

Site Analysis

Data Collection/Methodology

Several sources were consulted in the process of compiling site analysis data and maps for the Squire Cheyney and Waln Run Park Master Plans.

Thornbury Township provided GIS mapping data such as tax parcel information, roads, hydrologic features and aerial photographic images. Additional GIS data was downloaded from the Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) website including state, county and municipal boundaries. GIS data were compiled to create a set of site analysis maps.

The 2005 Nave Newell Composite Site Plan for the development of The Preserve at Squire Cheyney Farm, a residential community proposed by Orleans, provided detailed information about the Squire Cheyney site. Included in the Site Plan was information about proposed utilities, proposed adjacent residential lots, and the configuration of proposed open space areas.

The Final Subdivision Plan for Echo Hill II dated December, 1997 prepared by Kelly & Associates Consulting Engineers and Surveyors, provided the location of wetlands and setbacks, topographic and hydrological information for Waln Run Park.

Visits to both Squire Cheyney and Waln Run parcels were conducted by the consultant with the intent to inventory, analyze and document existing site conditions. An initial reconnaissance visit to both sites in August, 2006 provided a photographic inventory and field verification of existing conditions. A second site visit in January, 2007 provided additional ground information for portions of the Waln Run site that were previously inaccessible due to the density of vegetation.

The photographic inventory, site visits, and other site analysis data allowed for a thorough understanding of each site's conditions as well as the particular opportunities, constraints and design implications associated with their development.

Squire Cheyney Park: General Site Data

Squire Cheyney Park: Land Use

The Township owned Squire Cheyney Park site is currently bordered to the north and east by agricultural and vacant land. To the south along College Hill Road is a residential neighborhood.

A majority of the land north and east of the site is to become residential development as part of The Preserve at Squire Cheyney, with the exception of proposed open space. A seventeen acre conservation parcel adjacent to the site's eastern border contains the historic Cheyney Farmstead. This parcel is currently owned by Orleans Development Company and will likely be deeded to Thornbury Township. How the Orleans parcel and its historic structures are reused will have an impact on the final configuration and character of Squire Cheyney Park.

Directly to the west of the site is the Cheyney University campus. Concept School, a college preparatory school, is located approximately one mile from The Squire Cheyney site.

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The park's proximity to homes, a college preparatory school and the university implies that its primary users may be residents, students and faculty. Visitor activity may also be generated by the potential adaptive reuse and interpretation of the existing historic farmstead structures. Proposed park activities and facilities should take into consideration the needs of these user groups.

Squire Cheyney Park: Zoning

Squire Cheyney Park is zoned Township Owned Property (T). The zoning requirements for this district are currently undefined by Chapter 155 from the Code of the Township of Thornbury. The Thornbury Township Solicitor has confirmed the right of a municipality to exempt itself from the provisions of its own zoning ordinance based upon court cases and the leading PA zoning treatise.

Squire Cheyney Park: Historic Overview

The Township owned Squire Cheyney parcel was originally part of a 1500-acre tract of wild forest purchased by John and Thomas Cheyney in 1724. The parcel is named after John Cheyney's son Thomas, mentioned in historical records as 'Squire Cheyney', who is known for playing a significant role in the Battle of Brandywine of 1777.

Squire Cheyney warned General George Washington of an impending ambush on American troops by British troops. Cheyney's warning, and Washington's response, which was to confront the flanking British troops, is said to have spared American troops from what may have been a disaster for the colonies during the American Revolution.

The 18th century Cheyney stone colonial farmhouse, a barn and a springhouse are located northeast of the Township owned park boundary, on a seventeen acre conservation parcel owned by Orleans development. The farmhouse is currently on the State Register of Historic Sites and meets requirements for the Federal National Historic Register.

The private 19th century Dallett serpentine farmhouse and barn out building are located on the hill to the north of Squire Cheyney Park.

Some agricultural activities persist at the park, including hay harvesting. Hay bales scattered throughout the landscape were noted during a site



Cheyney University, as seen from Squire Cheyney Park.



18th century Cheyney stone colonial Farmhouse.



Cheyney Barn.



Hay bales.



Cheyney Springhouse.

visit in August 2006. Farm equipment that is no longer in use surrounds the Cheyney farmhouse.

Squire Cheyney's remains were buried on a hill at his farm in 1811, which later became the family graveyard. This historic cemetery is located just south of the park boundary, along Cheyney Road. The Cemetery is owned and maintained by the Cheyney family (Walter Cheyney).

The site's historical identity as a farmstead as well as its association through Thomas Cheyney to the Battle of Brandywine should be integrated into the design program for Squire Cheyney Park. The reuse of historical structures can help express this identity. Interpretive design potential also exists in some of the objects found on site, such as the seasonal hay bales and farm equipment. Most of this equipment is planned to be removed by the current owner.

The Squire Cheyney farmstead structures, a farmhouse and a barn, were evaluated by Frens and Frens Restoration Architects. This evaluation included a survey of the house and barn to determine whether stabilization and/or restoration of these structures are feasible. A cost estimate for their reuse as well as an assessment of the most appropriate uses was examined. This report is summarized below. The full report is contained in the appendix of this report.

E.L. Crow Inc. completed a market analysis to determine possible reuse options for the historic farmstead structures. The market analysis report is summarized in chapter three of this report.

Frens and Frens Restoration Architects Conditions Assessment Report

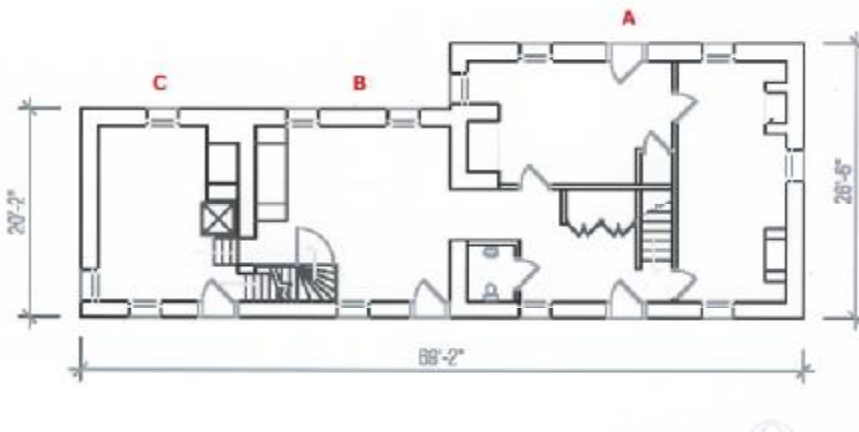
As part of the master site plan for Squire Cheyney Park, a survey of conditions of the historic farmhouse and barn was completed by Frens and Frens Restoration Architects in October, 2006. The purpose of this report was to determine the work necessary to stabilize and restore the structures, as well as to evaluate the best possible reuse of each building.

On the following page is a brief summary of the contents of the Conditions Assessment Report. A complete copy of the Conditions Assessment Report can be found in the appendix of this report.

Site Analysis

Squire Cheyney Farmhouse

The Squire Cheyney Farmhouse retains a high measure of architectural integrity and is a good candidate for restoration, despite the observation of numerous structural deficiencies which are in need of repair.



First floor plan of the Squire Cheyney Farmhouse.

According to the Conditions Assessment Report, non-residential use of historic stone houses is inappropriate for several reasons. Reasons include:

- The small size of rooms limits their use to small meetings and non-classroom meeting formats.
- ADA access is difficult to achieve because of narrow doorway widths, floor level changes, large space required for accessible restrooms.
- Public use is usually limited to the first floor due to ADA access issues. An elevator would be required to provide access to the second floor.

The potential reuse of the farmhouse as a house museum was not recommended due to the high cost of operations. Numerous house museums exist within the Brandywine Valley, decreasing the demand for an additional house museum.

The report suggests that the most compatible reuse of the farmhouse is as a single-family or two-family dwelling. Rehabilitation costs and architectural alterations would be less costly, and the building would be best preserved with residential use.

Short term and long term preservation and rehabilitation recommendations are outlined in the report which calls for considerable restoration work.

Squire Cheyney Barn

After years of neglect and poorly executed reconstructive efforts, the barn is also in need of stabilization and restoration.

The report listed the following reuse recommendations for the barn:

- Maintenance building, office, public restrooms, and seasonal recreation space for the planned park.

- Park office and conditioned meeting space should be fitted into the old dairy level.
- Occupied and conditioned spaces are not appropriate for the threshing floor because of issues upgrading the roof framing to comply with code, the loss of character resulting from inserting conditioned space into the barn, the lack of windows, as well as the high cost of improvements.
- The threshing floor could be used seasonally as a public gathering space or for storage.

As with the farmhouse, short term and long term preservation and rehabilitation recommendations are outlined in the report which calls for extensive restoration work.

Squire Cheyney Springhouse

The springhouse was excluded from the scope of the Frens and Frens study, however Frens and Frens, Simone Collins and the Steering Committee agree that this structure is worthy of preservation in some form as an historic landscape element.

Construction Budget

The construction budget outlined in the Frens and Frens report is an order-of-magnitude estimate based on experience derived from costs associated with the rehabilitation costs of similar projects, with similar states of repair, in similar locations, with similar proposed uses. The costs presented are meant to assist the Township in understanding the *magnitude* of preservation and rehabilitation costs. Actual costs can not be determined until the buildings are cleaned out, measured, and a study of feasibility for potential adaptive reuses is conducted.

Squire Cheyney Farmhouse

The first floor of the farmhouse is approximately 1600 square feet. Stabilization only of the building exterior (the building envelope) is likely to fall in the range of \$120 to \$160 per square foot. The total cost would range from \$192,000 to \$256,000.

Rehabilitation of the building interior to accommodate one or two family residential use following the stabilization of the building envelope is likely to fall in the range of \$200 to \$250 per square foot. The total cost would range from \$640,000 to \$800,000. Therefore, order of magnitude costs to rehabilitate the building are estimated at \$832,000 to \$1,056,000.

Squire Cheyney Barn

The ground floor of the barn is approximately 6200 square feet. Stabilization only of the building envelope is likely to fall in the range of \$80 to \$120 per square foot. The total cost would range from \$496,000 to \$744,000.

Rehabilitation of the dairy level (ground floor) to accommodate public use is likely to fall in the range of \$200 to \$300 per square foot. If only a portion of the ground floor were used as a park office and public restrooms, say 1200 square feet, the total cost would range from \$240,000 to \$360,000. This price range is comparable to the cost of a new park office pavilion.

Site Analysis

Therefore, order of magnitude costs for stabilization and use as noted is estimated at \$736,000 to \$1,104,000.

Squire Cheyney Park: Site Access

The Squire Cheyney parcel is located approximately three miles east of Wilmington Pike (Route 202), which is a major arterial road in Thornbury Township. The parcel is approximately an eighth of a mile south of a minor arterial, Route 926, also known as Street Road, which has been designated a scenic collector road. Vehicular access to the site is off of Cheyney Road, which according to the Township Comprehensive Plan has received requests for scenic road designation.

The Township Comprehensive Plan and Official Map show a commuter bikeway network, proposed by the Chester County Planning Commission, along Route 926, from which bicyclists would have access to Cheyney Road and the park. A walking and bike path extending south from Route 926 along Cheyney Road is proposed by the Orleans Development Company and will allow for convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the site.

Squire Cheyney Park: Views

The Squire Cheyney parcel consists primarily of open agricultural land, offering minimal visual obstructions onto the site from Cheyney Road. The hedgerows and open fields to the north and east of the site offer a visual backdrop to the Cheyney Farmstead and Springhouse which is historically appropriate and reminiscent of a rural agricultural landscape. The historic structures are visible from a majority of the site.

Proposed new residential development to the north and east of the parcel will alter the expansive viewshed that currently exists. The proposed residential development plans have been organized around the preservation of an open visual corridor between the historic Dallett Farmstead and the historic Cheyney Farmstead.

In order to maintain an appropriate rural setting for the historic Cheyney structures and proposed park, it will be important to establish densely vegetated buffers along the areas where new development will be located. This will help minimize the visual impact that new homes will have on the character of the



A view of the 19th century Dallett serpentine farmhouse located immediately north of the project site.



The Cheyney barn as seen from the springhouse.

site's agricultural landscape. Views into the site from Cheyney Road should be preserved through the judicious placement of vegetation.

Squire Cheyney Park: Utilities

The Squire Cheyney parcel is located adjacent to a proposed new residential development which will include public sanitary sewer and water. Because of this proximity, public utilities will be available to the park for use in the historical structures, restrooms and other park facilities.

Existing public utility services include overhead electric wires along Cheyney Road and the existing Farmstead drive.

Squire Cheyney Park: Natural Features

Squire Cheyney Park: Topography and Hydrology

The Squire Cheyney parcel slopes from west to east towards the site's low point, which is a stream called Cheyney Run. The stream curves in and out of the park along its eastern half, leaving a small piece of land within park property that slopes from east to west towards the same stream. Cheyney Run flows into Chester Creek, a major waterway in Thornbury Township.

FEMA floodplain mapping along this stream indicates a floodplain width of between 80 feet and 170 feet. Seasonal flooding along this stream has been reported by local residents.

The Squire Cheyney parcel has an average slope of less than 15%. A very small portion of the site is characterized by a moderate slope, which is considered to be 15% to 25%.

The relatively gentle slope across the majority of the site is compatible with a variety of recreational uses such as trails and play fields. The presence of a stream can potentially add to the scenic quality of the site and its future uses.

Squire Cheyney Park: Soils

The Squire Cheyney Park site contains soils classified by the USDA Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey Maps as prime agricultural soils, which are fertile and considered productive for agriculture.

A majority of the Township parcel's soil is classified as Glenelg Channery Silt Loam, (GeB2) and (GeC2), with slopes between 3% and 15%. This soil tends to be well drained with a seasonal high water table at 6 feet below the surface and bedrock that is typically located 60 inches below the surface. Glenelg Channery Silt Loam is appropriate for agricultural uses.

A hydric soil classified as Wehadkee Silt Loam (We) is located along Cheyney Run. This soil is typically poorly drained with slow runoff and moderate permeability. This soil type is associated with floodplains and may experience frequent, but brief flooding. (We) soils have a seasonal high water table that varies from 0 inches to 6 inches and bedrock that is typically located 60 inches below the surface. Limited stream bank erosion within areas with Wehadkee Silt Loam (We) soils is evident.

Site Analysis

The northern portion of the site contains soils classified as Glenville Silt Loam (GnA). This soil tends to be moderately well drained with a seasonal high water table that varies from 6 inches to 3 feet and bedrock that is typically located 60 inches to 99 inches below the surface. This soil type is associated with agricultural use.

A small portion of the site along the western boundary contains Chester Silt Loam (CdB2). This soil is typically well drained with moderate runoff rate and a moderate permeability. These soils have a seasonal high water table at 6 feet and bedrock that is located approximately 60 inches below the surface. Chester Silt Loam is used for agricultural crops such as corn, soybeans and grain.

Soil type should be taken into consideration when locating the various activities and facilities associated with proposed development. Particular attention should be directed to designing in a way that does not exacerbate existing erosion or flooding issues. Plants species compatible with each soil type should be chosen for use in the landscape.

Squire Cheyney Park: Vegetation

The majority of Squire Cheyney Park consists of grazed (hayed) agricultural fields and wetlands with few trees. Vegetation such as sedges, mint and various grasses are present in proximity to the stream. Erosion along the stream bank is likely a result of over grazing and a lack of sufficient vegetation to stabilize the stream embankments.

A wooded hedgerow is located east of the site behind the historic Cheyney Farmstead. A native meadow mix can potentially be planted throughout the existing wetlands to mitigate the presence of invasive species.

Native trees species associated with well drained silt loam soils can be used on this site. These include a variety of oaks, tulip poplar, and hickory. Water tolerant native trees can be used in areas containing hydric silt loam soils. Trees such as sweet gum, black gum, willow oak, pin oak, alder, and willow are appropriate.

Squire Cheyney Park: Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) records do not indicate the presence of any known species of special concern or resources within the park.



Cheyney Run.



Existing stream bank erosion.

Wetlands

Wetlands have been delineated for all lands presently owned by Orleans. On-site investigations show that limited areas of wetlands may exist on the Township park property. The Township must delineate any wetland areas before initiating construction to avoid any disturbance.

Squire Cheyney Park: Opportunities and Constraints

The development of the Squire Cheyney parcel presents Thornbury Township with significant opportunities.

Rural agricultural landscapes throughout the country are undergoing a transformation as fields are replaced with new development. The preservation of this portion of one of these agricultural properties in Thornbury Township, along with the historic farmhouse, barn and springhouse will help to secure a piece of Thornbury Township's heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The park's high visibility, accessibility and proximity to residences and educational facilities place it in an ideal position to serve the community. Squire Cheyney Park can help meet the Township's educational, tourism, and recreational needs. This park offers the potential to engage visitors with many amenities, such as the adaptive reuse and interpretation of historic structures, pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect to other trails and open space within the Township, passive/active recreational facilities, and the enjoyment of a picturesque rural landscape. The careful development of this park can help Thornbury Township realize two of its goals:

- To preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and architectural integrity of the Township, including parks and open space, historic structures and natural resources.
- To investigate opportunities to create pedestrian trail and bikeway linkages between residential neighborhoods and community facilities.

The opportunity to promote environmentally sustainable park development practices is also available in the design of this park by electing to make decisions that protect the site's natural features. This includes the use of permeable paving surfaces, native plants, recycling existing building materials, and employment of stormwater management and water quality best management practices (BMP's).

Constraints associated with the development of this parcel also exist and should be addressed in a creative manner. Proposed residential development will alter the expansive character of the existing agricultural landscape by replacing open fields with new homes. The effects of the modifications made to this landscape's character must be minimized through design in order to maintain an appropriate setting for the historic Cheyney Farmstead.

Some opposition to the development of a park has been voiced by neighbors residing adjacent to the Squire Cheyney parcel. Concerns generally have to do with the possibility of unwanted changes occurring as a result of the development of the park. Issues include a possible decrease in privacy or safety associated with the proximity of trails and park users to private property. This Master Plan process was designed to involve residents and keep them informed throughout the design process.

Site Analysis

Residents were invited to participate in public and neighborhood meetings and asked for their input in order to be able to attempt to address all issues in a respectful and timely fashion.

Waln Run Park: General Site Data

Waln Run Park: Land Use

The Waln Run Park site is bordered to the north and south with single family residential development. A vacant parcel known as the Hill Property abuts the eastern site boundary and is currently on the market for sale. This Master Plan recommends that the Township consider purchase, partial purchase, or the establishment of easements on this property in order to protect environmentally sensitive land immediately adjacent to Waln Run Park.

To the northwest is a large agricultural parcel (Allen Tract) which is currently under construction for single family homes.

A portion of the densely vegetated site is mown by the Township and is occasionally used by neighbors as an informal play area. Signage prohibiting hunting within the park exists, however hunting does occasionally occur within the park. Informal walking paths exist indicating pedestrian use.

Potential Waln Run Park users include nearby residents and the community at large. The needs of these user groups should be considered when proposing park activities and facilities.

Waln Run Park: Zoning

Waln Run Park is zoned Township Owned Property (T). As with Squire Cheyney Park, the zoning requirements for this district are currently undefined by Chapter 155 from the Code of the Township of Thornbury. Thornbury Township may exercise its right to exempt itself from the provisions of its own zoning ordinance for Waln Run Park.

Waln Run Park: Historic Overview

The parcel on which Waln Run Park is located was once part of a larger lot known as the Hill Property. A pond located along the eastern site boundary was used to store water for the purpose of fighting fires. In 1997, land development plans were submitted to subdivide the parcel into five residential lots.



Echo Hill Road and residences adjacent to Waln Run Park.



View of adjacent Hill Property.



Mown field within Waln Run Park.



The pond located along the eastern park boundary, within the Hill Property.



Lack of signage at the park's entrance.



50' wide entrance to the park off of Echo Hill Road.

Thornbury Township intervened in the land development process in order to purchase and preserve the parcel as parkland for the community.

Site Access

The Waln Run parcel is located approximately two miles east of Wilmington Park Road (Route 200) approximately half a mile south of Route 926. The site is just west of Westtown/Thornton Road, which has been designated a scenic local road. Access to the Waln Run parcel is off of Echo Hill Road, which is south of the site and connects to Westtown Road. A fifty foot wide portion of the property, located along Echo Hill Road, provides pedestrian access onto the larger site. No signage exists to inform residents of the site's entrance or its status as a park.

There are currently no roads or bikeway networks providing direct access to the Waln Run parcel, however a variety of opportunities for pedestrian and bike access have been proposed. According to the Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan, a walking path is proposed north of the site along Westbourne Road. A dual use trail for walking and bicycling is proposed to the east, bike paths are proposed along both Concord Road to the west and Westtown Road to the east. A trail connecting to the site's northwest corner through the new Sage Hill residential development will provide access from the north.

Creating connections from Waln Run Park to nearby pedestrian and bike networks should be considered in the design and planning of this facility.

Waln Run Park: Views

Waln Run Park is not visible from either Echo Hill or Westtown Roads. Once inside the park, a large field that is mowed creates an open view within the park. Views beyond the parcel boundaries are generally limited by dense vegetation. During the winter those views are less limited due to the absence of foliage on vegetation, at which time some of the adjacent residences can be seen from within the park.

The lack of visual access both into and out of the park contributes to a sense of isolation when within the site. This sense of isolation has the potential to be perceived as a security issue for park users, as surveillance of park activities is minimal. However, limited views also create a feeling that one is in the country, rather than in the suburbs.

Site Analysis

Improved access to the site and judicious vegetation removal may encourage additional park use and visibility within the site without destroying the park's character.

There is an open area approximately 160 feet wide, along the southern park boundary, at the rear of the Echo Hill lots. Providing a denser vegetative buffer along portions of the park boundary adjacent to these homes will reduce the visibility into private property and may produce an added sense of privacy for residences.

Waln Run Park: Utilities

According to the 2004 Township Comprehensive Plan, Waln Run Park is not located within an area receiving public water or sewer services. Most households within the Township use on-site wells and septic systems.

Waln Run Park: Natural Features

Waln Run Park: Topography and Hydrology

The Waln Run Park parcel slopes from south to north towards the site's low point, Waln Run, a tributary to Chester Creek. The site's average slope is less than 15%. Waln Run forms the northern site boundary. The FEMA floodplain boundary extends 60 feet to 80 feet into the site. Storm water from upstream development, a small pond and a creek drains into a wetlands area found at the northeastern corner of the site.

The relatively low slope across the site is compatible with recreational uses such as trails and play fields. Access to the site's stream can be an amenity that will draw visitors to the park.

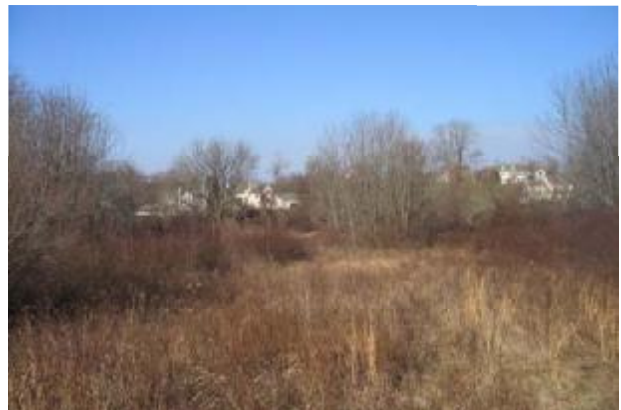
Waln Run Park: Soils

Waln Run Park contains soils classified by the USDA Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey Maps as prime agricultural soils, which are fertile and considered productive for agriculture.

A majority of the site's soil is classified as Glenville Silt Loam (GnB2). This soil tends to be moderately well drained with a seasonal high water table that varies from 6 inches to 3 feet below the surface. Bedrock is typically located 60 inches to 99 inches below the surface.



Views of residences to the north are screened by dense vegetation in the summer.



The same view as above, in the winter.



A view of the mown field in winter.



Waln Run.

The soils along the northern site boundary are classified as Chewacla Silt Loam (Ch). This soil classification coincides with land along the stream and within the floodplain. This soil type tends to be somewhat poorly drained with very low runoff and moderate permeability. The seasonal high water table ranges from 1 foot to 2 feet and bedrock is typically located 60 inches below the surface. Chewacla Silt Loam is typically associated with uses such as pasture and cropland.

Soils east of the site boundary are Worsham Silt Loam (WoA). This soil is found along a stream and adjacent to a pond. This soil type tends to be poorly drained with slow runoff and slow permeability. The seasonal high water table varies from 0 inches to 5 inches and bedrock is typically located 60 inches below the surface. This soil type is commonly found in woodlands or pastures. It is seldom associated with agricultural uses.

A small portion of the access road just off of Echo Hill Road contains soil classified as Urban Land-Gleneleg Complex (UoD). This soil is well drained with a seasonal high water table that is approximately 6 feet deep and bedrock that is typically located 60 inches below the surface.

Soil types shall be considered in determining where to locate various activities and facilities proposed within the park. The use of porous hardscape surfaces is an option which should be considered for trails and vehicular access. Plants that are compatible with each soil type should be chosen for any proposed plantings.

Waln Run Park: Vegetation

The Waln Run Park vegetation is characteristic of an evolving old field. At one time it was likely cleared of vegetation, perhaps for agricultural use, and is now experiencing successional regrowth of trees, shrubs and understory plant species. This is also suggested by the presence of species such as multi flora rose, which is invasive and indicative of prior ecological disturbance. Despite this disturbance, a variety of wildlife species are present on site, most notably birds, deer, and other small mammals.

According to the Township Comprehensive Plan Land Resources Map, Waln Run Park contains woodlands, which require tree protection and tree replacement.



Multiflora rose can be found throughout the site.

Site Analysis

A mown pathway leads from the Echo Hill Road entry to a large cleared area within the park. The remainder of the site is densely vegetated with a mixture of invasive growth and mature, native trees.

Wetlands are present in the northeastern portion of the site and along the eastern site boundary. Plants such as cattails can be found within the adjacent pond.

Native trees species that are suitable for use in the well drained silt loam soils include a variety of oaks, tulip poplar, and hickory. Water tolerant native trees appropriate for the site's hydric silt loam soils include sweet gum, black gum, willow oak, pin oak, alder, and willow. Native meadow and wetlands plants are also appropriate for use here.

Waln Run Park: Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) records do not indicate the presence of any known species of special concern or resources within the park.

Waln Run Park: Opportunities and Constraints

Currently the Waln Run Park parcel is isolated, visual and physical access is limited, and many members of the community are unaware of its existence or what it has to offer. The site is mostly used by wildlife, with occasional informal use by hunters and immediate neighbors. The secluded nature of its location, its close proximity to adjacent residences, and its relatively small size makes active recreational uses such as sports fields and playgrounds inappropriate for this site. Passive recreational uses such as walking trails, unstructured play, appreciation of the natural setting, picnics, and seating areas are more compatible with this site's character.

Improvements to Waln Run Park offer the opportunity to enhance the quality of the visitor experience, preserve wildlife habitat as well as increase the site's ecological health. The opportunity exists to create ADA accessible trails that invite visitors into and through the site and connect it to the larger proposed Township trail network. Promoting community use can lessen issues of security from within the site. The removal of invasive plant species and planting of native species can improve the quality of wildlife and vegetative habitats.

As vacant land within Thornbury Township is converted to new development, Waln Run Park will remain intact as a protected park that has the potential to become a local community destination offering passive recreation within a beautiful natural setting.

Opposition from neighbors to park improvements stem from the possibility of unwanted changes occurring as a result of the development of the park. Some concerns include additional traffic due to a need for added parking along Echo Hill Road in front of residences, apprehension about possible disturbance of wildlife habitat, and issues with visitors potentially trespassing onto adjacent private property. The design consultant considered these concerns and addressed them in the master planning process.

The Waln Run Park site's wetlands offer opportunities to provide public access to these environmentally sensitive areas to allow for environmental interpretation. It should be noted that wetlands may present a limitation to park development in that Township Zoning documents assert that no impervious surface, disturbance of earth or vegetation shall occur within 100 feet of a wetlands boundary. Due to the lack of defined zoning

requirements for Township owned property, Thornbury Township may opt to exempt itself from the provisions of its own zoning ordinance. Alternatively, minor layout changes to the proposed trail system would allow for site development that is in compliance with Township regulations.

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