

9. Parks & Recreation

9.1 VISION STATEMENT

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.

9.2 GOALS

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: 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: 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

- 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 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 by orders of magnitude. 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 even more enjoyable.
- 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.
- 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

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 is out-of-date. 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 and use patterns.
- More specifically, the study is necessary for 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.
- Until the more detailed Recreation Plan is updated, the Town should continue to pursue the planning and implementation of park expansions and improvements as described in this Chapter.

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

- Compared to average national standards, Yorktown currently has a great deal of parkland relative to population, on a Townwide basis. 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 the Teatown Lake Reservation and all State, County, and Town parks are counted (excluding school facilities,) Yorktown has 294.5 acres per 1,000 residents, more than 28 times the upper range of the minimum park standard.
- However, only a portion of Town parkland is used for active recreation. Focusing on land used for active recreation only in Town parks, Yorktown barely exceeds the national standard (11.3 acres per 1,000 residents.) If school facilities were counted, this figure would be slightly increased, but it would still be far below what would be expected of a municipality with as much park acreage as Yorktown. Due to great local interest in recreational activity, national standards may not adequately represent local need, so a higher local standard for active recreational land may be appropriate. This

suggests that additional land will be needed for active recreational facilities as the population continues to grow.

- Consider providing a wide range of new recreational facilities on the selected site, based on funding availability and local interest. Options for active recreational facilities to be included on the site: an indoor recreational center; all-purpose fields; an outdoor track; a skateboard park.
- The concept for the indoor recreational center includes the following:
 - The center consists of a single building, rather than a group of smaller structures. A single building can be more efficiently maintained. The space can be larger and thus can be used for a wide range of activities. It would bring together Yorktown residents into one location, contributing to Town identity and pride.
 - It has enough space to accommodate indoor recreational programs and activities.
 - The center has an indoor arena (i.e., for soccer, hockey, etc.), as well as an indoor gymnasium and dividable multi-purpose room(s.)
 - On the same site as the center, there are also all-purpose fields adjacent to the building, so that field users can take advantage of its bathrooms, locker rooms, water fountains, concessions, and/or vending machines.
 - The site should be connected to the Town's greenway network.
 - The site should be located on an arterial road, with an adequately sized parking lot.
 - The Town makes use of available grant or foundation funding for the project. Also, the Town should explore whether the center could be developed as a joint venture with an adjacent municipality, to save on costs.
- Possible Town park sites include: (1) the Holland Sporting Club; (2) the Strang Boulevard property; (3) the Franciscan site; (4) the Phoenix Academy property on Stony Street; (5) the portion of FDR Park fronting on Route 202; (6) the vacant site on Route 6 near Mill Street; (7) the Foley property near Downing Park; (8) bus parking property on north side of Route 202; (9) Somers Realty property south of Route 6; (10) Grange Fair property on Gomers Street; and (11) the B.O.C.E.S. property
- Of those sites, the FDR park site is particularly suited for an indoor recreational facility, due to its close proximity to Yorktown Heights. A site in Yorktown Heights proper would be ideal, although no sites are now apparent.

Policy 9-3: Continue to improve and expand hiking trails on Turkey Mountain, in Sylvan Glen, and along the Hunter Brook, 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 providing 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.

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 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.
- Continue to seek out grant funding to improve pocket parks for public use. For example, the Town recently won grant funding for Railroad Station park.

Policy 9-6: 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.
- Basic criteria:
 - All: sidewalk and crosswalk linkages; connections to greenways; traffic calming on adjacent local and collector streets (for pedestrian safety); significant set-aside of open space (i.e., woodlands, wetlands, lawns, etc.)
 - Village green: up to 1 acre; pedestrian and bicycle entrances only; no parking; outdoor lighting only in the form of pedestrian-scale street lamps. Allowable amenities: gazebo, playground, trails.
 - Pocket parks: 1 to 5 acres; pedestrian and bicycle entrances only; no parking; outdoor lighting only in the form of pedestrian-scale street lamps. Allowable amenities: gazebo, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, non-regulation playing fields, outdoor ice skating, trails.
 - Neighborhood parks: 5 to 20 acres; located on an arterial or collector road; pedestrian/bike entrances connecting to local streets; trees and/or fencing adjacent to residential uses; outdoor lighting only in the form of pedestrian-scale street lamps. Allowable amenities: everything permitted for pocket parks, plus regulation playing fields, running track, parking.

- Community parks: 20 acres or more; located on an arterial road; woodland buffering adjacent to residential uses. Allowable amenities: everything permitted for pocket and neighborhood parks, outdoor lighting for play areas, indoor recreational facilities, swimming pool, picnic areas, viewing stands.

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.)

Policy 9-8: Allow commercial recreation 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 9-9: Create a unified signage format, theme, and logo for Town parks.

- This should be undertaken with the assistance of specialists in landscape architecture, marketing, and graphic design.

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. For example, explore the feasibility of utilizing existing flat lawn areas occasionally for Town soccer practice.
- As another option, work with the State to circulate the FDR Park newsletter to Town residents, and help establish a greater presence for FDR Park on the internet.

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.

- Seek out 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 or re-stripe parking lots to yield more parking spaces.
- If all those measures have been tried, and there are still chronic parking shortages, then consider one of the following options:
 - Create unpaved spill-over parking areas beside the lot, provided the area can be properly drained and does not encroach into a wetland buffer.
 - Rather than expanding existing lots, create one or more new lots elsewhere on the site. Keep all lots small, so as to avoid creating concentrated areas of blacktop.
 - Provide shuttle service from the YCCC or the hamlet centers on peak demand days (e.g., Saturdays in July to the Shrub Oak pool.)

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 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.
- Candidate locations for new facilities include: Railroad Station Park, serving trailway users.

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

- Greenways, parks and protected open space should 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, open to all.
 - 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 proving parkland. However, the Town should re-evaluated current 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 recent 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. There is a beach that can provide boating access to the waterfront.

- 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 for the site include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - A children's summer camp. The Lake would provide opportunities for swimming and canoeing. Nearby Sylvan Glen, Turkey Mountain, and other open space preserves would provide opportunities for hiking and learning about the natural environment.
 - A cultural center, possibly as a branch of the YCCC, possibly with a focus on the fine arts, i.e., painting and sculpting; possibly with satellite programs for the Teen Center.
 - An outdoor theater, built into the hillside, possibly with a Theater Company organizing summertime theatrical performances.
 - A literary center, possibly with a focus on storytelling or puppetry, possibly with one or two small rooms (i.e., up to 40-person capacity) for lectures or storytelling.
 - Rental of artist studio space, possibly with one or more artists in residence, possibly with occasional "open studio" events where the public can tour the studio space and observe works-in-progress.
 - Rental of event space (e.g., meeting space, outdoor theater, banquet facility.)
 - A public "neighborhood" park with a beach, boating access, tennis courts, basketball courts, and mix of other small-scale recreational facilities.
- In exploring these concepts, the Town should give close consideration to traffic concerns. Depending on the use, the site could potentially attract significant volumes of traffic into and through the Mohegan Lake neighborhood. The Town should work with the neighborhood to minimize and/or mitigate such impacts.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 9: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

- Tables 9-1 lists all of the Town's recreational sites.
- In addition to those sites, the Town has approximately 430 acres of unused open space, some of which may be useable for recreational purposes in the future. Some of those sites are small lots acquired as in-rem. Those sites are listed in Table 9-2.

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.	3.5	Tennis courts, playground, nature trail
Hanover East Park	Hanover St.	41.0	Playground, parking lot
Hunterbrook Field	Hunterbrook Rd.	15.1	Ballfield, parking
Ivy Knoll	Spruce St.	1.0	Playground, nature trail, pond
Ivy Knolls Park	Ivy Rd.	2.6	Playground, ballfield, parking, basketball hoops, outdoor ice skating
Mohansic Ave. Park	Mohansic Ave.	2.2	Playground, parking
Shrub Oak Memorial Pavilion	East Main St.	0.1	Momument, benches
York Hill Park	Hawthorne Dr.	2.3	Playground, ballfield
Yorktown Plaza Park	Commerce St.	0.3	Sitting area
Walden Woods Park	Curry St.	N/A	Playground
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>68.1</i>	<i>(excluding N/A)</i>
<u><i>Neighborhood Parks</i></u>			
Chelsea Park	Gomer St.	2.3	Ballfield, playground
Crystal Lake	Granite Springs Rd	61.1	Natural; outdoor ice skating
London Woods Field	London Rd.	17.2	Ballfield, parking
Pine Tree Field	Benjamin Blvd.	39.7	Ballfield, parking, nature trail
Willow Park	Curry St.	9.4	Ballfield, playground, ball field, play apparatus, and outdoor ice skating
Woodlands	Strang Blvd.	15.4	Ballfield, parking
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>145.1</i>	
<u><i>Community Parks</i></u>			
Downing Park	Rte 202/Crompond Rd.	37.9	Lighted tennis courts, playground, picnic area, ballfield, restrooms, parking, cooking grills, pavilion, outdoor concert area
Junior Lake Park	Edgewater St.	11.1	Swimming pool, playground, picnic area, lake building, restrooms, cooking grills, and outdoor ice skating
Railroad Station Park	Commerce St.	1.3	Playground, basketball courts, station building, bike trail
Shrub Oak Park	Sunnyside St.	46.3	Swimming pool, lighted tennis courts, ballfields, playground, trails, pool building, parking, restrooms, outdoor hockey rink
Sparkle Lake Park	Granite Springs Rd.	33.0	Lake, beach, playground, basketball courts, parking, community building, administration building, picnic area, cooking grills, rest rooms, outdoor ice skating

Table 9-1: Inventory of Town Parks

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Use/Facilities</i>
Sylvan Glen	Morris Ln.	163.8	Nature trails, ice skating, parking
Turkey Mountain	Locke Rd.	124.2	Nature trails, parking
Yorktown Community & Cultural Center	Commerce St.	5.6	Ballfield, play equipment, track, parking, YCCC building, gazebo, gymnasium, senior center
<i>Subtotal</i>		423.2	
TOTAL		636.3	(excluding N/A)

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

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Use/Facilities</i>
Open Space	Locksley Rd.	0.3	Natural
Open Space	Springhurst St.	0.5	Natural
Open Space	Viewland St.	9.8	Natural
Open Space	Gomer St.	19.4	Natural
Open Space	Greenwood St.	1.0	Natural
Open Space	Giordano Dr.	3.9	Natural
Open Space	Maxwell Ct.	1.4	Natural
Open Space	Locksley Rd.	0.3	Natural
Open Space	Rutledge Dr.	10.3	Natural
Open Space	Hanover St.	5.1	Natural
Open Space	Croton Lake Rd.	2.8	Natural
Open Space	Blinn Rd.	4.5	Natural
Open Space	Barberry Rd.	0.5	Natural
Open Space	Salem Rd.	5.9	Natural
Open Space	Deerfield Ave.	4.9	Natural
Open Space	Dalia Ct.	13.6	Natural
Open Space	East Main St.	0.2	Natural
Open Space	Radcliff Dr.	10.2	Natural
Open Space	Manchester Rd.	11.4	Natural
Open Space	Bonnie Ct.	12.0	Natural
Gomer Wetlands	London Rd.	45.0	Natural
Open Space	Cordial Rd.	1.9	Natural
Open Space	Gomer St.	6.9	Natural
Open Space	Stonewall Ct.	4.6	Natural
Open Space	Somerston Rd.	7.9	Natural
Open Space	Field St.	7.9	Natural
Open Space	Hunterbrook Rd.	0.7	Natural
Open Space	Eleanor St.	1.9	Natural
Open Space	Valleyview St.	0.8	Natural
Open Space	Route 6/Mill St.	0.1	Natural
Open Space	East Main St.	1.2	Natural; planned pocket park
Open Space	Hillside St./Sagamore	0.1	Natural
Open Space	Sagamore St.	0.6	Natural
Open Space	Hillside St./Kimble	0.3	Natural
Open Space	Mohegan Ave.	0.4	Natural
Open Space	Amelia Ct.	7.3	Natural

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

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Use/Facilities</i>
Open Space	Scofield Ave.	17.2	Natural
Open Space	Stony St.	27.0	Natural
Open Space	East Main St.	1.1	Natural
Open Space	Stony St.	22.3	Natural
Open Space	Wildwood St.	17.5	Natural
Open Space	Old Yorktown Rd.	3.6	Natural
Open Space	Oakside Rd.	64.0	Natural
Open Space	Manor St.	7.2	Natural
TOTAL		426.6	

- 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; pool, trails, substandard soccer fields.) FDR Park does not attract many Town users.
- *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. Lakeland just put forward a new bond for the track.
 - 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 (636.6 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 17.5 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 294.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This is 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 (11.3 acres per 1,000 residents), 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; provides more space and a wider range of facilities than a pocket park; has 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; has 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 functions 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.

Summary of Past Plans

Town Development Plan, 1970

- Acquire and reserve more recreational and open space areas throughout the Town.
- Continue to require recreation areas as part of new subdivisions, or payment-in-lieu of those parks.

- Undertake a feasibility study for developing recreational facilities on lands dedicated to the Town as part of the subdivision process, and develop and Neighborhood Facilities Recreation Plan.
- Provide recreational facilities that serve all age groups.
- Playground-playfield sites should be about three to size areas in size, should be located within walking distance of adjacent residences, and should have service areas of about a half-mile to one-mile.
- Locate playground-playfield sites adjacent to or part of a school site.
- Because County and State parks are used by non-resident day trippers, create a large Town park to be used by residents. The park should be 100 to 200 acres in size. The Town should acquire this land immediately.
- If the City of New York ever sells its watershed lands, maintain those lands for open space to protect the water quality of the reservoir and for potential recreational purposes.
- Limit development in the swamp west of Lake Osceola, in order to limit flooding and runoff impacts.

Town Development Plan, 1983

- Establish a four-level park system:
 1. Tot lot/mini park
 2. Neighborhood playground
 3. Playfields
 4. Town park
- Establish a trail system that connects recreational and open space parcels. Provide trail markers, erosion control, and trail maps.
- Implement the bike network plan adopted by the Town Board.
- Acquire additional open space areas for the joint purposes of resource conservation and recreation. These areas include:
 - Areas along the shores of Mohegan Lake;
 - Linear park between Mohegan Lake and Shrub Oak
 - Linear park between Copper Beech School and Taconic Woods
 - Stream and wetland conservation on the London, Gerber-Migliaccio, and Solomon properties
 - Turkey Mountain
 - Christal Farm and Cat Hill
 - Steep slopes north of Hunter Brook, with a linear park along Hunter Brook
 - Noah's Ark property

1988 Town Plan Review

- Continue to be aware of recreational needs
- As new land is subdivided, procure suitable land for recreation (i.e. reject parcels that are wet, steep, unusable)
- Explore the development and use of “on-paper” parcels for recreational purposes.