City of Beacon
Parks & Recreation Fee Study

March 2017

BFJ Planning

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City of Beacon
Recreation Fee Study

March 9, 2017

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Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the recreational needs of the City of Beacon. The report will serve as a guide for the expansion of and/or improvements to existing facilities, as well as for acquisition and/or disposition of parkland. It will also provide a basis for the imposition of recreational fees associated with new development as required by Section 27-A(6) and 33(4)(c) of the New York State General City Law and Section 195-25(A)(4) of the City of Beacon Code pertaining to subdivisions and Section 223-25(H)(4) of the City of Beacon Code pertaining to site plans.

The following report is organized into three parts. Section 2 provides an inventory of Beacon's existing parks and open spaces, which addresses recreational activities, facilities provided, and maintenance needs. Section 3 addresses the City's existing and projected population and demographic trends. Section 4 identifies recreational guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and evaluates the adequacy of Beacon's recreational facilities based on these guidelines and projected population. The report concludes by providing recommendations that address potential deficiencies identified in Section 4, including the expansion and/or improvements to existing recreational facilities.

1.1 Study Methodology

BFJ Planning has reviewed existing reports prepared by the City's Recreation Department, conducted several on-site surveys of the City's recreational facilities, and gathered and compiled data from the following sources:

- U.S. Census Bureau demographic data.
- Population forecasts through the year 2025 published by the Dutchess County Planning and Development Department and the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council.
- Guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).
- Existing parkland acreage and lot configurations provided by the City of Beacon.

Using the above data, gaps in parkland services, facilities and locations, on a City-wide level, were identified for existing and future populations based upon the guidelines of the NRPA. Recommendations were then developed addressing identified deficiencies, including areas where the acquisition of land or creation of new facilities would enhance existing recreational sites, create a network of recreational sites, or provide facilities to areas of the City currently underserved.

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Section 2: Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Beacon has a wide variety of public, quasi-public and private recreational facilities available to its residents (see Figure 1). Public facilities include neighborhood parks and public recreational areas that serve the entire community. Quasi-public facilities include those provided by the Beacon City School District. Private facilities such as the Dutchess County Country Club are reserved for members only.

While private facilities contribute to recreational opportunities in the City, they do not serve most of Beacon's residents for reasons of exclusivity, waiting lists or cost. Further, there is a risk that they will not be available in perpetuity for recreational purposes. Many golf courses in the region have pursued residential development on their properties, lessening the recreational focus. Though there are no indications that Dutchess County Country Club will proceed in that direction, its owners have the option to explore development alternatives. Since private recreational facilities may not be available to many residents for the indefinite future, this analysis focuses on public recreational facilities operated by the City. Quasi-public facilities owned by Scenic Hudson (non-profit) or owned and regulated by the School District but available to the public, are also considered in the analysis.

2.1 NRPA Park Classifications

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has set the following guidelines for recreational facilities.

Table 1: NRPA Classifications

Classification	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Parks: Address limited, isolated or unique recreation needs.	Less than 1/4-mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2,500 sf and 1 acre.
Neighborhood Parks: Recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Informal active and passive recreation.	1/4- to 1/2-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum. 5-10 acres optimal.
School Parks: Use of school facilities to fulfill community recreational needs.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable, depending on function.
Community Parks: Serve broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Usually serves two or more neighborhoods in 1/2- to 3-mile distance.	Usually 30-50 acres.
Large Urban Parks: Serve broader purpose than community parks. Used when smaller parks are not adequate to meet the community's needs.	Usually serves the entire community.	Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 acres or more being optimal.
Natural Resource Areas: Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open spaces, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Determined by resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
Greenways: Link park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Determined by resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
Sports Complexes: Consolidate heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites throughout the community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities.	Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40-80 acres being optimal.
Special Uses: Cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable dependent on the specific use.	Variable.

Source: Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. (National Recreation and Park Association (December 1995).

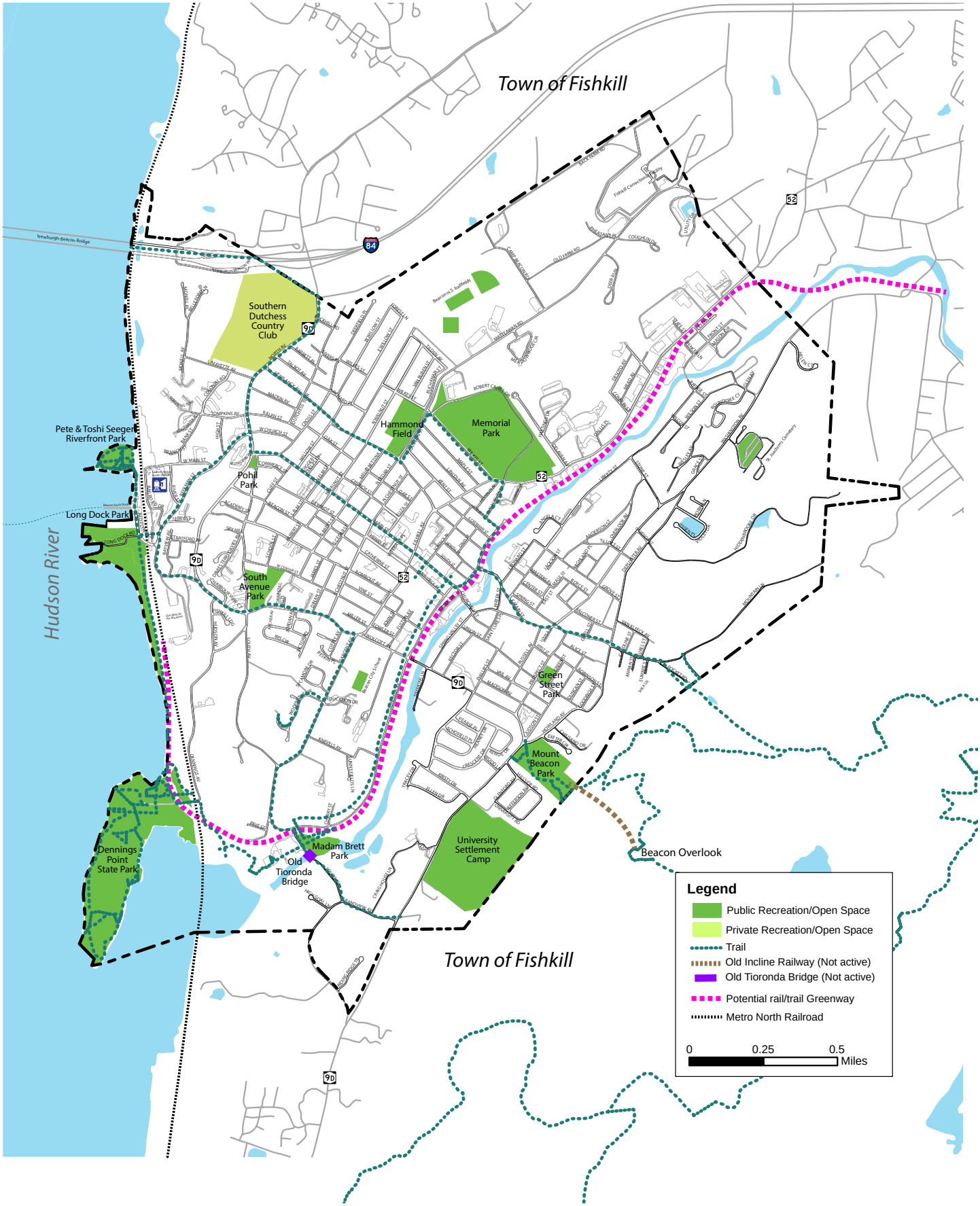

FIGURE 1: BEACON PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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2.2 Inventory of Parks and Recreation Facilities in the City of Beacon

Beacon hosts a multitude of parks and recreation facilities throughout the city including waterfront parks, hiking trails and green spaces supporting a variety of active and passive recreational uses. Many of the parks are owned and operated by the City, while others fall under the jurisdiction of the non-profit Scenic Hudson, the New York State Department of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation or the Beacon City School District, as well as those with a number of participating partners such as the regional trails and greenways. The following inventory of parks and recreation facilities in Beacon provides an overview of each park's current facilities and existing conditions, as well as opportunities for improvements to facilities. The analysis was conducted in coordination with the City's Recreation Department and included input from a citizen advisory Recreation Committee.

For ease of reference, the inventory is organized by the entity that has jurisdiction over the park or recreational facility, according to the following color classification:

City of Beacon Parks & Recreation Facilities

Scenic Hudson Parks & Recreation Facilities

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Facilities

Beacon City Schools Parks & Recreation Facilities

Trail & Greenway Recreation Facilities

SOUTH AVENUE PARK

NRPA Classification: Neighborhood Park (6.9 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

2 tennis courts
1 full basketball court (repaved 2015)
2 full horseshoe courts
1 shuffleboard court
1 bocceball court
1 community garden
1 large flexible green field
Programming includes Back to School event

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

1 pavilion & 1 play structure (currently under construction - funded by Community Block Grant). Potential improvements include repurposing the underutilized horseshoe courts for checkers/chess for local seniors community, zen garden for meditative walking, hammocks, a perimeter path for walking/cycling, and signage/wayfinding.

POLHILL PARK

NRPA Classification: Mini Park (less than 1 acre)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Visitor's Center (volunteer operated)
Benches, electrical outlets, lighting
Bus stop, wayfinding signage
Paved walking paths,
Tree (for Christmas lighting)
Pop-up community library

Pohill Park is a gathering place for parades, as well as a gateway to Main Street. It serves as a civic plaza, adjacent to the City Hall building and fire station. Programming includes the Sukkot event, lectures, candle-light vigils, and outdoor films in the park.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Redesign of pathways and landscaping, WiFi and charging stations, more seating, more public art installations.

PETE & TOSHI SEEGER RIVERFRONT PARK

NRPA Classification: Large Urban Park (11.5 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

3 basketball courts (1-full size/full court, 2-smaller/full court)
2 volleyball courts (sand)
1 play structure
2 swing sets
1 electrical outlet

Events include: pumpkin, strawberry, corn & beer festivals (hosting thousands of visitors), Riverpool & the Newburgh to Beacon swim event (in the summer months).

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Repaving of existing basketball courts (potential top priority), bathrooms & more electrical outlets (second priority), provide better picnic facilities (tables, pavilion, bbq grills), replace play structures (including natural elements), add perimeter walkway and connectivity to Long Dock Park via a pedestrian path, install kayak boat launch on north side of site, and perhaps add a bandshell in the future.

MEMORIAL PARK

NRPA Classification: Large Urban Park (49.3 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Football field with bleacher seating (used year-round), 1 full size baseball field, 2 little league fields, 3 full-size softball fields, 1 youth softball field, 1 seasonal soccer field, 2 basketball courts, 3 tennis courts(currently unusable), Beacon Barks (volunteer operated) dog park, pavilion, restrooms (recently upgraded), WeePlay Community Project tot park(community organization funded and operated).

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

New pavilions for gathering and shelter from weather,
New Parks Department and equipment storage building,
Top of hill plateau area could be used for group picnics (grills, tables, seating),
Paving/surfacing for parking areas (with improved drainage to prevent pooling),
WeePlay tots park redesign to include removing sand and adding more features and new surfacing,
Pop Warner Field is in poor condition and could benefit from a turf management expert to prolong the longevity of the grass condition throughout the sports seasons,
Addition of a perimeter path for walking and cycling.

HIDDENBROOKE

NRPA Classification: Natural Resource Area (approx. 103.3 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

In 2015, the City, in partnership with Dutchess County, purchased the 103.3 acre Hiddenbrooke property to permanently preserve the area as open space. To purchase the property, the City contributed $1.1 million and the County contributed $550,000 through its Partnership for Manageable Growth Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program. Other funding included $350,000 from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and $250,000 from the Archdiocese of New York.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Hiddenbrooke property preserves natural lands and includes several open space fields, hiking/walking paths, and programmed activities such as nature education and herb gardening with volunteer groups which could be formalized and expanded upon. The majority of the Hiddenbrooke property is densely forested and includes swampland that inhibits access and the potential for further recreational uses, aside from passive activities such as bird and wildlife observation. Due to this limited public accessibility as well as other restrictions on the property, Hiddenbrooke has not been included in the Capital Project Estimates in Appendix B.

Source: Facebook, Hiddenbrooke Open Space Preserve

FLANNERY (GREEN STREET) PARK

NRPA Classification: Neighborhood Park (1.4 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Basketball court
Playground
Covered seating area with 3 bench/tables
Ball game pole
Hopscotch and paved area
Recently upgraded bathrooms

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Replace play structure, resurfacing of basketball court (priority), new use for currently underutilized paved area (e.g. pickleball), expand parking capacity (remove fence), construct perimeter path for walking/cycling, improve landscaping/trees, provide ADA accessibility.

MADAM BRETT PARK

NRPA Classification: Neighborhood Park (4.9 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Located along Fishkill Creek, includes historic industrial/manufacturing building, Old Tironda bridge/South Avenue Bridge, waterfalls, bird watching, fishing.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Plans for residential development and reconstruction of Old Beacon Line bridge underpass to connect thoroughfare to NY-9D. Opportunities for improved lighting, seating, landscaping, adaptive reuse of previously industrial building on site for a variety of uses including recreation facilities and concessions that could continue to generate future revenue for the Parks. RFEI for Old Beacon Line rail-trail proposal could provide connectivity to surrounding parks and trail system.

Source: Hudson Valley Illustrated

Source: Scenic Hudson

MOUNT BEACON PARK

NRPA Classification: Natural Resource Area (164.3 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

One of the most popular parks in the City of Beacon, Mount Beacon Park is located on the eastern edge of the City and begins along the course of the historic Beacon Incline Railway, which was the world's steepest funicular in the early 20th century and one of the Hudson Valley's prime tourist attractions. The trail up is a steep but manageable climb, including a fire tower and observation platforms on the summit. The park is owned and operated by Scenic Hudson and New York State Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Since the fire that destroyed the historic Beacon Incline Railway in 1983, the Beacon Incline Railway Restoration Society has been advocating toward it's restoration. There have also been proposals for a zip-line. The hiking trails could benefit from some maintenance, including measures to mitigate erosion and maintain the quality of the pathways. The fire tower and observation platforms could also be upgraded, although this may not be a priority at this time.

Source: Flickr.com

Source: mttombillygoat2.blogspot.com

LONG DOCK PARK

NRPA Classification: Large Urban Park (15 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Long Dock once contained a rail ferry terminal, warehouses and other buildings. More recently, it was home to an oil terminal, salt-storage facility and junkyard. All traces of its industrial past have been removed to create a riverfront destination featuring a kayak pavilion and beach for launching boats, rehabilitated wetlands and meadows that attract wildlife. The park's restored, historic Red Barn, now Scenic Hudson's River Center, hosts arts and environmental-education activities and is home to the American Center for Folk Music. The Klara Sauer Trail connects Long Dock to Dennings Point State Park.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Scenic Hudson has plans to expand the park to include a plaza, boardwalk, walking path, seating pavilions and a new parking area. An area has also been designated for food trucks to operate on-site.

Source: getawaymavens.com

Source: judybmwinterphotography.com

UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT CAMP

NRPA Classification: Large Urban Park (50 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

This property, a former longtime summer camp was purchased by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in 2008. Under a land lease agreement, the park is operated and maintained by the City of Beacon. The property includes a number of historic structures that originally served the camp, with amenities including:

Beacon Glades 18-hole frisbee disc golf course
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. (environmental education & advocacy organization)
Public pool (11,000 visitors in summer 2016)
Theater building rented out for weddings and events

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Upgrade pool as fully operational aquatics complex, including concessions, ping pong, bathroom/changing facilities, and ADA accessibility (top priority); improve theater building to allow continued hosting of events (second priority); renovate gym for summer camp programming space and rock climbing wall (third priority). Connect hiking trails to parks system. Cabins to be renovated later for potential rental opportunities.

DENNINGS POINT STATE PARK

NRPA Classification: Natural Resource Area (66 acres)

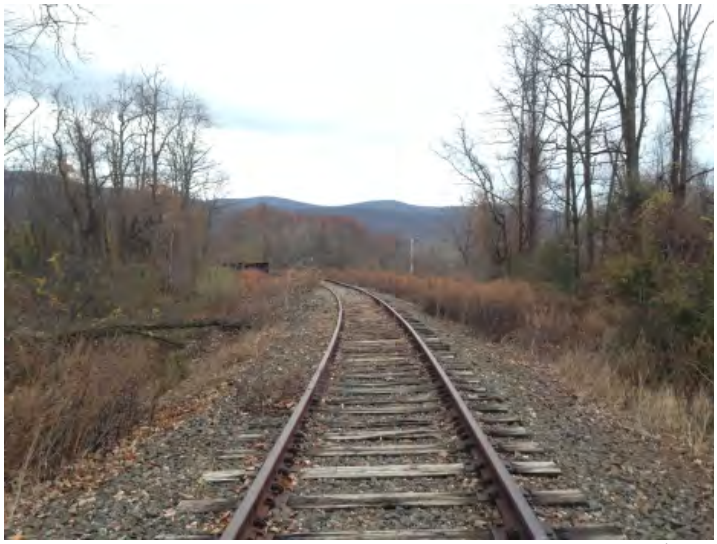
INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Dennings Point Park is owned by the New York State Department of Parks and Recreation, but operated by the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, an extension of Clarkson University. The Fjord Trail for cycling and walking also connects to the park.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

Dennings Point State Park includes walking and cycling trails as well as opportunities for fishing, eagle observation, and other passive recreation activities. The park is also connected to the Old Beacon Line (currently owned and operated by Metro-North Railroad) which has been proposed to be made into a rail-trail for active recreation opportunities, as well as a link between a number of currently existing parks. The Beacon Institute has also recently been awarded a grant from the New York State Regional Economic Development Council for $500,000. These funds will be applied toward the Beacon Institute to transform part of an abandoned factory building into a multi-purpose public asset, including vehicle parking and a picnic pavilion. The shoreline adjacent to the pavilion will also be restored and stabilized. The industrial building's roof will be converted into a solar photovoltaic array. The park's shoreline trail will be upgraded and new interpretive signage will enhance the public's understanding of the park's wildlife habitats.

Source: Clarkson.edu



Source: BFJ Planning

HAMMOND FIELD

NRPA Classification: School Park (8.9 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Hammond Field is owned by the City of Beacon, but operated by the Beacon City School District. The field includes a high school regulation size football field, with a perimeter track, stadium style bleachers, picnic benches and a digital welcome message board. There is also a structure for storage of maintenance equipment as well as a parking area on site.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Pop Warner Field is currently in poor condition; the field could benefit from a turf management expert to prolong the longevity of the grass condition throughout the sports seasons.

Source: Facebook, Hammond Field Football

BEACON HIGH SCHOOL

NRPA Classification: School Park (approx. 8 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

8 tennis courts
1 full-size baseball field
1 (smaller) softball field
2 full-size soccer fields

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Beacon High School fields are currently in good condition; however they could benefit from a turf management expert to prolong the longevity of the grass condition throughout the sports seasons.

Source: Facebook, Hammond Field Football

BEACON CITY SCHOOLS

NRPA Classification: School Park (approx. 3 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The Beacon City Schools parks and recreation facilities include:
1 full-size soccer field
1 smaller (practice) soccer field
2 field hockey fields

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Beacon City School fields are currently in fair condition; however the fields could benefit from a turf management expert to prolong the longevity of the grass condition throughout the sports seasons.

Source: Google Maps, streetview

FJORD TRAIL

NRPA Classification: Greenway (acreage TBD)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail connects the Beacon and Cold Spring Metro-North stations, along with several parks and greenspaces. The Preliminary Draft Master Plan was completed in early 2015. The project study area contains many important and popular recreational and cultural destinations. RBA Group has been contracted by the City to complete the Master Plan including a feasibility study for costs and implementation.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Preliminary Draft Master Plan outlines opportunities for improved signage and wayfinding, as well as trail maintenance, and areas for seating and passive recreation activities.

Source: HudsonFjordTrail.org

FISHKILL CREEK GREENWAY & HERITAGE TRAIL

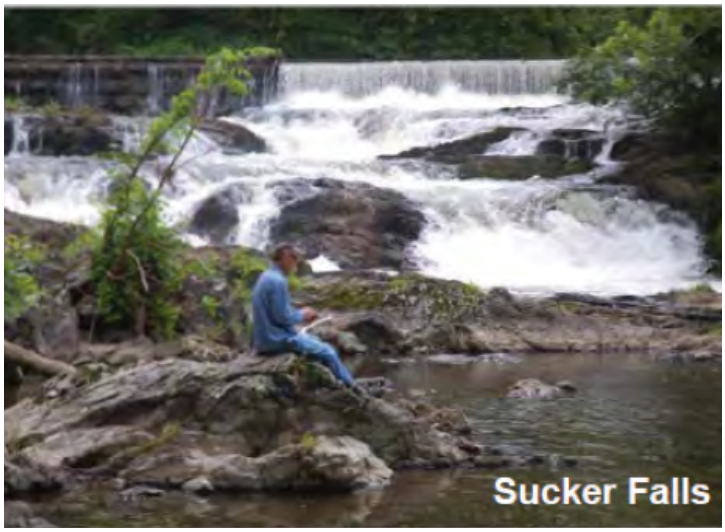
NRPA Classification: Greenway (1.58 acres)

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Over the past year, the city of Beacon along with the Greenway Trail committee, has developed a master plan for the Fishkill Creek Greenway and Heritage Trail (FCGHT). Upon adoption, this plan would define and map out the path, trail heads, points-of-interest, and other details that would make the trail an iconic feature of Beacon. The FCGHT has been under development by the City of Beacon via a number of easements with permissions from private property owners. The maintenance responsibility for the various sections of the trail varies.

OPPORTUNITIES & PLANNED FACILITIES:

The Greenway Trail plans to continue it's expansion with the goal of connecting with other trails in the surrounding area to offer greater access for hiking and walking recreation opportunities. Currently the greenway is approximately 20-25% complete.



Source: SquareSpace.com

Source: BFJ Planning

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Section 3: Population Trends

3.1 Demographic Analysis

In 1980, there were 12,937 residents in the City of Beacon. By 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that the City's population had climbed to 14,599 persons, a gain of 1,662 or 12.8 percent. Population projections prepared by Urbanomics using estimates from Esri predict that the population will reach 16,237 by 2025.

Table 2 shows the historic total population in the City from 1980 to 2015 and population projections from 2020 to 2025. From 1980 to 1990, Beacon saw minimal growth, increasing by just over one percentage point every five years. From 1990 to 2000, the population grew by 5.7 percent, just over half the nationwide growth rate over that period. Since 2010, recent Census estimates suggest that the City's population has declined somewhat. However, Esri population forecasts, based on Census, Postal Service and building permit data, predict a strong gain in population over the years from 2010 to 2020, with somewhat reduced growth from 2020 to 2025.

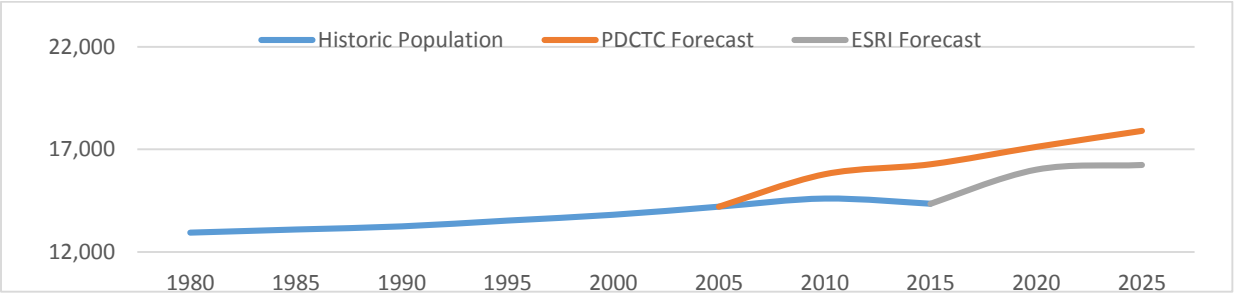
Table 2: Change in Population, 1990 to 2025

Year	Total	Percent
1980	12,937	NA
1985	13,090	+1.2%
1990	13,243	+1.2%
1995	13,526	+2.1%
2000	13,808	+2.1%
2005	14,204	+2.9%
2010	14,599	+2.8%
2015	14,347	-1.7%
2020	16,009	+2.5%
2025	16,237	+1.4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2015; Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, 2005-2025 Population Forecasts; Esri 2016-2021 Forecasts. Note: Inter-year historic population for 1985, 1995 and 2005 and forecasted 2020-2025 population estimated by Urbanomics.

Population growth trends are further illustrated in Chart 1, including both historical and future population forecasts from Esri and the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC). The PDCTC forecast was released in 2005 and based on growth trends prior to when the City saw a population decline.

Chart 1: Historic and Forecasted Population, City of Beacon, 1980-2025



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; PDTC, 2005-2025 Population Forecasts; Esri 2016-21 Forecasts. Note: Inter-year historic population for 1985, 1995 and 2005 and forecasted 2015-2025 population estimated by Urbanomics.

3.2 Projects Approved and in the Pipeline

Beacon's projected population growth is supported by the healthy development activity the City has been seeing. As shown in the table below, more than 640 residential units are under construction, have been approved or are currently in the approvals process. There is known developer interest in at least another 540 units. This continued residential growth will create additional demands on Beacon's municipal services, including its recreational facilities.

Table 3: Beacon Residential Development Approved or in the Pipeline

Project Name/Location	# of Units/Type of Units	Status
Highland Meadows (11 Hastings Drive)	68 senior	Under construction
1 East Main Street	19 condos	Under construction
Beacon Theatre conversation	32 apartments	Under construction
The View (Beekman Street)	42 condos	Under construction
Lofts at Beacon Falls	68 apartments	Under construction
Webber III (9-11 Creek Drive)	46 apartments	Under construction
344 Main Street	24 apartments	Land use approvals
249 Main Street	28 apartments	Land use approvals
Hip Lofts (Mason Circle)	144 artist live/work	Under construction
248 Tioronda Avenue	100 apartments	Land use approvals
West End Lofts (Wolcott Avenue)	90 affordable/workforce	Before planning
AK Holding (25 Townsend Avenue)	12 single-family	Before planning

Source: City of Beacon, March 2017.

Section 4: Needs Analysis

This section assesses the adequacy of existing recreational facilities in Beacon. The City has experienced some growth over the last two decades, and, as described below, is expected to continue growing into the future. Beacon's population increase raises two key questions: 1) can the current recreational facilities in the City accommodate more use without straining capacity, and 2) will new facilities be needed to satisfy growth?

The NRPA has issued benchmarks for the type and quantity of recreational facilities and acreage to help address these questions. The standards focus on facility sizes and service areas. It is the opinion of the NRPA that "the number of acres for park and recreation land is based on what the citizens determine is best for themselves."

While the latest NRPA standards shift away from reliance on population-based acreage needs, standards published by the group in the 1980s are still useful in assessing Beacon's recreational needs. The Dutchess County Departments of Planning and Public Works have indicated that NRPA population-based standards are still used as guides at the county level. Thus, the earlier standards are appropriate in the context of this analysis.

4.1 Parkland Acreage

To determine the potential need for additional parkland, the population estimate for 2015 and the population projections through the year 2025 were reviewed in the context of the NRPA standard of persons per recreational space needed to meet current and future recreational demands. Table 4 summarizes the acreage of existing recreational facilities in the City. Table 5 illustrates parkland need based on the NRPA standard of providing 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents of Beacon.

Table 4: Acreage of Existing Recreational Areas

Recreation Area	Acreage	Primary Type of Recreation
South Avenue Park	6.9	Active
Polhill Park	>1	Passive
Pete & Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park	11.5	Active
Memorial Park	49.3	Active
Flannery (Green Street) Park	1.4	Active
Hiddenbrooke	2.1[1]	Passive
City-Owned Subtotal	*72.2*	
University Settlement Camp	50	Active
Madam Brett	4.9	Passive
Long Dock Park	15	Passive
Mount Beacon	164.3	Passive
Dennings Point State Park	66	Passive
Greenway Trail	1.58[2]	Passive
Total (including all facilities)	**+373.98**	

Source: Dutchess County Info Access (geoaccess.co.dutchess.ny.us/infoaccess/)

[1]For purposes of this analysis, only the portion fronting Depuyster Avenue, which is available and known to be used by the public, is included.

[2]Based on 13,800 linear feet of trails complete or to be completed in 2017, at an average width of 5 feet.

Table 5: Parkland Acreage Needs

Year	Population	Recommended Parkland Acreage
2000	14,810	148
2005	14,204	142
2010	14,599	146
2015	14,347	144
2020	16,009	160
2025	16,237	162

Based on 10 acres/1,000 residents (NRPA)

The NRPA recommends a standard of 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. Based on the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimate (July 1, 2015), the City of Beacon has a current population of 14,347, and therefore requires a minimum of 143.5 acres of parkland. This minimum acreage of parkland is not currently met by the City's Parks and Recreation properties totaling 72.2 acres.

While additional open spaces not owned by the City, such as the State-owned University Settlement Camp and Scenic Hudson's properties, do provide sufficient acreage to meet the NRPA standards, those properties are not under the City's control and serve a population beyond Beacon. Moreover, an initial assessment of the City's park inventory found that many City facilities are in disrepair and in need of upgrading, as discussed below.

4.2 Adequacy of Beacon Recreational Facilities

The NRPA has also recommended population-based standards for individual recreational facilities. The following table provides a list of existing recreational facilities within Beacon as compared with the NRPA Standards.

Table 6: Beacon Recreation Facility Needs

Recreation Facility	Standard*	Required Minimum**	Provided	Surplus/(Deficit)
Swimming Pool	2 per 20,000	1	1	0
Volleyball Courts	1 per 5,000	3	2	(1)
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 per 5,000	3	7	4
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	7	5	(2)
Playgrounds	1 per 1,000	14	7	(7)
Basketball	N/A	--	8	--
Soccer Fields	N/A	--	1	--

**NRPA*
***Based on 2015 population estimate of 15,616*

In addition to the municipal-owned facilities listed above, there are recreational facilities currently accessible to Beacon residents that are owned and operated by Scenic Hudson (not-for-profit organization) and the Beacon City School District, including: one baseball field, one softball field, eight tennis courts, and four soccer fields.

A review of Table 6 above indicates that Beacon is most notably deficient in the number of playgrounds and tennis courts. These facilities, however, may be supplied privately. Playground equipment is often provided by individual homeowners, while tennis courts may be found at private clubs or as part of a homeowners association. The standards outlined above should serve as guidelines in the planning and decision-making process. Beacon's actual needs for these various types of recreational facilities may differ from the national standards based on local preferences.

4.3 Suggested Improvements to Beacon Recreation Facilities

Based on site visits and discussions with City staff and the Recreation Committee, the following section identifies potential improvements to Beacon's existing recreation facilities to address deficiencies at each facility. The improvements are categorized as "wants" and "needs," to assist in setting priorities, with cost estimates provided for the recommended program of improvements.

As shown in Table 6, the most significant potential projects identified are at University Settlement Camp and Riverfront Park. At University Settlement Camp, recommended "needs" improvements include upgrades to the pool and bath house facilities, as well as overall stabilization of buildings, demolition of some structures and utility improvements. "Wants" items include day camp improvements and several projects to enhance the usefulness of the facility. At Riverfront Park, priority projects include new basketball courts and parking lot, playground and path improvements. "Wants" include a kayak launch and creation of a performance stage.

Table 7 identifies a total of $1.26 million of high-priority projects for Beacon's recreation facilities, with another $586,250 as lower-priority items, for a total of $1.85 million in capital projects. More detailed information regarding the assessment and analysis for each individual park can be found in the Appendix.

Table 7: Summary of Proposed Capital Projects for Beacon Parks

Park	Needs	Wants	Total
Memorial Park	$150,000	$82,500	$232,500
South Avenue Park	$164,500	$90,000	$254,500
Riverfront Park	$300,000	$90,000	$390,000
Flannery (Green Street) Park	$88,000	$33,750	$121,750
University Settlement Camp	$550,000	$225,000	$775,000
Polhill Park (Visitor Center)	$10,000	$65,000	$75,000
Total Capital Budget	***$1,262,500***	***$586,250***	***$1,848,750***

Source: RGR Landscape

4.4 Potential Acquisition of Open Space

As noted above, the total acreage of City of Beacon-owned recreational facilities does not meet the NRPA standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Without additional City-owned lands designated for open space and/or recreation, Beacon will continue to be deficient with regard to this standard, and anticipated population growth can be anticipated to widen the gap. The City's draft (2017) Comprehensive Plan update recommends that, in addition to undertaking improvements to maximize utilization of its existing facilities, Beacon plan for its future recreational needs by studying potential new sites for active recreational facilities, and by prioritizing significant open space properties to be preserved through purchase of development rights or through direct acquisition of property.

This study does not make any recommendations as to acquisition of specific properties; however the City does have options it could pursue. The Draft Comprehensive Plan notes that approximately 13 percent of Beacon's total land area is presently vacant, with the majority consisting of land surrounding the Fairview Cemetery, a couple of lots south of City Hall, land south of DIA Beacon, land south of the closed landfill and next to a vacant industrial site, and the Craig House site in the southern part of the City. Much of the vacant land is adjacent to Fishkill Creek and could create opportunities for greenway connections. There are also scattered vacant sites in residential areas that could potentially provide neighborhood pocket parks or playgrounds. The City may also seek creation of publicly available open space as part of future development or redevelopment.

If the City were to acquire land for open space, it would need to pay fair market value for the property. To get a sense of potential land costs, Urbanomics assessed the asking prices of both residential and non-residential land for sale in Beacon, several nearby communities and Dutchess County as a whole, as summarized in the following table. As shown, the prices vary wildly, but Beacon could expect to pay at least $100,000 an acre for vacant land, and potentially much more depending on the particular circumstances of the property.

Table 8: Average Asking Prices of Land for Sale: Beacon and Nearby Communities

Community	Average Asking Price for Residential Land		Average Asking Price for Non-Residential Land	
	Per SF	Per Acre	Per SF	Per Acre
Beacon	$20.09[1]	$875,199[1]	No land available	
Fishkill	$0.27	$11,810	$11.31	$492,664
East Fishkill	No land available		$7.40	$322,344
Hyde Park	$0.61	$26,634	$2.30	$100,188
Poughkeepsie	$2.24	$97,672	$11.71	$510,088
Wappinger Falls	$1.50	$65,419	$2.63	$114,563
Dutchess County	$1.10	$48,102	$6.69	$291,416

Source: Realtor.com for residential land, CoStar for non-residential land. Prices as of February 21, 2017.

[1]An outlier property on Main Street in Beacon, with an asking price per square foot of $100.44, is responsible for the high average residential land prices. Excluding this property, the average asking price for residential land in Beacon was $4.02 per square foot, or $175,205 per acre.

4.5 Recreation Fee

Currently, Beacon levies a Recreation Fee to new developments, based on a graduated scale depending on the type of development, as follows:

Table 9: City of Beacon Recreation Fees

Subdivision:	$4,500/lot
Site Plan:	
	1st-10th unit: $1,500/dwelling unit
	11th – 25th unit: $1,250/dwelling unit
	26th – 50th unit: $1,000/dwelling unit
	51st+ unit: $750/dwelling unit

Source: City of Beacon Fee Schedule
NOTE: Section 223-25(H)(6) of the City Code provides that, if the land included in a site plan under review is a portion of a subdivision plat which has been reviewed and approved pursuant to Section 195-25 of the City Code, the Applicant shall be credited for any land set aside or money donated in lieu thereof.

Since 2012, the City has collected more than $261,000 in recreation fees from new development projects, and spent nearly $192,000 from collected recreation fees during the same time period. The table below reflects the Recreation Fee revenue generated and spent each year and tallied into a total sum amount.

Table 10: Recreation Fees Collected, 2012-2016

Year	Recreation Fees Collected	Spending from Recreation Fund
2012	$52,773	$30,549
2013	$46,273	$6,500
2014	$93,250	$12,500
2015	$9,000	$63,000
2016	$60,250	$79,278
Total	***$261,546***	***$191,827***

Source: City of Beacon

The following projects have been funded by recreation fees during the past five years:

- Memorial Park: New basketball courts, restroom remodel, shade structure installation, new BBQ grills and small pavilion installation.
- South Avenue Park: Basketball and tennis court restoration, playground installation, small pavilion installation.
- Green Street Park: Basketball court rehab, bathroom remodel.
- Riverfront Park: New swing sets, electrical upgrades, new BBQ grills, walking path replacement.

In order to assess the appropriateness of Beacon's recreation fee, it is useful to look at comparable fees in adjacent and nearby communities. As shown in Table 11, below, the amount the City charges per lot for subdivisions is comparable to that of the other communities. However, Beacon is unusual in that it charges a graduated schedule for multifamily developments, with the fee decreasing as the overall size of the development increases. In essence, this structure penalizes smaller multifamily developments and offers a significant discount to larger projects. While this may serve to make larger projects more economically viable, the City may want to re-examine this fee structure if it seeks to promote infill development on smaller lots. Ultimately, this a policy decision by the City Council.

Table 11: Recreation Fees in Other Municipalities

Municipality	Recreation Fee
Town of Fishkill	For subdivisions or site plans: $5,000 per lot or d.u., or $3,000 per lot or d.u. if approved on-site recreation area.
City of Newburgh	5 cents per square foot of subdivided land. Open space fee for site plans as determined by Planning Board.
Village of Wappingers Falls	$5,000 per lot or site plan.
Village of Brewster	For subdivisions: $2,500 per d.u. for 1 bedrooms, $3,500 per d.u. for 2 bedrooms, $5,000 per d.u. for 3 or more bedrooms.
City of Poughkeepsie	For subdivision/site plan: $5,000 per single-family lot; $1,250 per bedroom for two- or multifamily.
City of Peekskill	$4,500 per d.u.

Source: Municipal codes for Town of Fishkill, City of Newburgh, Village of Wappingers Falls, Village of Brewster, City of Poughkeepsie and City of Peekskill.

Section 5: Recommendations

The above analysis indicates both the need and desire for improved and/or expanded recreational facilities within Beacon. The City's total open space and recreational acreage does not meet the NRPA standards based on Beacon's population, and both demographic projections and projects under construction and/or approved illustrate a continued increase in population well into the near future that will generate demand for additional recreational facilities. Meanwhile, many of the City's facilities are in disrepair and in need of more than $1 million in high-priority capital improvements that are beyond the scope of Beacon's annual budgets. These improvements can be funded, in part, by recreation fees on new development projects.

There is clearly both a need for the recreation fee and evidence that it serves as an important element of Beacon's capital budgeting process and planning for recreational improvements, particularly if the City pursues future land acquisition.

While the need for the recreation fee is clear, the City should consider whether improvements can be made to the amount and administration of the fee, to ensure both effectiveness and equity. This report offers the following recommendations for Beacon's recreation fees:

A. For privately owned properties that are providing the City with a land easement for the purposes of a continuous Greenway trail for recreation uses, the recreation fee should be waived.

B. The recreation fee applied to new developments including residential units could be revised to more accurately reflect the projected incoming residents' impact on parks and recreational facility usage. Other than providing for a specific fee for single-family dwellings, the current fee structure makes no distinction between type of residence (i.e. townhome vs. multifamily apartment). Recognizing that multifamily developments typically have smaller household sizes and generate fewer school children, per unit, than single-family or townhome developments, the following revised fee schedule is proposed, with the amounts based on Beacon's existing fees:

    - $4,500 per lot for a single-family subdivision (same as existing)
    - $1,500 per unit for a townhome development
    - $1,000 per unit for a multifamily development

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Appendix A: NRPA Parkland Classification and Standards

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Recreation Size and Occupancy Standards

What Are NRPA Park Types and Acreage Standards?

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a national, non-profit service organization dedicated to advancing parks, recreation and environmental efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people. NRPA works closely with national, state and local recreation and park agencies, corporations and citizens' groups in carrying out its objectives. As part of its activities, NRPA has created a hierarchy of park types, as well as a set of acreage standards for different park types. This information is shown in Table PR.1.

Table PR.1: NRPA Parkland Classification and Standards

Type	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1000 Residents	Desirable Site Characteristics and Facilities
Neighborhood Parks	¼ to ½ Mile	5-15 Acres	1 to 2 Acres	Serve the surrounding neighborhoods with open space and facilities such as basketball courts, children's play equipment and picnic tables
Community Parks	1-2 Miles	25+ Acres	5 to 8 Acres	May include areas suited for intense recreation facilities such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. Easily accessible to nearby neighborhoods and other neighborhoods
Regional Parks	Several Communities	200+ Acres	5 to 10 Acres	Contiguous with or encompassing natural resources
Special Use Areas	No Applicable Standards	Variable Depending on use	Variable A	rea for specialized or single purpose recreation activities such as campgrounds, golf courses etc.

Occupancy Standards

Facility	Persons/HA at any one time	Daily turnover rate	Persons/HA per day	Persons/Acre per day
Dense picnic site	200—300 1	.5—2	300—600	120—240
Lightly USED picnic site	40—100 1	.5—2	60—200	25—80
Playing fields	50—100 2	—3	100—300	40—120
Urban parks	150—200 3	—4	450--800	180—320

Appendix B: Parks Inventory & Capital Project Estimates

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South Avenue Park Neighborhood Park

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
ADA Parking		X			Not Striped
ADA Accessible Route		X			
ADA Bathroom					No Public Bathroom; Rec Office open M-F 9-3
ADA Playground		X			Accessible Route to Playground planned for construction this year.
ADA Pool					N/A
ADA Fishing					N/A
Pavement		X			
Fencing			X		
Retaining Walls				X	Wood Retaining Walls at Tennis and Basketball Courts do not have a long life. Will deteriorate / start to fail in 1-5 years.
Lawn		X			
Trees		X			
Gardens		X			
Basketball Hoop / Courts	X				Recently repaved
Tennis Posts/Nets/Courts	X				
Play Equipment	X				Playground for older children under construction; Playground planned for younger children
Play Safety Surface	X				
Parking Lot		X			
Bicycle Rack					
Buildings		X			Recreation Office Building serves a number of purposes. Layout of Building and Entrances could better accommodate organizations and uses. For example there is no dedicated public bathroom and no dedicated entry to Fitness Center.
Shelters	X				
Pool					N/A
Swings					Planned for Construction
Pond					N/A

Program of Activities

Organized	Gardening	Basketball	Tai-chi (Rec Center)		
Less Formal	Tennis	Sledding	Picnicking	Walking	(Horseshoe and Painted Game Area out of Date)
Community Events	Puppet Show	Music Concert			
Opportunities	Fitness Trail	Skate Park	Stage	Bicycling	

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Playground (5-8)	$ 30,000		$ 30,000
Court Fencing	$ 60,000		$ 60,000
Retaining Walls	$ 22,000		$ 22,000
Fitness Trail		$ 45,000	$ 45,000
Stage		$ 20,000	$ 20,000
Skate Park		$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Rec Center Building Improvements	$ 50,000		$ 50,000
Bicycle Parking	$ 2,500		$ 2,500
Capital Budget	$ 164,500	$ 90,000	$ 254,500

Visitor Center (Polhill Park)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	< 1 acre Poor	Mini-Park Comments
ADA Parking		X			
ADA Accessible Route		X			
ADA Bathroom					N/A
ADA Playground					N/A
ADA Pool					N/A
ADA Fishing					N/A
Pavement		X			
Fencing					N/A
Retaining Walls					N/A
Lawn		X			
Trees		X			
Gardens					N/A
Basketball Hoop					N/A
Tennis Posts/Nets					N/A
Play Equipment					N/A
Play Safety Surface					N/A
Parking Lot		X			
Bicycle Rack					N/A (Desirable)
Buildings	X				
Shelters		X			Bus Shelter (Location in Plaza is not optimal.)
Pool					N/A
Swings					N/A
Pond					N/A

Program of Activities

Organized	Visitor Center	Parades	Holiday Events	Music	Plays
Less Formal	Sitting	Walking	Orientation	Bus Stop	
Opportunities	Artists Garden	Sculpture Garden			
Community Events	Parade Departure (Numerous Events)	Holiday Tree Lighting	Sukkot	Performances	Gardening

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Repave Plaza		$ 50,000	$ 50,000
New Benches / Seating	$ 10,000		$ 10,000
New Plantings		$ 5,000	$ 5,000
Artists Garden		$ 5,000	$ 5,000
Relocate Bus Shelter		$ 2,500	$ 2,500
Bicycle Parking		$ 2,500	$ 2,500
Capital Budget	$ 10,000	$ 65,000	$ 75,000

Riverfront Park Large Urban Park

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
ADA Parking		X			Need for more Parking
ADA Accessible Route			X		Most paths are compacted gravel - not optimal for wheelchair use
ADA Bathroom					No restroom facility available even though park is large and isolated. Connection to a sanitary sewer Line is a major impediment to building a facility.
ADA Playground			X		Safety Surface of loose wood chips is not compacted - unsuitable for wheelchair use
ADA Pool					N/A except for when "River Pool" is in operation
ADA Fishing			X		No easily accessible route to shore for wheelcahir users
Pavement			X		
Fencing			X		
Retaining Walls					N/A
Lawn			X		
Trees		X			
Gardens					N/A
Basketball Hoop				X	Courts and Fencing require reconstruction
Tennis Posts/Nets					N/A
Play Equipment			X		Dated
Play Safety Surface			X		Wood chips depleted and loose
Parking Lot			X		Insufficient # of Spaces
Bicycle Rack					N/A
Buildings					
Shelters			X		Need for more Shelters. (Shelters can provide revenue.)
Pool					N/A
Swings		X			Wood chips depleted and loose
Pond					N/A

Program of Activities

Organized	Ferry Landing	Basketball	River Pool	Concessions		
Less Formal	Tennis	Sledding	Picnicking	River Pool	(Horseshoe and Painted Game Area out of Date)	
Opportunities	Fitness Trail	Kayaking	Stage	Water Access	Additional Parking	Additional Shelters
		Festivals				
Community Events	Farmer's Market	(Three per Year)				

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Basketball Courts	$ 150,000		$ 150,000
Playground	$ 75,000		$ 75,000
Kayak Launch		$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Parking	$ 50,000		$ 50,000
Path Improvements	$ 25,000		$ 25,000
Shelter		$ 40,000	$ 40,000
Stage		$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Capital Budget	$ 300,000	$ 90,000	$ 390,000

Memorial Park Large Urban Park

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
ADA Parking		X			
ADA Accessible Route		X			
ADA Bathroom		X			
ADA Playground		X			
ADA Pool					N/A
ADA Fishing					N/A
Pavement		X			
Fencing			X		
Retaining Walls					N/A
Lawn / Play Fields		X			
Trees		X			
Gardens		X			
Basketball Hoop					N/A opportunity to reuse site of Tennis Courts
Tennis Posts/Nets				X	Courts available nearby at High School
Play Equipment		X			
Play Safety Surface		X			Tot Play Area: sand conflicts with artificial turf
Parking Lot		X			
Bicycle Rack					N/A
Buildings		X		X	Maintenance Building needs reconstruction; need for a community meeting room for volunteer organizations
Shelters					Constructing a New Shelter
Pool					N/A
Swings		X			Available only at Tot Play Area
Pond					N/A
Lighting			X		Inadequate for planned activities

Program of Activities

Organized	Little League	Pop Warner	Softball	Soccer	Wee Play	Concessions
Less Formal	Dog Run	Sledding	Picnicking	Walking	Bicycling	
Community Events	Easter Egg Hunt					
Opportunities	Woodland Trail	Woodland Playground	Parking for Dog Run	Basketball	Maintenance Building and Community Meeting Room	

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Maintenance Building / Meeting Room	$ 75,000		$ 75,000
Sport Field Lighting		$ 50,000	$ 50,000
Woodland Playground		$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Woodland Trail		$ 5,000	$ 5,000
Parking at Dog Run	$ 10,000		$ 10,000
Basketball Court	$ 50,000		$ 50,000
Sport Field Improvements	$ 10,000		$ 10,000
Bicyle Parking		$ 2,500	$ 2,500
Tot Playground Improvements	$ 5,000		$ 5,000
Capital Budget	$ 150,000	$ 82,500	$ 232,500

Flannery (Green Street) Park Neighborhood Park

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
ADA Parking					No Parking Available; Need for up to 10 spaces. Opportunity for spaces off Union Street.
ADA Accessible Route			X		No paved paths to activity areas
ADA Bathroom		X			
ADA Playground			X		Playground out of date. Likely not ADA compliant
ADA Pool					N/A
ADA Fishing					N/A
Pavement		X			
Fencing			X		Fenced on two sides. Extent of fencing may be reduced to only edge along Prospect Street
Retaining Walls			X		Wood Retaining Wall along Prospect Street
Lawn		X			
Trees			X		Need for more Shade Trees; large tree recently lost.
Gardens					N/A opportunity for gardens
Basketball Hoop		X			
Tennis Posts/Nets					N/A
Play Equipment			X		Dated
Play Safety Surface			X		Sand surface
Parking Lot					No Parking other than streetside parking available
Bicycle Rack		X			
Buildings		X			
Shelters		X			Place for Private Parties and Community Gatherings
Pool					N/A
Swings	X				New swings
Pond					N/A

Program of Activities

Organized	Basketball	Private Parties				
Less Formal	Playground	Swings	Picnicking	Shelter	Ball Toss	(Painted Game Area out of Date)
Opportunities	Fitness Trail	Stage	Repurpose Painted Game Area		Parking	
Community Events						

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Parking 10 Spaces	$ 20,000		$ 20,000
New Fence - Prospect St.	$ 8,000		$ 8,000
Retaining Wall - Prospect	$ 10,000		$ 10,000
Playground	$ 50,000		$ 50,000
Paths & Fitness Trail		$ 30,000	$ 30,000
Shade Trees		$ 3,750	$ 3,750
Capital Budget	$ 88,000	$ 33,750	$ 121,750

University Settlement Camp Large Urban Park

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
ADA Parking			X		
ADA Accessible Route			X		
ADA Bathroom				X	Bathroom not ADA compliant
ADA Playground					N/A
ADA Pool			X		needs steps to be compliant
ADA Fishing					N/A
Pavement		X			
Fencing			X		Fence Enclosure at Pool could be reconfigured
Retaining Walls			X		
Lawn		X			
Trees		X			
Gardens		X			Community Garden
Basketball Hoop					N/A except for at indoor gym in building that needs repair
Tennis Posts/Nets					
Play Equipment					
Play Safety Surface					
Bicycle Rack					
Parking Lot					
Bicycle Rack					
Buildings		X	X	X	Various condition - most need repair and/or evaluation
Shelters					N/A
Pool		X	X		Facility may be too small and dated for demand / potential
Swings					N/A
Pond					N/A

Program of Activities

Organized	Swimming Pool	Frisbee Golf	Community Garden		Event Facility at Theatre (Weddings, Parties, Concerts, etc.)
Less Formal	Hiking Trails	Swings	Picnicking	Shelter	Ball Toss (Painted Game Area out of Date)
Opportunities	Climbing Gym	Stage	Day Camp	Art Room	Numerous Buildings to repurpose; others that require removal. A Comprehensive Plan is desirable.
Community Events					

Capital Projects	Needs	Wants	Total
Pool Upgrade	$ 150,000		$ 150,000
Bath House	$ 125,000		$ 125,000
Concession		$ 50,000	$ 50,000
Climbing Gym		$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Art Room		$ 50,000	$ 50,000
Day Camp Improvements		$ 100,000	$ 100,000
Building Stabilizations	$ 150,000		$ 150,000
Building Demolitions	$ 50,000		$ 50,000
Utility Improvements	$ 75,000		$ 75,000
Capital Budget	$ 550,000	$ 225,000	$ 775,000

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