

Chapter 2: Doylestown Community Profile



Essential
... For human development



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The Facts and Figures

Background and Location

- Location** The Doylestown community is in the heart of Central Bucks County, about 25 miles north of Philadelphia. It is bordered by New Britain Borough and Warwick, Warrington, Buckingham, New Britain, and Plumstead Townships. The community is part of the Central Bucks School District.
- Size** The Borough and the Township comprise about 17 square miles in area. The Borough is almost completely surrounded by the Township.
- History** The community harkens back to 1745 when William Doyle established a tavern at State and Main Streets. The Doylestown community is historic and has a rich cultural heritage famous for the arts. Officially, the Township was established in 1818 while the Borough was incorporated in 1838. The Township has been mainly residential and agricultural in development. Due to the persistence of a citizenry that treasured its heritage and architecture, the Borough escaped the redevelopment trend of the 1960's which resulted in the razing of historic buildings. The Township developed in the 1970's, much later than other suburban Philadelphia communities that experienced the post World War II growth. Today, the community has access to regional employment centers making it a very desirable community in which to live.
- Today** The county seat for Bucks County is Doylestown Borough. The Township and the Borough are nearly fully developed. The local economy is stoked by services such as health care, education, retail, tourism, and other professional enterprises. The community is frequently cited in publications as one of the best places to live or visit in the region, state, and nation. Challenges include an emerging climate of fiscal austerity due to a stabilizing tax base, affordable housing for future generations as housing values escalate, continued provision of high quality public service, and the continued development of the parks and recreation system.

Government

Types: Township of the Second Class. Borough.

Elected Officials: In the Township, the Board of Supervisors has five members who are elected to six-year terms and together represent the entire Township. They serve both legislative and executive functions. Doylestown Borough has a mayor and nine council members, who are elected to four year terms from three wards.

**Appointed
Officials:**

The Township has a Park and Recreation Board, a Shade Tree Commission and an Environmental Advisory Council. The Borough has a Parks and Recreation Board, the Fanny Chapman Pool Board and a Shade Tree Commission. The Township and the Borough have a joint Performing Arts Council, Bike and Hike Committee and Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan Study Committee.

Municipal

Administration: The municipalities each have a professional manager to carry out policy and manage daily operations.

Demographic Trends

Doylestown Township is continuing to experience a double digit rate of population growth. The Borough, after experiencing a decreasing population, is seeing growth that outpaces the state as a whole.

Population Trends

Nearly 27,000 people live in the Doylestown community. About 2,000 are institutionalized in Bucks County Correctional Facilities located in Doylestown Township. Those incarcerated do not use community facilities outside of the prison. **Table 1** presents the population between 1980 and 2000. Between 1980 and 2000, the Township population increased by 49 percent, over 14 times the rate of Pennsylvania's growth. The Borough lost 5.6 percent.

The population changes in the Township and the Borough mirror what was happening across Pennsylvania between 1980 and 2000. Outer lying townships increased in population by 49 percent while borough populations decreased by 9.8 percent. Doylestown Borough fared comparatively better with its smaller loss. The loss of population in Pennsylvania's older communities including Doylestown Borough was the result of many factors including competition with new mall developments in suburbia, and a recession which combined to take its toll on older communities.¹ Combined, this trend shows what was happening in Central Bucks County: the decentralization and spreading

¹ Brookings Institution. Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003. pp 28.

out of the population. More houses were built outside the town center while population in the older Borough declined.

What Doylestown Borough had that many other boroughs did not was a committed group of local business owners and civic minded residents who banded together to resist and prevent the loss of the historic fabric of the community in the federal “redevelopment” programs of the 1960’s. They saved the historic character of the community which is so vital to the new population trend of increased growth projections through 2020 as well as to the overall livability of this community.

Table 1 Pennsylvania, Bucks County, and Doylestown Population 1980-2000				
	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-2000
Pennsylvania	11,864,904	11,881,643	12,281,054	3.5%
Bucks County	479,211	541,174	597,635	24.7%
Doylestown Township	11,824	14,510	17,619	49%
Doylestown Borough	8,717	8,575	8,227	-5.6%
Township & Borough	20,541	23,085	25,846	25.8%

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

The population projections in **Table 2** show a continued double digit rate of growth in Doylestown Township at 21.6 percent between 2000 and 2020. The Borough will also experience population gain but on a smaller scale of 4.3 percent. Overall the Doylestown community will gain nearly 4,200 people through 2020 of which more than 4,000 will be in the Township according to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Table 2 Bucks County and Doylestown Population Projections 2005-2020					
	2000	2005	2010	2020	% Change 2005-2020
Bucks County	597,635	625,050	652,800	709,150	18.7%
Doylestown Township	17,619	18,570	19,520	21,430	21.6%
Doylestown Borough	8,227	8,350	8,450	8,580	4.3%
Township & Borough	25,846	26,920	27,970	30,010	16.1%

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census, Bucks County Planning Commission, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Age

As interests change throughout one’s lifetime, it is important to look at the age groupings in order to target services. **Table 3** represents population by major age group changes between 1990 and 2000 as well as comparisons with Bucks County and Pennsylvania. As a percentage of the population, the Doylestown Community has fewer children and youth and more people 65 years and older than Bucks County or Pennsylvania. The age group of 20 to 44 showed a significant decrease of nearly

eight percent in the Township and five percent in the Borough. This is evidence of Pennsylvania’s “Brain Drain”, the loss of bright young people to other areas. Despite a robust economy, Pennsylvania suffered a net migration loss of 20,038 people holding bachelor's, master's or professional degrees from 1999 through 2001. Most of that net loss, 13,056, was among people 20 to 29 years of age, according to the study by Gordon F. DeJong and Michele Steinmetz of Penn State University found. The study also concluded that the state faced a serious erosion of its educated young people. Pennsylvania's brain drain migration has a corrosive effect on the economic and social well-being of the state according to this study².

The United States Census Bureau considers any change of 2.5 percent or more to be significant. Other significant changes include:

- Population aged 65 and older increased by over four percent in the Township.
- An increase of about six percent in people ages 45 to 64 in the Borough. Anecdotal information and observation indicate that this increase follows a national trend of “empty nesters” and pre-retirement age people flocking to small towns and urbanized areas with lots of activities and walkable places. The Township’s population in this category also increased by 2.6 percent.

An important factor influencing these age group trends is the escalating cost of housing in this community. Both real numbers for house prices and interviews with residents found that younger people just starting out with their careers and families cannot afford the housing prices here. One of the real fears that people expressed in the public participation process was the reality that their children may not be able to afford to live here.

Table 3 Percent of Population by Age Group*						
Age Groups	Doylestown Township %		Doylestown Borough %		Bucks County %	PA %
	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000	2000
Under 5	4.6	5.6	5.6	4.6	6.4	5.9
5-19	19.8	19.8	13.5	13.4	21.4	20.6
20-44	38.7	30.9	37.9	33.1	35.3	34.7
45-64	23.1	25.7	17.8	23.6	24.3	23.1
65+	13.7	18.0	25.0	25.5	12.4	15.6
Median Age	36.8	41.5	39.7	44.2	37.7	38.0

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census
*Due to rounding, percentages do not add up to 100%

Graying of Doylestown

The Doylestown community’s median age of 41.5 in the Township and 44.2 in the Borough is higher than the median age of both Pennsylvania at 38 and Bucks County at 37.7. The median age in the community increased by about five years in the 1990’s. Two

² Robbins Richard. *Study Shows State’s “Brain Drain” Unabated*. **Tribune Review Publishing Company**. July 13, 2003.

milestones occurred in 2006: the first baby boomers turned 60 and more than half of all boomers were age 50 or older by May. People ages 45 to 54 have the highest average household income and the highest household spending of any age group. Old age is still a long way off as 50 year olds can expect to live another 30 years (women, 82.5 and men, 78.5).³ Nearly half of Doylestown’s population is 45 years of age and older.

Different Generations - Different Views of the World

Longer lives have produced several generations with different views of the world: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y as defined in **Figure 1. Generations and Implications**. Their formative experiences have molded specific preferences and beliefs among these different age groups. Each group has its own attitudes, sensibilities, issues, and cultural expectations. Clarifying the needs and desires of all generations is essential in public service. Finding out how to reach and involve different generations of people in parks and recreation in a positive manner is complex. For example, one generation, Gen Y, has three segments: adults, teens, and children. For program planning and outreach, understanding client groups is essential.

Population Target Groups

Population figures help guide age group planning. **Table 4** presents the raw number of citizens by age group. For example, one of the community’s prime target groups for recreational services is the age group 5 to 14. This group has 3,211 people so this is the target audience for programs for this age group. The family life stage age group of 35 to 54 has about 8,161 people suggesting that family oriented programming is important. About 5,266 people are 65 and older suggesting that community recreation services should include this group. Doylestown appears to be youth-centered. This is evident in news articles, public discussions, private enterprise devoted to the youth market, and issues related to public gatherings in the Borough. It is important to note that about 6,000 people are 19 and under and nearly 21,000 people are 20 or older.

Age Group	Township	Borough	Combined
Under 5 Years	989	377	1366
5-14 Years	2,472	739	3,211
15-19 Years	1,025	359	1,384
20-34 Years	2,317	1,541	3,858
35-54 Years	5,787	2,374	8,161
55-64 Years	1,856	744	2,600
65- 84 Years	2,487	1,562	4,049
85 Years+	686	531	1,217

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

³ Ad Age.Com. **Implications of Latest Baby Boomer Milestone**. <http://www.adage.com>. July 5, 2005.

Figure 1
Generations⁴ and Implications⁵

Traditionalists – *Born before 1946*. Affected by the Great Depression. Hard work. Self-sacrifice. Respect for authority and institutions. Earned their material comforts the good old-fashioned way. **Reaching this group:** Stress frugality & their right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Use endorsements of well-known people with wisdom of experience.

Baby Boomers – *Born 1946 – 1964*. The next generation of senior citizens. Born into prosperity and affluence. “Permissive” upbringing. Feel special and privileged. Challenge authority. Champion the unconventional. Focused on self-fulfillment. Strong sense of entitlement and self-worth. **Reaching this group:** Stress family and family activity. Supply products and services that make boomers feel like young active winners.

Gen X – *Born 1964-1980*. Lived with social and economic obstacles that are harder than those faced by Traditionalists and did not exist for Boomers. Technology and media opened them to wider choices in lifestyle than previous generations. Sophisticated and savvy about the world. Skeptical. **Reaching this group:** Use candor, humor, and pragmatic approaches.

Gen Y (Echo Boomers) – *Born 1980-2000*. Group so large and complex that it is viewed as three distinct groups: adulthood, teens and tweens. Multi-cultural diversity. Broader definition of family. Affected by violence and scandal: 9/11, Columbine, Iraq, terrorism, and political scandals. More watchful and careful about their personal safety. Mistrustful of the media. Information Age influence: shorter attention spans, boredom and over-stimulation. **Reaching this group:** Use technology: videos, computers, WEB. Capitalize on hope and optimism. Inclusive multi-cultural programs and services. Participative planning enabling people to be heard through pulling together.

Family Structure

One of the most marked changes in Pennsylvania’s population in recent years has been the alteration of the family structure. Households have experienced a decline in married couples and households with children. Households with single people, single heads of households and single parents have increased. Between 1990 and 2000, the following changes occurred:

- Percentage of married-couple householders in the Township decreased from 75.2 percent to 74.1 percent and from 53.9 to 48.3 percent in the Borough.
- Householders living alone increased from 39.9 to 44.4 percent in the Borough. The Borough’s high percentage of householders living alone is due to the retirement communities including Heritage Towers and Center Square Towers. In comparison, about 21 percent of Bucks County householders live alone. Householders living alone in the Township remained stable at about 22 percent.

⁴ Paul, Pamela. September 2001. *Getting Inside Gen Y, American Demographics*, Volume 23(9) pp 42-49.

⁵ Smith, J. Walker and Clurman, Ann. 1997. *Rocking the Ages: the Yankelovich Report on Generational Marketing*. (New York, NY: Harper Business).

- About 30 households indicated the grandparents are the primary caretakers of their grandchildren.
- About 55 percent of households with children in the Township and 61 percent in the Borough have “all parents” in the work force, that is, all parents may include birth or adoptive parents and step parents.

Income

Table 5 shows the income comparisons for the Township, the Borough, the County, and the State. About 950 people in both the Township and the Borough lived at the poverty level according to the 2000 United States Census. The increase in household median income in Bucks County, Doylestown Township and Doylestown Borough represent real economic gains beyond the cost of living. For example, the median household incomes in 1990 of the Township (\$52,212) and the Borough (\$32,942) would be worth \$66,553 and \$41,940 respectively in 1999 according to the consumer price index. As **Table 5** shows, the actual median household incomes in 1999 were 22 percent higher in the Township and 10 percent higher in the Borough than they would be based on adjustment according to the consumer price index.

Area	Household	% Change 1990-1999	Family	Per-Capita	% Individuals in Poverty
Pennsylvania	\$40,106	37.9	\$49,184	\$20,880	11.0%
Bucks County	59,727	37.8	68,727	27,430	4.5
Doylestown Township	81,226	55.6	93,984	38,031	3.7
Doylestown Borough	46,148	40.0	71,988	32,249	4.4

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

Education

Doylestown is a well-educated community. Education is an important community value as evident in the support for the public school system as well as in the number of families who send their children to independent schools. Educational attainment is the strongest indicator of an individual’s income potential, attitudes, and spending habits. The trend nationally is toward higher levels of education. Doylestown has about twice the percentage of residents with college degrees as well as advanced or professional degrees than the state does as a whole. **Table 6** represents the educational attainment levels for the municipalities, the county and the state.

Table 6 Educational Attainment of People 25 Years and Older in 2000			
	High School Graduate + %	Bachelor's Degree %	Advanced or Professional Degree %
Pennsylvania	59.5	14.0	8.4
Bucks County	57.3	19.8	11.4
Doylestown Twp.	40.9	29.5	18.6
Doylestown Borough	47.9	25.3	16.6

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

Race

About 95 of every 100 citizens is Caucasian in Doylestown. Diversification increased by only one percent in the Township and 1.3 percent in the Borough in the 1990's as shown in **Table 7**. People of color represent about five percent of the population.

Table 7 Racial* Composition by Percentage of Population								
	Doylestown				Bucks County		Pennsylvania	
	Township		Borough		1990	2000	1990	2000
	1990	2000	1990	2000				
White	96.1	95.2	97.3	96.0	93.9	92.5	88.5%	85.4%
African American	2.5	2.6	1.0	1.3	2.7	3.3	9.1	10.0
Latino – of any race*	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.6	2.3	1.8	3.2
American Indian	.1	.1	.1	.1	.009	.1	.1	.1
Asian	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.5	2.3	1.1	1.8

*Numbers do not total 100% because the Latino group includes multiple races.

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

People with Special Needs

Table 8 presents the statistics regarding people with special needs in the community. The Doylestown Community has a lower proportion of people with disabilities than Bucks County or Pennsylvania. The only exception is the population aged 65 and older residing the Borough. This is presumably due to the retirement housing that would have a higher proportion of people with disabilities located in the municipality, one of the reasons that people move into retirement housing. Nearly one out of two citizens 65 years and older in the Borough is reported in the census as having a disability. About 3,200 people in the community report having a disability. This does not include children younger than five.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is defined as a substantial limitation in a major life activity. It is commonly measured as difficulty on performing activities of daily living (personal care tasks), instrumental activities of daily living or difficulty (household management), and in performing more general mobility-related activities.

Table 8 Disability Status of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population in 2000				
	Doylestown Township Number / %	Doylestown Borough Number/%	Bucks County	Pennsylvania
Ages 5-20	129 / 3.7%	54 / 4.7%	6.2%	7.5%
Ages 21-64	966 / 10.3%	645 / 14.2%	14.9%	17.5%
Ages 65+	572 / 26.7%	812 / 46.5%	34.9%	39.4%
Total*	1,667 / 9.5%	1,511 / 18.4%	21.8%	17.2%

* - percentage of the total population

Housing

Table 9 shows information about housing. Housing is generally an indicator of affluence. Those who can afford to own their own homes are more affluent than those who rent. The exception to this rule of thumb is retirement housing which is significant in Doylestown. About 20 percent of the Borough's housing is comprised of structures with 20 or more units. Only six percent of the structures in Bucks County overall have 20 units or more. About 30 percent of renters pay 35 percent or more of their income in rent, which is higher than the county's rate of 27 percent. Housing values have been skyrocketing in this Central Bucks community. New townhouse prices in the Borough spiked by over 50 percent in less than a year in 2004-05. People are concerned about the affordability of homes for future generations.

Table 9 Housing Information 2000				
	Doylestown Township	Doylestown Borough	Bucks County	Pennsylvania
Owner Occupied %	83.6	48.3	77.4	71.3%
Renter Occupied %	16.4	51.7	22.6	28.7%
Detached single family homes %	65.4	37.8	64.1	55.9%
Median House Value	\$253,200	\$180,800	\$163,200	\$97,000
Median Gross Rent	\$1,160	\$775	\$736	\$531

Source: Penn State Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Census

Public Opinion

This planning project included a five part public participation process: a Study Committee, key person interviews, focus groups, public meetings and a community wide direct mail survey.

Study Committee

Residents representing a broad base of community interests participated on the Study Committee. They included representatives from the Township and the Borough, elected and appointed officials, Parks and Recreation Boards, natural resource conservation, senior adults, families, organized sports, service clubs, Central Bucks School Board, and general community interest. The Study Committee met monthly throughout the planning process.

Key Person Interviews

The Doylestown Township Parks and Recreation Department, Doylestown Borough, and the Plan Study Committee identified interviewees:

- Township and Borough officials
- Planning boards
- Parks and Recreation Boards
- Performing Arts Committee
- Bike & Hike Path Committee
- County Planning Commission
- County Public Works Department
- County Parks Department
- Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
- Business owners
- Library
- Mercer Museum
- Michener Museum
- Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce
- Delaware Valley College
- Bucks Beautiful
- Central Bucks Healthy Communities Team
- Parks and recreation managers and staff in the Township and the Borough
- Public Works managers and staff in the Township and the Borough
- Assistant Borough Manager
- Township Program Coordinator
- Borough Recreation Coordinator
- Central Bucks School District: Superintendent and a Board Member
- Doylestown Athletic Association (DAA)
- Central Bucks Athletic Association (CBAA)
- Catholic Youth Organization Sports (CYO)
- Heritage Towers
- Centre Square
- Central Bucks YMCA

- County Theatre
- Fanny Chapman Board
- Girl Scouts
- Boy Scouts
- Schade's Little Store
- Cycle Sports

Focus Groups

The planning team held focus groups with the organized sports groups, teens, community arts organizations, and active senior adults. The purpose of the forums was to determine the ideas, opportunities, and issues regarding the particular needs and interests of the target group.

The planning team held a work session with the Central Bucks School Superintendent. The purpose of this session was to determine areas of common interests and potential collaborative projects in the future and to learn about the District's future plans with ramifications for parks and recreation.

Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held to launch the project: one in the Borough and one in the Township. Public meetings were held regarding the draft plan and the adoption of the plan.

Community Direct Mail Survey

To achieve statistical significance with a high level of confidence, the study needed to generate 361 surveys in the Township and 350 completed surveys in the Borough based upon the number of households in each community. The returned surveys exceeded these numbers with 415 from the Township and 408 from the Borough. A direct mail survey of 1,587 households yielded a statistically reliable and valid response of 52 percent. Direct mail surveys typically garner a three to five percent (3% - 5%) response rate. The summary of the survey findings is reported in the Appendix.

Findings of the Public Participation Process

Overall the public participation process revealed a great deal of pride, love and enthusiasm for Doylestown. The following points summarize the findings and are presented without respect to priority:

1. **Genuine pride and appreciation for the high quality of life in the Doylestown Community.** People expressed appreciation for the efforts of both the Township and the Borough to provide high quality community services. About 70 percent of the survey respondents reported having a positive impression of parks and recreation in the community. About four out of five survey respondents expressed satisfaction with community parks and recreation.

2. **Residents like the Borough and the Township working together in community endeavors.** Residents would also like to see the School District as part of parks and recreation planning and operation. This is particularly true for community arts and sports organizations. Residents view the Township and the Borough as one integrated community.
3. **Residents invest their own time and expertise in making the community an even better place.** The number of volunteers, volunteer hours, and contributions that support community parks and recreation is remarkable. At the same time, there is a very high level of expectation among the citizenry regarding facilities, services, and programs that extends beyond the human and financial resources available. Most often this expectation comes from those who are not involved in civic projects according to anecdotal information presented in the key person interviews, forums, surveys, and conversations during park visitation.
4. **The Bike & Hike Path is a treasured aspect of the parks and recreation system.** Residents want the path system to be completed as soon as possible including linkages to destinations beyond Doylestown such as to New Hope and Peace Valley Park.
5. **The success of the town center in drawing people 24/7 also brings challenges.** The vibrancy of the Borough is a model to communities everywhere. Wherever people gather, there are usually conflicts. The Borough has been committed to addressing the issues and user conflicts in a small space.
6. **Natural resource protection ranks high with the residents.** About 84 percent of the survey respondents stated that protecting natural resources and open space should be a municipal priority.
7. **Additional sports fields and gyms are needed.** Community sports organizations serve well over 8,000 players, some of whom play in more than one sport. League officials report growing participation, four season play, more girls playing, players at older and younger ages, and newer sports emerging as organized leagues such as lacrosse. As an emerging sport, lacrosse is growing intensely at the same time that no fields are available. Area soccer, baseball, and lacrosse teams all use fields in other communities. The Township, the Borough, the School District, and representatives from surrounding municipalities all report a shortage of fields.

Thirty-seven (37%) percent of the respondents stated that sports fields improvements should be a high priority and another 36 percent said they should be a priority for a total of 73 percent. This is a high response rate in community recreation surveys in which the response for additional sports fields generally falls below 20 percent. Gym time is very limited to the degree that a community basketball organization has purchased a gym in Hatboro while other organizations rent gym time in Lower Southampton, King of Prussia, and Solebury from schools or commercial enterprises. School district improvements have resulted in additional gyms in other municipalities within the district borders. While sports field lighting was suggested, this has been a contentious issue in the community given the level of development. Any field or game court lighting should be considered on a case by case basis as part of the master planning or facility improvement process.

- 8. A performing arts center continues to be of interest to arts enthusiasts in the Doylestown community.** For this plan, a focus group was held with officials from the James J. Michener Art Center, the Mercer Museum, the County Theatre, Doylestown Township and Doylestown Borough; business owners in the field of entertainment; and artists from the studio and performing arts. Findings that emerged included:
- An arts center in Doylestown has been under discussion since 1988, including a feasibility study that was undertaken. Many people have spent countless hours in this effort for over 17 years.
 - The focus has been on the creation of the physical structure. Little attention has been directed towards the operation, financing, and management of such a facility.
 - A performing arts center should be a regional facility, not a local Doylestown one.
 - The Township and the Borough cannot undertake the development and operation of a performing arts center as a municipal function due to cost and staffing limitations.
 - Further exploration of a performing arts center could be undertaken by a private community or regional organization. The PennDOT site represents a potential location. The future of this site will be determined in conjunction with the Heritage Conservancy (future owner of the site) over the next few years as PennDOT vacates the property. Should any private group wish to pursue the concept of establishing a performing/studio arts center, it would be to their advantage to set forth a schedule to establish a plan to *develop, operate, program, manage and finance* it by 2009 and to work with the Borough and the Heritage Conservancy in the planning process.
- 9. The need for an amphitheater in Central Park emerged in interviews, focus groups, and the survey.** About 66 percent of the survey respondents said that the amphitheater should be a priority.
- 10. Year-round recreation is a priority.** Focus has been on outdoor recreation. There is a need for indoor facilities for a variety of activities ranging from gyms for youth sports to fitness and wellness facilities for the aging population and facilities and services in the arts, culture, and family recreation. School facilities are very limited in terms of times available. About 57 percent of the survey respondents indicated that developing an indoor recreation center is a priority or a high priority.
- 11. Municipal parks and recreation serves as a catalyst for developing lifelong interests.** The community has many recreation opportunities. An important finding emerged from the public participation process: municipal parks and recreation has a significant role in creating lifelong active lifestyles through basic community recreation programming and opportunities. They offer important feeder services from which residents move onto higher level leisure pursuits such as at the Music Conservatory and the museums. A plethora of recreation opportunities is available to the residents of this community from the County, the Township, the Borough, the YMCA, the cultural institutions such as the Mercer and Michener Museums, scouts, community organizations, the School District, and private enterprise.

12. **Special events are the top program area for reaching the broadest base of citizens.** Analysis of the survey findings show that Oktoberfest, the arts festival and the summer concert series reach a broad segment of the population.
13. **Promoting parks and recreation is important to the community.** Creating an image and identity for municipal parks and recreation has been underway for the last ten years. The public participation process shows that there is a high level of recognition about community parks and recreation. In a market where people are deluged with information, seeking new ways to advertise is increasingly challenging. Community members appear to like the WEB site and articles in the local newspapers as well as direct mail, including the recreation guide.
14. **Financial Concerns.** Given the challenging economic times and the tight fiscal climate within the Township and the Borough, citizens and elected officials are concerned about paying for municipal services.
15. **Partnerships are important.** Citizens recognize that the Township and the Borough cannot accomplish everything in parks and recreation on their own. Partnerships with a host of community organizations are crucial. Building upon relationships with community providers and the school district should be a major initiative of this plan.

Analysis

Doylestown is a vibrant community with a high quality of life, outstanding municipal services, cultural resources, a top-notch educational system for pre-schoolers through graduate studies close to home, a highly respected hospital, multi-modal transit system including non-motorized connected pathways, and an affluent, well-educated, and interested citizenry.

The population is aging. The baby boomers are emerging as an active, healthy, well-educated and engaged group of people. The community continues to be family oriented as well as a retirement destination. Population changes warrant planning ahead for adult park and recreation consumers who comprise 72 percent of the population. The large number of senior citizens that will emerge as the baby boomers retire is the single most significant demographic change that parks and recreation managers must address in planning.

Our changing society has resulted in issues that impact services for children and youth: child custody, abuse, discipline issues, juvenile justice, violence, substance abuse, and other major concerns that were not in the picture just a few years ago.

The public participation process found areas for improvement which include the need for additional sports fields and improved athletic field maintenance, the need for an arts center, and interest in fitness/wellness and environmentally oriented programming. Concern about the preservation of open space and the pressure to develop the larger remaining parcels was raised throughout the public participation process. Development forecast shows that another 4200 people will be moving in to the community over the next 15 years. Planning for parks, recreation facilities and services for the new population is important.

Residents are concerned about taxes especially in light of the Central Bucks School District building construction program of recent years that resulted in significant tax increase.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are numbered for ease of discussion and do not reflect the rank order of importance.

- 1. Adopt natural resource protection and open space conservation as a priority.** Explore how to preserve the remaining open spaces through easements and planning tools. Consider how to add parkland to accommodate additional sports fields and facilities that balance nature and recreation for citizens to lead active lifestyles. There is some urgency here due to development pressures. Add natural resource management as a maintenance function in the municipalities.
- 2. Focus on planning for an increasing population.** Another 4200 residents will be moving into the community through 2015.
- 3. Plan for an active aging population.** Community demographic composition is changing resulting in the need to focus planning efforts on the changing composition of the population: primarily towards an active aging population and families.
- 4. Include people with special needs in all aspects of planning, service delivery and facilities design and operation.** About 3,200 citizens over the age of five reported having a disability in the 2000 U.S. Census. People with special needs should be represented on the parks and recreation boards. Both municipalities strive to accommodate people with special needs in all programs and facilities. Collaboration with community organizations and social service agencies regarding service to those with special needs could be considered.
- 5. Balance facility development for lifetime and self-directed recreation.** Municipal parks and recreation in Doylestown needs to achieve balance in its facilities and services. This includes providing facilities and services for organized sports, natural resources protection, programmed recreation, and self-directed recreation.
- 6. Explore how to add sports fields.** Involve sports groups, both municipalities, and the school district. Explore the acquisition of additional park land on which to locate sports fields. Update the Central Park master plan to determine how athletic facilities could be added through the use of land contiguous to the park. Lighting at existing and future parks, where appropriate can enable extended use of playing fields to meet the current and future demand.
- 7. Encourage private organizations or citizens to develop a strategy for the establishment of an arts center.** Include the development of a vision, a mission statement, and a feasibility study for how the center would be managed, operated, and financially supported over time.

- 8. Establish methods for public outreach for monitoring the pulse of the community on a regular basis when the plan is being implemented.** The public participation process found that involving the public regularly beyond organized appointed committees provides fresh eyes and information to guide decision-making.
- 9. Continue Township and the Borough collaboration with parks and recreation planning, programming, management, facilities, and services.**
- 10. Explore and procure funding sources that are a mix of public and private funding.** Work with all levels of government and the private sector to secure additional funding to help realize the goals of this plan. Recognize that there is a limited pool of private sector resources in the Doylestown Community for which numerous sources compete to obtain financial support.