MT. Lebanon Parks Master Plan

First Public Meeting
January 15, 2003

Meeting Notes and Analysis Drawings
The purpose of this project is to better serve residents by enhancing recreational opportunities and green space within thirteen of the community’s municipal parks.

To improve the Mt. Lebanon park system, a design will be created for each of the 13 parks. The designs shall be consistent with the recommendations of the municipality’s Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (CRP), will take into consideration the special opportunities and limitations of each park, and will reflect community consensus and municipal cost/maintenance issues.

A master plan is a guideline for park maintenance, improvement and development.

**Goals of the Master Plans**

1. To create a unified park system with consistent and interconnected elements that will collectively serve the community's needs
2. To enhance each park’s unique qualities
3. To utilize space effectively, perhaps relocating certain facilities or amenities to achieve an appropriate balance of active and passive use.
4. To accommodate current needs and provide flexible options for meeting future needs, in particular those recommended by the CRP.
5. To protect, preserve and enhance natural resources, balancing recreational and ecological concerns.
6. To develop a short- and long-term implementation strategy, beginning with pilot projects that will promote the master plan effort.
7. To consider maintenance needs and the impact of maintenance on municipal resources.
# Inventory of Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Wooded Site</th>
<th>Baseball Field</th>
<th>Basketball Court</th>
<th>Soccer Field</th>
<th>Tennis Court</th>
<th>Football Field</th>
<th>Volleyball Court</th>
<th>Kay Equipment</th>
<th>Trails in Wooded Areas</th>
<th>Pavilion Shelter</th>
<th>Permanent Restrooms</th>
<th>Water Fountains</th>
<th>Fire Ring</th>
<th>Parking</th>
<th>Other Amenities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bird Park</td>
<td>42.00</td>
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<td>(1) porta potty</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1) toilet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Picnic tables, grill</td>
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<td>Church Place Park</td>
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<td>street</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handicap sidewalk, picnic tables</td>
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<td>parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highland Terrace Park</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mt. Lebanon Park</td>
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<td>(10) R.L.</td>
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<td>(2) sand</td>
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<td>(4) earth</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
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<td>Recreation Center, Tennis Center, 2 Batting cages, bocce court, ice skate, shuffleboard court, swimming pool, concession stand, grill, picnic tables</td>
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<td>Robbins Hollow Park</td>
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<td>parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Picnic tables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R indicates regulation size fields and courts
L indicates lighted fields and courts
The basketball court sits on the upper terrace of Meadowcroft Park.

The tennis courts sit above the softball field enclosed by a fence and dense vegetation.

The softball/baseball field is enclosed by a steep slope and dense vegetation.

Dense vegetation acts as a screen in between the basketball court and the walkway.

A walkway carries pedestrians through the park without interfering with activity on the tennis and basketball courts.

The difference in elevation provides a secure setting for Meadowcroft Park.
A small stream traverses the valley floor of Iroquois Park.

Stormwater is lead through culverts into the stream.

The eastern portion of Iroquois Park is open and manicured. The basketball court is partially embraced by the woodland edge protecting the stream corridor.

Iroquois Park contains several play structures to accommodate a variety of ages.

The path on the left of the image leads to the Galleria Mall. This park provides a safe pedestrian link from the residential area to the adjacent commercial area.

The western portion of Iroquois Park is enclosed by steep slopes and dense vegetation creating a woodland setting.
Hoodridge Park is a fairly steep valley bounded by a single family housing development, Connor Road and Terrace Drive. A utility easement for telephone poles is also part of the site.

Along Terrace Drive the woodlands are lined by a maintained lawn. However, in most other instances along Connor Road, and behind the neighborhoods, the park has an overgrown woodland edge.

Only one pathway cuts through the wooded park connecting the two neighborhoods (from Eisenhower Drive to Marshall Drive). No other formal points of access to the park are available.

From the paved pathway a few informal trails extend into the woodlands, but are terminated quickly.

An intermittent stream runs through the park, occasionally contained by culverts.
Sunridge Drive divides the park into two distinct entities. Play equipment (left) is located on the opposite side of the road from the basketball court (right).

A steep narrow drive enables a single car to access the play equipment. No parking or turnarounds are available at either segment of the park.

The play equipment is dispersed throughout the woodland setting.

Sloping topography separates play areas in the park.

An unlined basketball court is nestled into the terraced slope with low visibility from Sunridge Road.

The slope (left) prevents direct access from the surrounding neighborhood to the basketball court.
At the termination of Country Club Drive is the entrance to the park. A sidewalk continues from the neighborhood into the park. Minimal on street parking is available.

A sidewalk bisects the park and winds around the play equipment.

The Country Club Park is bordered on three sides by a private golf course and woodlands.

An unlined court with one basket is located in the far corner of the park (opposite the entrance). It is encompassed by woodlands and the golf course.

The boundary of the golf course is fenced off from the park. However, a break in the fence line enables access to and from the golf course (though private).

Play structures are grouped closely together in a grove of trees.
Landscape planting and signage along Church Place create a “formal” entrance.

The playground equipment is geared towards young children.

A handicap accessible walkway traverses the park to connect with the swing set.

A wood arbor provides shelter for benches and picnic tables.

Topography change throughout the park creates a terraced landscape.

A steep slope separates the park from Lavina Avenue.
A soccer field encompassed by woods, is accessed by trails from the Beadling Road parking lot.

Many trails through the woods are informally defined by tree branches. Some trails are designated by color ‘markers’ on trees.

Beadling Road forms the southern boundary of the park. A more formal, maintained park edge creates a transition between the wooded landscape and the surrounding neighborhood.

An intermittent stream carves through the park, at times confined to culverts or pipes where the trail crosses.

At several points of steeper topography split rail fences line the trail segments and timber steps provide an easier transition between grade.

Fire ring and seating area accessed by Bird Park Drive entrance.

Wooden play structure located in open lawn area adjacent to fire ring (Bird Park Drive).

Trails from playground lead up to picnic pavilion. A wooden bridge connects the picnic area to trails throughout park.
Sculptural stone walls lead up to a large pavilion.

The stone walls provide a focal point as well as a place for gathering.

The park has several play areas for young children located near the Recreation Center.

A pavilion and small play structure sit in the valley surrounded by steep slopes and a dense tree canopy.

This image shows one of the three softball/baseball fields along Cedar Boulevard.

This basketball court is located across the street from the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center.

This parking lot serves both the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center and the main playground area.

The sand volleyball court is a unique amenity to the Mt. Lebanon Park. The court is situated at the top of a steep slope leading down to Greenhurst Drive.
Twin Hills Park, though predominantly steep wooded slopes, has pockets of open fields along its edges (Chatham Park Drive shown above).

Amur Honeysuckle is a dominant shrub in the park, arching overhead and creating cavernous "rooms" with its dense, curving branches.

Signage marks the public access at Twin Hills Drive, though no parking is available. Initially several trails depart from this point and are defined by a mulch path and lined with branches.

The park's northern and southern boundaries are defined by multi-family residential units. Single family homes form the park's east and west borders. (Chatham Park development shown above).

Nature leads, art follows.

In the southernmost corner of the park water collected by a concrete pipe creates a moist environment and a shallow pool.

The trail/park entrance from the multi-family units (south) is unmarked and chained off. The trail is undefined and quickly fades into the underbrush.

Trails further into the park become more ambiguous and are not clearly defined, and are often unmarked narrow dirt paths that do not connect or loop.

A shallow stream carves its path north-south through the park.
The cul-de-sac at the end of Brafferton Drive is the only vehicular access point for the park. A steep path leads down to the softball/baseball field and basketball court.

This small lawn trail is the safest route for spectators to use if a game is already underway.

The basketball court is also enclosed by steep slopes and dense vegetation.

The softball/baseball field is encompassed by steep slopes and dense vegetation.

At times, the outfield is used as a small soccer field.

A neighborhood sidewalk extends from Valley Park Drive to the edge of the park.
The upper parking lot is hidden from view by a steep slope and large spruce trees.

A variety of play equipment awaits young visitors.

Rockwood Park provides a pedestrian link between Rockwood Avenue and Vallevista Avenue.

The park’s amenities are terraced into the landscape.

The basketball court sits adjacent to the parking lot and is protected from Rockwood Avenue by a steep slope and dense vegetation.

Rockwood Park sits above a steep slope with dense vegetation separating the park from adjacent backyards.
Rockwood Park

Rockwood Avenue

Kewanee Avenue

Valleysta Avenue

Margaretta Avenue

Property Line

Existing Evergreen Trees (Typ)

Existing Deciduous Trees (Typ)

Basketball Court

Bituminous Parking Lot (Approx. 5 Cars)

Bituminous Parking Lot (11 Cars)

Property Line

Wood Pavilion

Cliffing Structure

Climbing Structure

Swingset (2 Each) in Mulch Bed

Slide and Climbing Structure in Mulch Bed

Existing Deciduous Trees (Typ)
Robb Hollow Park shares an entrance with the Department of Public Works.

Cedar Boulevard runs along the upper municipal maintenance yard lined by a row of trees and a three-rail fence.

A trail starting at the main entrance by the municipal buildings leads hikers on a long walk through the woods to an old fire circle and picnic area.

A small wooden bridge crosses an intermittent stream channel and allows the trail to continue up a steep slope.

This is a trail radiating from the entry into the park off of Driftwood Drive.

A small stream cuts through the valley floor.

An overgrown fire circle and picnic area are well hidden at the top of the hillside.

Due to the woodland setting of Robb Hollow it is home to a variety of wildlife, such as this white-tailed deer.
Pennsylvania Boulevard

View down Pennsylvania Boulevard.

Trolley lines adjacent to Pennsylvania Boulevard form the eastern boundary.

Landscape character.

"Permit Only" parking lot located at the terminus of Hazel Road.

View of sloped site from Hazel Road lot.

The site slopes upward to meet the backyards of houses on Avon Drive.

January 15, 2003

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Municipality of Mt. Lebanon
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
15205

Nature leads, art follows.
Old, mature trees spot the hillside and transition the park from a woodland setting to a community open space.

Williamsburg Park is equipped with several play structures and a pavilion.

The tennis court and basketball court sit high above the entry on Valley Park Drive.

A concrete bridge spans a dry stream bed.

Manicured lawn mimics the form of a stream and leads the eye towards the bridge in the background. The path to the right meanders up the slope to another parking lot.

The turnaround allows easy access into and out of the park.
General Question (before break-out sessions)

1. Are the school fields being included? Are you taking into consideration how those fields are used?

2. Will this consider how open space connects to other municipalities?

3. Is Mt. Lebanon Park, and this building (Recreation Center) included in this study?

4. How was your firm selected?

5. What budgetary/monetary constraints regulate us? How is the money going to be acquired?

6. Will you be considering the character of the parks as they exist now? (Bird Park vs. some of the smaller neighborhood parks)
Mt. Lebanon Parks Master Plans
Notes from First Public Meeting – January 15, 2003

Break-out Group #1 (Fred)

Strengths

Variety
Neighborhood parks and main park = diversity
Use schools
Recreation Campus
Wooded natural quality
Good balance of recreation and nature
Enough green space to support habitat
Green space = educational tool
School environmental classes
A lot of accessibility – use by opportunity
Quiet contemplative aspects
Social purpose – interaction
Country Club Park
Facilities that no one else has (ice rink, volleyball)
Public Works - works

Weaknesses

Williamsburg Park – overdeveloped – has lost its natural and creative aspects
Nature trails are not well maintained
Highland Terrace has moist (wet) areas. Equipment needs to be kid-friendly
Red & Yellow equipment is of poor quality
Most playground areas need addressed
Plantings should be native – Mt. Lebo plants
Invasive species within Bird Park and Twin Hills Park
Robb Hollow is destroyed
Specimen trees should be planted. Need an inventory of species. Bio-Blitz in Bird Park
Educate the public as to what is there
Species removal
Habitat
Re-state value – parks impact

High school partnerships
Schools open to use
Problems balancing recreation needs vs. nature
Schools not always available
Tennis courts need renovation (tennis center)
Hoodridge Park is a conservation district
Lights on volleyball courts

Vision of the Future

Program for students – High school students maintain natural areas
Neighborhoods enhance trails
Twin Hills is a beautiful park, partner with city for maintenance
Municipal fields are in excellent condition after recent improvements
Winter use – sled riding? Where?
Let it go wild
Update playground equipment
Green space corridors enlarge parks – bikeways
Use proper methods to remove invasive species
Comp. Plan – outside joint venture (Youth Sports Alliance)
Historic elements into municipal parks – art
Water fountains in parks
Land acquisition
They should be bigger!
Be thoughtful about preserving green space – nature!
Mt. Lebanon Parks Master Plans
Notes from First Public Meeting – January 15, 2003

Break-out Group #2 (Erika and Lisa)

General Comments
- Parks need formalized signage and trail system
- Need a forest management plan for all the natural parks
- Need a land management plan
- The proximity of the parks is key to the residents. It is important to maintain the ability to walk to the parks for the residents.
- Linkages to greenspaces “stepping stones” – links to other municipalities parks
- Play equipment needs to be universally designed for people with special needs
- Need new play equipment (especially swings) in the neighborhood parks
- “Tree City” Plan and ordinance
- When trees are cut down they are not replaced
- Interpretive walks in the woods
- Indoor recreation/covered play area for winter use
- Area is rich in history
- Need information along trails
- Passive parks need management based upon sound ecological principles (sustainable)

Bird Park
- Leave the park alone
- Preserve its natural beauty
- The park should be used to teach ecology and its history to make the park interactive
- Poor Drainage at fire ring and soccer field
- People enjoy the trails throughout the natural setting
- The park feels safe
- The park is used by the boy scouts for education
- Need to enforce keeping dogs on a leash
- Need to create an area that dogs can be unleashed in
- It is important to maintain the ability to walk your dog in park
- The park needs better signage, i.e. about keeping dogs leashed
- A few people heard that there was a proposal to pave trails in Bird Park-everyone agreed that this was unnecessary and would destroy the character of the park
- Forest management plan needed
- Any changes need to be ecologically sensitive
- Some people felt that the park was well maintained
- Nature trails - maintenance problems
- Area for dogs to run unleashed?
- Interpretive trails (*Meet the Arborist* night at the park)

Main Park (Mt. Lebanon Park)
- Everyone enjoys the playground equipment and the pavilions
- The park provides the most amenities
- Main Park has all the facilities
- Trees are falling down
- Used for cross-country skiing
- Sledding
- Play equipment is nice and pavilions are used a lot
- Pavilion #2 has water and electric – covered in mud after a rainstorm (drainage + location)
- Trees need to be replaced when they fall
- Trails need maintained
- No dogs in Main Park
- Arboretum (education)

Twin Hills Trails Park
- Very different from Bird Park
- Natural character is enjoyed by the neighborhood
- Needs larger parking area
- Land Management Plan
- Reforestation, native plants should be considered
- Should be the “walking trails” park
- Public playground
- Very natural, great trails
- Needs signage

Williamsburg Park
- Tennis courts

Robb Hollow Park
- Leave the park alone
- Preserve its natural beauty
- There should be interpretative signage revealing the natural ecology and historic significance of the site.
- Why is the land used for mulching?
- More land used for dumping

Pennsylvania Boulevard Park
- Need to acquire the rest of the land for a park
- This would be a great place for bike and jogging trails.

Country Club Park
- Everyone walks to the park
Break-out Group #3 (Joe)

Restrooms not available in many of the parks
Many people use the parks for jogging and walking
Difficult to know how many parks Mt. Lebo has, where they are and what is in them

Demographics of Mt. Lebo?
Should demographics dictate design of park or should design of park influence demographics?
Improve park facilities to keep/attract young people with families
Baseball fields are outdated and in poor shape
Drainage in the Bird Park soccer field is poor
More and more people are involved in athletics and over-taxing fields

Bird Park is a natural resource
Mt. Lebo needs more bike trails, bikers have to leave their community to find a place to ride
Traffic has increased so dramatically kids can’t play on the streets
What is the zoning definition of a park?
Twin Hills Park needs a place for dogs and possibly a baseball field

Bird Park is unique because you feel like you’re completely away from everything (civilization)
It would be nice to set aside areas for dogs in Mt. Lebo Park

Maintenance of fields is poor
Drainage at the Bird Park field is poor
Fences at Sunset Hills Park are falling down because of poor drainage
Poor maintenance leads to safety issues (fences, erosion, trails…)
Play equipment within the parks is bad

Parks need to be better “advertised”
Boy Scouts / Eagle Scouts help out with maintenance in the parks

Grass surrounding the pool is a problem. Grass becomes muddy and people track mud into pool

Wildlife is returning. We should be more aware and encourage (some types) of wildlife
I have seen deer, turkey and red tail hawk

Mt. Lebo is an urban community. We need to take a more “manicured” and “maintained” approach to our parks. We can’t just let these places go wild. If I want un-spoiled nature I will drive to Cooks Forest or the Adirondack Mountains.

Is the Rec. Center Building part of the plan? If so, it could be re-developed into more of a community attraction with an indoor track for walkers or a coffee shop

I am interested in the programming aspects of the parks. We need to get people outside and get them using the parks. Something like the fitness stations in South Park (cardio, strength training, running…) should be considered.

A trails system should be considered, one that links the parks together.

Twin Hills Park – its beauty is that it is natural, neighbors maintain trails (Mt. Lebo drops-off mulch and gravel for their use) not formal DPW maintenance. Grape vine is very dense in places

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