

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to inventory the existing public facilities and services available to the residents of East Pikeland Township and to assess the adequacy of them. The facilities and services addressed herein include the following:

- Water Supply
- Sewage Disposal
- Fire Protection
- Police Protection
- Emergency Medical Services
- Parks and Recreation Services

All of these facilities and services are considered by most people to be essential to the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of modern urban and suburban communities and when adequately provided are a measure of a good quality of life. The same is true for rural communities with the possible exception of public water and sanitary sewer systems that are normally private and on site. In suburbanizing communities, attempting to maintain their rural and agricultural areas, deliberate limitations on the expansion of public water and sewer systems are a major part of an integrated approach to preserving agricultural areas.

Water Supply

East Pikeland Township residents are served by a variety of sources of potable water. Most residents use private wells as the source of water. There are however three independent public water providers operating in the Township. The Phoenixville Borough Water Company provides water service to a small area of commercial and multi-family residential uses along Pennsylvania Route 23 in the eastern part of the Township. The entire Phoenixville Water system utilizes approximately 3.0 mgd drawn from the Schuylkill River. The Citizens Utilities Water Company of Pennsylvania, with a franchise area that covers all of East Pikeland Township, provides public water service to an area of commercial, small lot single family detached and multi-family residential uses along Pennsylvania Route 113 and Camp Council Road. The Company also serves an area of industrial, commercial and small lot single family detached residential uses to the south along Pennsylvania Route 13 and along Kimberton Road. The average daily use of

water in the entire Citizens Utilities system is approximately 1.45 million gallons per day (mgd) drawn from the Schuylkill River. The Fox Knoll Water Company serves only the development of Red Fox Knoll that consists of 23 residences, utilizing approximately 4,000 gallons of groundwater per day. Figure 4.1, Public Water and Sewer Service Areas, shows the existing public water service areas in the Township.

Sewage Disposal

All of the area between Pennsylvania Route 23 and Cold Stream Road, as well as the subdivisions of Merlin Hills, Bevans Orchard and Hunt Field, that are south of Cold Stream Road, are served by a public sanitary sewer system operated by the Valley Forge Sewer Authority. In addition to serving this area of East Pikeland Township, the Authority serves parts of West Vincent Charlestown, Schuylkill and West Whiteland Townships. With a design capacity at the treatment plant of 8.0 mgd, the current average daily use of the system is approximately 6.0 mgd. The Township system discharges into the Wilson Road Force Main which runs along the Schuylkill River. The area to the north of Pennsylvania Route 23 and most of the area to the south of Cold Stream road rely on individual on-site sewage disposal systems. For the most part, soil conditions in these areas are suitable for ground discharge, however there are areas of hydric soils and steep slopes where conventional septic systems should not be used. Refer to Figure 3.6, Soils Resources. In this Chapter, Figure 4.1, Public Water and Sewer Service Areas, delineates the extent of public sewer service in East Pikeland Township.

Figure 4.3, Public Water and Sewer Service Areas Overlay, depicts the public sewer service area as an overlay on the area served by a public water supply system. As can be readily seen, a large part of the area served by public sewers still must rely on individual wells for water. This situation can result in the net loss of water from the Township insofar as groundwater can be lost through the sewer system that, after treatment, is discharged to the Schuylkill River eventually flowing into the Delaware River.

Fire Protection

East Pikeland Township is provided primary fire protection by the Kimberton Fire Company with the Liberty Fire Company located in Spring City providing first call response to the northwest corner of the Township. In addition to serving East Pikeland Township, this volunteer fire company serves the Townships of East Nantmeal, East Vincent and West Vincent. While this covers a wide area, the Kimberton Fire Company Station is located in

Kimberton and is centrally located in East Pikeland Township. This location allows a short response time to all areas of the Township.

In addition to the service area and response times, the adequacy of fire protection is usually a function of the number and type of equipment to serve the kinds of land uses in an area and the number and availability of the fire fighters. Furthermore the availability of public water service with adequate pressure and properly spaced hydrants are important aspects of fire protection adequacy.

At the current time, the Kimberton Fire Company has approximately 30 active volunteer fire fighters and the inventory of equipment available to the Company includes the following pieces of fire fighting apparatus.

- 2 Pump Trucks
- 1 Platform Aerial Ladder Truck
- 1 Seventy Thousand Gallon Tank Truck
- 1 TAC
- 1 Four Wheel Drive Brush Truck
- 1 Medium Duty Rescue Truck
- 1 Spill Contaminate Trailer

Police Protection

East Pikeland Township maintains its own Police Department with a staff that includes a Police Chief, 5 full-time patrolmen and 1 part-time patrolman. This staffing provides 24 hour per day service according to the following shift pattern:

<u>Shifts</u>	<u>Officers</u>	
Day Shift	7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	2
Evening Shift	3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.	2
Night Shift	11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	1

One measure of the adequacy of police protection is the number of officers per 1,000 population. The Pennsylvania Department of Community Development recommends 1.9 officers per 1,000 population although variables such as land use patterns, density and intensity of land use, population characteristics and the history of the number and type of police reports can alter such standards. Municipalities in Chester County have recently averaged approximately 1.4 officers per 1,000 population. At the

present time East Pikeland Township has approximately 0.93 officers per 1,000 population, assuming a year 2000 population estimate of 7,000 persons and a total of 6.5 officers.

Emergency Medical Service

There are two components to emergency medical services provided in East Pikeland Township, rescue services and ambulance services.

The Kimberton Fire Company provides rescue services for all types of accidents including vehicular, industrial and residential accidents. The equipment available for rescue purposes include hydraulic rescue tools (jaws cutters, jacks and rams) and an air bag system for controlling hazardous materials leaks as well as for lifting heavy equipment or vehicles. In addition to the rescue equipment, many of the Company's volunteer members are trained as First Responders, Advanced First Aiders or Emergency Medical Technicians capable of providing at-the-scene medical attention.

Ambulance service within East Pikeland Township is provided by the Spring-City Ambulance Company which also serves the Borough of Spring City and the Townships of East Vincent and West Vincent. Recommended response times for ambulance service is 10 minutes. Since the greatest percentage of East Pikeland Township's population is centrally located approximately 4 miles from Spring City, very good response times for most of the Township's population can be maintained.

Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan

On July 20, 1993, East Pikeland Township Board of Supervisors adopted the above referenced plan, prepared by Robert E. Bartmann, AICP. This document addresses many of the community facility and services elements, particularly the parks and recreation issues related to this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Due to the complete and thorough manner in which the Open Space Plan was prepared, it is recommended that it be considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan. It is a valuable resource, which will be summarized in this chapter regarding relevant topics. Of particular interest are sections on Recreational Resources and Needs, Plan for Recreational Lands and Facilities, Site and Facility Development, Recreation Program, and Park Maintenance.

Existing Recreational Facilities and Programs

Generally, there are two types of recreational lands; those designed and constructed for active recreational uses and those that are allowed to remain in a natural state to be used for passive recreational pursuits. Active recreation facilities are intended for athletics, competitive sports, and other vigorous activities. Baseball, football, soccer, basketball, tennis, and track and field events are examples of recreational activities considered active. Additionally, active recreation often includes accommodations for spectators. Passive recreation is characterized by a general lack of structured facilities and often occurs in the natural environment. Examples of passive recreation include hiking, jogging, cycling, foxhunting, bird watching, and picnicking. Other variables affecting all recreation are whether the activity is conducted indoors or outdoors, seasonally or year-round, or by teams or individuals. Some recreational activities consume vast amounts of land, whereas others require relatively small spaces. Open spaces and facilities can range in size from large areas serving regional populations to small scale facilities serving a neighborhood or community. See Figure 4.2, Existing Recreation Facilities.

In East Pikeland Township there are twenty-five outdoor recreation and open space sites. Nine are municipally owned by the Township, five are not municipally owned but are available to the public, and eleven are conditionally available to the public. Nineteen of the sites are for passive recreation uses, and six are designed for active use. Two of the six active sites are commercially operated. The Township owns approximately 126 acres of land, of which the vast majority is passive, undeveloped land. The partially developed Kimberton Community Park represents the Township's active recreation center. Other active recreation sites include the Kimberton Fire Company and the East Pikeland Elementary School. Six commercial sites are the Burger King lot on Rt. 23, Water World on Rt. 724, Markey Miniature Golf, Echo Valley Deck Hockey, French Creek Outfitters Shooting Range, and a bowling alley. See Figure 4.3, Existing Active Recreation Areas. The Township owns seven passive recreation areas located along both Pickering Creek and French Creek. Other tracts have been preserved as private open space. Utility companies own areas of undeveloped land, however public use is not always encouraged. An exception is land along the Schuylkill River where the Philadelphia Electric Company has granted Chester County an easement for a trail along its transmission line.

Indoor recreational facilities are traditionally much more difficult to locate. The costs of building and operating such facilities can be beyond the capabilities of small communities. However, there are opportunities in the East Pikeland community for shared use of existing buildings. The Open Space, Recreation

and Environmental Resources Plan enumerates several sites which may be available. The East Pikeland Elementary School has a gymnasium and classrooms which are available for a fee. Other possible sites include the Kimberton Fire Company, the Pennsylvania National Guard and the former Kimberton Grange Hall, now a commercial dance studio. Not located with the Township but nearby are the Senior Center of Phoenixville, the Phoenixville YMCA, the Phoenixville Recreation Center, and the junior and senior high schools of the Phoenixville Area School District. Although not often thought of as recreation, the branch library at Chester Springs serves those needs of Township residents.

Regional recreation facilities are also available for residents able to travel to nearby areas. These facilities are provided by larger municipalities and the State. Examples are the Valley Forge National Park, Marsh Creek State Park, Chester County's Warwick Park, Montgomery County's Lower Perkiomen Creek Park and French Creek State Park. In addition, there are State Game Lands in the northern areas of Chester County. Numerous golf courses can also be found in the region.

Recreational Needs

The low population density of East Pikeland Township has contributed to the lack of active recreational areas due in part to large residential lots which provide for many recreational opportunities. Yard space does not, however, satisfy all recreational needs for a population. The Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan has identified standards for differing types of parks, from urban residential parks to subregional parks. For each type of park there is an ideal area, travel distance and population to be served. Further, there are recreational activities that are typically found in parks that can be classified by the number of each facility required to serve a given population. The Plan found a deficiency of facilities generally across the Township. Specifically, it found a gross lack of neighborhood facilities, while citing the beginnings of a community park in Kimberton. At present, there is a lack of both acreage and developed facilities. Figure 9.1, Proposed Parks and Recreation Facilities Map, found in Chapter 9, Open Space Plan, illustrates the location of proposed facilities.

Standards for passive recreational areas are much more difficult to quantify than active facilities. Residents of the Township have expressed interest in the preservation of natural open space, but the quantity needed for a given population is subjective. Also difficult to resolve is the manner or extent to which recreational facilities should be provided in the natural areas. The argument is basically how much development can occur without

compromising the intrinsic values of the land. Other than preserving scenic vistas, open space can provide for a network of trails for a variety of purposes. Recreational trails for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians take advantage of the natural features and terrain, providing local opportunities for passive outdoor recreation. These same trails can also provide a network connecting destinations, allowing residents to walk or bike to community facilities, such as schools, parks, shopping and even employment. A need for trail systems in the Township has been identified in the past and still remains. Another benefit of a Township trail network is the ability to connect to regional systems of hiking and biking trails, for instance along the Schuylkill River. Underlying the interest in trail systems is the concern for minimizing the use of motorized transportation where feasible, in order to improve air quality and lower the need for expanded roadways.