

The Board of Commissioners is seeking volunteers to assist the Township engineer and administration to prepare the Aston Township Master Plan. (See the scope of work below)

It is anticipated that the work to develop the plan will begin in March. There will be at least three committee meetings and two (2) public meetings. It is anticipated that a final plan would be considered by the Board of Commissioners in late summer.

The Board will be appoint a volunteer committee at their meeting on February 18th. If you are interested in serving on this committee, send a letter of interest to John A. Granger, Township Manager at [jgranger@astontownship.net](mailto:jgranger@astontownship.net).

## **Aston Township Parks Master Plan**

Aston is blessed with an exceptional park system. Most residents can walk to a park within five (5) minutes from their home. This is an exceptional value to our residents.

The Township Wide Park Study will become the blue print for park improvements in the future.

The document will be used to support grant application for funding to support necessary park improvements.

One of the most important elements of what the plan will be to prioritize the proposed improvements. The prioritized list will be used when applying for grants.

### **Scope of Work**

1. ***Kick-off Meeting and Project Orientation:*** There will be an initial kick-off meeting with representatives from the Township to confirm project expectations and discuss key issues and expected outcomes. It is anticipated that the ongoing planning efforts and coordination between the Township and its residents will yield important information related to specific potential constraints and opportunities. Specific goals for the meeting will include:
  - confirm the project objectives;
  - identify key project stakeholders;
  - identify other relevant prior plans and studies;
  - identify communications channels and project personnel;
  - outline a community outreach process;
  - outline anticipated agency and regulatory coordination and approvals;
  - identify targeted project budget and schedules.
2. ***Define Goals and Objectives:*** Pennoni Associates will work with Township officials and project stakeholders to define specific goals and objectives for the Plan. This will include a detailed description of the intended purpose of the Plan, and identification of specific outcomes.
3. ***Project Background:*** To make sure that the recommendations are consistent with established municipal goals, Pennoni Associates will review and become familiar with previous relevant plans, studies, and information, including the most current Township Comprehensive Plan, and any prior open space and recreation plans and studies. General community information (population, demographics, etc.), to confirm current and projected future needs of the Township will also be reviewed.
4. ***Parks and Open Space Inventory:*** A thorough field inventory of existing parks, playgrounds, and public open space within the Township to gain a full understanding of the opportunities, constraints, and physical context will be conducted. Photographs or otherwise

record conditions observed in the field will be made. The inventory will include an assessment of existing conditions, such as:

- Size, type, and ownership for each property;
- ADA compliance, including entrances and slopes;
- site access and circulation;
- safety concerns;
- general age and condition of equipment and facilities;
- grading (slopes) and drainage issues.

5. **Base Map Preparation:** Working from existing Township base information, supplemented by aerial photography and field verification, a plan of existing parks, playground, and open space resources will be created, to serve as the working base for planning drawings and diagrams.
6. **Community Needs Assessment:** The current and projected needs of the community for open space and recreation facilities will be evaluated. The degree to which existing facilities meet or fall short of that target will be assessed. This analysis will encompass several factors, including:
  - a. National Standards: Compare existing community resources with accepted national standards. Using established guidelines, a summary of the various types of parks and the recommended minimum/maximum standard sizes and quantities of each type of park; and compare them against the existing acreage and facilities will be performed.
  - b. Recreation Programming: Through discussion with Township officials, stakeholders, and non-profit recreation and athletic associations, a list of existing recreation programs available in the community. These programs will be compared with the resources offered by existing facilities, as well as projected future needs and desires for program expansion.
  - c. Americans with Disabilities Act: Existing parks and recreation facilities will be reviewed for accessibility and determine whether reasonable opportunities exist to allow people with disabilities to participate in and benefit from programs. Recommendations for compliance and improvements will be made.
7. **Opportunities:** Identify and evaluate options for expanding the Township existing parks and open space system to better meet the needs of the community. Options to be explored may include:
  - a. Vacant/undeveloped land – potential benefits and approximate costs of acquisition
  - b. Potential to expand/renovate existing facilities – opportunities to upgrade or reprogram existing parks and properties with new uses that may be more relevant to current and future needs.
  - c. Utility Corridors – Opportunities to utilize existing rail and/or utility corridors for development as trails and greenways, for recreation benefit and as connections between other parks and open space resources.

8. **Recommendations:** Based on an assessment of community needs and available opportunities, a coherent set of recommendations for expansion and upgrade of the Township Parks and Open Space system will be developed. This Master Plan will be intended to serve as the documentation of goals and strategies, as well as recommendations for specific improvements. The Master Plan will include:
- a. Description of proposed improvements for each existing park facility
  - b. Suggested properties for acquisition, and proposed use for each
  - c. Conceptual sketch plans for each property
  - d. Overall Township-wide plan diagram
  - e. Overview of current and projected future recreation programming
9. **Public Outreach:** To assure that ample opportunity is provided for input by the community and project stakeholders, a public process that solicits input from Township residents and constituent groups will be conducted.
- a. **Steering Committee Meetings:** The Township will establish a project Steering Committee to provide input to the process and serve as a sounding board for our recommendations. Members of the Steering Committee may include Township officials, members of the business community, civic leaders, representatives of recreational associations and others which may be identified. During these meetings the committee will identify key issues, review proposed findings, discuss alternative solutions, and refine the recommendations. At a minimum three Steering Committee meetings will occur at the following stages in the design process:
    - **Meeting 1:** Introduce project, clarify objectives, gather input as to priorities for evaluating alternatives, and identify resources and challenges.
    - **Meeting 2:** Present initial findings and preliminary recommendations, and solicit feedback.
    - **Meeting 3:** Present draft Master Plan and solicit feedback on concepts and implementation strategy.
  - b. **Stakeholder Meetings:** In addition to the input provided by the Steering Committee, one-on-one meetings with stakeholders will be necessary to review specific aspects of the project in detail as the Plan is being developed and refined.
  - c. **Public Meetings:** Two (2) public meetings will be held during the course of the project to present findings and gather community input. One meeting will occur near the beginning of the process to solicit input, and the other will take place near the end of the process as final recommendations are being formulated.
  - d. **Website Support:** To encourage public input and discussion, graphic materials and written project summaries will be provided for the Township to post on its website.

- e. Public Opinion Survey: Public opinion surveys are an effective way to reach residents of the Township who cannot attend the public meetings. Manage an online survey will be created to gather public input on planning and revitalization efforts from large audiences.

**10. *Implementation Plan*:** An overall strategy for implementation of the proposed improvements will be developed. This will include:

- *Action Plan*: Identifying responsible parties and roles, and outlining discreet action items and timelines for each leading to project implementation.
- *Phasing Plan*: Prioritized list of projects and actions, broken into short-term, medium-term, and long-term phases, depending on cost, complexity, readiness for implementation, and other relevant factors.
- *Estimated Costs*: Order of magnitude construction cost estimates for recommended improvements.
- *Funding Sources*: Identify specific potential sources for capital funding to make improvements, including eligible grant programs, and other strategies.
- *Recreation Programming*: Summary of recommended programs, as identified during the outreach process.
- *Maintenance Plan*: Identify required maintenance tasks, associated costs, and responsible parties.

**11. *Final Report Document*:** All the work products described above will be assembled into a formal bound final report, and furnished as DRAFT for review by the Township and Steering Committee. After this review, any necessary revisions will be incorporated into the DRAFT and a final report will be issued. Final documents will be furnished in both hardcopy and electronic formats, in quantities and specific electronic formats as desired. Final deliverables comprising the Plan will include:

- *Narrative Report*: A final narrative report that describes the project goals, methodology, and results. The final report will be submitted to the Township for adoption/acceptance. The report will include a stand-alone Executive Summary containing the main points of the full document.
- *Maps and Plans*: Key analytical maps and drawings will be provided as presentation-size hard copy originals, as well as in electronic format.
- *Digital CD*: Containing the Study Report and Maps and Plans in a digital, reproducible format.
- *Meeting Minutes* and other records of project correspondence.
- Formal Township Resolution accepting the Report.