

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-17

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM PLAN AND PROCESS FOR INTEGRATING GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE INTO TOWNSHIP PARKS.**

WHEREAS, the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance and the potential for environmental benefits with an increased number of green infrastructure features within Ferguson Township parks; and

WHEREAS, the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors recognizes the value in having a standard approach to converting a designated area into an interconnected network of open space within Township parks by approving a green infrastructure policy; and

WHEREAS, the policy will establish a program plan with park classifications, definitions, and examples of green infrastructure spaces as well as formalizes a process for integrating green infrastructure into appropriate park areas with written maintenance plans and procedures provided for each approved green infrastructure within Township parks.

NOW THEREFORE, the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors adopts the Ferguson Township Green Infrastructure Policy, attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

RESOLVED this 19th day of April 2021.

TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON

By: _____

Laura Dininni, Chair
Board of Supervisors

[S E A L]

ATTEST:

David G. Pribulka, Secretary

Ferguson Township Park Green Infrastructure Policy

I. Purpose

- a. Ferguson Township recognizes the importance of maintaining the condition, accessibility, and safety of its naturalized environments to serve as a green feature or green infrastructure in developed and undeveloped parks. The focus of this policy is to establish a program plan with definitions and a process for integrating green infrastructure into appropriate park areas and formalize how and when maintenance plans and procedures are created for approved green infrastructures within Township Parks.

II. Definitions

a. Park Classifications

- i. **Mini Parks** – Smallest park type, addresses limited recreation need. Provides close to home recreation. Requires high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and playground and high visitation.
 - ii. **Neighborhood Parks** – Focus of neighborhood; in walking/biking distance of visitors. Provides access to basic recreation opportunities. Contributes to neighborhood identity. Establishes sense of community. Requires high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and reasonably high visitation.
 - iii. **Regional/Community Parks** – Large park for active and passive recreation; serves residents municipality-wide. Accommodates large groups. Variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and interests. Space for organized, large scale, high participation events, family destination with fitness and wellness opportunities. Requires mixed level of maintenance associated with moderate level of development, budget restrictions, inability to perform higher levels of maintenance. Potential for park “friends” or adopt a-park-partner.
 - iv. **Natural Preserve** – An area of land within a municipal park that is managed to conserve wildlife or plant habitat or other natural features. Protects resources. Provides opportunities for environmental education. Requires lower level of maintenance.
- b. Natural Areas** – Also referred to as “Natural Resource Areas” that are designated areas within municipal parks for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. Designed with minimal recreational use and vary in size depending on the existing resource.
- c. Green Infrastructure** – refers to an interconnected network of open space within municipal parks consisting of natural areas and other green features that protects ecosystem functions and contribute to clean air and water. Examples include the following:
- i. **planted meadow(s)** – designated area purposefully planted with native grass, forbe, and wildflower seed to provide food sources and habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Low-mow and planted meadows are examples.

- ii. **meadow(s)** - designated area where existing site vegetation is evaluated to identify and remove invasive species with a continued maintenance plan to prevent the spread of invasive species from park to park. Low-mow and no-mow meadows are examples.
 - iii. **Grow Zone** – refers to all types of meadows, with native seed mix plantings or natural vegetation growth,
 - iv. **Pollinator gardens and plots** - designated area that is planted with specific plant types beneficial to pollinators in a designed garden. Used for demonstration and educational purposes. Typically requires ongoing maintenance including weeding, mulching, trimming, plant care.
- d. **Undeveloped area** – an area within the park that is not for active use.
 - e. **Future phase of development** – a designated area within the park planned to be developed in a future phase of development.

III. Pre-Planning and Assessment for Green Infrastructure

- a. Ferguson Township parks may be evaluated to determine whether naturalizing a park area would benefit the park setting, expand or enhance habitat areas, and/or provide a sustainable landscape.
- b. Various site conditions have an impact on determining the most appropriate natural area practices available, or how a specific practice must be adapted to meet the physical constraints of the site. Examples include, but are not limited to location, soil conditions, space availability or size and shape of existing parkland or land slated for park redevelopment, the need to integrate green infrastructure practices into existing landscapes, stormwater infrastructure or existing site features such as structures, mature trees, or other existing natural resources and rights-of-way within local municipal parks.
- c. Prepare a cost estimate and identify for consideration a diverse support of funding streams including municipal designated dollars, grants, volunteer hours or in-kind donations in the form of donated goods and services.
- d. Prepare a design for naturalizing park areas that shall include an invitation to community members such as residents, nearby businesses, community organizations to engage early and often in the planning, design, and implementation process. Involving stakeholders at the beginning shall support equity and inclusivity through listening and empowering community involvement.

IV. Process for Integrating Green Infrastructure into Appropriate Park Areas

- a. To identify and/or determine facilities, improvements, and appropriate park areas that shall be considered suitable for conversion to a natural environment, an established multidisciplinary team approach is required as part of the park planning process. Integrating naturalized areas for sustainable green infrastructure into existing parks, expanded parks and new park sites is accomplished through a park assessment and planning process or through the development of a Park Master Plan.

- b. The park assessment and planning process may be initiated following a citizen request, staff recommendation, Parks and Recreation Committee recommendation or as directed by the Township Manager or Board of Supervisors. The park assessment and planning process reviews Township Parks and considers the needs and interests of visitors, appropriateness of facilities, potential need for green stormwater facilities, and opportunities to integrate naturalized areas and functional improvements and consideration is given to any issues that need addressed.
- c. All requests and recommendations shall be submitted for review by completing the online Ferguson Township Parks and Recreation (FTPR) Request Form for Green Infrastructure. The form is received by the Township Manager and Assistant Manager and will initiate the formal park assessment and planning process review. Commitment to construct green infrastructure, when approved, will be contingent on available resources, budget, site constraints, and other variables.
 - i. Requests or recommendations for a naturalized area to be integrated into an existing park or part of a new park shall be reviewed first by the Township Manager to evaluate the nature of the request or recommendation to confirm or deny that the scope of work is within the purview of the Township.
 - 1. If the scope of the work being requested is not permitted for the park property owner, the Township Manager will dismiss the request or recommendation.
 - 2. If the scope of work is within the purview of the Township, the Manager will require the formal process as outlined in this policy for integrating the naturalized area(s) into appropriate park settings and initiate the process for review.
 - ii. Ferguson Township Manager or Assistant Manager, Arborist, Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician will coordinate with CRPR Parks Maintenance Supervisor to attend a field view to observe, discuss and list options for naturalizing the park areas based on request or recommendation.
 - iii. Parks and Recreation Committee reviews and discusses the options for naturalizing the park areas as proposed by Township and CRPR staff to generate conceptual idea(s) to be mapped in a site development drawing.
 - iv. At the direction of the Township Manager, staff will prepare a site development map illustrating the natural area within the park for review and acceptance.
 - v. In collaboration with the Township Arborist and CRPR, the Parks and Recreation Committee will recommend a maintenance plan, site development plan, and brief narrative to describe the design of the naturalized area.
 - vi. Parks and Recreation Committee provides a recommendation for the Board of Supervisors to accept and approve for staff to implement the natural area for an initial observational period of 6 months.
 - 1. Signage posted at the site as part of implementation is required.
 - 2. The public is encouraged to provide input in the form of an opinion survey available in print form in the office or online;

3. Five months after the site feature has been developed in the park setting, the Board of Supervisors will review the opinion survey results and staff input to take action at a regular meeting to conclude the six months observational period.
- vii. At a Regular Meeting, the Board of Supervisors will take action to:
 - 1) authorize advertisement of a resolution to approve a map with the natural area as a new site feature on the park plan; or 2) propose an amendment, direct staff to update the map and advertise a resolution at a future meeting after repeating steps 4(c)iii to 4(c)vi.; or 3) deny the request.

V. Operations and Maintenance

- a. Maintenance plans and procedures to ensure long-term maintenance for each green infrastructure feature shall be collaboratively prepared with Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency in written form within 60 days of the Board of Supervisors accepting and approving the implementation of the naturalized area.
- b. The maintenance plan for each green infrastructure shall include the following:
 - i. Identification of staff resources for routine inspections and maintenance. Consideration on which municipal departments have the equipment and skill to inspect and maintain the green infrastructure and determine what, if any, training is required.
 - ii. Identify the common problems that require non-routine maintenance to aid staff in the field inspecting naturalized areas. Common problems that trigger non-routine maintenance include excess sediment accumulation, trash, debris, overgrown vegetation, dead or diseased vegetation, signs of erosion or standing water present more than 72 hours of a rainstorm.
 - iii. Establish and continuously update to incorporate green infrastructure maintenance triggers and remedial actions. Maintenance schedules will be updated and set for each type of practice based on the approved naturalized area, and a tracking system shall be in place to ensure that maintenance is performed as prescribed.
 - iv. Secure funding for annual maintenance in the Operation Budget. Staff will prepare and provide a cost estimate budget for each naturalized area to the Township Manager or Assistant Manager.
 - v. Enlist the help of volunteers for routine maintenance, such as removing trash and weeds, can be accomplished and permitted with record of a volunteer waiver signed and on file.
 - vi. Evaluate equipment needed to maintain green infrastructure and determine if additional equipment is needed to note in maintenance plan. Or establish procedures for cleaning equipment in an effort to prevent the spread of invasive species and include in the maintenance plan for the naturalized area being approved.