recreation department can generate. The most logical place for this community center would be in or near Moon Park.

A community center should be designed to meet a wide variety of activities. Some factors that should be considered when designing the center include:

- Rapid changes in technology should be considered

- Meeting current program demands, while remaining flexible for future needs
- A single story building is preferable for maintenance, security and supervision purposes

In addition to the actual facility, parking must be considered as well. A generally accepted rule is one space per every 200 square feet of floor space.

Trails

Moon Township has the potential to provide a variety of walking, biking, hiking and nature trails for its residents. However, motorized trails are not recommended for development in the township and equestrian trails are questionable. With possible access to the river a water trail may be feasible in the future. As Moon Township develops an interconnecting trail system throughout the community, the residents will be able to traverse the community either by foot or by bike to many locations in the community. See Figure 4-5, which indicates potential trail locations. In terms of the existing trails, the flyers and signs for the Robin Hill trails should be redone in order to complement any theme or signage improvements that have been recommended previously. Improved signage at the trail entrances, interpretative signs or use of the Memory Medallion Concept along the trail, benches and an outdoor class room along the trails would provide improvements as well. The Memory Medallion Concept is one that would allow the township to provide coins to park users, which would provide information about interpretative areas throughout the park once the coins are placed on the various interpretive sites. These medallions could also be used in conjunction with the Moon Area School District as outdoor classrooms for environmental studies. Improvements to the Moon Park trails should include trail entrance signage, interpretative signs indicating various features and changes in the ecology and installation of benches.

Mandatory Dedication of Land

Because ownership is the most efficient way to conserve open space, Moon Township Supervisors should create a land conservation fund as a way to set money aside for open space acquisition. A land conservation fund requires the municipality to designate a percentage of the municipal budget to go into a separate account that is to be used for acquiring land for open space. The supervisors can determine the percentage based on budgetary constraints, and can be as little as a quarter or half a percent. The fund does not have to be used immediately either. The money could be gathered over several years or until an opportunity became available to purchase land.

While Moon Township does have language in their ordinances regarding dedication of open space, it is only required for cottage developments (40 percent of the gross site area is required to be set aside as common open space). Cluster lot development and planned residential developments are not required but encouraged to dedicate a portion of the site as common open space. The administration should adopt a Mandatory Land Dedication Ordinance to ensure that as the population of the township increases, adequate land is set aside for open space and recreational activities. Sample zoning amendments for mandatory dedication can be found in Appendix J.

It is recommended that the minimum standard for mandatory dedication be 10-acres of land for every 1,000 residents for all developments five acres or more. This is derived based on the median of the upper level of land required by the National Recreation and Parks Association for

a neighborhood park (2-4 acres / 1,000 residents) and a community park (10-16 acres / 1,000 residents).

Based on the aforementioned determination of 10 acres / 1,000 residents, the required amount of land to be dedicated per dwelling unit in a subdivision should be as follows:

- 1,000 residents divided by 2.44 person per household (based on the 2000 census) = 410 dwelling units / 1,000 residents
- 10 acres divided by 410 dwelling units = .024 acres per dwelling unit

This formula finds that the township should require a developer to dedicate .024 acres per dwelling unit for public open space or recreation.

The Mandatory Land Dedication Ordinance should also include a "fees in lieu of" option. While it is not legal to require a developer to pay fees instead of providing open space, the option should be available to address situations where the developer is unable to provide a usable parcel of land or if the levels of recreation needs in the area are currently being met. If the fee is set so that it is enticing to the developer, the situation could benefit both the developer and the township in that it would provide an easy way for the developer to meet his / her requirement in terms of recreation and open space and it would provide the township a stream of money for parks and recreation. The fees that are collected should be based on current appraisals of fair market value and should be reviewed periodically to ensure accuracy with current market trends. Once collected the township should deposit the fees into an interest bearing account designated for park improvements in the immediate area of the proposed development. Moon Township should ensure that these funds are used within three years of receipt, based on Section 503 of the Municipalities Planning Code. The following is a formula that can be used to calculate the fee based on a fair market value (appraised land value per acre) of $15,000.

$15,000 multiplied by the required land to be dedicated per dwelling unit (.024) = $360 per dwelling unit.

In addition to adopting the Mandatory Dedication of Land Ordinance, the planning commission and the parks and recreation advisory board should hold periodic joint meetings to ensure that there is coordination of the recreation plan components and community recreation needs through the subdivision and land development administrative processes (Governor's Center for Local Government Services, 2001). A member of the parks and recreation department should also attend planning commission meetings that deal with projects where land dedication is involved to ensure that the needs of the parks and recreation department are being met.

Amherst Play Lot

This is a nice small play area. Perhaps add a small shelter for a single picnic table. Play facilities need to be made handicap accessible.

Playground Equipment: Paint whirl; define use zone and surface for the Kompan play structure; three bay swing set cannot establish full required use zone due to the bank; address possible entrapment issues, define use zone and install proper surfacing for the metal slide

- **Bench**: Paint
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - This park is not ADA compliant. A paved walkway from the parking area to the playground equipment plus the addition of ADA compliant surfacing material under the equipment is required to make this play lot compliant.

Cedar Drive Play Lot

The Mooncrest Restoration Plan recommends that this play lot serve primarily as a playground for three to seven year olds with extensive opportunities to explore and play. Additionally the play lot should be a location for family recreation including areas for community plays or movie showings as well as play equipment for older children and a half-court basketball court with a lower hoop for preteens. A key aspect of this play lot should be the creation of Mooncrest Nature Park, which would be an enlargement and new use of the wooded hillside below the existing play lot and would include natural watercourses. The existing paths that are being used by pedestrians walking to Thorn Run Road and Coraopolis should be formalized and augmented with additional paths that would link this park to Overlook Park, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Old Thorn Run Road and beyond (Hanson, 2003).

Consideration should be given to replacing all of the playground equipment. A defined use area and adequate surfacing is needed around all playground equipment. Picnic tables and a shaded area is needed. Property lines should be located to determine boundaries of the park. This may allow enough area for a possible hiking trail down through the woods. Other potential facilities could include a large sandbox and a paved walking area.

- **Playground Equipment**: Replace Timberform play structure (does not meet standards); metal slide faces the wrong direction, no side rail at the top, very narrow landing at the top, and several potential entrapment areas; remove one swing and replace bent rail on the swing set, replace bent bar on the climber / chinning bar
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - This play lot is not ADA compliant A paved walkway and proper surfacing would be required to bring it into compliance.

Loch Shin Play Lot

Consider revising the entrance path so that it isn't so steep, repave entrance path, address drainage problems throughout the site, consider adding preschool equipment, perhaps add a kiosk style pavilion with a table, Existing electrical box near playground needs repaired. This facility needs to be made handicap accessible.

- **Playground Equipment**: Consider replacing metal slide (facing wrong direction, too high, possible entrapment), see saw and Timberform play structure (does not meet standards); remove one swing from the swing set (only two permitted per bay) and infant and regular swings should be separated
- **Basketball Court**: Resurface and fence on two sides
- **Benches**: Repair and paint
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - Due to the location of this facility, it would be very difficult and expensive to bring this facility into compliance. A gradually sloped paved walkway would have to be constructed and proper surfacing placed under all equipment. Due to its location and difficulty in providing maintenance, the township should consider deeding this land over to the neighborhood association or removing the play equipment and keeping this area as open space.

Meade Drive Play Lot

Incorporate some attractive plantings into the hillside, improve the drainage ditch along the base of the hillside, and create a more define and improved walking trail from the houses behind the playlot. Consider adding plantings along the fence lines to provide more privacy for the adjoining homes as well. Develop a trail that ties into the Olson property, add a pavilion, preschool equipment and a volleyball court.

- **Playground Equipment**: Surfacing area and use zone needs to be defined
- **Multi-Purpose Field**: Drainage on the field needs to be addressed
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - A continuation of the paved walkway into the play lot and specifically to the playground equipment would be required to be ADA compliant.

Moon Park

Moon Park is a beautiful facility that provides a good variety of recreational opportunities. Some of the facilities need attention to make this a first class park. However, strong consideration should be given to replacement of most of the older playground equipment as most is in poor condition and does not meet today's recommended standards. This could be completed with a phased program removing the pieces in the worst condition first. The courts (basketball and tennis) that are located in the park need attention as well in terms of fence replacement and resurfacing. This work should be included in the phased program mentioned above for the playground equipment. A walking trail around the two new softball and soccer fields adjacent to Moon Park is recommended as well.

- **Parks and Recreation Office Building** : Make handicap accessible
- **Asphalt Basketball Courts and Volleyball Court**: Seal asphalt; secure bottom of fencing; secure loose rails on the fence; replace damaged boards on bench outside of courts
- **Playground Equipment Near Park Entrance**: All pieces of the equipment need to be ADA compliant and accessible and a defined use zone with the required depth of surfacing material. The following equipment needs to be replaced—Two spring animals and climber don't comply with standards; metal slide has possible entrapment areas; whirl has bad bearings, exposed concrete and it doesn't comply to use zone requirements; overhead climber doesn't comply to use zone requirements;
- **Deck Hockey Area**: Resurface; repair top rail on the fencing and install adequate drainage along the bank
- **Two Basketball Courts**: Resurface, install adequate drainage
- **Batting Cages**: Remove the old fencing along the access
- **DeVenzio Field**: Reclaim the warning track area
- **Apollo Shelter**: Make handicap accessible; put a cover on the electric box; replace deteriorated retaining wall
- **Shelter near the entrance to Moon Park**: Make handicap accessible
- **ARL Amphitheater**: Resolve drainage issue from the upper level to the stage; straighten wall; place fence along the wall and address the lip on the edge of the stage
- **Large Playground Area**: Stage coach should be scraped and painted; lower the swings on the 3-bay swing set with matting; remove the wooden climbing structure (it is rotting at the base); metal slide is too steep and facing the wrong direction; replace exposed concrete; replace sandbox digger and spring animals; fencing around tot playground creates a possible entrapment area; rocket see-saw handles and exposed concrete need to be replaced; double see-saw fulcrum needs to be tightened; replace bearing on whirl; remove one swing from the swing set (to comply with use zones—can only have two swings in one bay); place rubber edging around entries to the concrete drain crawl pipes; address the brace that protrudes directly over the climbing area on the climber slide; address the drainage problem, the bent leg and the exposed concrete covered with rubber on the spider climber; rocket climber / slide is too high; remove long metal slide immediately; consider removing the climber / slide (bottom of slide bed not attached, slide too steep, exposed concrete, bottom of metal poles rusting, possible head entrapment in saucer); consider removing the climber (possible head entrapment in saucer holes, exposed concrete, and rusting); space ship and spring rocket ship has exposed concrete and the handles are not to standards; swing set has a bent pole and the swings are too high; angled saucers retain water, have bad bearings and exposed concrete
- **Handicapped Playground Area**: All areas need defined use zone and adequate surfacing

and the following equipment needs to be replaced or fixed—the whirl with ramp need new bearings and the pinch points are dangerous; the swing set should only have two swings per bay and they must be the same type in each bay (i.e. first bay—two wheelchair, second bay—two infant, etc.); play structure and ramps need the wooded sheeting to be secured, replace damaged boards on the ramp, put backing on the stairs, trim the bush near the ramp climber, replace damaged rails, replace end cap on metal rail, replace end cap on ramp, repair asphalt at the end of the ramp

- **Rotary Shelter**: Electric boxes need covers, exterior grill against the building needs a chimney and replace deteriorated concrete
- **Soccer Field**: The field is in poor condition; place rails on the aluminum bleachers; make field handicap accessible
- **Sand Volleyball Courts**: Attach brace to the bleachers
- **Playground with Kompan Structure**: Define use zone and provide adequate surface around the Kompan structure; remove the Burger King piece (the slide exits into a pole, the swing bridge chains are bad, the stair ladders create possible entrapment, spiral slide sheeting surface does not meet standards, needs to be resurfaced)
- **Space Ship Spring Toys**: Need resurfacing
- **Lower Shelter**: Consider moving (it is in a poor location and has bad access); replace deteriorating roof
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - Tot Playground – This facility is fully compliant.
    - Amphitheatre – There is a paved walkway to the front of the stage, but then there is a small step up onto the stage. This makes the stage non accessible. Also, an ADA individual would have to set immediately in front of the stage making it very difficult to see and very loud. Access to the upper viewing area should be provided.
    - Shelter – Located on upper level above the maintenance building. This facility is accessible since you can drive right up to it.
    - The other shelters should have paved walkways installed to make them ADA compliant. Also, some ADA compliant picnic tables should be purchased and placed at each of the shelters as well as other appropriate areas throughout the park. Sports fields should have access through paved walkways or ramps so that ADA individuals could watch the games.
    - Development of an ADA compliant field for Challenger groups should be considered.

Olson Park

Olson Park should encompass primarily nature oriented activities and a pocket park concept. A pond/lake on the western side of the entrance and a nice playground on the eastern side could greet people as they enter the park. A series of hiking and mountain bike trails would allow visitors to explore the biodiversity of the park as they choose between a short hike or a long hike through the valley and along the hillsides. Arch bridges over the stream and benches along the trail would enhance the hikers visit, and interpretive signs identifying the flora and other features could also be installed to create an educational experience. A primitive camping area could be included for use by the local scouts, and trails connecting surrounding neighborhoods should be included. A conceptual site plan for Olson Park can be found in Appendix H. Once developed, all areas and facilities of this park will need to meet ADA requirements.

Overlook Park

Vandalism has been a problem in this area. Drainage is a problem that needs resolved in conjunction with providing a paved access to comply with ADA standards. An observation deck should be built and a new play structure should be installed closer to the community center to provide a safer and more secure play area. According to the Mooncrest Restoration Plan, Overlook Park is envisioned as serving seven to twelve year olds as a primary playground with extensive play and climbing equipment as well as adults on a rebuilt, full-size basketball court. A new landmark pavilion taking advantage of the view (this could be incorporated with the observation deck mentioned above), a drinking fountain, a sandbox and toddler-friendly equipment should also be incorporated into the park (Hanson, 2003).

This park is also adjacent to the Mooncrest Community Center. The Restoration Plan states that this building should act as a beacon for the community, both in the social sense and literally as well. The building should be rebuilt as environmentally-sensitive, attractive building. The community center should expand past the current programming, which is the police substation, the Knowledge Connection (associated with the Carnegie Library), and the Moon Township Parks and Recreation Department satellite office, into a center which provides opportunities for job training, homeowner courses, credit counseling, etc. The ultimate goal is to hire full-time staff at the center, but should be started with an intense volunteer effort. Also, any future expansion of the center should take place at its current location (Hanson, 2003).

- **Playground Equipment**: Define use zone and provide adequate surfacing for the entire playground area; remove regular swing from the bay with the infant swings; consider replacing the small play structure (steps are too steep and there is possible entrapment on the steps); the handles do not meet standards on the spring animals; the saucer retains water and there is exposed concrete
- **Picnic Table**: Needs to be repaired and painted
- **Basketball Court**: Seal the cracks; repair damaged fence and add additional height to fence behind basket on the northeastern end of the court; add lights
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - The play lot would require a paved walkway to all play equipment to make it compliant. The Moon Crest Community Center, which is adjacent to the park, was not complete when the assessment was taken so its accessibility is not known at this point. However, the second floor of the structure was not going to be accessible.

Robin Hill Park

This is a beautiful park with a lot of potential. All maintenance items should be addressed, and additional programming at the Log House should be considered.

- **Nimick House**: Consider covering the rear courtyard; investigate opportunities to add additional parking
- **Amphitheater**: Improve step access and railing to the amphitheater; seal and stain the wood, upgrade the flooring; have electrical outlets inspected for safety; close the back of the amphitheater to provide the best sound
- **Trails**: Upgrade the signage
- **Benches**: Repair
- **Coventry Log House**: Increase use of house; replace loose material on the walkway; make the log house handicapped accessible; seal deteriorated logs with Citol 1 and Citol 23 and treat for insects
- **General Maintenance**: repair potholes in driveway; remove old stumps to improve appearance; fill in the deep hole off the side porch of the Nimick House; replace the edging on the brick patio
- **ADA Recommendations:**
    - Nimick House – Paved walks provide access up to the house, but ramps are needed to access the house at all entrances. Once inside the house access is not available to the basement or to the upstairs. It would be very expensive and take away from the character of the house to make the entire house ADA compliant. The patio behind the house should be upgraded and made ADA compliant.
    - Coventry Log House – A paved walkway to the log house could be installed. However, a ramp into the house would still be needed and this would take away from the character of this structure.
    - Amphitheatre – This facility should be made ADA compliant through either a paved walkway or a ramping system.
    - Herb Garden – This is located on a hillside and could be made ADA compliant, but the expense and changes to the garden probably would not worth it for the amount of use it would have from ADA individuals.
    - Trails – The trails are all natural trails and are not ADA compliant. It would be very expensive and difficult to bring them into compliance.

Whispering Woods Ball Field

Entrance sign should be reoriented. A trail should be established down through the detention pond area and tied into the Olson property.

- **Playground**: Establish proper use zone and install fall safe material around the swing set and the metal slide (there are possible entrapment issues as well with the slide); the swing set should be scraped, painted and the chains should be inspected, the regular swing should be removed from the bay with the infant swing as well

As was mentioned earlier, Moon Township will be lacking in all types of park land by the year 2010 according to the 1983 NRPA standards. These standards cannot be the only factor when determining recreation need, however. This is even more true when looking at the population projections that were used in the NRPA formula to determine park land need. The projections from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), are not completely accurate in terms of reality. For example, the SPC calculations projected that Moon Township would have 32,651 people in 2002, and the township only had 22,290 people in 2000. Therefore the projected population of 45,653 for the township in 2010 is most likely over stated.

The recent acquisition of Olson Park, which will add an additional 146 acres to the township's park land, as well as the information that was gathered throughout the planning process shows that the township should focus efforts on increasing programming and marketing current park land as well as ensuring that quality open space is preserved rather than focusing on adding additional park land at this time. The adoption of a Mandatory Dedication of Land Ordinance, as was discussed on pages 4-16 and 4-17 will also help to ensure that the township residents are receiving an adequate amount of open space, park land and recreation facilities.