

## 9. Parks & Recreation

### 9.1 VISION STATEMENT

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Yorktown is and should continue to be a recreation-oriented community, with a network of parks, athletic amenities, and greenways. Parks and recreational facilities should provide Yorktown residents with a diverse range of recreational opportunities, from exercise, to team sports, to experiencing the natural environment. They should contribute to community character and quality of life and should be coordinated with efforts to protect natural resources and scenic landscapes.



Brookside School Playground, Broad Street.

### 9.2 GOALS

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Goal 9-A: Provide safe, attractive, and well-maintained parks and recreational facilities of adequate number and size that contribute to a high quality of life for Yorktown residents.

Goal 9-B: Provide a diverse range of park and recreational facilities that serve residents of all ages and physical abilities.

Goal 9-C: Provide plentiful opportunities for both active and passive recreation in Yorktown and continue to surpass national parkland standards.

Goal 9-D: If possible, link together parks and recreational facilities through a system of recreational greenways, scenic corridors, and "green" corridors (see Chapter 6).

Goal 9-E: Provide a safe, accessible, and connected network for walking and biking throughout Yorktown, including both on-street and on off-street paths, and continue to increase opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, roller-blading, and so on.

Goal 9-F: Continue to create a unified image and identity for Yorktown parks.

Goal 9-G: Promote walking and biking to parks and recreational sites, while also maintaining adequate automobile access and parking.

Goal 9-H: Ensure that parks and recreational facilities are expanded or improved over time to reflect changes in demographic trends, recreational interests, or facility use patterns.

Goal 9-I: Coordinate park planning with initiatives for open space preservation and natural resources conservation.

Goal 9-J: Partner with public and private entities to enhance recreational opportunities for Yorktown residents.

Goal 9-K: Use innovative funding mechanisms to pay for park expansion and maintenance, helping to keep park costs under control.

### 9.3 OVERVIEW OF PARKS & RECREATION

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- Yorktown as a community highly values recreation and athletics, as evidenced by the numerous sports clubs and very intensively used recreational facilities.
  - Interest is not just limited to team sports like soccer, football, and baseball, but also individual activities like biking, walking, and running.
  - Cyclists can be seen all over Town during the warmer months of the year.
  - Many Yorktown residents simply enjoy the outdoors by hiking in places like Turkey Mountain, going to the beach at Junior Lake or Sparkle Lake, or swimming at the Shrub Oak pool, taking their children to the local playground, or walking the dog on their neighborhood streets.
- Yorktown has an abundant supply of parkland, exceeding national standards for park acreage. In the future, enhancing recreational opportunities will not be primarily about setting aside more land for recreational purposes, but about making strategic improvements that make the park system responsive to demographic shifts
- According to national standards, towns need a mix of different types of parks: small pocket parks within walking distance of their houses; neighborhoods parks with ballfields and other limited recreational facilities; and community parks with unique amenities like hiking trails, swimming pools, regulation-size fields, running tracks, and indoor fields or gyms.
- Priorities identified through the technical analysis and community outreach process include: creation of an interconnected greenway network; expansion of athletic facilities; provision of an indoor recreational facility; addition of parkland in the hamlet business centers and built-up neighborhoods; improved access to existing parks; and high standards of maintenance in all parks.
- The effort to establish a greenway network can dovetail with efforts for open space and natural resource conservation. It can also provide greater opportunities for walking and biking to parks and recreational sites. This provides a particularly convenient way for children to reach sports practice and games.

- According to the Yorktown Recreation Commission, Yorktown is particularly in need of more athletic fields. The demand for additional team play areas is being driven by the fact that many sports are now “three season” sports and are attracting more children and adults. Yorktown also needs more indoor recreational space for basketball, hockey, indoor field sports, swimming, etc. A third critical shortfall is for meeting space for recreational programs and club activities.
- During Task Force meetings, participants cited the need for maintenance of existing parks and facilities as a high priority. They also discussed and agreed upon the objective of connecting existing parks and neighborhoods *physically* through networks of greenways, open space, scenic corridors, and "green corridors" (see Chapter 6). Participants also came to a consensus that they would like to see parks more unified *conceptually* as well, through uniform signage, maps, and brochures.

## 9.4 POLICIES

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***Policy 9-1: Evaluate the utilization patterns of existing parks and recreational facilities. Regularly update the Town’s Recreation Plan, which identifies future needs and includes implementation strategies for park and recreation improvements, expansions, and maintenance.***

- The Town's existing Recreation Plan was prepared in 1978 and updated in 1983 although no new open space map was done at that time. The plan should be brought up to the current day and should be updated every few years to take into account changing trends and needs.
- National standards cannot be solely relied upon to determine future facility needs. For most facility types, the Town must continue to monitor needs based on local interest, changing demographics and use patterns.
- As the Recreation Commission has made great strides in recommending recreational improvements, an updated study will allow the Town to better understand how parks and recreational facilities are currently being used and the times of day and days of the week when they are in use.
- In addition to analyzing use and scheduling conflicts, the study should identify facilities that are overburdened or have inadequate "resting" time. It should also evaluate parking and access.
- The updated Recreation Plan would include recommendations for improving the use of existing parks and recreational facilities; identifying what new park and recreational facilities will be needed; providing for the appropriate maintenance of municipal park facilities; and outlining appropriate implementation strategies.
- An updated Recreation Plan would also offer the Town an opportunity to broadly evaluate the costs and benefit of additional park and recreation programs.

- Until the more detailed Recreation Plan is updated, the Town should, considering the fiscal implication, pursue the planning and implementation of park expansions and improvements as described in this Chapter.

***Policy 9-2: Consider providing one new major community park with both indoor and outdoor active recreational facilities.***

- Ideally this recreational site/center should provide both indoor and outdoor multi-purpose recreational facilities. Conceptually, the center should be centrally located, have access from a major arterial road include ample parking and be connected to the town trailway system. The site could consist of a large indoor facility with gyms, pool, soccer/lacrosse fields, skate rinks, etc. Adjacent to the main building there should be multi-purpose fields and a lighted all- season track. Space for club activities should be provided.
- Due to the magnitude of this project, alternative funding sources should be explored. Possible opportunities include grants, foundation funds, joint ventures with private enterprises or not-for profit organizations. Also a joint venture with an adjacent municipality could be explored. There are several potential sites which could be considered including the Strang Road property, the Franciscan parcel, the Phoenix Academy and the former County bus garages on Route 202.

***Policy 9-3: Continue to improve and expand hiking trails on Turkey Mountain, in Sylvan Glen, and along the HunterBrook, and seek to establish trails on Piano Mountain.***

- This effort should build off recommendations made by the Yorktown Land Trust. The Land Trust issued the *Turkey Mountain Triangle Open Space Master Use Plan* in December 1988 and the *Plan for a Hunterbrook Linear Park* in April 1992. These two plans lay out specific recommendations for land preservation and establishment of hiking trails. Based on these recommendations, the Town has been working to preserve additional open space in these areas.
- Turkey Mountain: Recently acquired land has the potential for new trails. The NYCDEP owns the land, and the Town should pursue a stewardship agreement with NYCDEP to maintain public access to the land.
- Sylvan Glen: Some trails already exist. Creation of additional trails may be possible, and preferably, there should be a connection to the proposed bicycle routes along either Route 202 or the Bear Mountain Parkway right-of-way (see Chapters 3 and 4.)
- Hunterbrook: A greenway has been envisioned. A public access easement has been obtained in some areas, and portions of a trail have been established. The Town should seek to complete the greenway.
- Piano Mountain: Vacant land has trail potential. Some land is Town-owned, but most of the mountain is located north of the Town line. The Town should work with Putnam Valley to establish a comprehensive trail network.

**Policy 9-4: Create a Townwide recreational greenway network that provides both walking and biking paths.**

- Recreational greenways should include both walking and biking paths. The trailway floor can have a mixed paved and gravel floor that can be shared by both pedestrians and bikers.
- Together with scenic corridors and green corridors, recreational greenways would form a network of open space and greenery that enhances Yorktown’s already exceptional quality of life. Scenic corridors preserve and showcase the Town's natural beauty and/or link together historic sites or districts, whereas green corridors have woodland and landscaping buffers along major roadways (see Chapter 6.)
- Recreational greenway locations:
  - North County Trailway to FDR Park along the proposed Downing Street roadway extension (currently being planned.)
  - Along the Catskill Aqueduct right-of-way, utility rights-of-way, and the Taconic State Parkway right-of-way
  - Around the New Croton Reservoir.
  - Connecting to and/or traversing FDR Park, Teatown Reservation, Sylvan Glen, Turkey Mountain, Piano Mountain, Hunter Brook and any other locations with walking, hiking, or biking trails.
  - Connecting to the Briarcliff-Peekskill Trail.
  - Connecting to greenways in adjacent municipalities, such as the Hudson Valley Greenway in Cortlandt.
  - Traversing new subdivisions, if necessary to complete critical links in the greenway network. The Town should seek preservation of trail rights-of-way during the subdivision review process.
- Strategies to implement the trails include: (1) negotiating for public access to wetland buffers beside streams, to create continuous stream-side walking trails; (2) tax abatements for land set-asides and easements; (3) purchase of open space, and (4) promotion of trail connections during subdivision, site plan and other discretionary reviews.



Downing Park Tennis Courts, Yorktown Heights.

**Policy 9-5: Consider using in-rem properties currently owned by the Town to provide additional pocket parks in built-up neighborhoods.**

- According to the NRPA, residents need a mix of small pocket parks, schoolyard/neighborhood parks, and community parks (see the appendix to this chapter.)

- Formalize criteria for determining which in-rem properties should be sold off and which could be used as parkland. Potential criteria:
  - Parcel adjoins parks, greenways; institutions (e.g., the library, schools); hamlet business centers;
  - Parcel is usable for recreational purposes;
  - Parcel has unique natural resources, scenic qualities, or other characteristics worthy of preservation.

***Policy 9-6: The Recreation Commission as part of an updated Recreation Plan should establish criteria for the size, character, and location of future parks to help ensure that they are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.***

- The Town's 1983 Development Plan contained such criteria, which are similar to those below. The terminology for parks has changed since 1983, and the more conventional up-to-date terms are used in this Plan. The size standards for smaller-sized parks have generally been increased from the 1983 Plan. This mainly reflects the preference for larger parks, which can be more cost-effectively maintained and more easily patrolled.

***Policy 9-7: Acquire land along the North County Trailway in Yorktown Heights as parkland, and establish other small parks in the hamlet centers.***

- These parks provide needed open space and recreational opportunities in the built-up areas of Yorktown.
- Located in the hamlet centers, such parks would also contribute to community pride and identity (see Chapter 4.)



Shrub Oak Memorial Park.

***Policy 9-8: Allow commercial recreational facilities near the hamlet centers.***

- Examples of commercial recreational facilities include tennis clubs, indoor climbing, and health clubs (see Chapter 4.) Sports domes could be considered as well in limited cases, due to their greater traffic and visual impacts.

***Policy 9-10: Develop, display, and make available park maps and brochures.***

- These should include information on programs sponsored by the Recreation Department and Yorktown's private sporting clubs.

***Policy 9-11: Strongly encourage expansion of the Teatown Lake Reservation and its network of hiking trails.***

- The Teatown Lake Reservation has 14 miles of hiking trails and an aggressive land preservation program.

***Policy 9-12: Work with the State to promote greater use of FDR Park by Yorktown residents.***

- As one option, work with the State to program Town activities in the park as a way of drawing Yorktown users.

***Policy 9-13: Work with the school districts to continue allowing Yorktown residents to use indoor and outdoor school recreation facilities when they are not being used for school purposes.***

- School sites in Yorktown have playing fields and indoor gymnasiums that are already available for use by Yorktown residents.
- Scheduling conflicts between school and non-school activities may occur, but the Town should work with the school districts to ensure that conflicts are worked out and that all groups are accommodated to the greatest possible extent.

***Policy 9-14: Partner with the school districts, the Boys & Girls Club, and neighboring towns to develop joint recreational facilities and programs.***

- Such partnering can result in better recreational programming, and can be cost effective as well.
- Work with the school districts and the Boys & Girls Clubs to provide more after-school and before-/after-event care for kids.

***Policy 9-15: Increase and improve pedestrian entrances to parks and greenways.***

- Provide additional pedestrian entries that link up with local neighborhood streets.
- Enhance sidewalk and crosswalk connections near park entrances.

***Policy 9-16: Provide bike trails, lanes, and routes leading up to and weaving through parks.***

- Develop a Townwide system of bike trails, lanes, and routes (see Chapter 3.)
- Work with the State to install bike lanes along FDR Park's loop roads, and connect them with bike lanes and trails outside the park.

***Policy 9-17: Maintain adequate auto access and parking for parks and greenways***

***Possible options include:***

- Shared parking arrangements between parks/greenways and adjacent sites.

- Provide on-street parking where there is adequate roadway width, residential privacy can be protected, and pedestrian safety can be ensured.
- Redesign parking lots to yield more parking spaces.

***Policy 9-18: Ensure that parks and greenways are designed to be handicapped accessible and are user-friendly for senior citizens and the handicapped.***

- Although hiking trails, by their very nature, cannot be handicapped accessible, paved trails like the North County Trailway and active recreational facilities should be.
- The Town should make parks friendly to senior citizens and the handicapped by adding ramps, seating, bathroom facilities, hand railings, handicapped parking, and other appropriate facilities and amenities.
- The Township should provide recreational facilities that are popular with senior citizens and the handicapped.

***Policy 9-19: Provide bathroom facilities in parks with high volumes of visitors.***

- Many parks already have seasonal facilities, for example Shrub Oak Park, Downing Park, Junior Lake, etc.
- Facilities should be provided only where they can be installed and maintained in a cost-effective manner.
- A potential new facility could be at Railroad Station Park to serve railway users.

***Policy 9-20: Coordinate park planning with open space preservation initiatives.***

- Greenways, parks and protected open space could form a continuous network of greenery throughout the Town.
- Requiring land dedication for parks as part of subdivisions is a benefit to the community, providing what amounts to small pocket parks in residential areas.
  - Link those small parks into the Town's park system through trail links and sidewalk connections.
  - Identify each park with a name and post a sign at the entrance identifying it as a public facility,
  - Make sure that such parks are recorded on Town tax maps, indicating the title holder and specifying that the site is designated for park use in perpetuity.
  - Continue to allow developers to pay an in-lieu fee instead of improving parkland. However, the Town should periodically re-evaluate fees; they may need to be increased to better reflect current land values.



***Policy 9-21: Make the Holland Sporting Club site into a self-sustaining, multi-use cultural and/or recreational facility.***

- The Town's acquisition of the Holland Sporting Club site provides a unique opportunity to create a special public use that brings Yorktown residents together. The site is very beautiful, with woodlands that slope down to the waterfront of Mohegan Lake.
- This unique site is located in an equally unique neighborhood. Mohegan Lake is known for its turn-of-the-century cottages, its history as a summer haven for artists and intellectuals, and its tradition in the art and profession of storytelling.
  - These attributes open up a world of possibilities. Opportunities may allow for a number of possible uses including day camps, cultural activities, picnicking and hiking, nature activities, outdoor theater and, very importantly, access to Mohegan Lake for boating and swimming.
  - The ultimate use for this site depends first upon a thorough assessment of the condition of the buildings, needed infrastructure improvements, and environmental impacts. Of utmost importance is a site master plan to consider the aforementioned issues, the property attributes, accessibility, and neighborhood impacts. Use of this property will require a significant financial commitment and phased improvements may be the most appropriate approach. Therefore, the expected initial uses may likely be limited to hiking, picnicking and boating.

**APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 9: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

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- Tables 9-1 and 9-2 list the Town's recreational sites and open space.

**Table 9-1: Inventory of Town Parks**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Use/Facilities</i>
<u><i>Pocket Parks</i></u>			
Blackberry Woods Park	Marcy Ln.	2.39	Tennis courts, playground, nature trail
Hanover East Park	Hanover St.	13.51	Playground, parking lot
Hunterbrook Field	Hunterbrook Rd.	15.41	Ballfield, parking
Ivy Knoll	Spruce St.	0.96	Playground, nature trail, pond
Ivy Knolls Park	Ivy Rd.	1.18	Playground, ballfield, parking, basketball hoops, outdoor ice skating
Mohansic Ave. Park	Mohansic Ave.	N/A	Playground, parking
Shrub Oak Memorial Pavilion	East Main St.	N/A	Monument, benches
York Hill Park	Hawthorne Dr.	2.25	Playground, ballfield
Yorktown Plaza Park	Commerce St.	0.26	Sitting area
Walden Woods Park	Curry St.	5.38	Playground
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>41.34</i>	<i>(excluding N/A)</i>
<u><i>Neighborhood Parks</i></u>			
Chelsea Park	Gomer St.	2.6	Ballfield, playground
Crystal Lake	Granite Springs Rd	5.16	Natural; outdoor ice skating
London Woods Field	London Rd.	7.9	Ballfield, parking
Pine Tree Field	Benjamin Blvd.	39.45	Ballfield, parking, nature trail
Willow Park	Curry St.	9.3	Ballfield, playground, play apparatus, and outdoor ice skating
Woodlands	Strang Blvd.	24.26	Ballfield, parking
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>88.67</i>	
<u><i>Community Parks</i></u>			
Downing Park	Rte 202/Crompond Rd.	27.88	Lighted tennis courts, playground, picnic area, ballfield, restrooms, parking, cooking grills, pavilion, outdoor concert area

**Table 9-1: Inventory of Town Parks**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Use/Facilities</i>
Junior Lake Park	Edgewater St.	9.11	Swimming pool, playground, picnic area, lake building, restrooms, cooking grills, and outdoor ice skating
Railroad Station Park	Commerce St.	1.06	Playground, basketball courts, station building, bike trail
Shrub Oak Park	Sunnyside St.	88.26	Swimming pool, lighted tennis courts, ballfields, playground, trails, pool building, parking, restrooms, outdoor hockey rink
Sparkle Lake Park	Granite Springs Rd.	39.37	Lake, beach, playground, basketball courts, parking, community building, administration building, picnic area, cooking grills, rest rooms, outdoor ice skating
Sylvan Glen	Morris Ln.	163.83	Nature trails, ice skating, parking
Turkey Mountain	Locke Rd.	149.96	Nature trails, parking
Yorktown Community & Cultural Center	Commerce St.	6.08	Ballfield, play equipment, track, parking, YCCC building, gazebo, gymnasium, senior center
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>485.55</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>615.56</b>	<i>(excluding N/A)</i>

**Table 9-2: Inventory of Other Open Space Owned by the Town**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Open Space	Amelia Ct.	7.40
Open Space	Audra Ct.	0.80
Open Space	Blinn Rd.	4.50
Open Space	Bonnie Ct.	11.10
Open Space	Bridge Pointe Lane	2.80
Open Space	Cordial Rd.	1.60
Open Space	Deerfield Ave.	5.00
Open Space	Eleanor St.	2.00
Open Space	Fenimore Ave.	19.60
Open Space	Frost Rd.	3.40
Open Space	Giordano Dr.	3.00
Open Space	Glen Rd.	14.80
Open Space	Gomer St.	19.30
Open Space	Gomer St.	6.80
Solomon Farm	Gomer St. near Somerston Rd.	33.89
Open Space	Granite Springs Rd.	4.17
Open Space	Greenwood St.	1.00
Open Space	Hanover St.	5.20
Open Space	Heyward St.	0.40
Open Space	Hillside St./Kimble	0.30
Open Space	Hillside St./Sagamore	0.40
Open Space	Hunterbrook Rd.	0.70
Open Space	James St.	5.20
Open Space	Juniper Dr.	0.10
Open Space	Lakeside Dr.	0.30
Open Space	Locke Ave.	22.80
Gomer Wetlands	London Rd.	79.40

**Table 9-2: Inventory of Other Open Space Owned by the Town**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Open Space	Manchester Rd.	8.90
Open Space	Manor St.	7.00
Open Space	Maxwell Ct.	1.40
Open Space	Mohegan Ave.	0.40
Open Space	Oakside Rd.	12.10
Open Space	Old Yorktown Rd.	1.30
Open Space	Radcliff Dr.	10.20
Shallow Creek	Route 6	12.00
Open Space	Route 6/Mill St.	0.10
Open Space	Salem Rd.	6.10
Open Space	Scofield Rd.	16.70
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>459.33</b>

- Buildings used for Town's Parks and Recreation programs:
  - Sparkle Lake building
  - YCCC, Community Rooms 1, 2, 3 and Senior Room
- *School Recreation Facilities.* The following school facilities are located in Yorktown, each having their own recreational facilities. School recreation facilities are generally available for public use when they are not needed for school purposes. Non-school athletic groups, including the Town's Recreation Department, have to apply to use school recreational facilities for organized activities.
- The portion of the site used for recreational purposes is shown. This figure is an estimate, based on 50 percent of the total acreage for the site (rounded)
  - Lakeland Central School District
    - George Washington Elementary School: Ballfields, playground: 6.0 acres.
    - Thomas Jefferson Elementary School: Ballfields, playground: 13.0 acres.
    - Lakeland-Copper Beech Middle School (Grades 6-8): Swimming pool (temporarily closed), Ballfields & Benjamin Franklin Elementary School: Ballfields, playground: 33.0 acres combined.
    - Lakeland High School (Grades 9-12): Ballfields: 17.0 acres.

- Yorktown Central School District
  - Brookside Elementary School (Grades 3 to 5): ballfields, playground; 6.0 acres.
  - Crompond Elementary School (Grades 3 to 5): ballfields, playground; 5.0 acres.
  - French Hill Elementary School (Grades K to 2): ballfield, playground; 6.0 acres.
  - Mohansic Elementary School (K to 2): ballfields, playground; 6.0 acres.
  - Yorktown High School (Grades 9 to 12): ballfields, tennis courts; & Mildred E. Strang Middle School (Grades 6 to 8): swimming pool, ballfields; 28.0 acres combined.
- *County Facilities.* Mohansic Golf Course (717.4 acres.) Bald Mountain Park (112.1 acres, near Teatown Lake Reservation, a.k.a. John C. Hand Memorial Park.) The County also owns the 207.3-acre Kitchawan Preserve on the south side of the New Croton Reservoir. This site has publicly accessible walking/hiking trails.
- *State Facilities.* Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park (823.7 acres, including water bodies; pools, trails, and soccer fields.)
- *Teatown Lake Reservation.* This private, non-profit nature preserve consists of 784.0 acres, an education center, and 14 miles of hiking trails.
- *Regional Trails.* The North County Trailway (bike trail, 22.1 miles from Eastview to the Putnam County border) is paved and allows for both pedestrians and bikes. The Briarcliff-Peekskill Trail (a 12-mile trail that runs from Ossining to the Blue Mountain Reservation in Peekskill) runs through the Teatown section of Yorktown.
- *Nearby Regional Parks:* Palisades Interstate Park (Bear Mountain); Blue Mountain Reservation in Cortlandt; Fahnestock State Park in Putnam County.
- *Private Park Associations.* Yorktown has some private park associations as well, which maintain private facilities for members. Membership in the Shrub Oak Community Park District, for example, provides access to the Shrub Oak Lake, off route 6, which has a beach, playground, and picnic area.
- Yorktown has a large number of private, volunteer-based sports clubs. The clubs provide a wide variety of sports opportunities for residents, particularly children, which the Town would not be able to provide on its own.
  - Examples: Boys & Girls Club; Shrub Oak Athletic; Yorktown Athletic; Yorktown Soccer
  - The Recreation Department has two (2) program supervisors, who help clubs get organized and work out facility scheduling.
  - Private clubs charge fees for insurance, umps and uniforms
- The primary user group of the Town park system currently is children.

## Observations

- During the Task Force discussion of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.), participants had many positive things to say about the parks and recreational facilities in Yorktown. One participant cited as a community strength the unique “size and scope” of Yorktown parks compared to other towns in the county.
- However, two needs were cited: (1) additional athletic fields and other sporting facilities and (2) better access to the park system. For example:
  - Participants said that the bike trail is “well-maintained” but that people “can’t get to the bike trail.”
  - Various participants said that there is a general need for more fields of all types, due to the popularity of soccer, lacrosse, etc.
- According to the Recreation Department, much field time is taken up by organized team sports, with very little time for “field resting” or free play.
  - Between March and November, all fields are booked during weekdays (after-school hours) and Saturdays. Weekday school hours and Sunday afternoons are virtually the only free time available.
  - Because of the lack of available playing time, there is currently little opportunity for new leagues to be organized.
- Major future needs, as identified by the Parks and Recreation Department, include: a new walking track; and lighting of fields in some locations.
  - Proposed new track at Lakeland High School; Town has agreed to pay for half.
  - A new senior housing development will be providing a track that will be open to the public;
  - All types of fields are needed; they may also need to be sprinklered.

## National Trends & Standards

- Recreational activity has been steadily increasing nationally over the last several years. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau *Statistical Abstract of United States, 1996 and 2000.*)
- In order by participation level, the most popular forms of recreational activity (i.e., with the greatest number of participants) are: walking as exercise, swimming, exercise with equipment, bicycle riding, golf, camping, bowling, hiking, fishing (fresh water), basketball, and aerobic exercise.
- The most popular field sports are: soccer, baseball, softball, and football. (Lacrosse and inline hockey were not tracked.)
- The sporting activities whose popularity increased the most between 1994 and 1998 were: hunting with firearms, aerobic exercise, hiking, backpacking, fishing, basketball, walking as exercise, bowling, bicycle riding, exercise with equipment, and swimming.

- It is interesting to note that most of these listed activities are passive, i.e., they do not require specialized recreation facilities, just open space.
- The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that a municipality provide between 6.25 to 10.5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.
  - If Town parks alone are counted (462.89 acres, from Table 9-1, excluding State, County, school, and non-profit lands, and also excluding Town open space not currently being used for recreational purposes), Yorktown has about 12.75 acres per 1,000 residents (based on the year 2000 population of 36,318.)
  - If State and County parks and the Teatown Lake Reservation are counted, then the figure increases to well above the minimum standard.
- However, only a portion of Yorktown's parkland is used for active recreation. If land used for active recreation is examined alone, recreation areas in Town parks still exceed the minimum standard, but by a narrower margin. This suggests that additional land will be needed for active recreation as the population grows.
- Parkland is reasonably well-distributed throughout Yorktown. While most active recreation facilities are concentrated in the north, this is where most residents reside.
- According to the NRPA, residents need a mix of pocket parks, schoolyard/neighborhood parks, and community parks.
  - **Pocket parks:** usually less than 5 acres; provide a local place for residents to stroll, visit with neighbors, walk the dog, and take the kids to use the playground; typically do not have large recreational facilities like regulation-size baseball fields; mostly serve nearby residents who live within walking distance (about a quarter-mile radius.)
  - **Schoolyard/neighborhood parks:** 5 to 20 acres; have playing fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and other recreational facilities; provide more space and a wider range of facilities than a pocket park; have a larger service area, meaning some people live too far to walk and will drive instead.
  - **Community parks:** usually 20 acres or more; attract residents from throughout Yorktown; have particularly large open space areas and/or unique facilities not found elsewhere in the community (e.g., a swimming pool, a golf course, a playing field with stadium seating, hiking trails, etc.)
- As shown in Table 9-1, most of Yorktown's park acreage is in the form of community parks.
  - Because of the size and abundance of community parks in Yorktown (a unique attribute among towns), those parks actually serve as de facto neighborhood and local parks as well. For example, Junior Lake is not only a community-wide attraction, but it functions as a local pocket park for the surrounding Yorktown Heights neighborhood.
  - Generally, high school sites are considered to function as community parks, whereas middle school and elementary schools function as neighborhood parks.



- All County and State facilities, as well as regional attractions like Teatown Lake Reservation and the North County Trailway, would be considered community parks.
- While there is no shortage of parkland Townwide, the table does show fewer pocket parks than might be expected in a municipality the size of Yorktown. Some areas could potentially benefit from the addition of a pocket park, particularly the business hamlet centers, for example, as a way of complementing their built-up environment. At the same time, since pocket parks are more costly to maintain than larger parks, the Town should consider creative ways to pay for small parks, perhaps with the assistance of businesses, residents, property owners, or non-profit agencies.