

LIGONIER VALLEY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Focus Group Summary – Recreation/Trails
January 16, 2017 – 6:00 PM

A total of nine (9) persons attended the session facilitated by Mark Lazzari (EADS). Suggested topics as per input received from field work, the prior workshop and the community survey included the following, but these were noted for guidance only:

- Walkability issues
- Trail segment extensions
- Winter sports expansion
- Destination recreational opportunities

An additional topic of recreation facility enhancements was discussed by attendees. After a brief introduction on the process and the purpose of this session, input on issues and recommendations were welcomed.

Walkability Issues

In general, pedestrians do feel safe walking in the Borough at all hours of the Day. Noted that sidewalks are located in most of the Borough and street lighting is provided at most street intersections. Ideas on improving walkability in the Borough were identified:

- Extend sidewalks along W. Loyalhanna St. (west of Fairfield St.) and complete the sidewalk system along Fairfield, Boquet, and McColly Sts. to Weller Athletic Field and Friendship Park & Playground. Additional sidewalk gaps identified on:
 - Franklin St.
 - Mellon St.
 - Bell St.
 - Graham St.
 - Bunger St.
 - Eastern edge of E. Church St
 - Northern edge of Plum St., Village Ct., Kastner St. and North Ave.
- Add lighting in alleyways – noted that pedestrians use the alleyways as much as the main streets.
- Install ADA Ramps/Curb ramps in the Borough – reported that curb ramps are located only along Main Street.
- Spot sidewalk repairs in the Borough – reported that sidewalk conditions are variable in the Borough primarily resulting from street tree upheaval.

Trail Segment Extensions

There was a detailed discussion on the Ligonier Township Recreation Committee's priorities trail expansion priorities and their overall goal to establish connections between the Borough and Township and between their recreation assets.

- Expanding the Ligonier Valley Trail northward from its current terminus near the Ligonier Valley Conference center thru the Ligonier Municipal Complex and ultimately into Wilpen – acquiring easements from unwilling property owners is a

major impediment. Several property owners reportedly have refused to grant an easement. No specific assistance by the Borough or Township with this matter was identified.

- Expanding the Ligonier Valley Trail to connect with the Bethlen Community – working with Bethlen to finalize a route alignment, acquire easements and funding. No specific assistance by the Borough or Township with this matter was identified.
- Better on-road signage of the existing Walking Trail in the Borough – signage is currently only provided on telephone poles along the route. Goal is to get road surfaces along the routes paint marked with a pedestrian/bike symbol. Suggested that this will require coordination and approval by the Borough to add upkeep of the on-road markings to their annual line painting program.

Recreation Facility Enhancements

The Ligonier Township Recreation Committee also discussed their priorities related to enhancing existing playground/recreation areas. No specific role for the Borough/Township to assist in this matter was identified.

- Enhancements to the Wilpen and Laughlintown playgrounds are anticipated to begin in spring 2017.
- Creating a large community garden on Loyalhanna Watershed Association property just outside of the Borough – anticipate having 30+ plots available for lease. Anticipate establishing this garden in spring 2017.
- Working on creating a Dog Park – longer range project – need to identify suitable location.

No specific role for the Township or Borough to assist in accomplishing these projects was identified.

Attendees also suggested that additional tennis and basketball courts are needed in the Ligonier Valley, noting that tennis/basketball courts at Friendship Park are well used.

Winter Sports Expansion

Discussion focused on the newly reopened Laurel Mountain Ski Area.

- Attendees noted that as of now users are mainly from the local area. It is believed that a new lodging facility in the area is needed to open the facility up to a larger regional crowd.
- Also noted that Seven Springs only has a lease with DCNR until 2018. Suggested that once Seven Springs has a longer term lease with DCNR, they will increase their promotion of the facility and will consider adding additional amenities.

Suggestions to better connect the Borough/Township with the Ski Area include:

- Borough and Township work with the Ligonier Valley School District to re-establish a school ski-club which would lead to greater use of the facility.

- Borough and Township focus efforts on attracting a ski (and bicycle) outfitter to the Valley.

Destination Recreational Opportunities

Discussion focused on attracting an indoor water park or similar facility with a lodging facility to the land across US Rt. 30 from Idlewild Park (i.e. former Timberlink facility) – goal would be to create a year round recreation destination in this area.

- Suggested that the Plan recommend that a strategy be developed for attracting a water park/lodging developer to this land.