

**WALL PARK VALLEY RECREATIONAL PROPERTY SCREENING**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Project Number:** EAC-2017-04

**Last Revision Date:** October 11, 2017

**Name of property under review: Name / Mc # / Block & Lot**

Brandt / Mc 2 / 713-C-299	Kocan / Mc 12 / 824-C-262
Brandt / Mc 3 / 713-B-147	Marymont / Mc 15 / 824-K-40
Glen Manor / Mc 9 / 824-G-162	Petrush / Mc 19 / 713-B-108

The properties that are currently part of Wall Park (Mc 23 / 713-K-200 and Mc 24 / 713-K-228) are not included in this review.

**Property Access Street:** These Town-owned properties are interconnected and include the valleys leading from Wall Park to Highland Road. Nearby streets are identified in the following chart; however, access and parking may not be available at each location.

**Size (Acres) and shape:** The properties are irregular shaped and follow the stream valley. The six Town properties total 66.5 acres. Sizes are noted in the following chart. Tax map aerial photos are available through the Allegheny County website ( <http://www2.alleghenycounty.us/> ). The two Town properties that comprise Wall Park have a combined acreage of 7.9 acres.

**Terrain / Slopes / Soils / Limitations:** The properties have a rugged terrain with steep slopes the lead to the stream valley. Many of the bottomlands are riparian and include broad wetlands. Some of the deeds for the properties have conservation easements that limit the potential uses and access as noted in the following chart.

<b>Tract Name (Map ID) Parcel ID</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Use Restrictions Stated in Deed</b>
Brandt (Mc 2) 712-C-299	Sloop Road	0.5	Must allow family access to spring.
Brandt (Mc 3) 713-B-147	Sloop Road	22.1	Development prohibited within 50 yards of the westerly and easterly boundaries except for use as walking paths or bike paths. Path shall be named after the Brandt family.
Glen Manor (Mc 9) 824-G-162	Glen Manor Rd / Highland Rd	2.4	Uses are limited to road improvements, recreational, and other municipal purposes.
Kocan (Mc 12) 824-C-262	Glen Manor Rd Highland Road	4	No use restrictions.
Marymont (Mc 15) 824-K-40	Marymont Dr / Sequoia St	18.7	Maintain the property in its current natural state and use the property only for natural resources conservation purposes except for a bicycle and/or walking trail, stormwater management, and sewerage facilities or wetland mitigation enhancement. Trail use requires posting neighboring properties with signage, prohibiting motorized vehicles, prohibition of alcoholic beverages, restricting trail use to occur from dawn to dusk, planting of pine/spruce trees

			along the property line and constructing a barrier preventing entry from the private road.
Petrush (Mc 19) 713-B-108	Sloop Road / Rochester Rd	18.8	No use restrictions.

**Existing vegetative cover:** Most of the properties have old growth forest cover on the valley walls leading to the wetlands and stream. The understory is sparse from deer browsing.

**Existing water attributes:** Most of the properties involve streams and wetlands that are tributaries to the Lowries Run watershed.

**Potential for parking (Number of spaces):** Most of the roads next to the properties have very narrow shoulders because of the steep slopes and do not allow for roadside parking. Potential parking spaces on the Town properties are noted in the following chart.

**Existing recreational uses and adjacent land uses:** Wall Park (Mc 23&24) is located at 8741 Sloop Road occupying 7.9 acres and has the following facilities: a pavilion, a playground, 2- baseball/softball fields, a Dek hockey rink, a volleyball court, a basketball court, 2-tennis/platform courts, horseshoe pits and trails.

The six properties (Mc 2, 3, 9, 12, 15, and 19) under this screening are vacant including mainly forested steep slopes and valleys leading to a stream and wetlands at the bottom. The zoning district that includes Wall Park and the adjacent properties is designated as District R-2 One & Two Family Residential. The vast majority of the lots adjacent to the six properties under review are being used for single family residences. The properties under study have no facilities and are currently used for passive recreation uses including hiking, nature study and hunting. A majority of the properties adjacent to the Town properties are developed with single family residences or remain as buffers to the developments.

Tract Name (Map ID) Parcel ID	Location (Primary/ Secondary)	Acres	Use/Description/Facilities
Brandt (Mc 2) 712-C-299	Sloop Road	0.5	Passive uses. Forested valley with steep slopes and stream. Near Wall Park valley. No facilities.
Brandt (Mc 3) 713-B-147	Sloop Road	22.1	Passive uses. Forested valley with steep slopes, wetlands and stream. Near Wall Park valley. Has former access trail with very limited road parking. No facilities.
Glen Manor (Mc 9) 824-G-162	Glen Manor Road / Highland Road	2.4	Passive uses. Currently serving as Town hard fill staging area. Has very limited road parking (4 spaces) next to Glen Manor Road. Most of this property currently lacks vegetative cover. It is located at the head of the Town Wall Park valley properties. When the hard fill activities are complete, the property has potential for limited recreational facilities and trail head parking. No facilities.

Kocan (Mc 12) 824-C-262	Glen Manor Road / Highland Road	4	Passive uses. Forested valley with steep slopes, wetlands and stream. Near Wall Park valley. Has very limited road parking (4 spaces) next to Glen Manor Road on Mc 9. No access is present from Chesapeake Ave since it dead ends into private properties. No facilities.
Marymont (Mc 15) 824-K-40	Marymont Drive / Sequoia St	18.7	Passive uses. Forested valley with steep slopes, wetlands and stream. Near Wall Park valley. This property has conservation easements on the deed that restrict access and potential uses. No access is present from Marymont Drive. Access from Sequoia Street has no trespassing signs on it and lacks parking. No facilities.
Petrush (Mc 19) 713-B-108	Sloop Road / Rochester Road	18.8	Passive uses. Forested valley with steep slopes, wetlands and stream. Adjacent to Wall Park. Involves two tributary valleys leading to Wall Park. No parking available adjacent to Rochester Road due to steep slopes. No facilities.

**Potential recreational uses suggested for study:** Restrictions within the deeds for some of the properties limit the potential uses of the properties. The physical conditions of these properties include forested steep slopes that lead to the valley that includes a stream and wetlands. The physical conditions that exist limit potential recreational activities to passive uses such as hiking, nature study, environmental education and hunting. Trails could be developed to accent the natural beauty of the environment and provide educational experiences. There are numerous wildflower colonies and other natural features located on the properties. Wildlife plots can be developed but will be difficult to maintain due to limitations on equipment access. Stream diversions could enhance the wetlands and contribute to water quality enhancement.

As noted in the earlier chart, some of the properties have conservation easements on the deed that restrict access and potential uses. Several of the properties can only be accessed through adjacent Town-owned properties. The Town has easements for storm water management and the McCandless Township Sewer Authority (MTSA) has easements for sewer lines that traverse the Town properties and follow the stream down through the valley. Gas line easements also exist on some of the Town properties. These easements are maintained with a limited vegetative cover and may assist in providing potential pathways for trails. Walkways, board walks and trail management practices would be required to provide for stream and wetland crossings and access to a sustainable trail system that minimizes encroachment on the environment.

The review team suggests that the trail and property use be limited to foot traffic and no biking. It is also suggested that access and parking be limited to the ends of the chain of properties at the Wall Park Mc 23 and Mc24 area and the Mc 9 property at Glen Manor Road.

**Exclusions for recreational uses and rationale:** The physical conditions of these properties include forested steep slopes that lead to the valley that drains to streams and wetlands. The physical conditions present limit potential recreational activities to passive uses such as hiking, nature study and hunting. Most of the roads next to the properties have very narrow shoulders because of the steep slopes and do not allow for parking. Some of the properties have covenants and restrictions in the deed that limit access and potential uses as noted in the first chart.

**Any known neighborhood preferences/concerns:** An E-mail was received expressing concern about the following items that will be reviewed during public meetings and examined in the feasibility/preliminary design phase of the trail development:

- Trail surface material
- Trail location relative to property lines
- Privacy of backyards, any buffer zone
- Tree removal for trail construction
- Clearing the path of dead trees
- Limitations to walkers/runners and prohibition of motorized vehicles
- Allowance of pets
- Trail maintenance, cleaning and safety
- Allowance of hunting
- Concern with the deer population
- Concern with coyotes
- Parking locations for trail users
- Trail hours of use
- Gating of trail parking areas

**Suggested next steps:** It is suggested that the Town authorize a further study of these properties as to the feasibility and preliminary design of development of trails and environmental education areas. It is suggested that the recreational access to the inner portions of the properties be restricted to foot traffic only. The concerns presented by neighbors and residents will be addressed during the feasibility study and the sketch design of the trail layout. The plan will be developed with incorporation of input from Town Council, Town Staff, the EAC, residents and trail associations.

The EAC envisions that the next phase of additional studies could be completed with outside direct costs being limited to a maximum of \$5,000 for mapping, photographs, trail design information and resident meeting materials. The results of the next phase of study would include a sketch location for the proposed trail and a preliminary design that addresses the concerns raised and proposed staging of trail development if appropriate. The initial site visits with potential trail association representatives would be conducted during the fall and winter in order to avoid vegetation obscuring the surroundings. The time frame to develop the feasibility study and preliminary design is envisioned to take between nine to twelve months.

**Sources of Information not noted above:**

- Field observations,
- Google mapping,
- Allegheny County Real Estate Website,
- Town Staff
- Deed Review of Town Properties (713-C-299, 713-B-147, 824-G-162, 824-C-262, 824-K-40, and 713-B-108)
- E-mail from Elizabeth Yurkovich (adjacent resident) Dated June 8, 2017.

**EAC Reviewers:** Team Members - Ken Allshouse (Project Manager), Bill Kirk and Brian Moreth

**Approved by Environmental Advisory Committee:**

Chairman/Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/ 2017

Project Manager/Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/ 2017