

6. A Plan for Community Facilities

The Plan for Community Facilities addresses the Township's provision of municipal facilities and services as it accommodates future development. In addition to focusing on the Township facilities: schools, libraries, police services and fire protection services, and parks, the plan offers recommendations for coordinating the provision of these services in light of the Proposed Character Areas map. It is this coordination that will enable the Township to provide the necessary services to support growth in the Township, but also to deliver them at a reasonable cost and while maintaining a fiscally balanced budget.

Existing community facilities are depicted on **Map 7-1**.

A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Schoonover Municipal Center and Smithfields Library

The Schoonover Municipal Center on Municipal Drive is conveniently located just off the Route 209 corridor and in proximity to a popular commercial area serving basic community needs. The newly renovated Municipal Building was dedicated in June of 2006 after undergoing extensive rehabilitation to add approximately 1,200 square feet of office and public meeting space, as well as critically needed storage. These renovations followed the relocation of the Roads Department to a nearby facility.

Also located nearby is the Smithfields Public Library, adjacent to the Foxmoor Village Shopping Center. This branch library is one of three associated with the regional Eastern Monroe Library System and serves Middle Smithfield and Smithfield Townships. The main library, the Hughes Library is located in Stroudsburg. Additional library services are available through the East Stroudsburg University, just a few miles south of Marshalls Creek, and at the individual schools located within the Township.

The library system is funded through County property taxes with additional assistance and fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Eastern Monroe Public Library. Future planning calls for a new, larger library to serve the growing population in this area.

Police Services and Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Policing services are provided by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), based in Swiftwater. Currently, Middle Smithfield Township provides an unmanned substation for the State Police, located to the rear of the township administrative buildings. This location serves PSP as a meeting location nearer to residents. The office also serves as a location for PSP to complete reports and download information as needed to allow those units stationed within Middle Smithfield Township to complete tasks within the township whenever possible.

As the demand for services rises along with population growth, the Township acknowledges that there may be a need to explore opportunities for a local force, possibly through a regional sharing agreement with other municipalities. To this

end, the Township will need to make regular assessments of the capacity of the current police force to deliver efficient and effective services. To date, the township has completed two police studies, one conducted through DCED and the other utilizing a citizen task force. Future monitoring should focus on the level of service currently provided, including the number and type of calls, call locations, and response times. This data will provide background information for a strategic plan that projects future levels of demand, as well as the ability to determine if and when a new arrangement would be needed to ensure sufficient levels of service. This plan should evaluate alternatives for future service delivery, particularly the potential for a Stroud Area Regional Police Force. The Township has contacted the Stroud Area Regional Police Force and is currently in preliminary discussions regarding such a possibility.

In regards to fire protection services, there are three local fire companies, all manned by volunteer staff. These stations are the Marshalls Creek Fire Company, the Bushkill Fire Company and the Shawnee Fire Company. All calls for the stations are dispatched through the Monroe County Control Center, which handles 911 for all Monroe County municipalities and Lehman Township in Pike County.

Of these, the Shawnee Fire Company is the smallest of the three in terms of Township service area; followed by Bushkill Fire Company with Marshalls Creek Fire Company serving the largest portion of the township. Due to firefighter personnel limitations, both Marshalls Creek and Shawnee are dual dispatched during weekday coverage hours. All three companies work as mutual aid companies for each other.

Just as the Township needs to assess the need for a local, joint police force in the future, there are concerns over the continued abilities of the fire protection to continue to attract and maintain a sufficient volunteer base. As the volume of calls increases with the population, it may be necessary to establish core paid positions, especially during daytime hours, which are most difficult to staff.

Emergency Medical Services including emergency response for ambulance services for both Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support (paramedic) services are primarily handled by Bushkill Emergency Corps. There are three primary stations located in Marshalls Creek, Foxmoor and Bushkill. Paramedic services are provided on a 24-hour-a-day basis through the Marshalls Creek station with Basic Life Support services rotated through the remaining stations to maintain a two station coverage at all times. To meet its long range needs, the organization projects a need to increase its operation to include additional unit availability and staff as the population increases. All emergency calls are dispatched through the county's 911 center, Monroe County Control Center. To better serve these calls the County has hired a 911 Coordinator and is currently undertaking a readdressing program.

Staffing of Bushkill Emergency Corps is provided with a combination of career and volunteer staff. The agency operates primarily as a user funded operation with donations from outside sources such as municipal funding as ancillary, but necessary to meet the growing needs of the Township. With increasing population and increases in aging residents, municipal support of all natures will become more important.

Secondary EMS response is provided by Suburban EMS Services and additional mutual aid resources are available through agreements as well as through dispatch of agencies through Monroe County Control Center.

Educational Facilities

Middle Smithfield Township is a part of the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD). The school district covers approximately 214 square miles, comprised of the East Stroudsburg Borough and the townships of Smithfield, Middle Smithfield, and Price, in Monroe County, and Lehman and Porter townships in Pike County. There are 10 schools located throughout the District that had an enrollment of approximately 8,240 students for the 2006-2007 school year.

Two of the District's schools are located in the Township: Middle Smithfield Elementary and Resica Elementary. Their 2006-2007 enrollment is 822 students and 697 students, respectively. They account for 18.4% of the students in the District. Approximately 1,000 Middle Smithfield high school students attend two East Stroudsburg Area High Schools. More than fifty five percent (55%) of the students go to ESASD High School North, located in Lehman Township, Pike County. In 2006-2007, HS-North had an enrollment of 1,354 students, serving approximately 45% of the Township's students. The remaining fifty five percent (55%) of students attend East Stroudsburg Area High School South, located in East Stroudsburg Borough. In 2006-2007, this school had an enrollment of 1,519 students.

The ESASD projects enrollment numbers through 2012 based upon actual enrollment and modified projections provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The most recent attendance and projections for selected area schools and the District as a whole as of October 2006 are shown in Table 6-1. These projections show an estimated growth of nearly 19% for the District over the five-year period. Both elementary schools located in Middle Smithfield show a growth rate greater than that of the overall District. Middle Smithfield Elementary, with a projected growth rate of 37.35%, is projected to have a growth rate nearly twice that of the District as whole. The East Stroudsburg High School North, which enrolls more than half of the students from Middle Smithfield Township, also shows a growth rate of more than twice that of the District.

Table 6-1: Student Enrollment Projections, ESASD

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	% Change
ESASD Total	8,243	8,564	8,890	9,150	9,523	9,789	18.76%
Resica Elementary	697	723	748	770	811	837	20.09%
Middle Smithfield Elementary	822	879	959	1,000	1,077	1,129	37.35%
HS-North	1,354	1,495	1,590	1,728	1,825	1,937	43.06%
HS- South	1,519	1,527	1,511	1,507	1,547	1,561	2.76%

Source: ESAD Administrative Office

Expansion of the student population will require close monitoring to ensure that the student to teacher ratio, classroom size, and other facilities are capable of adequately

managing the population while providing a quality service. Expansion of school facilities will not only require attention to the school buildings themselves, but to the bus fleet and the ability to fill positions as needed with qualified professionals.

In addition to the public school system, the Monroe County Technical Institute in Bartonsville, Pennsylvania supplements and builds on the educational opportunities for high school students in the ESASD.

The closest opportunities for higher education are East Stroudsburg University, located just a short distance away in East Stroudsburg, and Northampton Community College. The Community College's main location is in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with a branch maintained in Tannersville.

Goal for Community Facilities

The Township's goal for Community Facilities and Services is to **provide effective services for the Township residents, and support the regional provision of services by others.**

There are two objectives for achieving this goal:

1. Expand the provision of municipal services as needed to keep pace with growth.
2. Investigate opportunities to expand and provide new services in the Township.
3. Support existing municipal services.

Recommendations for Community Facilities (General)

The need for expansion, updating, and maintenance of the Township's facilities is a certainty as the demand for administrative, emergency, educational, and recreational services increases over the next 10 to 20 years. The Township's ability to provide these services as needed and in a cost effective manner will greatly depend on its ability to plan for their delivery, whether independently or in a regional context.

1. Emergency Services

- a. Cooperate with State, County, and adjacent municipalities to ensure the adequate provision of regional services such as ambulance and public safety.
- b. Establish or participate in the establishment of a long range, strategic plan that closely monitors response times and service levels for emergency services. In regards to fire protection, this plan needs to include projections for future staffing and equipment needs, and particularly the establishment of paid positions.

In regards to Policing, there is a growing need for the Township to investigate the provision of a local police force, and the feasibility of a joint, regional force. Initial

discussions have tentatively explored the option of a joint force with a willing neighbor. The benefits of such an arrangement would be numerous, including the sharing of start-up and equipment costs that would make it more cost effective in the short term.

2. Educational Services

- a. While the East Stroudsburg Area School District is responsible for school planning, the Township needs to be a vital partner in these efforts to communicate and plan for the community's future. The Township can ensure that this feedback is provided by developing a mechanism for the ESASD to review and provide input on pending development proposals under the Township's review.
- b. Require fiscal impact statements that analyze selected developments' impact on the School District.
- c. Encourage developers to cooperate with the School District to acquire land for additional facilities as needed.
- d. Encourage compact development that concentrates housing around schools, thereby allowing students to walk to school and other facilities.
- e. Encourage sufficient housing for the teaching and administrative staff of the school district. As housing affordability becomes a greater concern, maintaining quality staff that are able to live and work within the community is a challenge that affects the school system, the family, and potentially every taxpayer. This issue is also addressed in the Plan for Housing, Chapter 5.
- f. Explore opportunities for a community college and other social services.
- g. Seek opportunities to create youth and senior centers in the Township.
- h. Encourage community based nonprofit organizations.

3. Other Municipal Services

- a. Develop a capital improvements program to support existing municipal facilities and services.
- b. Cooperate with regional entities and adjacent municipalities to support regional facilities (i.e., library).
- c. Develop a monitoring program to ensure existing facilities and services meet projected needs for the future, including solid waste and recycling management services.

B. PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Parks and recreational facilities are perhaps the most difficult facilities to estimate in terms of future needs due to the need to balance the types of activities, myriad owners and jurisdictions, and the individual preferences and values embraced by a particular community. Oftentimes a community will undertake a Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan in order to give proper attention to the complexities and needs of this important municipal service.

Open space and recreation in Middle Smithfield Township is provided through an exceptionally wide variety of public and private entities. The Township is especially unique in that it benefits from state and federal open space and recreational opportunities, even though these are oriented beyond Township residents to a regional, and even national, population. Locally, there are opportunities provided by the Township itself, as well as regional entities and private facilities.

Municipal Open Space and Recreation Facilities

At the Township level, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends the following categories of parks and open space as a way to organize the land resources found within a community¹:

Community Park

- Typically between 30 and 50 acres in size
- Serves two or more neighborhoods or a ½ to 3 mile radius
- Meets multiple recreational needs

Neighborhood Park

- Typically between 5 and 10 acres in size
- Serves up to a ½ mile radius
- Focus on casual active and passive facilities
- May include parks on school sites

Mini-Park

- Typically less than one acre in size
- Serves a small (1/4 mile or more), secluded area or single neighborhood
- Used to address limited or isolated recreational needs
- May include playground area or tot lot

School Park

- Size and location vary
- Allows for expanding the recreational, social, and educational opportunities in an efficient and cost effective manner

¹ *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996

There are two municipal parks within Middle Smithfield Township, Echo Lake Park and Resica Park. Echo Lake Park is owned and operated by the Township, while Resica Park is owned by the East Stroudsburg Area School District. The Township has recently acquired a third park, located along Municipal Drive and Lower Lakeview Drive.

Echo Lake Park is 5.5 acres in size and consists of a walking trail, remote control car track, and soccer/football field. Additional playground equipment and picnic facilities (including grills) are planned for the site. It is centrally located along both sides of the Route 209 corridor, near the proposed village center, and thus conveniently located within the greatest concentration of population in the Township.

Resica Park is a 30-acre park leased from the East Stroudsburg Area School District and co-located with the Resica Elementary School on Route 402. This park with perennial garden and playground also provides facilities for sand volleyball, horseshoes, bocce ball, a baseball diamond, picnic area, and a walking trail. In addition, there is a public pavilion that can be reserved for special occasions. However, park facilities are only open after school hours.

The Township has acquired 12 acres for a third park located along Municipal Drive, in close proximity to the Municipal Building. The Township is currently planning the facilities and programs for these grounds.

Federal, State, Regional and Private Facilities

In addition to its own facilities, Middle Smithfield is fortunate to have several alternative opportunities for outdoor recreation offered within its boundaries, including proximity to both a national recreation area and state forestlands. There are more than 2,300 acres of the Delaware State Forest and 3,600 acres of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The State Forest provides a variety of recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, hiking, educational services, and camping. The National Recreation Area also provides these opportunities plus water activities such as swimming and paddling.

The Eastern Monroe Regional Park Commission manages regional parklands for use by Middle Smithfield, Smithfield, and Price Townships, and Delaware Water Gap Borough. These areas include the Shawnee Stables, Mt. Nebo properties, preserved through regional open space bond funds, and Rivers Edge Development.

There are also private lands that add to the recreational assets available within the Township. The Resica Falls Boy Scout Reservation is comprised of over 4,000 acres of pristine natural lands. Nearly 3,000 of these acres are preserved through conservation easements, with the goal of preserving the entire property through a multi-year partnership between the Pennsylvania DCNR, Monroe County, and the Township. Also, the Stony Acres is a 119-acre wildlife area owned by the students of East Stroudsburg University. Hiking, camping, orienteering, educational services are among the activities available at the facility. Primarily oriented to the University population, public use can be arranged through the University. All of these additional opportunities should be taken into account when planning for the recreational and open space needs

of the Township as these facilities and assets should enhance and complement each other, and not duplicate resources or target populations.

Recreational Planning

Middle Smithfield Township does not have a Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan to analyze the complex recreational demands, existing and future, placed on the Township's facilities.

The Eastern Monroe Regional Park Commission and Monroe County have each completed Open Space Plans that focus on regional park and trail networks. Recreational facilities also include the Township's existing and planned network of trails and pathways. The benefits of trails are important to residents and visitors alike. The Township has an opportunity to cooperate and coordinate with the County and others to build a network of green infrastructure and be a part of a County that is "Forever Green". This network can form the spine to which local trails connect providing greater access and enjoyment of the facilities offered throughout the region.

Summary of Existing Recreational Opportunities

Middle Smithfield is endowed with a wide variety of park and recreation facilities that enhance the quality of life of its residents. The key is to ensure that these facilities offer the right combination of active and passive activities as demanded by the Township's residents and visitors, regardless of age or ability. In addition to the park classifications, the NRPA also recommends level of service (LOS) standards for different activities. These standards are a ratio of acreage of different types of parkland and/or recreational activity per 1,000 persons in order to provide a recommended minimum amount of space needed for recreation services desired by residents. These are only advisory, but can provide a starting point for a more in depth conversation and planning effort by the Township.

In terms of location, open space and recreational opportunities are dispersed across the Township, but more heavily concentrated along the Route 209 Corridor, where the larger Township, regional and even state community is well served by the number and diversity of activities provided. For Township residents specifically, there are two facilities located in this area, while Resica Park is located to further north along Route 402. These existing facilities correspond to the Proposed Character Areas in that they are located in the areas with the greatest proposed concentrations of growth.

However, most of these facilities fall into the community park category and require a vehicle for the vast majority of visitors and residents. Access to these parks presents a challenge to residents desiring recreation and open space opportunities close to home and within walking distance. These needs can be fulfilled by the mini-park and neighborhood park categories or through private open space developed as part of a development plan and owned and maintained by a home-owners association. However, many of the older communities, particularly those developed as vacation areas and/or without maintenance associations are more in need of such facilities as they are converted to year round use.

As new developments are proposed that meet the need for new housing, the Township will need to look for opportunities to retrofit existing neighborhoods looking for such opportunities and ensure that such local amenities are provided close to home.

Goal for Parks and Recreational Facilities

In specific regards to Parks and Recreational Facilities, the Township's goal is to **create adequate recreational opportunities to serve the diverse needs and desires of Township residents and visitors.**

This goal is supported by the following five objectives:

1. Maintain and enhance existing municipally owned park and recreational facilities.
2. Expand recreational programs and opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.
3. Cooperate with other organizations and agencies to encourage full use of existing recreational facilities.
4. Establish an interconnected system of parks, facilities, and trails that link historic, scenic, and cultural assets to each other and the Township's neighborhoods and centers.
5. Provide incentives for dedication of open space to the Township.

Recommendations for Park and Recreational Facilities

1. The Township should consider initiating a Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan that not only assesses recreational and open space facilities, services and conditions, but also analyzes future demand in terms of the land area and activities, and proposes an interconnected system of park and other facilities that coincides and builds on the efforts of the Eastern Monroe Regional Parks Commission and Monroe County.

The purpose of this plan should be to establish a both a "wish list" and acceptable level of service standards will guide the Township as it grows to ensure that adequate facilities are in place or can be budgeted. This plan should also provide the basis for a recreational component of the capital improvements program so that the Township can acquire additional lands and/or provide and expand needed facilities, over time.

2. Future demand for parkland and recreational opportunities can be addressed in several ways. First, the Township may seek to further develop partnerships with the State and the National Park Service to locate certain activities within the DWGNRA and share the costs of construction and maintenance. Other partnerships should continue to include the East Stroudsburg Area School District (as with Resica Park), and nonprofit entities, such as the YMCA and sports leagues.

3. The Township should participate in an ongoing dialogue between the Eastern Monroe Park Commission and Monroe County in order to jointly plan and provide for open space and trails that benefit not only the County, but also the region. The Township can also participate in the marketing of "Forever Green", participate on the County Open Space Advisory Board, and promote the County's Open Space Acquisition Program as well as consider a partnership program of its own. This type of cooperative outreach and marketing can result in broader support for the park system as a whole, but can also assist the Township in gaining technical assistance, grant funding, and support in forming non-profit or volunteer groups willing to assist in the maintenance of area parks and trails.
4. An additional option is to provide incentives within the Township Code that will permit developers to dedicate open space to the Township for use as a public park or to pay a recreational fee-in-lieu whenever development is proposed. This would support the Township's future costs to acquire and maintain recreational facilities, as well as trails and pathways, or to assist in retrofitting older neighborhoods with increased open space as needed.