The Montgomery County Parks, Trails, and Historic Sites Department is undertaking a plan to improve the park.
What is a Park Master Plan?

- Establishes a “vision” for the park for the next 20+ years.
- Determines the role Lorimer Park plays in Montgomery County’s overall park system.
- Establishes a framework for how the vision can be achieved.
- Determines the major incremental actions needed to achieve the vision.
- Considers physical improvements and operational and management requirements.
- Outlines capital budgeting targets along with potential revenue sources.
- Establishes a guidance and policy tool for decision-making as implementation occurs and to address future unforeseen conditions.

Did you know?

- Lorimer Park consists of 230 acres located entirely within Abington Township.
- The primary property was a bequest of George Horace Lorimer in 1937 and additional land was dedicated as surrounding lands were developed. A condition of the transfer requires that the park be kept, “in as nearly a natural state as shall be possible.”
- It is the only county park in the eastern part of Montgomery County where more than two-thirds of the county’s population resides.
- The creation of the 5+ mile Pennypack Trail in 2009 connects the park with a large population, providing direct walking and bicycle access.
Lorimer Park was dedicated to Montgomery County to be used as a public park by benefactor George H. Lorimer upon his death in 1937. It opened in 1938 and has grown from the initial 132 acres to the current size of 230 acres. Lorimer was the editor of the Saturday Evening Post for the Curtis Publishing Company. He resided in the Wyocote section of Cheltenham Township. He purchased a large of assemblage of farmland totaling nearly 2,000 acres in Huntington Valley in the early 1900s. This land includes what is now the properties of the Sisters of the Holy Redeemer and Lorimer Park, which at the time he called King’s Oak. Lorimer used the land as a weekend retreat and to entertain famous friends such as President Herbert Hoover. He so loved King’s Oak that he arranged that upon his death the property be deeded over to Montgomery County. He directed that the park be dedicated to his mother and daughter (both named Belle) “for the enjoyment of its natural beauty.”

**Lorimer Park History**

**Prior to 1683**
- Inhabited by the Lenni Lenape, a Native American tribe. Council Rock is believed to have been a meeting place for the tribe.

**1729**
- Edmund McVeagh II purchases the land.

**1915**
- George Horace Lorimer purchases the land.

**1937**
- Upon his death, George Lorimer donates 132 acres to Montgomery County in honor of his mother and daughter (both named Belle) “for the enjoyment of its natural beauty.”

**1944**
- Lorimer Park is design by Landscape Engineer, C. Donald Woodward. The design of the current park is little changed from the original design.

**1967-1984**
- Through county acquisitions, the park acreage is expanded from 132 acres to 230 acres.

**2008**
- Montgomery County leases the Fox Chase-Newtown rail line for the purpose of extending the Pennypack Trail.

**2014**
- The Pennypack Trail is extended to Welch Road to the north and Rockledge to the south.

**2023**
- Commence master planning project.

**1683**
- William Penn purchases the land from the Lenne Lenape.

**1735-1740**
- Edmund McVeagh II builds a house on the property. The house still stands today.

**1915-1937**
- George Horace Lorimer uses the property as a weekend retreat. He calls the property “Kings Oak.” He entertains famous friends such as President Herbert Hoover, authors James Whitcomb Rilley and Mary Roberts Rinehart, and actor DeWold Hopper.

**1983**
- Rail service through the park on the Fox Chase-Newtown line is discontinued.

**2009**
- First 2-mile section of the Pennypack Trail is constructed.

**2015**
- The Pennypack Trail is extended to Byberry Road.

**As a part of the dedication of the land by George Lorimer, the following restrictions are written into the deed:**

1. The Grantee shall set aside the real estate herein conveyed as a Public Park which shall be called Lorimer Park in memory of Arabella Burford Lorimer and Belle Burford Lorimer, and a suitable tablet, showing the name, purpose, and memorial shall be erected and maintained at the principal entrance to the Park.

2. The Park shall be kept in a nearly its natural state as shall be possible. Any supplementary planting of trees or of the shrubbery shall be of native American Stock.

3. Only such roads and paths as are necessary to its proper utilization shall be laid out through the Park.

4. The Park shall not be commercialized or used for commercial purposes.

5. The Park shall be adequately patrolled.

6. Birds and non-predatory animals shall be fostered.

7. Bathing, picnics, and games shall be permitted only of the kind and at places selected and maintained therefore by the Grantee.
A significant component of Lorimer Park’s recreational value lies within its network of trails and paths. These form the basis of primary visitor experiences within the park. Circulation also includes the methods of arrival to the park, whether by automobile, bicycle, or walking. The park’s circulation system and access points also represent the areas where there are the greatest opportunities for improvements, for both functionality and safety.

**Opportunities & Themes**

**Circulation & Access**

**Pennypack Trail Crossing/Moredon Road Parking Lot Entrance**

**Moredon Road Parking Lot**

**Mowed paths in meadow area**

**Gravel path in South Park**

**LEGEND**

- Main Vehicular Circulation
- Vehicular Service Road
- Park Paved Trails
- Lorimer Park Trail
- Proposed Rockledge Trail
- Park and Trail Access

What portion of Lorimer Park’s trail and path network do you feel is the most important? **Place sticky notes with your comments here**

What portions of Lorimer Park’s circulation system do you feel requires improvement or enhancement? **Place sticky notes with your comments here**
Opportunities & Themes

Natural Ecology and Park Landscape

In Association with:
Toole Recreation Planning

JUNE 2024

What areas of the park's ecology and landscape do you feel need the most attention in terms of care and maintenance?

Heavily eroded areas along Pennypack Creek and forest edges are vectors for invasive species expansion.

Few new canopy and understory tree saplings exists limiting forest regeneration.

What areas/aspects of Lorimer Park's landscape do you most appreciate?

Place sticky notes with your comments here

Place sticky notes with your comments here

Lorimer Park is noted as a nature-oriented open space oasis in the densely populated area of eastern Montgomery County. The various landscapes that exist within the park represent multiple aspects of the overall regional native ecosystems as well as the detrimental impacts of physical disturbance, chronic flooding, the introduction of highly invasive species, as well as other forces.

Significant and regular flooding events with high velocity causes major streambank erosion and ecosystem disturbance.

Recreational uses without adequate design and ground treatments are compounding disturbance and erosion.

Large areas of the park are completely overwhelmed by invasive vines and species that do not stabilize the soil and cause further erosion.

Desires to access the creek's edge is impacting the health and quality of the riparian vegetation buffer of the creek, negatively impacting the forest canopy and the creek.

Forest is composed of a high percentage of trees of similar age with little to no regrowth and understory vegetation.

What areas of the park's ecology and landscape do you feel need the most attention in terms of care and maintenance?

Place sticky notes with your comments here

Place sticky notes with your comments here
Recreational activities within the park primarily focus on passive uses and the available facilities align with these activities. The overwhelming use of the park is for walking, running, and hiking along with fishing and birdwatching along with a general appreciation of the park’s natural setting. With the proximity of the Pennypack Trail, more active uses like bicycling are prevalent, as well as sledding and informal active game use of the large turf lawn field in the central park area are common. Other activities include environmental education and youth organization camping programs.

The large open lawn creates a central space for informal activities.

The Pennypack Creek is a recreation magnet both to view and appreciate as well as for fishing.

Pavilion

Restroom & Meeting Room

Picnicking and social gathering

ILLUSTRATION OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE PARK

What areas/aspects of Lorimer Park’s recreational amenities do you most appreciate and want protected?

Are there recreational aspects in Lorimer Park you feel need improvement or modification?

Place sticky notes with your comments here

Place sticky notes with your comments here
Developing a clear and concise Vision Statement for Lorimer Park is a way to help guide decision-making. Below are two draft vision statements.

Which of the following statements is most aligned with your view of what Lorimer Park is and should be in the future?

#1

**Discover the Wonders of Lorimer Park**, a nature-focused haven dedicated to preserving the vibrant habitat of the Pennypack Creek watershed. Our mission is to invigorate healthy living by illuminating the intricate connections between plants, ecology, science, people, and places. Dive into an immersive experience of land stewardship, conservation, arts, history, and recreation, and let nature inspire you.

#2

**Welcome to Lorimer Park**, an exhilarating outdoor recreation paradise where conservation, safety and inclusivity come first. Immerse yourself in a wide array of nature and cultural activities, supported by cutting-edge land management practices. Embrace modern cultural values of diversity, health, fitness, leisure, play, education, and ecological sustainability in a dynamic and vibrant natural setting.
The following images represent a menu of park facilities, treatments, activities, etc. They are not intended to be recommendations but instead visual prompts to get everyone thinking about what may or may not be desirable/appropriate for Lorimer Park. In some cases images are meant to contrast to gauge community sentiment about a topic.

### VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

#### TRAILS AND PATHS

1. MULTI-USE PATH - GRAVEL
2. MULTI-USE PATH - ASPHALT
3. MULTI-USE PATH - MULCHED
4. HABITAT WALKWAY - ELEVATED BOARDWALK
5. VISTA OVERLOOK - ELEVATED BOARDWALK
6. PERMEABLE PAVING

#### PARK AMENITIES

7. SHADE STRUCTURE
8. SOLAR CHARGING FACILITIES
9. ADULT SWINGS
The following images represent a menu of park facilities, treatments, activities, etc. They are not intended to be recommendations but instead visual prompts to get everyone thinking about what may or may not be desirable/appropriate for Lorimer Park. In some cases images are meant to contrast to gauge community sentiment about a topic.

IMPORTANT PLEASE READ

MASTER SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF LORIMER PARK
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMS

10 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING - ARTS

11 OUTDOOR FITNESS AREA/CIRCUIT

12 NATURED-BASED PLAY AREA

13 FRISBEE GOLF

14 ART INSTALLATIONS

15 AMPHITHEATER

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

16 SOLAR CANOPIES ON PARKING LOT

17 RAIN GARDEN/BIOSWALE

18 HABITAT RESTORATION

WAYFINDING & SIGNING

19 TRAIL SIGNING

20 DIRECTIONAL SIGNING

21 INTERPRETATIVE SIGNING

Photo Credit: Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust