



# Town of Manchester Parks and Facilities Master Plan

September 2021



Our  
**Parks**  
TAKE ME TO THE PARK

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# Executive Summary

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This executive summary provides a high-level overview of the Town of Manchester's Parks & Facilities Master Plan elements, including:

- The demographic and income profile
- Community engagement
- The recreation program analysis
- Recreation trends
- Trails and connectivity analysis
- Park and facility assessments
- Level of service (LOS) analysis
- Conceptual vision plans
- Funding and revenue strategies
- Strategic action plan
- Implementation strategies

## Demographic and Income Profile

Utilizing Esri data, BerryDunn reviewed several key socioeconomic indicators in relation to park and recreation services. All data was acquired in 2020, reflecting the actual numbers reported in the 2010 U.S. Census. In 2010, the median age of the 58,241 Town of Manchester (the Town) residents was 37 years. This was slightly lower than the U.S. median age of 38.8 years and also that of Connecticut (CT) at 40.8 years.

The Town's total population is projected to experience minor growth between 2010 and 2025 with an increase of 1% (or 337 residents). Minor shifts are expected in the youth age categories, with two increasing slightly and two decreasing slightly. Overall, the change is expected to be 568 fewer residents between the ages of 0 and 19 years. The predicted shift in the adult population (ages 25 to 64 years) is a decrease in every category ranging from a 1.8% decrease (ages 55 to 64 years) to a 19.2% decrease (ages 25 to 35 years). All of the age categories over 65 years are expected to increase significantly. Combined, the number of adults over 65 years of age is expected to increase by 3,746, or 120%.

In terms of race, the data projects that the Town's composition will shift by 2025 with a decrease of 11.6 percentage points (or 6,599 people) in the White Alone category. The increases include those who identify as Asian Alone, which is predicted to increase by 3.7 percentage points (or 2,139 people), and Black Alone, which is predicted to increase by 3.4 percentage points (or 2,054 people).



The ethnicity of Hispanic Origin (a designation independent of race) is expected to experience an increase of 7.6 percentage points (or 4,464 people) by 2025.

The predicted change in gender composition between 2010 and 2025 is fairly insignificant with a .01 percentage point increase in the male population and a .01 percentage point decrease in the female population.

In 2020, the Town's median household income was \$70,645, which was 11.8% greater than the U.S. national median income of \$68,400. A 6.4% increase is projected by 2025, which would bring the median household income to \$75,167.

## Community Engagement

Over the course of three months, nearly 1,500 people provided input regarding the Parks & Facilities Master Plan (the Plan) in a variety of ways. The engagement included 6 staff focus groups, 12 community focus groups, and 4 focus groups with local high school students. In-person engagement was held at four locations in October 2020, and a virtual town hall meeting was held in November 2020. A total of 405 statistically valid surveys were submitted to ETC Institute (ETC), 79 surveys were completed on Your Voice Matters, and 454 visits were made to Your Voice Matters between late July and mid-December 2020.

The consulting team gleaned a great deal of information from all of the various engagement avenues resulting in the following top 10 themes:

1. Charter Oak is visited frequently, and the recent upgrades are appreciated by residents—residents are looking for the same types of upgrades in other Town parks (completing the 2018 Center Springs Master Plan is a priority for many).
2. The Town has a history of providing well-organized, well-run, and affordable recreation programs.
3. The brand of the Department of Leisure, Families and Recreation (the Department) has greatly improved in the recent past.
4. There is a concern about Town and Department finances following the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are very important, and more attention is needed for some underserved groups.
6. The aging indoor recreation facilities are not meeting the current needs, and therefore, they will not meet future needs.
7. Safety and security are concerns in some parks after dark.
8. Upgrading the existing pools and adding new spraygrounds is important.
9. Park maintenance is a priority for investment.
10. Completing the Town's trail connections for hiking and biking is highly desired.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there is also a strong desire for the Town to enhance current partnerships and seek out new ones in order to be more efficient with funding and reach new people.



## Recreation Program Analysis

The Department offers a variety of opportunities for Town residents. The recreation analysis identified opportunities for recreation program and service expansion to meet community needs and desires in a comprehensive way. The following summary highlights the key points of the analysis; the full recreation analysis provides detailed insight into each core program and the individual analyses therein.

Throughout all of the focus groups conducted as part of the community engagement, the importance of DEI were mentioned at nearly every meeting—from the teens through the seniors. Town residents view diversity as a cornerstone of the community and want to ensure that there are programs and services available to everyone.

As part of the statistically valid survey administered by ETC, the following programs are slated as high priorities for investment in the Town:

- Fitness and wellness
- Outdoor and adventure recreation
- Nature enjoyment
- Senior adult activities
- Boating, kayaking, and canoeing
- Programs focusing on history

When comparing the Town's programs to the BerryDunn database of recreation assessments completed for agencies across the country, the consulting team determined that the Town offers 61.7% of common program offering types. Typically, park and recreation agencies offer just over 50% of the common programs, so the Department is doing very well with its variety of offerings.

According to the Department staff, core recreation programs include:

- Early childhood
- Youth
- Youth sports
- Camps
- Teens
- Aquatics
- Adults
- Adult sports
- Seniors
- Family programs

The consulting team analyzed the Department's core program offerings by season (summer, fall, winter, spring) from 2019 – 2020 and found that the most programs of programs were offered in the summer, and the greatest number of programs offered were related to aquatics. In terms of ages, the greatest percentage of programs were offered for children ages 0 – 5 years, while the lowest percentage of programs offered were for teens ages 13 – 17 years.

The consulting team compared Department programming from 2019 – 2020 to the Town's demographics and found that the largest discrepancy is for the adult population with 48% of the population but only 16% of Department program offerings.

As part of the recreation program analysis, Department staff completed program life cycles worksheets for all of the core program areas. The consulting team used the resulting data to determine the percentage of programs in the introduction, growth, mature, and decline stages. For the Department, the largest category is mature programs at 53%, and the smallest is introduction at 7%. A healthy balance between the stages is optimal, with a bulk of the programs in the growth and mature stages. The timing is ideal for the Department to provide an influx of new, innovative programs.

The consulting team has also reviewed Department marketing efforts. This is an area where great strides have recently been made. The Department has a full-time position that includes marketing and communication in addition to some programming duties. The Department creates three seasonal program and event catalogs that are included in the Better Manchester Magazine that is mailed to residents. The results of the statistically valid survey indicate that 74% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with the availability of information about programs and services on the website. Just under 63% are very satisfied or satisfied with the ease of the online registration process.



Based on the results of the community engagement, the statistically valid survey, and the review of current offerings, the consulting team identified several programming opportunities for the Department to consider, including the following:

- Nature enjoyment
- Outdoor and adventure recreation, such as boating, kayaking, and canoing
- Wellness programming
- Birthday party service
- Child care
- Dance/music/performing arts
- School break camps
- Esports
- Gymnastics/tumbling
- Historical programs
- Programs for children who are homeschooled
- Science, technology, engineering, and math programs (STEM/STEAM)
- Youth fitness

The consulting team evaluated the current policy and procedure for pricing programs and services. Historically, the Town has operated within a policy of charging low fees to no fees for programs. Based on the review of the Town's finances via the budget documents posted on the Town's website, the annual subsidy to the Department is increasing, and conversely, the cost recovery percentage is decreasing. With the minimum wage increasing to \$15/hour in July 2023, the cost recovery of the Department is likely to continue to decrease unless changes are made either by increasing fees or decreasing expenses.

In the final section of the recreation analysis, some best practices for the provision of recreation programs are outlined in conjunction with a number of specific recommendations. The recommendations are divided into four groups:

- Demographic considerations
- Programming considerations
- Marketing considerations
- Items that are worthy of continued analysis



## Trends

In conjunction with the recreation programming analysis, the consulting team provided a series of current trends. The trend information provided are categorized into general recreation, outdoor adventure activities, fitness, age-related trends, and some new trends as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Trails and Connectivity Analysis

FHI Studio, based in Hartford, CT, was included as part of the consulting team to:

- Map existing trails, greenways, and pathways
- Assess the existing trail system in the Town based on the available data
- Identify gaps in the trail system
- Produce a strategic connectivity plan by identifying and recommending a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that will connect parks to neighborhoods and schools across Town
- Provide trail maintenance recommendations

Once the FHI Studio team identified all of the gaps in the trail network, they considered four different types of trails to complete the connections including:

- Trails/pathways
- Sidepaths
- Bike lanes
- Shared roadways (or sharrows)

After the appropriate connection type was identified by FHI Studio staff for each trail gap, a three-phased plan, with cost estimates, was compiled. The FHI Studio team also reviewed a number of suggestions for connectivity solutions offered by several Town stakeholders and provided feedback.

## Park and Facility Assessments

To Design, based in New Britain, CT, was included as part of the consulting team to complete a review of Town park sites to assess the condition of all amenities, including:

- Pavement
- Vegetation
- Sports fields
- Play structures
- Site furniture
- Outdoor courts
- Lighting
- Pools and spraygrounds
- Stairs and walls
- Signage

In addition, To Design accessed the functionality of vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking, stormwater management, and way finding. For each park site that To Design evaluated, there is a park map, photos, and a table of To Design's detailed findings.

The Consulting team toured all of the Town's indoor recreation facilities, including the Senior Center, Mahoney Center and Leisure Labs, The Community Y Recreation Center, Nathan Hale, and Robertson School. Based on the facility conditions, results from the community survey and public engagement, program registration, and staff experience and expertise with Town programs, a potential new community recreation center is recommended to meet the current and future recreation needs of the community.



## Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

LOS provides guidelines in determining the appropriate level of parkland and amenities such as athletic fields, outdoor courts (tennis, basketball, and volleyball), and playgrounds. The consulting team used a variety of methods to create LOS guidelines as a result of the absence of a universally accepted method to determine standards. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has evolved from the use of unilateral standards applied to all agencies and has moved to creating more customized information through the Park Metrics Program. This database includes information from approximately 1,000 agencies nationwide that can be filtered by population, budget, location, etc.

LOS guidelines help to ensure an equitable distribution of parkland, facilities, amenities, and recreation programs throughout the system. The following mechanisms were used to complete the LOS process:

- NRPA Park Metrics
- Survey results
- Resident input
- Review of the equitable distribution of parkland, facilities, and amenities
- Staff and consulting team input

The LOS includes an acreage LOS analysis and an amenity quantity LOS analysis.

## Conceptual Vision Plans

With information gathered throughout the needs assessment, programming and trend analysis, and public engagement, the To Design team produced conceptual visions with cost estimates for six Town park sites:

- Northwest Park
- Union Pond/Robertson Park
- West Side Recreation
- Mt. Nebo
- Globe Hollow
- The Nike Site

The plans delineate proposed features, upgrades to existing facilities, and features to be removed. The goal of this effort is to recommend recreational enhancements that not only serve residents, but also are sustainable today and in the future. As part of this task, To Design provided a color rendering to accompany each concept plan.

## Funding and Revenue Strategies

The Consulting team compiled examples of funding and revenue strategies used by park and recreation systems throughout the country for the Town's consideration. This summary includes fund sources that relate to operating dollars and to capital dollars and provides an overview of foundations, conservancies, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, endowments, legislation, grants, sponsorships, and crowdfunding strategies.

## Strategic Action Plan

Following the staff visioning session, the consulting team created the final strategic action plan in alignment with the four themes: (Manchester is) dynamic, connected, thriving, and sustainable. All of the goals are divided into the key concept areas of programs, parks, trails, and facilities and then grouped by the recommended time frame for completion:

- Short-term (1 to 3 years)
- Mid-term (4 to 6 years)
- Long-term (7 to 10 years)

## Implementation Strategies

It is very important for the Town to successfully implement the Plan. In addition to strategies included in this section, such as the identification of a plan champion, ongoing employee engagement, reporting mechanisms, and internal marketing, the consulting team will facilitate a Strategy Implementation Workshop for the staff after the Plan has been approved. It is critical that the proper organizational culture be created in order to support the effective implementation of the Plan.









Ch. 1

# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, the Town retained the services of BerryDunn to work collaboratively with Town staff to complete the Plan that will articulate how to best meet the future parks, trails, open space, and recreation needs of its citizens, and to build economic and cultural value in the community.

The goal of the Plan is to provide a clear vision supported by goals, policies, and objectives that give direction to Town boards, commissions and staff for development, re-development, expansion, and enhancement of Manchester's parks, recreation programs, and assets. This Plan will help guide Town goals and priorities for the next 15-plus years.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly all of the public engagement for this Plan was conducted virtually. The exceptions were in-person events at four sites in October 2020 and a focus group with members of the Senior Center.

With a great deal of Town staff input, the consulting team created the Plan in six distinct phases:





## Discovery

Phase 1 included a kickoff meeting, a system tour, data review, the demographic and income profile, and the trends analysis.

The kickoff meeting, which was held on September 16, 2020, included team introductions, a review of project goals and objectives, project phasing, the deliverable schedule, project management, and a staff discussion regarding the desired outcomes of the staff and any issues that the consulting team should be cognizant of during the project.

The system tour, which was facilitated by Town staff, provided the consulting team with a basic understanding of the Town's park and recreation facilities. Additional tours by all of the consultants were taken throughout the project.

The data review included an examination of the organization structure and staffing, website content, program guides, budget documents, program registration data, and past planning documents such as the Manchester 2020 Plan; DEI Initiative; and Children, Youth, and Families Master Plan.

The Town's demographic and income profile was compiled using Esri data and analyzed projected population shifts, age and gender distribution, minority population, and income characteristics.

The final component for the first phase is the Trends Analysis. This information is based on BerryDunn's database of up-to-date industry trends related to park and recreation, park design, recreation programming, and the use of technology.



## Engagement

Phase 2 included all of the public engagement. The consulting team knew that the public engagement process was very important to the Town, and extra efforts were taken to reach as many residents as possible, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures.

The engagement began with a series of focus groups to collect input from staff and key community stakeholders. Six staff groups from five Town departments met with a BerryDunn consultant to share their thoughts. Focus groups were facilitated with a wide variety of Town groups, including:

- Elected officials
- Civic leaders
- The Youth Commission
- The Conservation Commission
- Board of Education (BOE) leaders
- Representatives from youth athletic organizations
- The Community Y Board
- The Advisory Recreation and Park Commission
- The School Repurposing Committee
- The Land Acquisition Committee
- A group focused on DEI
- Four groups of high school students
- One group of Senior Center members

To augment the focus groups, the Town sponsored in-person engagement events (Trick or Treat for Parks) at four sites on Saturday, October 24. Based on the trick-or-treat bags distributed and the voting for future Town investment in parks activity, Town staff estimated that over 400 people visited one of the four locations.

A virtual town hall event was held on November 19, 2020. The consulting team provided an overview of the master planning process, and another voting activity was facilitated. This event attracted 42 members of the public.

The final component of the community engagement was the administration of a statistically valid survey by ETC. The survey was mailed to randomly selected residents the week of November 9, 2020. The goal was to obtain 350 completed surveys, and 405 were received. The survey respondents closely matched the overall demographics of the Town.





## Analysis

Phase 3, the analysis phase, was the most time intensive, as it included:

- The recreation programming analysis
- The trails and connectivity analysis and estimated capital costs
- The park assessments
- An indoor recreation facility assessment
- The LOS analysis
- Conceptual park plans and estimated capital costs

Based on the public input, the park assessments results, location, and staff expertise, the following six sites were selected to be redesigned:

- Globe Hollow
- Mt. Nebo
- The Nike Site
- Northwest Park
- Robertson Park/Union Pond Park
- West Side Recreation



## Visioning

The fourth phase of the project focused on visioning. This is the most thought-provoking and creative phase of the planning process. Its purpose is to develop the most appropriate response to the identified needs and priorities of the community based on all of the previous technical aspects of the process.

A visioning meeting was held in-person with all of the consultants and Town staff on May 13, 2020. The first part of the workshop reviewed the Department's mission, vision, and values to ensure they still align with the Town's mission and respond to the residents expressed needs. The next step was to review all of the findings from the technical reports. The results of the visioning process assisted with the development of goals and objectives to drive the Plan. The themes were also finalized following this workshop based on the staff discussion.

The BerryDunn team met with staff from the Finance Department and Budget Office to discuss funding. The result of this meeting is the Funding and Revenue Strategies section of the report, which provides Town staff with an overview of foundations, conservancies, nonprofit organizations, public private partnerships, endowments, legislation, grants, sponsorship, and crowdfunding strategies.

## Implementation

The fifth phase of the project focused on implementation. Following the development of the Strategic Plan Vision, the BerryDunn team will provide a Strategy Implementation Workshop for staff. The discussion will include a listing of potential techniques that the Town can implement in order to effectively deploy the Plan. This session will also include a discussion regarding the organizational culture that is needed to support effective implementation.





## Final Plan

The final plan was prepared with staff input and review and then presented to the Town Board of Directors for their final approval.

The Plan is divided into five chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction**  
Includes a project introduction, the Town's commitment to DEI in the planning process, and the four themes that emerged through the planning process.
- **Chapter 2 – Community Engagement**  
Includes the demographic and income profile, a summary of the community engagement, and a high-level summary of the statistically valid survey results.
- **Chapter 3 – Analysis**  
This is the bulk of the report and includes the recreation program analysis, a trends report, the trails and connectivity analysis, the park inventories and assessments, the indoor recreation facility assessments, and the LOS report.
- **Chapter 4 – Planning**  
Includes conceptual plans and cost estimates for the redevelopment of Northwest Park, Robertson Park, West Side Recreation Area, Mt. Nebo, Globe Hollow, Nike Site, Center Springs Park, Case Mountain, and Charter Oak Park.
- **Chapter 5 – Plan Implementation**  
Includes a funding and revenue strategy, the strategic action plan, and implementation strategies.



Photo credit: Tristan Welch



# COMMITMENT TO DEI

According to NRPA, “true to the very philosophy of public park and recreation is the idea that all people — no matter the color of their skin, age, income level or ability — have access to programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great.”

Thus, it is extremely important that elements of the Plan encompass a robust community engagement process through an equity lens, identify needs of all segments of the community, and develop recommendations based on gaps in services throughout the Town.

It is NRPA’s vision that everyone has the just and fair quantity, proximity, and connections to quality parks and green space, and recreation facilities and programs that are safe, inclusive, culturally relevant, and welcoming.

NRPA’s vision for equity and inclusion consists of the following attributes:

## EQUITY

A community that prioritizes equity works to ensure that all community members have access to what they need to be successful.

+

## INCLUSION

A community that prioritizes inclusion works to ensure that all community members feel that they can access what they need to be successful

=

## RESULT

The result of equity and inclusion working together is a vibrant community, strong in its efforts to create environments in which everyone feels welcome, safe, and respected.

## Town of Manchester's Commitment to DEI

In keeping the NRPA DEI vision in mind, it is important to provide context for the Master Plan and its commitment to an inclusive process.

For several years, the Town has demonstrated its proactive commitment to DEI efforts. The Town demonstrates NRPA's equity attribute with the efforts made over the last several years to ensure all community members feel they can access what they need. This in itself is impressive given that most municipalities have just recently initiated DEI efforts.

The Town, in collaboration with KJR Consulting, developed an integrated strategy, implementation framework, and action plan to enable the Town to reach its goal of increasing inclusive community engagement in Manchester. The Town and the Department represent best practices in successfully operationalizing inclusive practices.

The implementation of this work included two strategies:

- Cultivate inclusive and culturally competent attitudes and behaviors in Manchester
- Promote inclusive public engagement

The implementation also included the creation of:

- **Equity and Inclusion Collaborative:** Leads the development and execution of a plan to increase inclusion and public engagement in Manchester
- **Community Ambassadors:** Enable access and communication with residents about community initiatives and events
- **Community Coalitions:** Connect with residents, share information, and increase engagement using grassroots organizing tactics

These groups represent the thoughtful approach the Town has taken in engaging the entire community; not only Town officials and staff, but community groups, businesses, and interested individuals. These groups elevate voices of the community and create multiple points of access for engagement and information. Rather than make assumptions about what groups and individuals need, the Town operates as a partner and is mindful of existing efforts from other providers of services. Additionally, the Town publishes information in three languages: English, Spanish, and Bangla.



NRPA has produced guidelines to follow for a master plan process. As a result, within the spirit of DEI, the development of the Plan included the following elements:

1. **Internal Assessment:** Before starting the master planning process, lay the foundation for the agency and the Plan. Then, assess organizational capacity and understand what the Department needs to work with the community, elected officials, and others in the developing and approving the Plan, and working to ensure an inclusive process.

*For the Town, this involved gathering information about the Department and how it operates and provides services, and understanding the legacy of park and recreation services.*

2. **Community Engagement:** Work with the community in all aspects of the planning process to ensure that the community has a voice and decision-making power in data collection, analysis, and implementing and executing the Plan. To create an equitable plan, ensure that the process allows for under-represented groups and communities to participate in this decision-making.

*The commitment to DEI was the centerpiece of engagement. From organizing targeted focus groups, to providing online engagement opportunities to all, to having pop-up events at strategic locations around the Town, nearly 1,500 community voices provided input into the Plan. A statistically valid survey was employed to ensure a truly representative slice of Manchester was reflected in the Plan.*

3. **Resources & Data Collection:** Collect and analyze data to prioritize resource allocation based on level of need for both park access and outcomes associated with park access, such as physical activity and climate resiliency. Include both qualitative and quantitative analysis in this data collection to understand where gaps and inequities in distribution, park quality, safety, and inclusion may exist.

*LOS metrics for parkland and amenities were created and served as a starting point for identifying gaps in service. Park concept plans included amenities that appeal to a broad cross section of the community.*

4. **Implementation:** Create a realistic action plan based on needs identified and current and future resource, partnership, and funding scenarios. If there are anticipated gaps in funding, then outline a plan to close the gap and how you will prioritize resources in the short term.

*The Plan included a realistic set of recommendations and identified the need for future park and recreation program development, all in alignment with the Town's DEI strategies. In addition, the Plan included a funding and revenue strategy narrative to identify ways of obtaining funding sources.*

The commitment to DEI is woven throughout all the elements of the Plan—from ensuring access to the public engagement process to identifying recommendations that support DEI opportunities in park development, recreation programs, and services, and indoor community spaces that appeal to all.

# KEY THEMES

In reviewing all of the data collected from the statistically valid needs assessment survey, the community engagement (where nearly 1,500 people were involved), the park assessments, and staff experience and expertise, the following four themes emerged during the planning process:

## MANCHESTER IS...



### DYNAMIC

The Town is known as an agent of change, continuously adapting services in response to changing community demographics and being at the forefront of evolving industry trends. This also entails constantly looking at service delivery through a different lens and being responsive to community needs.



### CONNECTED

The Town is committed to connecting with all residents, creating access and inclusion for all through DEI efforts—with a focus on the equitable distribution of programs, services, parks, and amenities for the entire community. Residents have identified connecting parks and facilities as a major priority. As a result, the Department will continue the development of connectivity throughout the Town, creating ease of access to parks, schools, and other points of interest. This theme also includes establishing, growing, and strengthening community partnerships that augment the Town's ability to provide services and robust outreach to residents.



### THRIVING

The Town's park and recreation offerings are a significant contributor to physical and mental health, education, economic vitality, environment, recreation and leisure time, social belonging, and safety for all Manchester residents. All of these factors, along with other Town services, make Manchester a desirable place to live through its great quality of life. The Plan will influence future parks, recreation, and trail development to keep Manchester growing and thriving for years to come.



### SUSTAINABLE

The Town will focus on meeting the needs of current residents without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainability is about environmentalism and green practices, but it also includes other important focus items, such as social and financial resources, and maintaining facilities and programming to a consistently high standard. Manchester's park and recreation services directly contribute to the economic vitality of the Town.





Our  
arks



03587



Life. Be In It.





Ch. 2

# Community Engagement

# DEMOGRAPHIC AND INCOME PROFILE

Demographic trends can inform the vision for future program growth and development;

therefore, to gain insight into the characteristics of the Town's constituents, BerryDunn reviewed several key socioeconomic indicators in relation to providing park and recreation services. BerryDunn obtained demographic data used for the analysis from Esri, a research and development organization that specializes in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in 2020 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 U.S. Census, as well as demographic projections for 2020 (current) and 2025 as estimated by Esri. It should be noted that Town staff relies on population data published by the University of CT (UConn).

## Age

The median age of the 58,241 Town residents recorded in the 2010 U.S. Census was 37 years. This compares to a U.S. median of 38.8 years and a CT median of 40.8 years. Table 2.1 depicts the population of the Town based on age group. The U.S. Census 2010 column contains actual data collected through the U.S. Census process. The 2020 and 2025 columns contain current and estimated projections, respectively.

Table 2.1: Population by Age

Age Group	U.S. Census 2010		2020		2025	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
0 - 4 years	3,736	6.4%	3,245	5.6%	3,191	5.4%
5 - 9 years	3,162	5.4%	3,308	5.7%	3,192	5.4%
10 - 14 years	3,295	5.7%	3,420	5.9%	3,371	5.8%
15 - 19 years	3,284	5.6%	2,929	5.0%	3,155	5.4%
20 - 24 years	3,923	6.7%	3,636	6.2%	3,244	5.5%
25 - 34 years	10,198	17.5%	8,545	14.6%	8,238	14.1%
35 - 44 years	7,543	13.0%	8,585	14.7%	8,714	14.9%
45 - 54 years	8,412	14.4%	7,058	12.1%	7,163	12.2%
55 - 64 years	7,061	12.1%	7,567	12.9%	6,937	11.8%
65 - 74 years	3,801	6.5%	5,810	9.9%	6,187	10.6%
75 - 84 years	2,371	4.1%	2,892	4.9%	3,726	6.4%
85+ years	1,455	2.5%	1,452	2.5%	1,460	2.5%
Total	58,241		58,447		58,578	

According to Esri, the Town's total population is projected to experience very minor growth between 2010 and 2025, with an increase of 1% (or 337 residents). UConn predicts greater growth in their data noting that the Town's population will increase by 9.2% between 2015 and 2025 (5,581 residents) and by 17.7% between 2015 and 2035 (10,693 residents).

The following figures break down the Esri-predicted population shift between youth and adults according to the same age groupings in Table 2.1.

Minor shifts are expected in all youth age categories with two increasing slightly and two decreasing slightly with the overall change of -4% (or 568 fewer people) in the youth population. The largest anticipated decrease is in early childhood ages 0 – 4 years: from 3,736 in 2010 to 3,191 in 2025, or -14.6% (545 fewer people). The second-largest decrease will be in the teen age group of 15 – 19-year-olds: from 3,284 in 2010 to 3,155 in 2025, or -3.9% (or 129 fewer people). The largest anticipated increase is in youth ages 10 – 14 years: from 3,295 in 2010 to 3,371 in 2025, or a 2.3% increase (76 more people).

The predicted shift in the adult population as a whole is fairly insignificant, with four age groups increasing in population and four decreasing. Overall, the adult age groups are expected to experience an increase of 905 people (or 2%).

The four age categories that will experience a decrease in population are:

- 25 – 34-year-olds (1,960 people or -19.2%)
- 20 – 24-year-olds (679 people or -17.3%)
- 45 – 54-year-olds (1,249 people or -14.9%)
- 55 – 64-year-olds (124 people or -1.8%)

The four age categories that are predicted to increase in order of significance are:

- 65 – 74-year-olds (2,386 people or 62.8%)
- 75 – 84-year-olds (1,355 people or 57.1%)
- 35 – 44-year-olds (1,171 people or 15.5%)
- 85+ years (5 people)

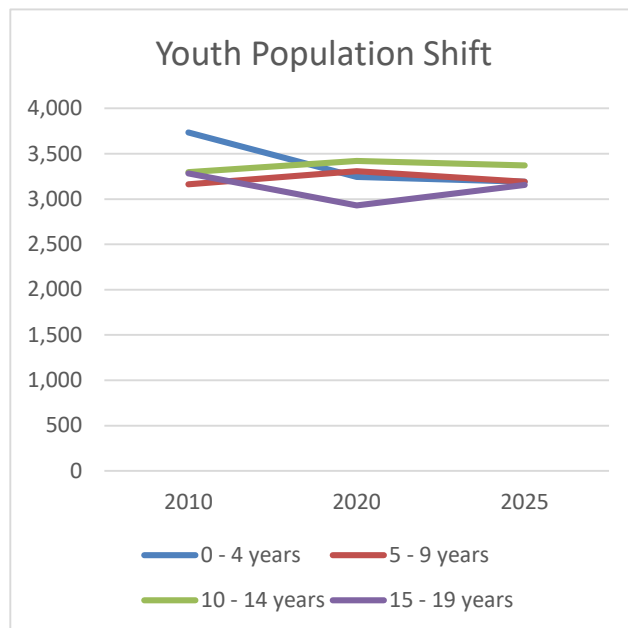


Figure 2.1: Youth Population Shift

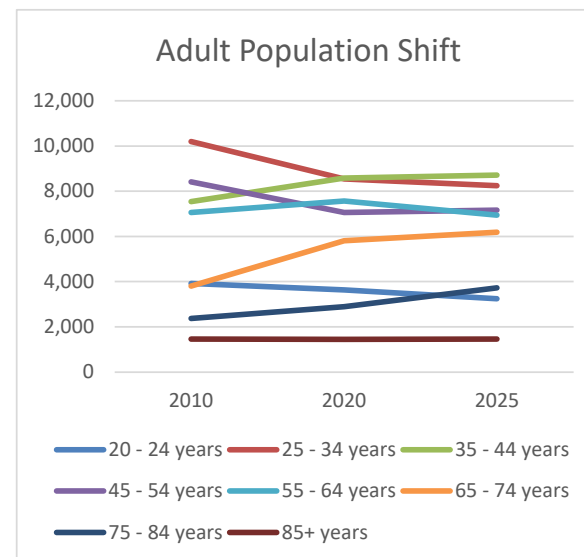


Figure 2.2: Adult Population Shift



Combined, the number of adults over 65 years of age is expected to increase by 3,746, or 120%.

This data suggests that few young families are moving to the area and having children, but older adults are staying in the community and aging in place. This will require enhanced and expanded adult and senior programming, and accessible facilities, parks, and trails are critical.

Future programming and comprehensive planning should focus on the influx of people over the age of 65, who nationwide have shown an increased demand for services that focus on their health and wellness, as well as a desire to give back to the community through volunteer efforts. Recreation centers with fitness and aquatic facilities as well as spaces dedicated to serving active adults and seniors will be necessary to accommodate these services. Attention to park and neighborhood connectivity via biking and walking trails should be a focal point for the Town. Although the Town should continue to focus on continuous improvement and development of all program areas for all ages, people over the age of 65 should be a primary target group.

For ease of analysis and a more practical application, BerryDunn combined the data charted in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 into more generalized age categories: youth, young adult, adult, active adult, and senior. Figure 2.3 depicts the percentage of the Town's population by age category in 2010, and Figure 2.4 depicts the predicted breakdown of percentage by age category projected for 2025.

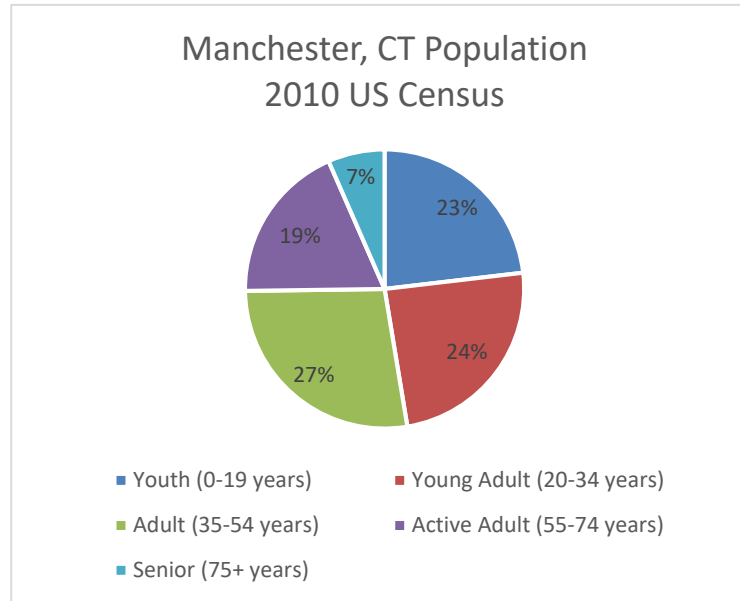


Figure 2.3: Town Population, 2010 U.S. Census

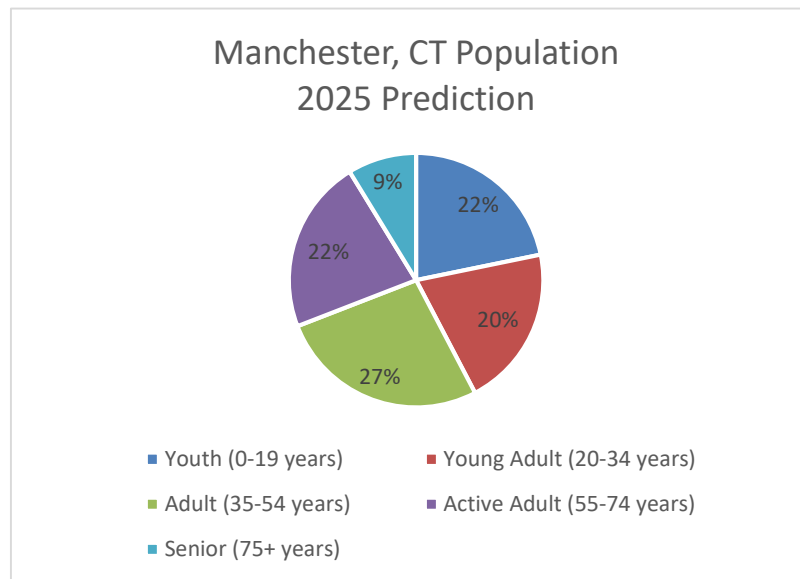


Figure 2.4: Town Population, 2025 Prediction

The shifts observed in Figures 2.3 and 2.4 are also represented in Figure 2.5:

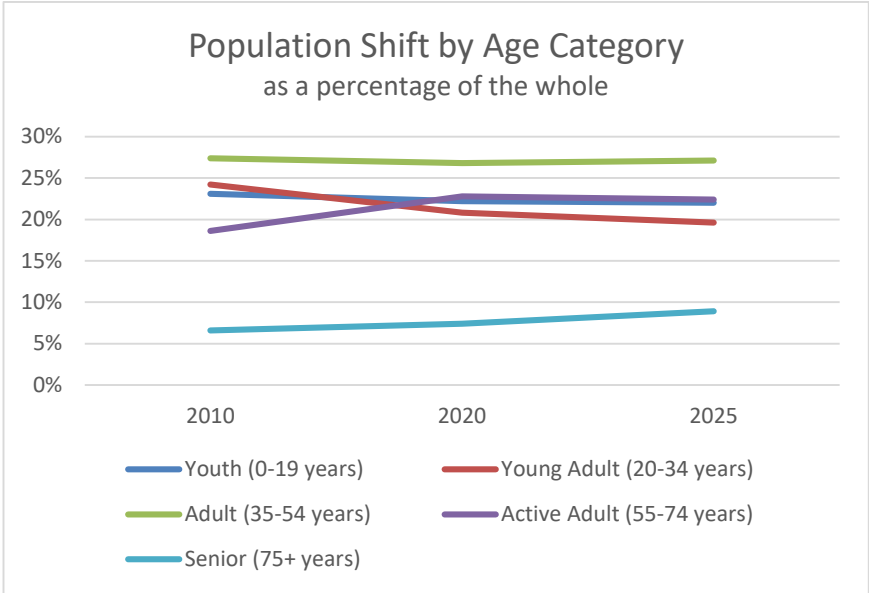


Figure 2.5: Population Shift by Age Category

Earlier in this report, the charts depicted the quantity of population increases by age groups, whereas Figure 2.5 represents the shift in age categories as a percentage of the whole population. The number of active adults is predicted to increase by 0.21 percentage points, and seniors are predicted to increase by 0.36 percentage points. Conversely, the number of youth is predicted to decrease by 0.04 percentage points, and the number of young adults is predicted to decrease by 0.14 percentage points.

By 2025, adults over the age of 55 are projected to account for just over 31% of the Town’s population. Youth are anticipated to account for a smaller percentage of the population, from 23.1% to 22%. These shifts in percentage of the whole population show an anticipated aging trend, with greater older adult growth than family growth.

## Race

The majority of Town residents, 71.4%, reported having a race of White Alone in the 2010 U.S. Census. The remaining population reported as 12.3% Black Alone, 7.9% Asian Alone, and 8% identified as Some Other Race Alone, Two or More Races, or American Indian Alone.

The data projects that the Town's race composition will shift by 2025, with a decrease in 11.6 percentage points in the White Alone category. Subsequent increases are anticipated across the other race designations, with the highest being in the Asian Alone category, which is anticipated to increase 3.7 percentage points, and in the Black Alone category, which is anticipated to increase 3.4 percentage points. The ethnicity of Hispanic Origin (a designation independent of race designation) is expected to experience an increase of 7.6 percentage points by 2025.

Table 2.2: Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	U.S. Census 2010		2020		2025	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
White Alone	41,585	71.4%	37,179	63.6%	35,026	59.8%
Black Alone	7,152	12.3%	8,593	14.7%	9,206	15.7%
American Indian Alone	183	0.3%	249	0.4%	281	0.5%
Asian Alone	4,627	7.9%	5,965	10.2%	6,766	11.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	21	0.0%	24	0.0%	23	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2,671	4.6%	3,836	6.6%	4,408	7.5%
Two or More Races	2,002	3.4%	2,601	4.5%	2,868	4.9%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	6,988	12.0%	9,839	16.8%	11,452	19.6%



A deeper investigation into population numbers instead of percentages, however, provides a more complete understanding of the predicted racial changes. The number of residents who identify as White Alone is predicted to decrease by approximately 6,599 people. Although those who identify as White Alone will still make up the largest percentage of the population at 59.8%, it is important to note that the Town is anticipated to house 6,898 more people who identify with a race other than White Alone.

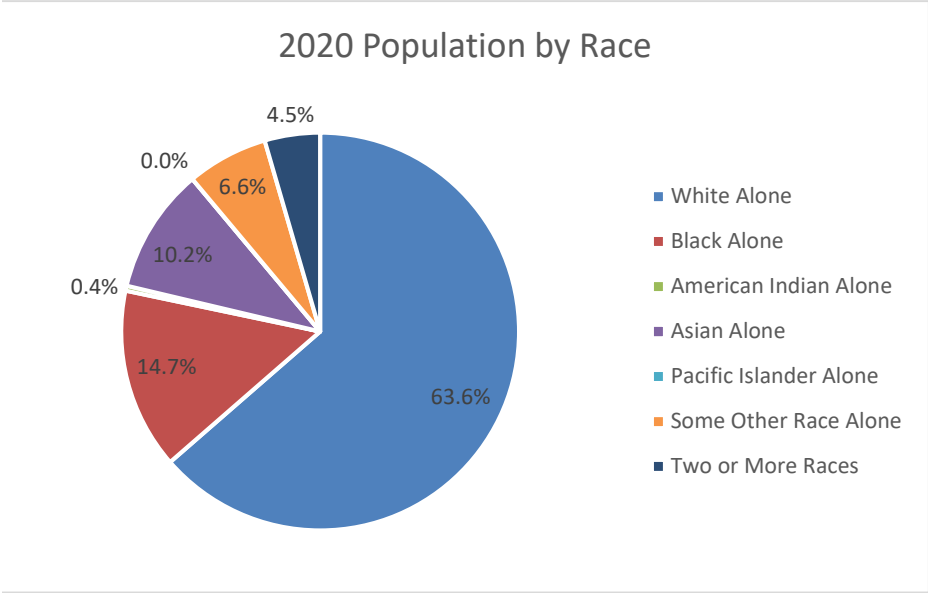


Figure 2.6: 2020 Population by Race

The number of people who identify as being of Hispanic Origin is anticipated to increase by 4,464 residents. The significance in these figures is that the recreational needs of a greater variety and larger quantity of cultural user groups will accompany the predicted shift in population. For example, the Hispanic culture is traditionally familial in its recreation endeavors. Subsequently, this group will likely seek multigenerational programming. This group will also benefit from playgrounds, pavilions with grills, open space, and walkability with neighborhood-to-park connectivity.

Working to help ensure intentional outreach and inclusion of cultural groups in future program development, park planning, and service implementation will be an important factor in keeping services relevant.

## Gender

Figure 2.7 depicts the percentage of the Town's population by gender category in 2010, and Figure 2.8 depicts the predicted percentage by gender category for 2025.

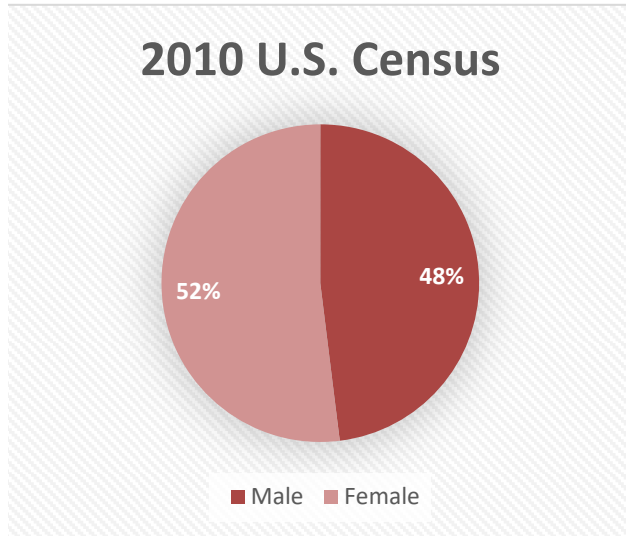


Figure 2.7: 2010 Population by Gender

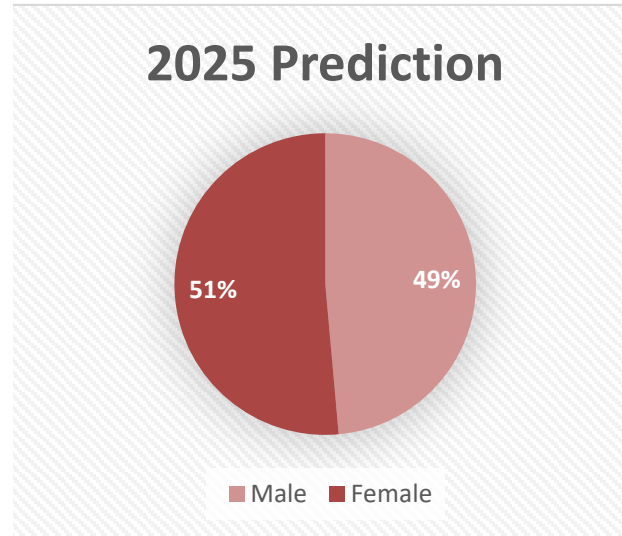


Figure 2.8: 2025 Population by Gender

The shifts observed in Figures 2.7 and 2.8 are also represented in Figure 2.9:

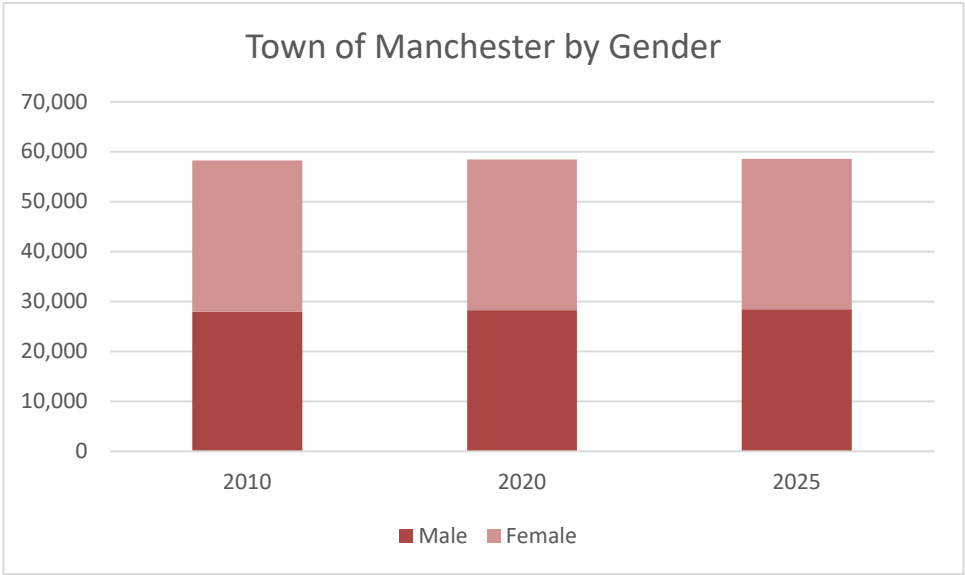


Figure 2.9: Population by Gender

Predicted shifts in population by from 2010 to 2025 are very minimal, with a 0.01 percentage point increase in the male population and a 0.01 percentage point decrease in the female population. Figure 2.9 demonstrates that the 27,980 males in 2010 will increase to 28,455 in 2025, or 475 additional male residents. The predicted number of females in the Town is 30,123 in 2025, down from 30,261 in 2010 (a decrease of 138 female residents).



## Household Income

The median household income in the Town was \$70,645 in 2020, 11.8% greater than the U.S. national median income of \$68,400 in 2020. A 6.4% increase is projected by 2025, which would bring the median household income to \$75,167. Figure 10 shows the breakdown by income level.

Just under 24% of Town households have an annual household income less than \$35,000. As a public recreation provider, the Town should continue to provide services at price points that meet the needs of all income levels.

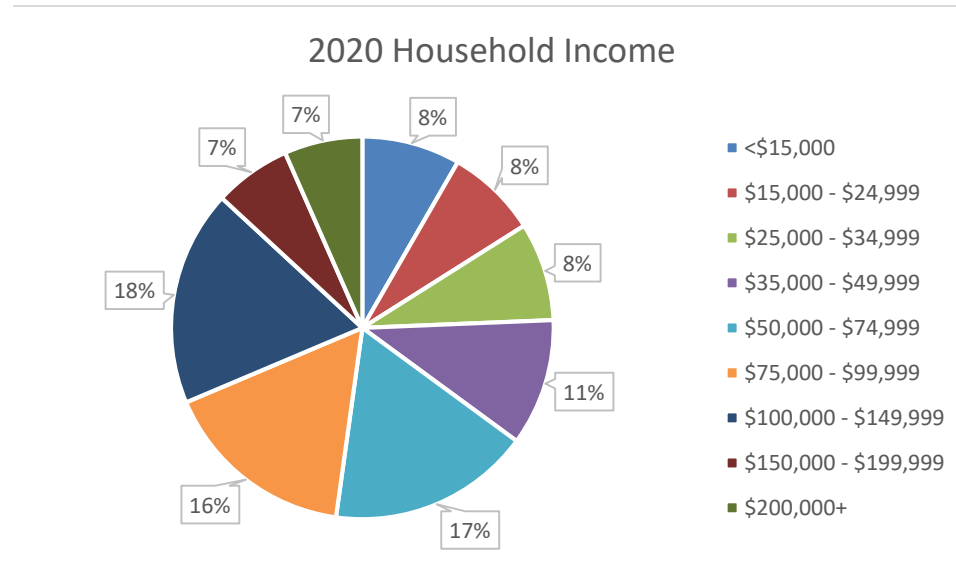


Figure 2.10: 2020 Household Income

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Over the course of 11 weeks, the Consulting team conducted 24 focus groups, which included 137 people, to obtain input for the Plan. These meetings included Town staff, elected officials, civic leaders, the Youth Commission, the Conservation Commission, BOE leaders, representatives from youth athletic organizations, the Community Y Board, the Advisory Recreation and Park Commission, the School Repurposing Committee, the Land Acquisition Committee, a group of Manchester seniors, four classes of upperclassmen from Manchester High School, and a group focused on DEI. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, all focus groups except one were held via Zoom.

## STRENGTHS OF RECREATION PROGRAMMING

In every focus group where the question, “What does the Leisure, Families, and Recreation Department do well?” was asked, there were many positive comments, and no one had to think long or hard about the topic in order to respond—the accolades flowed freely. Many people at the focus groups noted that the Department has done quite a bit of work in the past 5 to 10 years improving infrastructure such as fencing, bleachers, and courts, and these efforts are appreciated and should be continued.

The most frequent comments can be categorized into four themes: connection to Manchester, strong programming efforts, collaboration, and branding.

### Connection to Manchester



### Strong Programming Efforts



### Collaboration



### Branding



*“WHAT DOES THE LEISURE,  
FAMILIES, AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT DO WELL?”*





## Connection to Manchester

The Department has a strong connection to the Town and a reputation for building strong relationships with families. The Department includes staff with many diverse talents—not merely staff with a background in recreation. Many staff reside in and are well known in the community have a long tenure with the Town. The staff have a reputation for connecting families to a wide network of services available in the area and providing programming for hard-to-reach residents such as those who identify as LGBTQ+ and those who have a family member with a disability.

There is a sense that staff are in touch with the needs of the community, able to adapt to changing circumstances, and responsive to shifting demographics. Focus group attendees mentioned staff have been flexible during the COVID-19 health emergency and able to continue to provide necessary services allowing residents to remain active.







## Strong Programming Efforts

The Town has a history of providing well-organized, well-run, and affordable recreation programs that meet the needs of the community. Residents see Town staff as progressive and proactive, providing a wide range of opportunities allowing youth in the community to grow into adulthood able to make positive contributions to society. Many families have long-term relationships with programs, which reinforces the notion of success.

In addition to offering traditional recreation programs, Department staff are willing to explore different and unique opportunities for residents to enjoy. The new Rec on the Run program is an example of the staff's creativity. The Town has a strong swim lesson program, does a great job with arts programming, and provides an impressive Farmers Market. Although the Town has a reputation for strong programming, there is an apparent need for more early childhood programs, additional opportunities for teens, and adaptive recreation.





## Collaboration

The Department has positive and productive relationships with other Town departments and seeks input regarding programs, facilities, and services. In addition to working well with Public Works, the Department coordinates well with the Finance and Budget departments.

A good example of the coordination that exists is the recently constructed cricket field. The Department expressed to Public Works staff that the public was interested in building a field. While the field was being built, Department staff worked on creating programming. In addition to collaborating within the Town, Department staff are also engaged with outside groups providing spaces for grassroots organizations to host meetings.







## Branding

Over the past several years, the Department has focused on its brand, and those efforts are very evident. A full-time position was modified to include marketing tasks, and this has clearly made a difference in the department's ability to get the word out about programs and services. There is new signage and wayfinding in parks, which was mentioned several times during the focus groups. The Department has increased outreach through social media and created an identity for itself that has been well received by the community. Online registration was noted as being convenient for residents.

Although the Department has vastly increased its branding, there is a perceived need to reach teens and more residents who do not speak English. A couple of focus group attendees suggested the park ambassador program at Charter Oak be expanded to other parks in order to develop relationships with residents. Residents made many positive comments made about Better Manchester Magazine with a few suggesting it should be improved with glossy paper.





## FUTURE CHALLENGES

The focus group attendees highlighted some of the big challenges the Department is likely to face in the near future, including financial issues, DEI needs, aging recreation facilities, and safety and security.

### Financial Challenges

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the budget and future financing for programming and maintenance. There is uncertainty about the future of aid from the State of CT. It is possible the Capital Improvement Program could experience some significant cuts if state and local revenues are greatly reduced as anticipated. Although some residents would like to see more low-cost or free recreation programs to increase participation, others mentioned the need for more self-supporting programs as the Town faces budget challenges.

Several times during the focus group meetings, people mentioned that the “wish list” for new capital improvements is likely to be far longer than realistic funding scenarios, and expectations need to be managed. If funding is reduced, the Town will need to consider reallocation, innovation, and new efficiencies in order to continue to meet community needs and expectations. Key staff in the Finance Department suggested that an approach be taken to help ensure smaller, annual victories can occur, which would mean planning for smaller-scope projects where funding will be realistic and available.

A common sentiment shared during the focus groups was that the Town could do a better job maintaining existing facilities before building new amenities and facilities. People made many positive comments about the new sprayground, but some people expressed that older park amenities should have been maintained better before building something new. Another concern brought up in several meetings was that the volunteer pool is aging out, and it is not being replaced by young volunteers. It will be costly for the Town to take over what the volunteer groups provide—specifically at the Hockanum River Linear Trail. Trail usage has increased during the COVID-19 outbreak, so there are greater maintenance needs with fewer people volunteering to provide the necessary upkeep.

## DEI

DEI were common topics discussed by nearly all 24 focus groups. The Town is diverse, but some residents perceive more outreach is needed to all ethnic and minority groups. It was noted that some low-income groups are not aware of all opportunities in the Town and do not venture beyond their neighborhoods to explore or enjoy other park sites, programs, or services. This was evident during the four focus groups with high school seniors. Nearly all were students of color and had little awareness regarding what the Town provides in terms of park and recreation services. Few had ever attended a program. Most were aware, however, of Charter Oak Park.

Some residents perceive that some areas of the Town receive little to no investment. Some people are concerned about accessibility in the Town. The Community Y, for example, does not have an elevator. Many focus group attendees feel that the Town should take steps so all parks, facilities, programs, and services are accessible to all, regardless of ability. A few mentioned that the Town should look into programs such as Best Buddies or Special Olympics and be more proactive in reaching special populations.

Overall, residents view diversity as a cornerstone of the community, distinguishing it from surrounding towns. Town staff hope to utilize this strength to create new partnerships. A few people suggested the Town take the lead and develop programs to engage residents and educate the community on issues relating to racial injustice. In addition, many people expressed that focusing on DEI initiatives and working to ensure all Town programs and services are inclusive and equitable should be a community-wide priority.

## Aging Recreation Facilities

The age and condition of the active recreation facilities owned and operated by the Town was brought up at nearly every focus group. The resident's perception is that the indoor recreation facilities are aging, and too few to support growth or program expansion. All outdoor pools were built decades ago, as were the Community Y and the Mahoney Recreation Center. Residents also questioned whether the small buildings in several parks are currently being used. The overall sentiment is these aging facilities need to be vastly upgraded or replaced in order to meet the needs of current and future residents.

## Robertson Park/Community Y/Union Pond Park

Robertson Park is not seen as very inviting, as it is set back off the road and not particularly visually appealing. The Community Y is a very old building that the Town does not own—many do not see the potential of the Union Pond area; it is hidden, and the sentiment is that many residents do not know it exists. Several focus group attendees suggested that Robertson Park and the Union Pond area be improved and combined due to their proximity.

The Town maintains the Community Y and operates it as a small recreation center. The building includes a registration desk and accommodates drop-in basketball, youth sports, summer camp, a small fitness center, and exercise classes. During the focus groups, people often commented that the Community Y is “tired and worn” and long past its prime. The building is not ADA-accessible, and the space has limitations for recreation programming due to size and layout.

Several people suggested demolishing the Community Y and renovating Robertson School for recreation purposes by centralizing activities in this location and possibly adding additional space for seniors, a large gym, and an indoor pool. Another suggestion was to have the library take over the Y and the Town take over Robertson School and create a campus of sorts with improved facilities.

There was common sentiment the entire site (Robertson Park, Community Y, and Union Pond Park) should be studied together and linkages created in order to establish a “recreation hub” in this part of Town. Some view this site as unsafe and a place for illegal activity. Although there have been some recent improvements made at the site, such as the construction of a new cricket field, the perception is there is still work to be done.

Once the School Repurposing Committee comes up with a definitive final plan for Robertson School, the rest of the site could be enhanced to support the new use of this facility. As this is likely a long-term project, many people suggested the Town determine what can be done now to improve Robertson Park and Union Pond Park for current use.





Some ideas generated during the focus groups included making these two parks more of a community destination by:

- Improving the general maintenance and cleaning of the site (some dumping is occurring)
- Improving connections to this site via multiuse trails or a better pedestrian-oriented roadside infrastructure
- Adding a walk-over to improve safety as traffic in the area can be dangerous
- Adding a bike lane to encourage riding to this recreation area
- Increasing parking so more activities can be offered in this location
- Cleaning up the pond, improving the access to the water, and adding recreational opportunities
- Revamping the picnic area, adding more picnic tables, and making it more aesthetically appealing
- Constructing a new skate park
- Adding electrical junction boxes in key locations for special events
- Promoting the fitness trail to increase usage
- Creating a linkage to the Cheney Rail Trail
- Improving wayfinding and signage throughout the site

The notion is that improvements to this site will increase usage and therefore decrease the unwanted activities that residents perceive are occurring. There are few community anchors north of this site except for a shopping mall. Residents expressed a desire to invest in and develop this area on the north side of the Town as a one-stop-shop location for families for recreation and leisure activities.

## Washington School/Mahoney Recreation Center

Similar to the Robertson Park/Community Y/ Union Pond Park area, residents suggested a holistic approach in analyzing these facilities. It was clear during the focus groups that Town investment is needed in this area and, specifically, Mahoney Recreation Center is in need of a facelift. The perception is that these facilities are underutilized and the gymnasium needs upgrades. Although the outdoor pool in this park is attractive and appealing, the rest of the amenities do not seem to be as well received. This area is viewed as one with a great deal of possibility.

Some focus group attendees expressed this site is small, and amenities and activities should be geared toward the surrounding neighborhood. Others felt this site should be enhanced to attract people from other parts of Town. Regardless of the final park designation (neighborhood park or community park), this site is located in a dense neighborhood, and the needs of those living in the area should be considered. A common theme expressed at the focus groups was that improvements to Washington School are needed and would greatly increase its usage as an indoor recreation space. Focus groups also mentioned integrating the school, park, satellite Town offices, and health services to provide more access to Town services to the surrounding neighborhood.

The Town had planned to renovate Washington School, but a section of it has been designated as a National Historic Landmark, so the cost to retrofit that portion of the building became prohibitive. Another possibility suggested was to convert the 1920s section of the school into a space for the BOE, freeing up space at Robertson School for recreational purposes.

Many focus group attendees expressed it is important to keep a recreation center in this area of Town. The School District has already vacated the school in this area, and removing both a school and recreation center would not be appropriate. Many people commented that the Town should provide an anchor in this area, such as enhanced recreation space.

Additional suggestions to improve this site included:

- Relocating parking
- Creating opportunities for health and wellness activities
- Adding a venue for special events (either small events for the neighborhood or large events for the entire community, depending on the mission of the site)
- Creating terraced seating in the area surrounding the pool
- Adding picnic tables to make the space more inviting
- Repurposing the portion of the school not currently used for recreation into affordable housing, senior living, or three-bedroom rental units



## Outdoor Pools

The Town has a large aquatics program, but the majority of five outdoor pools were built decades ago. Most are lacking modern amenities (zero depth entry, water slides, spray features, vortexes, or sand play areas). With outdoor swimming a popular summer activity in the Town, a few residents suggested all of the pools be evaluated to determine potential upgrades and the associated costs. Following an existing conditions study of each, the Town could determine a phased plan to make improvements over time. The Town should also determine if five small outdoor pool facilities are needed or if fewer, larger, and more modern facilities are desired.

## Safety and Security

The safety and security for current and potential park and trail users is a concern. It was mentioned that crime and safety are a concern. Some commented they will not go to Town parks alone, as they fear for their safety. It was suggested that what was done at Center Springs Park to improve safety concerns (lifting of the tree canopy and increasing visibility in and out of the park) could be done elsewhere to increase park usage.

Another safety concern discussed is the raised decking network of paths at the Hockanum Trail. These have deteriorated over time, and they have not been repaired. The perception is this is now a liability concern. Historically, a group of volunteers has maintained this trail, but the Town can no longer depend on them due to their advanced age and limited abilities. Many focus group attendees expressed that the Town needs to do a better job of maintaining these trails for safety and aesthetic reasons.

A comment often repeated during the focus groups is the Town should have a strong emphasis on safety and security at all Town facilities and parks. The senior focus group was especially concerned about safety and suggested installing call boxes on some key trails for emergency purposes and adding more lighting (especially at Nathan Hale).



## PARK FOCUS AREA

In addition to the discussions regarding the Robertson Park/Community Y/Union Pond Park and the Washington School/Mahoney Recreation Center, several other parks were mentioned as sites that should receive some focused planning efforts. The sites mentioned most often included Case Mountain, Center Springs Park, the Nike Site, and the Hockanum River Linear Trail. There were many positive comments regarding the recent upgrades to Charter Oak Park, and residents would like to see these types of improvements made to other Town parks.



### Case Mountain

This is the largest recreation area in Town, and, according to some focus group attendees, the site has been neglected and now needs a great deal of attention. The trail system, which is now maintained by volunteers, should be improved and promoted to engage more people (especially youth). Residents suggested that the Case Lodge that sits on this site is an eyesore and a target for vandalism. The sentiment expressed was that it should be removed and something erected in its place that allows visitors to enjoy the pond. Several people suggested that the Town create a Master Plan with public input to determine the future of this site. The Plan should take into account the wildlife diversity and address the many erosion and drainage issues that exist on the site.

## Center Springs Park

A Master Plan was approved for this park in 2018 and should be reviewed and incorporated into the final Plan. Many residents would like to see the original master plan completed. This park is still underutilized, and there is an opportunity to improve it and increase visitation. For now, some focus group attendees feel there is nothing to draw people. It appears to be designated as a passive park, but adding some amenities would enhance it and increase usage. There was a suggestion this might be a good location for a new senior center. One focus group discussed the possibility of adding some amenities that could be utilized in the evening, such as a restaurant, to increase park usage at night.

### CENTER SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN

2018



## Nike Site

Some focus group attendees suggested the Nike Site is a great location for park expansion. Although the softball fields are in good condition, the park is lacking other amenities. A place that provided a variety of amenities where families could go together would be ideal. A playground would be a nice addition. This site is on the southernmost side of Town and is connected to a large piece of property owned by the Water Department that currently allows some recreational activities (primarily hiking). There are opportunities south of this site that could be combined with the Nike Site to become a major destination park.





### Hockanum River Linear Trail

Portions of Hockanum Trail are owned by the Town, portions by the State, and some portions are private easements. The Hockanum Trail is a beloved area that volunteers have maintained for many years. These volunteers are aging, and another solution for maintenance will likely be needed in the near future. This trail was designed as a linear trail, and it needs maintenance in several spots. As it is a footpath, it is difficult to get heavy equipment to certain areas to make repairs. A flood in 2005 resulted in a series of boardwalks that are now in disrepair and in need of replacement.

### Additional suggestions regarding park facilities and amenities

Focus group attendees suggested the following items to improve existing parks:

- Alter the layout of Charter Oak Park to increase parking
- Secure the athletic fields to prevent unpermitted use of facilities
- Add a ropes course at one of the larger park sites
- Create outdoor rental opportunities
- Add more pavilions as they are in high demand during the summer—especially with the COVID-19 health emergency
- Add bike share pods
- Repurpose the ski slope
- Add more Pickleball
- Add practice boards on existing tennis courts
- Replace the skate park (this came up very often and in each of the four high school focus groups)
- Beautify the parks with flowers (as was done in the past)
- Add more park benches



## Additional suggestions regarding park facilities and amenities

Focus group attendees made the following suggestions for additional indoor programming space in the Town:

- Replace the parking lot and club house at the Golf Course—it was noted several times that this facility is very well used and an important amenity in the community
- Add an indoor pool
- Add an indoor ice rink
- Build a soccer dome with two turf fields
- Build a modern community recreation center to meet the needs of current and future populations that could include an indoor pool; a gym; a fitness center; a walking/jogging track; spaces for early childhood programming; social, emotional, and mental health courses and programs; and sports training
- Add satellite senior spaces, or dedicate space to seniors in a new community center



## OTHER RECREATION-RELATED ISSUES

The following is a list of other topics (some suggestions and some questions) mentioned during the focus groups, categorized by miscellaneous, athletic fields, trails, and master plan promotion:

### Miscellaneous

- Some focus group attendees expressed confusion regarding what properties the Town owns and suggested that all Town-owned properties be mapped and categorized and a maintenance plan be created. Was the open space plan completed?
- Some residents expressed an interest in the Town obtaining the “Tree City” designation.
- What is the Town planning to do with the Hills Town Road and Bush Intersection?
- Start using the Great Lawn or consider selling it.
- The landfill site will be closed and will become open space—Mount Manchester. Is there a plan for this space?

### Trails

- Determine the rules, promote the rules, and police the trails owned by the Water Department. The Water Department has pretty walking trails that technically are not supposed to be used. Residents suggested that a decision be made to allow people on the trails for walking and promote the activity or to close the trails and police them. The same is true about dogs—technically, a state statute indicates that dogs are not allowed, but 30% of groups using this site have a dog with them.
- Improve the promotion of trails, as it is difficult to find information on the Town website.
- Increase connectivity and promote the use of the trails throughout Town.
- Add bicycle trails and promote riding a bike to work.

### Athletic Fields

- Discuss proposed athletic field complex capital improvements with athletic affiliate groups to seek input prior to construction or changes being made.
- Create a calendar or utilize schedule management software that will show athletic field availability.

### Master Plan Promotion

- Look for new avenues to communicate the Master Plan with residents.
- Draw in community groups: Town political committees, cultural groups, local businesses.
- Reach out to organizations that deal with children, such as Manchester Community Health Resources and CT Department of Children and Families.
- Translate the Master Plan into different languages.
- Less is more—provide a summary of highlights.
- Reach out to the owners/landlords of large apartment complexes and ask for their help in promoting the Master Plan.



## POTENTIAL SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

The following list of suggestions is related to potential new sponsors and partners for the Town to enhance promotion as well as the implementation of programs and services:

- Engage the local schools: Improving the coordination with the local schools was mentioned often and in several different ways. It was suggested the communication efforts between the Department, the sports affiliate groups, and the high school could be improved by streamlining the coordination of fields and athletic facilities. Currently, there is confusion regarding which agency is responsible for each facility. It was also noted the schools should be utilized for recreation program promotion and that the Department might be able to assist with some of the current challenges with e-learning.
- Engage local businesses: Rotary paid for the Music Park—there might be other groups that would provide resources for park amenities, events, services, or programs.
- Seek sponsors for events.
- There are many special events for kids and seniors; the Town should focus on the ages in between.
- Research the Hartford Foundation; it has provided grant money to the Town in the past. The new leadership at this organization is receptive and has a great relationship with the Town.

- A nonprofit initiated the dog park, which was built on Town property, and the nonprofit retains responsibilities. There will be needs in the future. The Town has the ability to remove trees and move woodchips. There is an opportunity to work more collaboratively with this group to provide the community this facility.
- Work more closely with the Land Trust in creating connections between existing facilities.
- Improve the connection and communication with existing volunteer groups.
- Find a community partner for the construction of a new community center.
- Consider creating a volunteer park ambassador force creating more of a presence in parks and on trails—especially those utilized less frequently.

There is a common sentiment that the Town should conduct more public engagement prior to adding or changing parks or facilities, and there should be a standard system in place to gather public input.







## SUMMARY OF IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

To augment the focus groups, the Town sponsored (socially distanced) in-person engagement events (Trick or Treat for Our Parks) at four sites on Saturday, October 24, including three parks (Charter Oak, Northwest, and Center Memorial) and Squire Village. Participants and staff wore masks and followed recommended public health guidelines to help ensure the health and safety of everyone in attendance. The events included Trick or Treat bags for kids and two activities for adults related to the Master Plan. Several Town staff and a consultant were at each site throughout the event.

The first activity asked attendees how the Town should invest in park and recreation. Each adult was given a plastic bag with \$1,000 in play money (10 \$100 bills). Each person was asked to divide their money and place into six different boxes depending on how they thought the Town should focus resources. The boxes included the following:

- **Community Center:** Build a new multiservice center to include recreation, senior services, and human services
- **Recreation Centers:** Renovate existing facilities (Community Y and Mahoney Recreation Center)
- **Maintenance:** Hire additional staff to support and maintain clean and safe parks, trails, and facilities
- **Outdoor Swimming Pools:** Upgrade existing pools and new spraygrounds
- **Trails and Bikeways:** Creating connections between the hiking, biking, and greenways
- **Parks:** Upgrade playgrounds, pavilions, athletic fields, and hard surface courts

Based on the voting totals at each site, Town staff have estimated over 400 people visited one of the four sites. The voting results from the money boxes are depicted in Table 2.3:

Table 2.3: Voting Totals for Future Town Investment

	Squire Village	Charter Oak	Memorial	Northwest	Total	Rank
Community Center	60	118	132	83	393	6
Recreation Centers	55	97	165	98	415	5
Maintenance	35	190	127	170	522	3
Outdoor Swimming Pools	110	138	189	144	581	1
Trails and Bikeways	40	132	140	104	416	4
Parks	40	189	167	151	547	2

Those who attended the October 24 in-person engagement said they would like the Town to make future investments in the following priority order:

1. Upgrade existing outdoor pools and new spraygrounds
2. Upgrade playgrounds, pavilions, athletic fields, and hard surface courts
3. Hire additional staff to support and maintain clean and safe parks, trails, and facilities
4. Focus on hiking and biking trails and greenways with completed connections
5. Renovate the existing recreation centers, including the Community Y and Mahoney Rec
6. Build a new multiservice center to include recreation, senior services, and human services

Table 2.4: Complete Tally of Voting for Future Park Study

For the second activity, each adult was provided two stickers and asked to indicate on a Town park map which parks they visit most frequently. The five parks with the highest totals were:

- Charter Oak Park (77)
- Center Springs Park (62)
- Northwest Park (42)
- Case Mountain (31)
- Salters Pool (27)

The complete tally of voting is depicted in Table 2.4.

	Northwest	Squire Village	Center Memorial	Charter Oak	Total
Charter Oak Park	10	14	17	36	77
Center Springs Park	8	6	19	29	62
Northwest Park	3		19	20	42
Case Mountain	7	1	18	5	31
Salters Pool	5		6	16	27
Union Pond	3		8	8	19
Wickham Park	1		3	14	18
Robertson	12		2	1	15
Wilfred Rd Park		14			14
Kennedy Soccer Fields			5	7	12
Verplanck Little League Field		4	6		10
New State Park		1	1	7	9
Center Memorial Park		1	6		7
West Side Park			3	3	6
Bagshaw			3		3
East Catholic Soccer Field		1	2		3
Manchester Regional Academy Field	1	2			3
Veterans Memorial Soccer Field			1	2	3
Camp Kennedy		2			2
Martin School		2			2
East Coast Greenway			1		1
MCC Baseball Field			1		1
Mt. Nebo	1				1
Nathan Hale		1			1
Nike Site		1			1



## In-Person Engagement Conducted at the Community Y

From November 2 through November 30, 2020, visitors to the Community Y had the opportunity to provide input about how the Town should focus resources in the future. This exercise was identical to the in-person engagement held on October 24 (10 \$100 bills were provided, and the boxes were labeled the same), but it was a self-directed activity. A total of 13 people participated, and the results were as follows:

- Community Center 50 bills/votes
- Recreation Center 28 bills/votes
- Trails and Bikeways 16 bills/votes
- Outdoor Pools 14 bills/votes
- Maintenance 13 bills/votes
- Parks 9 bills/votes



## SUMMARY OF VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING

### Speak Up for Our Parks

On November 19, the Town staff and consultants held a virtual town hall meeting to provide an additional opportunity for residents to get involved in the master planning process. Registration for this event was required. Following registration, the Consulting team sent an email including the link to the Zoom meeting. The meeting included a presentation by the consultants providing an overview of the master planning process. In addition, two polling questions were offered. The consultants encouraged participants to enter questions into the chat box throughout the meeting.

Of the 91 people registered for the meeting, 79 participated. Of the 79 who joined the meeting, 9 were Town staff, 6 were consultants, and 1 was an elected official. A total of 21 people were in the meeting for less than 30 minutes, leaving 42 members of the public who attended and stayed for the entire discussion.

The first polling question was asked twice in order to obtain attendees' top two choices to the question: "As part of the Master Planning process, five Manchester parks will be reviewed and studied in detail. Which park or combination of parks is MOST IMPORTANT to you or your family and should receive more time and attention?"

The choices offered were:

- Case Mountain
- Center Memorial Park
- Center Springs Park
- Charter Oak/Mt. Nebo
- Globe Hollow/Camp Kennedy
- Nike Site
- Northwest Park
- Robertson Park/Union Pond Park
- West Side Oval/Washington School/Mahoney Rec
- Wilfred Road Park

The first time the question was asked, the following were the top four responses:

- Case Mountain (29%)
- Charter Oak/Mt. Nebo (21%)
- Center Springs Park (17%)
- Robertson Park/Union Pond Park (12%)

The second time the question was asked, the following were the top four responses:

- Case Mountain (24%)
- Center Springs Park (15%)
- Charter Oak Park/Mt. Nebo (15%)
- Robertson Park/Union Pond Park (15%)

It is very clear from the results these four park sites are important to those who attended the virtual town hall meeting.

Similar to the in-person engagement session, the second polling question asked: "What is your top choice for where you would like Manchester to focus resources over the next 5 to 10 years?" and the responses were as follows:

1. Maintenance – Hire additional staff to support and maintain clean and safe parks, trails, and facilities (26%)
2. Trails and Bikeways – Hiking and biking trails and greenways with completed connections (21%)
3. Parks – Upgrades to playgrounds, pavilions, athletic fields, and courts (19%)
4. Community Center – Build a new multiservice community center to include recreation, senior services, and human services (14%)
5. Recreation Centers – Renovate existing facilities/Community Y and Mahoney Recreation Center (12%)
6. Outdoor Swimming Pools – Upgrades to existing pools and new spraygrounds (7%)

It is interesting to note the highest-rated item during the in-person engagement (upgrades to the outdoor pools) was the lowest-rated item at the virtual town hall meeting.

During the meeting, residents posted several questions in the chat box. The consulting team and Town staff answered those questions and posted on the Your Voice Matters website.

## STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS


As part of the public process, ETC administered a Park and recreation Needs Assessment Survey for the Town in the fall of 2020. The survey results helped to establish priorities for the future development of park and recreation facilities, programs, and services within the Town. In addition, the survey reinforces a resident-driven approach to planning that will enrich the future of the community and positively affect the lives of the Town's residents. The complete survey results and are included in a separate document.

## Methodology

ETC mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the Town. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online at [www.ManchesterSurvey.org](http://www.ManchesterSurvey.org). Ten days after ETC mailed the surveys, ETC sent emails to the households that received a survey to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the online version of the survey to make it easy for residents to respond. To prevent people who are not residents of the Town from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter his/her home address prior to submission.

The goal was to obtain at least 350 completed surveys from residents. The goal was exceeded with a total of 405 residents completing the survey. The overall results for the sample of 405 households have a precision of at least 4.8% at the 95% level of confidence.

What Will The Future of Our Parks and Facilities Look Like?




**Thursday, November 19th | 7:00 – 8:00 PM**

Join this 1-hour interactive Zoom Meeting with the Town of Manchester and consultants from Berry Dunn and help shape the future of Manchester's Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services.


This special community engagement session will provide information about the Parks and Facilities Master Plan process and prepare the community for the next steps on the planning process.


**Registration**  
Registration is required and space is limited. You must complete the registration form by 1:00 PM on November 19<sup>th</sup> to receive the meeting information. Follow the QR Code to register.



<https://manchestertc.seamlessdocs.com/1/ParkMasterPlanMeeting>

Stay Connected on [yvmct.com](http://yvmct.com).

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PARKS, TRAILS, AND FACILITIES 

 presented by  
Department of Leisure, Family and Recreation  
41 Center Street • 647-3084 • [reonline.townofmanchester.org](http://reonline.townofmanchester.org)



RESULTS

Demographics

Of those who responded to the question regarding gender, it was nearly evenly split at 50.9% female, 48.6% male, 0.2% non-binary and 0.2% not responding. The actual gender makeup of the Town is 52% female and 48% male. The ages of the respondents were also fairly matched around 20% as depicted in Table 2.5:

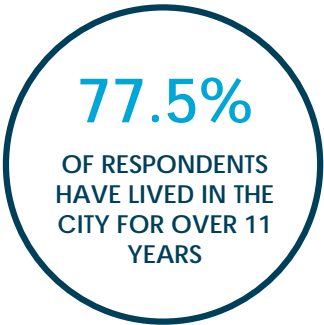


Table 2.5: Survey Respondents by Age

Response %	Age Range
20.1%	Between the ages of 18 and 34 years
18.1%	Between the ages of 35 and 44 years
19.8%	Between the ages of 45 and 54 years
20.6%	Between the ages of 55 and 64 years
21.4%	Over 65 years

A total of 247 respondents (or 61%) indicate that they are white; 65 respondents (or 16%) indicate that they are Black or African-American; 55 respondents (or 13.6%) indicate that they Hispanic or Latino; and 39 respondents (or 9.6%) indicate that they are Asian. The other 2.2% indicate that they are American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or Other. These figures are in close alignment with the actual demographics of the Town.

The total number of residents that respondents included in their family count in the survey is 948. In regard to age, 43% of household members are 20 to 54 years; 41% of household members are 55 years and older; and 17% are 19 years or younger.

The vast majority (77.5%) of Manchester survey respondents have lived in the community for 11 years or more with less than 23% residing there 10 years or fewer. In terms of income, 176 households (43.5%) earn less than \$75,000 with 152 households (37.5%) earning more than \$75,000. A total of 77 respondents (19%) did not respond to the question regarding household income.

## Modes of Transportation

Respondents were asked to check all of the ways that they or a member of their household travel to recreation facilities and amenities, and the top three responses include driving (79%), walking (51%), and biking (29%).

## Barriers to Participation and Usage

The top three answers provided when asked for all of the reasons that prevent the respondent or a member of their household from using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs in the Town of Manchester more often was “I do not know what is being offered” at 28%; followed by “I do not know locations of parks and facilities” at 18%; and “security is insufficient” at 17%.

## Additional Taxes

Survey respondents were asked about the additional amount they would be willing to pay per month to fund the improvements to existing parks and facilities and the development of new parks and facilities that are most important to their household. The greatest percentage of respondents (22.2%) are not interested in paying additional taxes to fund improvements to parks and facilities. The second highest percentage included households that are willing to pay an additional \$10 or more per month (21.2%) following closely by those willing to pay \$4 or \$5 more per month (21%). A total of 8.9% of the respondents did not answer the question. The pie chart below depicts all the responses.

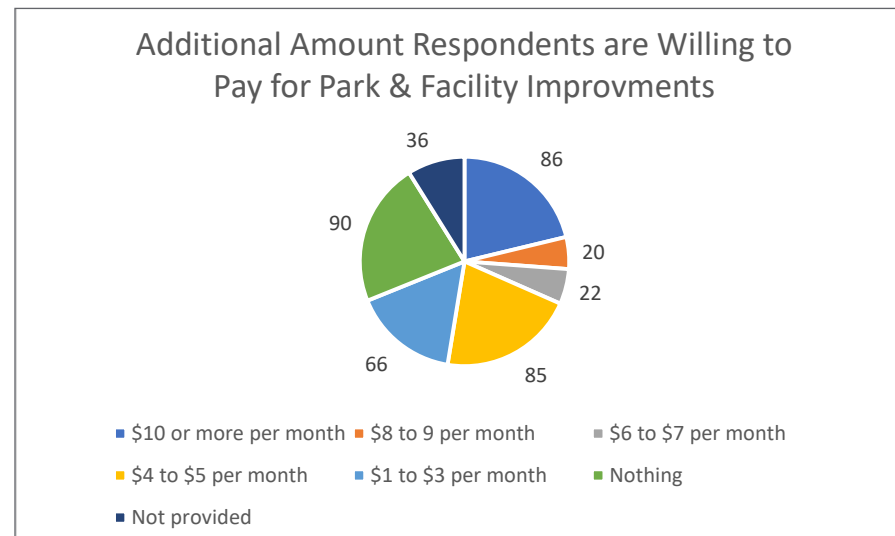
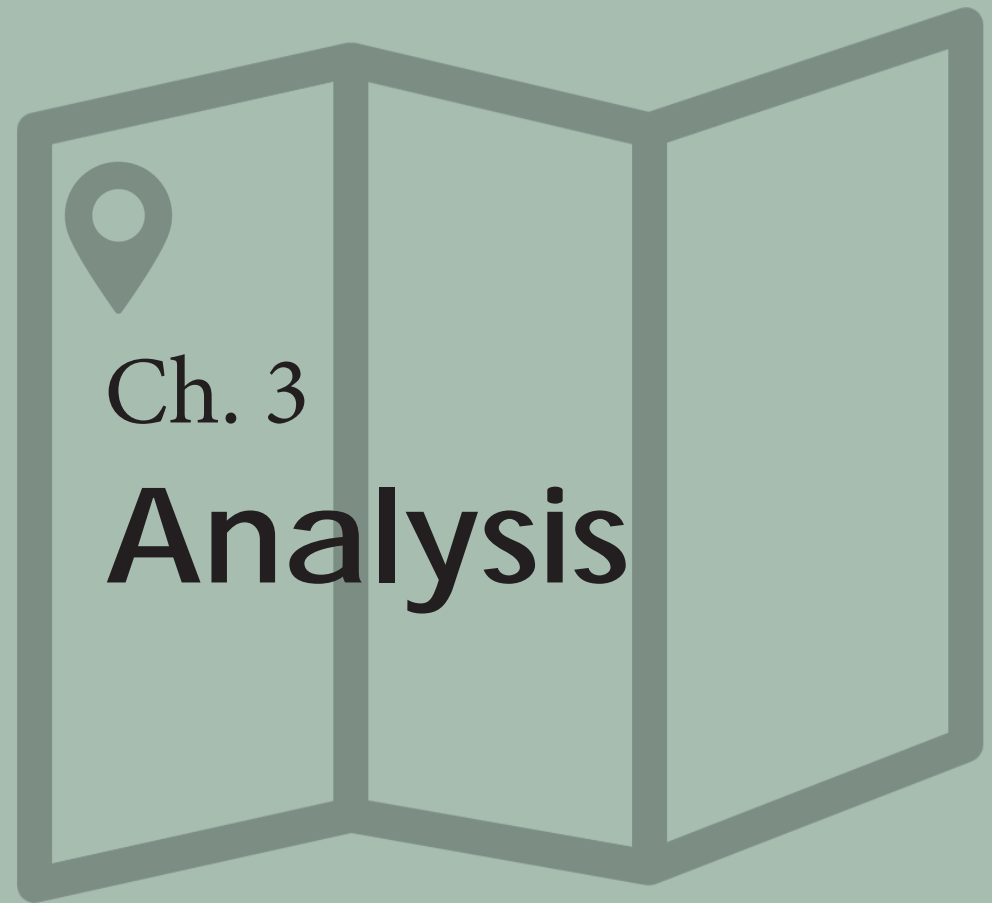


Figure 2.11: Willingness to Pay for Improvements





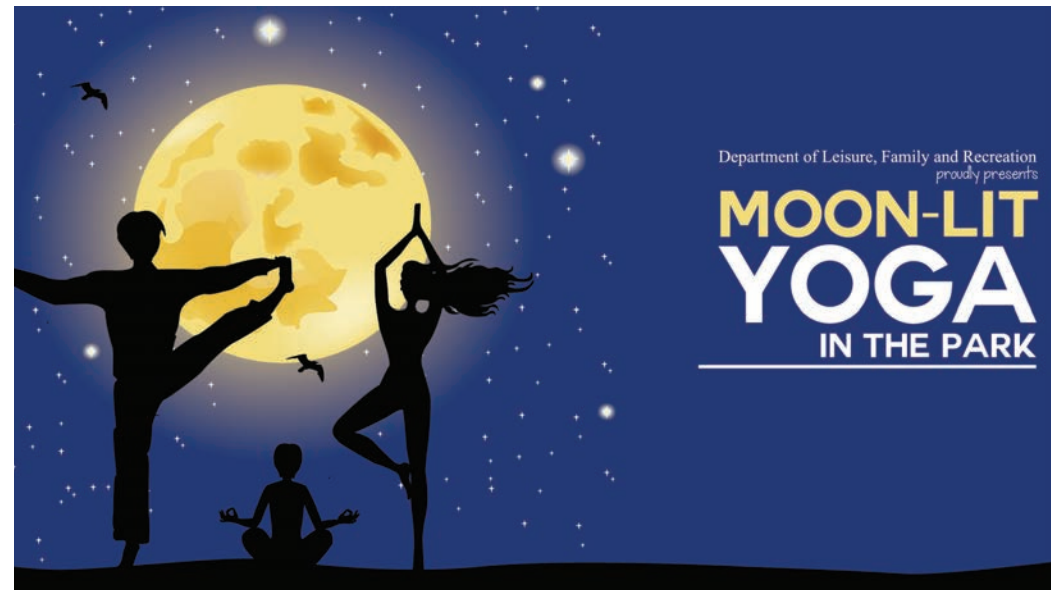


# RECREATION PROGRAM ANALYSIS

## Introduction and Review of Process

BerryDunn assessed the recreation programs and services offered by the Town through a series of individual analyses. This recreation program analysis offers detailed insight into the Town's recreation program offerings, and helps to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future program direction. This report also assists with identifying program categories, programming gaps, and future program considerations.

The reports and data that informed the recreation assessment process included the Department's seasonal program and event catalog for summer 2019, fall 2019, and winter/spring 2019/2020 and outcomes and conditions program metric worksheets completed by staff. Internal meetings and focus groups with staff and a variety of stakeholders also provided context and awareness of the Department's recreation program offerings. Results from the community engagement efforts – including the in-person community engagement, the virtual town hall, and a statistically valid survey – provided insight into the community's perspective.



## Mission / Purpose Statement

The Town provides recreation programming from different areas including the Youth Service Bureau, the Neighborhoods and Families Division, the Recreation Division, and the Senior Center. The Youth Service Bureau, Neighborhoods and Families Division, and Recreation Division are housed within the Leisure, Families, and Recreation Department while the Senior Center is housed in the Human Services Department.

### *Recreation Division*

#### **MISSION**

Enhancing the quality of life of all Manchester residents

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide a comprehensive program of recreational opportunities for all ages and ability levels and to provide safe, well maintained, well managed park and recreation facilities.

#### **DEPARTMENT INCLUSION STATEMENT**

The Department of Leisure, Families, and Recreation recognizes that equitable access to recreation programs is an inherent right to each of our citizens. As such, every effort is made to ensure that programs and services enrich our residents both socially and physically regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. Our goal is to continually evolve with our community in an effort to best satisfy the needs of both our current and future residents. Here, everyone is welcome.

### *Youth Service Bureau*

#### **MISSION**

Supporting Manchester youth in their journey to become responsible and productive citizens

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide specialized programs designed to meet the diverse needs of Manchester's youth and families

To outreach and advocate for youth and families

To provide venues for the voice of Manchester youth

To collaborate and coordinate with community and other resources to provide comprehensive services

### *Neighborhoods & Families Division*

#### **MISSION**

Partnering with the community to create a thriving and better Manchester.

#### **PURPOSE**

To better serve the needs of Manchester's youth, families and neighborhoods by coordinating communications among policymakers, service providers, and the public and encouraging community partnerships that promote healthy neighborhoods, healthy families and an inclusive community.

### *Senior Center*

#### **MISSION**

To promote socialization, community involvement, independence, and enrichment of older adults in Manchester. The center offers a comprehensive array of activities and services to meet the needs and interest of Manchester's seniors, encourages healthy lifestyles and supports lifelong learning.



## CONNECTION TO PUBLIC/STAFF ENGAGEMENT

### High-Level Themes from Employee Engagement Related to Recreation Programming

As part of the engagement process, the Consulting team met with six groups of staff from five departments:

- Youth Service Bureau
- Town Leadership
- Budget and Finance
- Public Works
- Leisure, Families, and Recreation
- Planning

This section includes the Town staff perspective regarding recreation programming.

Overall, the staff sentiment is that the Town does a great job of providing recreation programs for a wide variety of people—including harder-to-reach populations. Programs have a reputation of being organized and well-attended, and the Department has extended beyond traditional programming to offer new, creative offerings. Staff throughout the agency agree that DEI should be priorities when executing current programs and planning new opportunities. Helping to ensure that all programs and town property are inclusive and equitable is very important.

There could be more sharing of available facility space between the Recreation Division and the Youth Service Bureau; however, all programming staff are hampered by a lack of quality, accessible, indoor space. Current recreation facilities are aging and too few in number to support program growth or expansion. This includes the senior population, who have grown out of their current space at the Senior Center. The Community Y Recreation Center is not owned by the Town and it is very old, tired looking, and not accessible to those with a physical disability (there is no elevator). All staff agree that improvements to indoor facility space and expanded opportunities are important for the future of the Town. With some public schools still needing renovations, and the aging library, all staff realize that it will take time to address and improve all of the Town's indoor facility needs.

Per the Town staff, there are several groups that are currently underserved, including teens and children with disabilities. New indoor programming spaces could help address these deficiencies, but until that can be accomplished, other opportunities should be explored.

Staff suggested that an evaluation of existing partnerships be conducted to determine if the existing agreements are reciprocal in nature. Some staff sense that the Town gives far more to partners than it receives.

Creating new public/private partnerships was also a common theme as well as adding revenue generating venues through these types of partnerships. A private café was suggested to be included in a public park to increase traffic. The Budget and Finance staff would like to see more self-sustaining programs offered to offset the current subsidies to the Leisure, Families, and Recreation Department. Some recreation staff members are concerned about the increase in minimum wage to \$15/hour in July 2023 and how that will impact the overall budget.

Following the retirement of several staff whose positions were not filled, there is a perception that the Town is lacking recreation programmers and that new staff are needed to fill in the gaps.

## High-Level Themes from Public Engagement Related to Recreation Programming

The Consulting team met with 12 community groups and four classes of high school students as part of the community engagement. The community groups included:

- Community Leaders
- Conservation Commission
- School Leadership
- YMCA Board of Trustees
- Youth Athletic League Representatives
- Youth Commission
- A DEI group
- Civic Leaders
- Senior Center members
- School Repurposing Committee
- Land Acquisition Committee

Similar to the staff focus groups, those who attended the community group meetings believe that the Department offers many great programs and is responsive to the community and the shifting demographics. Focus group attendees mentioned several successful programs, including swim lessons, youth summer camps, sports (adult softball), youth programs (especially for families in lower income brackets), Rec on the Run, senior programming, family programs, and the Farmers Market. The Town's response (flexibility) during the COVID-19 outbreak was complimented by several focus group attendees.

A common theme throughout these community meetings was the need to make programming more accessible to those with disabilities—children with physical disabilities and those on the autism spectrum were mentioned specifically. Programs such as Best Buddies and Special Olympics were suggested. These are both currently offered by the BOE, and the Department supports these programs with advertising and staff. More advertising might be needed to get the word out. Following the difficult year due to the COVID-19 outbreak, there is also a great need for programs that address social, emotional, and mental health issues.

DEI were mentioned at every single community meeting—from the teens through the seniors. Residents view diversity as a cornerstone of the community and want to ensure that there are opportunities for everyone. Providing programming for people of different cultures and reaching residents who do not speak English (specifically those in the Latino community) and people of color were mentioned as priorities. One specific suggestion was to have an ethnic month for all of the groups in Manchester to educate residents about different cultures. In addition to new programming, a few people who attended these meetings suggested that the Town take the lead hosting conversations on race relations, social justice, and diversity planning within the community.

A partnership exists between the Department and the School District, but many focus group attendees suggested that efforts be made to strengthen and enhance this relationship to improve programming possibilities and program promotion. It was also suggested that more sponsorships be sought to reduce the Town's expenses for some events. The need for public/private partnerships was also mentioned, with two groups suggesting that a restaurant be added to Center Springs (which gets very dark at night) or Northwest Park to increase traffic and to add some activities to these locations.

New indoor program space was discussed at nearly every community focus group. The community is keenly aware that the Community Y Recreation Center is old and that it would cost a great deal of money to renovate it to the level that is needed. A new recreation center, an indoor pool (the high school pools are cold for the competitive swimmers), an indoor ice rink, an indoor track, and indoor turf fields were all suggested as Town needs.

The community focus group attendees made many suggestions for new programs, including:

- More access to kayaking and paddleboarding—and more access to water in general
- More alternatives to traditional team sports
- A new skate park to provide opportunities for local youth
- An extended swimming season (the pool closes in early August when it is still warm)
- Continue to add new programs that can be taught and attended virtually
- Tai Chi in the parks
- With the addition of a public orchard, food forests, urban agriculture, and a community kitchen, educate people how to grow their own food and also work to reduce local hunger
- English as a Second Language
- Entrepreneur training for youth
- Programs for children right after school

Several attendees in the four groups of high school students acknowledged that they know very little regarding Town recreation programming, and there is a desire to be more connected. They all suggested additional social media channels as a means to reach them more effectively.

### Needs Assessment Survey Results related to Recreation Programming

As part of the public input process, ETC randomly distributed a community-wide survey, and a total of 405 residents participated. The sample size had a precision of at least +/- 4.8 at the 95% level of confidence, which indicated a statistically valid sample. These results provide an estimate of the total number of households in the Town that have a specific need or desire related to facility and program use.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated that someone in their household participated in recreation programs offered by the Town during the past 18 to 24 months, and 93% of those indicated that programs were either “excellent” or “good.” The ETC database national average for program attendance is 32%, and 80% indicate that programs are “excellent” or “good.”

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 29 different programs and to rate how well their needs for each program are currently being met. The five activities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need are:

- Fitness and wellness programs (7,249 households)
- Boating, kayaking, and canoing (6,046 households)
- Yoga, Pilates, and Zumba (5,509 households)
- History and museums (5,483 households)
- Outdoor and adventure recreation (5,282 households)



The full chart of the number of households that have a need for a specific activity and whose needs are partly met is below:

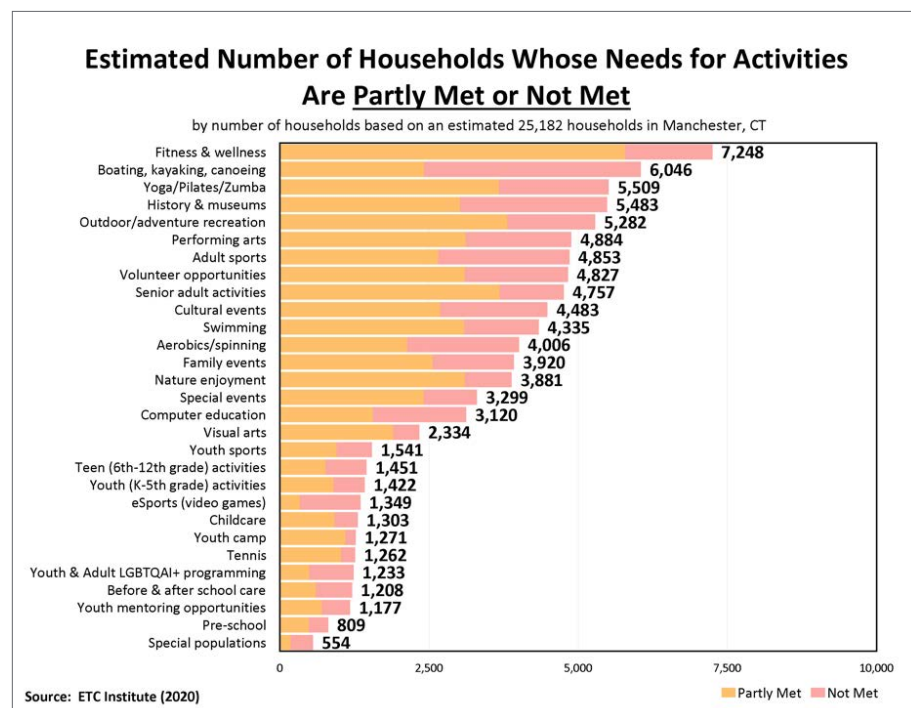


Figure 3.1: ETC Survey Results – Needs Partly or Not Met

The full list of activities and their importance to Town households is below:

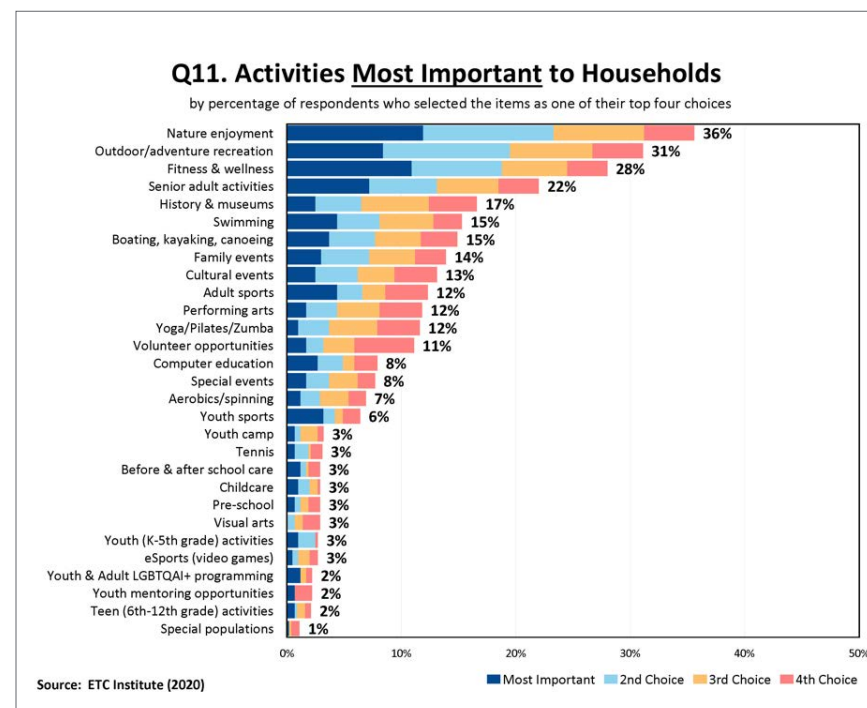


Figure 3.2: ETC Survey – Activities Most Important to Households

Overall, the five most important programs to Town household were:



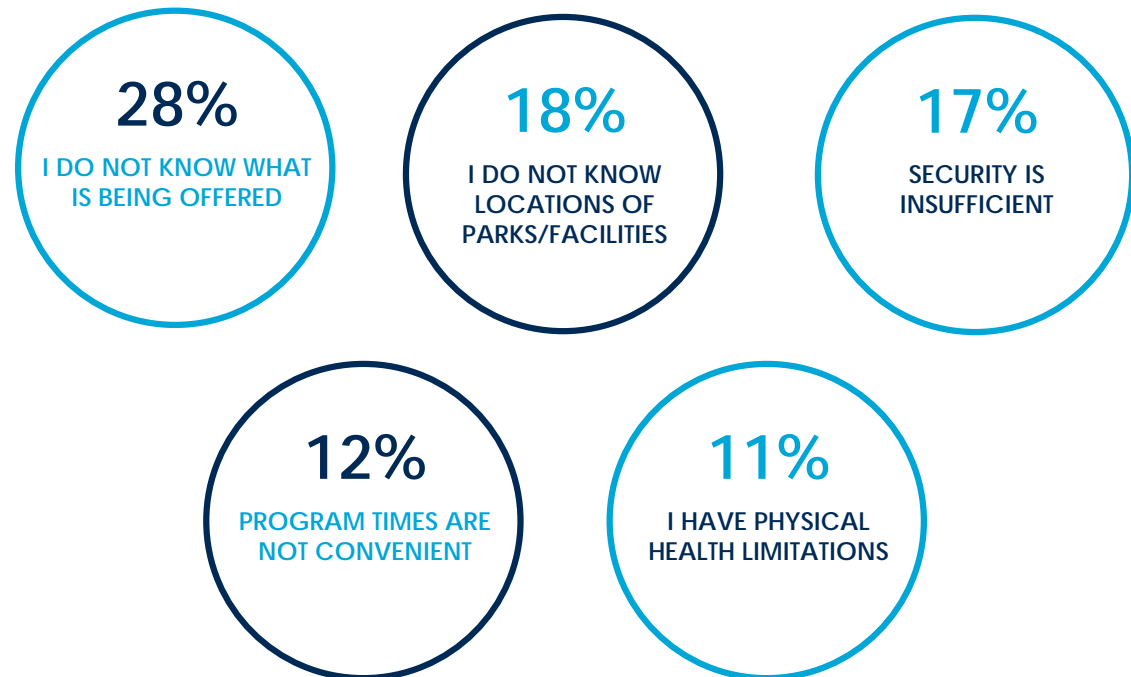
## Priority Investment Rating

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC to provide organizations with an objective means for evaluating the priority that should be placed on future investments for parks, facilities, and programming. The PIR equally weighs the importance that residents place on an activity and how many residents have unmet needs for the activity. The top six activities slated as a high-priority investment for the Town were:

- Fitness and wellness (PIR = 179)
- Outdoor and adventure recreation (PIR = 160)
- Nature enjoyment (PIR = 154)
- Senior adult activities (PIR = 127)
- Boating, kayaking, and canoing (PIR = 125)
- History and museums (PIR = 122)

The Town is the top choice when residents were asked where households take part in recreation activities at 64%, with neighboring cities coming in a distant second at 32%. Nationally, the local community preference is 46%.

The top five reasons that prevent residents from participating in Town programs include:



## Your Voice Matters Survey Results

In addition to the statistically valid survey that ETC conducted, the same survey was posted on the Town's website, Your Voice Matters (YVM) from December 22, 2020, through February 12, 2021. A total of 79 people responded to this survey. Although there were a few minor differences, the overall results of this survey were not much different than the results from the statistically valid survey.

The table below highlights the key differences in the results. The first survey column refers to the statistically valid survey (Valid) that was mailed to Town residents randomly, and the second column refers to the survey that was posted on the Town's website, YVM.

Table 3.1: Differences Between Responses to Valid Survey and YVM Survey

Survey Questions	% Valid	% YVM	% Increase
Percentage of households that participated recreation programs offered by the Town during the past 18 – 24 months.	28.4%	44.3%	15.9%
Percentage of households that participated in 4 – 6 recreation programs offered by the Town during the past 18 – 24 months.	14.8%	20%	5.2%
Percentage of households that rated ease of use of website as very satisfied.	15.7%	25.8%	10.1%
Percentage of households that rated ease of online registration process as very satisfied.	15.7%	27.6%	11.9%
Percentage of households that rated quality of customer service for registration as very satisfied.	27%	50%	23%



It makes sense that these figures are higher on the second survey as program users are more likely to be following Town news and seek out the survey on YVM to complete.

The survey included a question asking which 4 activities out of a list of 29 were most important to the respondent’s household. Only five program types had a difference of 5 percentage points or more including those in the table below. The column titled Valid refers to the statistically valid survey, whereas the column that reads YVM refers to the survey posted on the Town’s website.

Table 3.2: Differences in Survey Response Regarding Activity Preferences

Top Four Activities that are the Most Important to the Household	% Valid	% YVM	% Change
Cultural Events	13.1%	22.8%	+9.7%
Family Events	13.8%	6.3%	-7.5%
Nature Enjoyment (which rated the highest on both sets of results)	35.6%	44.3%	+8.7%
Senior Adult Activities	22%	29.1%	+7.1%
Swimming	15.3%	20.3%	+5%

In both surveys, the top four activities that respondents and their families participate in most often are in the same order with similar percentages and include the following:

Table 3.3: Responses from Both Surveys

Activity	% Valid	% YVM
1. Nature Enjoyment	39.8%	57%
2. Outdoor/Adventure Recreation	30.6%	36.7%
3. Fitness and Wellness	22.5%	25.3%
4. Swimming	15.3%	20.3%
Swimming	15.3%	20.3%

In the statistically valid survey, the gender of the respondents was near even at 50.9% female and 48.6% male (with 0.4% non-binary or not provided). Whereas in the YVM survey, 65.8% of respondents were female and 26.6% were male. A greater percentage of those over the age of 65 years completed the YVM survey (32.9%) compared to statistically valid survey (20.7%). In addition, more respondents completing the YVM survey identified as white (82.3%) compared to those in the statistically valid survey (61%). There were no big differences in the makeup of the household, the number of years lived in the Town, or the household income.

## RECREATION PROGRAM REVIEW

### Program Categories

The following is a list of major program categories that park and recreation agencies throughout the country typically provide. This list helps to identify if there any common program areas not offered by an agency. Most agencies offer a majority of programs. In matching the Town's inventory of programs against this list, over half of the program areas, 61.7%, are represented. (Orange text represents programs not offered.) The consulting team is not suggesting that the Town offer all of these programs. This is a comparison of the programs that the Town offers compared to the BerryDunn database of completed recreation assessments from across the country.

As the Town adds new programs to its mix, the items in red areas would be appropriate areas of focus.

ACTIVE ADULTS	GYMNASTICS/TUMBLING	SENIORS
AQUATICS	HISTORICAL PROGRAMS	SPECIAL/COMMUNITY EVENTS
BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL	HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS	SPECIALTY CAMPS
BIKING	HORSEBACK RIDING	SPORTS INSTRUCTION
BIRTHDAY PARTY SERVICES	ICE SKATING/HOCKEY	SPORTS LEAGUES/ADULTS
CHILDCARE	LANGUAGE ARTS	SPORTS LEAGUES/YOUTH
COOKING	LIFELONG LEARNING	STEM/STEAM
DANCE	MARTIAL ARTS	SUMMER CAMP (DAY-LONG)
DAY/SCHOOL BREAK CAMPS	MUSIC	SUSTAINABILITY/GREEN
ESPORTS	OPEN GYM	TEEN
EARLY CHILDHOOD	OUTDOOR ADVENTURE	TENNIS
ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURE	PETS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION
EXTREME SPORTS	PERFORMING ARTS	TRIPS
FITNESS	PICKLEBALL	VISUAL ARTS
GENERAL INTEREST	PRESCHOOL	WELLNESS
GOLF	RUNNING/WALKING	

## CORE PROGRAMS

The following section provides details about the core program areas offered by the Town. The Department staff have defined core program types as early childhood, youth, youth sports, camps, teens, aquatics, adults, adult sports, seniors, and family.

### Early Childhood

The Youth Service Bureau offers several early childhood programs that include a few fee-based classes (Toddler Time and Creative Kids) as well as a number of drop-in opportunities (such as Open Play Day, Cradle to Crayons, and Mommy & Me Playgroup). All of these programs are held at the Northwest Park Early Childhood Center. The Recreation Division offers several instructional sports programs (soccer, baseball, and basketball) for this age group. Many early childhood swim lesson opportunities are offered at all five outdoor pools and the high school pools, too. Many of the Department's family special events are designed for this age group including the Aqua Egg Hunt and Swimming with Santa.

### Youth

The Neighborhood and Families Division and the Youth Service Bureau both offer programs to Manchester youth (including Lego programs and Art Lab after School). The Recreation Division also provides a wide variety of swim lesson options at the five outdoor pools and the high school pools. Several programs offered bridge the gap between youth and teens, including PFLAG, Mother Daughter Circle, Boys Council, Sib Shop, and Journey. These are all free programs offered by the Youth Service Bureau.

### Youth Sports

The Recreation Division provides a number of youth sports opportunities, including basketball leagues and clinics, indoor and outdoor tennis instruction, Jukido, and indoor soccer. Over 57% of survey respondents who indicated that their family had a need for youth sports felt their needs are fully or mostly met. Many youth sports leagues are provided by Town affiliate organizations.

### Camps

A series of six-week summer camps are offered by the Recreation Division at a variety of locations. Four sites are offered for ages 5 to 11 years, one camp is offered for ages 11 to 13 years, and one camp is offered for ages 13 to 15 years, and a Recreation Leader in Training program that is offered for 15-year-olds. In addition, there are several youth sports specialty camps that are each held for a week including baseball, basketball, soccer (ages 4 to 6 years); Multi-Sport, baseball, basketball, flag football, soccer, and track and field (ages 7 to 12 years).





## Teens

The Youth Service Bureau offers a number of teen programs throughout the year, including: Write Out Loud Open Mic Night, Teen Center Discussion, Boys Week, Journey, Youth & Police Excursions, Sib Shop, and Boyz to Men. Via an application process, the Manchester Youth Commission provides input to the Board of Directors on youth issues. The Town offers a free program called PFLAG for teens 13 to 18 years old and a parent to provide support, education, and advocacy for those that are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. In early spring, Lifeguard Training and Water Safety Instructor classes are offered for teens who are interested in jobs lifeguarding or teaching swim lessons. During the summer, the Recreation Division offers teen swim lessons at Waddell Pool.

Most adult programs are offered for ages 18+, so some older teens might participate in these classes (including all the Adult Learnshops and the fitness classes).

## Aquatics

The Town has a very strong swim instruction program offering classes at all five pools during the summer and indoors at the high school pools during the fall, winter, and spring. In addition to providing instruction, a number of other classes are offered, including adult swim lessons, several aquatic fitness classes, lap swim, and special events at the pools. Due to the temperature of the high school pools set for competitive swimmers, there is some desire in the community for an indoor pool.

## Adults

There is a wide variety of adult programming offered by the Department. Popular offerings include many group fitness classes (both in the studio, in parks, and at the pools) and a series of Learnshops that focus on a gardening topics. The Town also offers CPR certification, a workshop focused on vision boards, and a film series with a discussion following.

## Adult Sports

The Recreation Division offers several adult sports leagues each season for different levels of ability. Men's basketball and adult volleyball (men's, women's, and co-ed) are offered during the winter months. Eight softball leagues are offered during the spring and summer at five fields located throughout the Town attracting 62 teams. Although most of the leagues are for men, there is one co-ed league. Four fall softball leagues are also offered at three fields attracting 36 teams (14 of which are co-ed). Beginning and advanced Pickleball instruction is also offered seasonally. Two golf leagues, held at Manchester Country Club, are offered beginning in April—a men's division and a co-ed division.

## Seniors

The Manchester Senior Center offers a wide variety of programs seasonally for residents 60 years of age and older. In order to participate in Senior Center programs, one must purchase a \$10 membership and live within the Town. The Center provides a number of free programs including dominoes, setback, mahjong, pinochle, pokey, bingo, bridge, quilting, painting, digital photography, book group, Wii games, billiards, cribbage, Scrabble, hand and foot, a men's group, friendship circle, senior circle, the Red Hat Society, and a walking group. For a \$5 fee, additional programs are available including ceramics, guided meditation, a community garden plot, and a wide range of fitness classes. The Recreation Division also offers a Senior Drop-In Basketball program as well as a Senior Aqua Fitness class. All of the adult fitness classes, the Learnshops, and the aquatic programs are available to the senior population.

In addition to the programs offered, the Senior Center also provides a number of services such as health screenings, financial assistance, social services, a meal program, and weekly transportation to a number of stores. A variety of day trips, overnight trips, cruises, and trips abroad are offered throughout the year, too.

## Family

Throughout the year, there are a number of programs and events designed for families, including holiday events (Aqua Egg Hunt, Pumpkin Fest, and Swimming with Santa), National Night Out, concerts in the park, Nature Explorers, Rec on the Run, the Manchester Farmers Market, and a variety of events at Charter Oak Park (paint night, movie night, science experiments, moonlit yoga, and tie-dying). During the summer, there are also some family events held at the outdoor pools.



## PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION

The Town staff have defined the core programs as early childhood, youth, youth sports, camps, teens, aquatics, adults, adult sports, seniors, and family. The quantity of total programs offered in each of the core program areas are displayed in Table 3.4 according to season, along with the corresponding percentage of the whole by both program area and season.

Table 3.4: Core Programs by Season

Program Types by Season								
Core Program Area	Summer		Fall		Winter/Spring		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Early Childhood	17	3.9%	23	12.4%	35	14.2%	75	8.7%
Youth Programs	20	4.6%	4	2.2%	17	6.9%	41	4.7%
Youth Sports	25	5.8%	10	5.4%	14	5.7%	49	5.7%
Camps	18	4.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	2.1%
Teens	4	0.9%	10	5.4%	17	6.9%	31	3.6%
Aquatics	166	38.3%	41	22.0%	48	19.4%	255	29.4%
Adult Programs	39	9.0%	26	14.0%	43	17.4%	108	12.5%
Adult Sports	13	3.0%	8	4.3%	16	6.5%	37	4.3%
Seniors	48	11.1%	47	25.3%	51	20.6%	146	16.9%
Family	83	19.2%	17	9.1%	6	2.4%	106	12.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 3.4 captures the quantity of total programming offered by the Town during the year examined (summer 2019, fall 2019, and winter/spring 2019 – 2020) and how the programming was distributed across core program areas. Total programming across the seasons varied; the summer season offered the highest total quantity of programs (433 or 50%) while the fall season had the lowest total (186 or 21.5%). Aquatics programming had the highest total quantity (255), which accounted for nearly 30% of all programming. Conversely, the areas with the lowest quantity of programming were camps (which are only offered in the summer) and teens with 31 (3.6%) and 18 (2.1%), respectively.



## PROGRAM AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

The age segment analysis reviews the distribution of program offerings according to the age segments serviced. For the purposes of this assessment, BerryDunn delineated age categories according to the following age structure:

- Early Childhood, ages 0 – 5 years
- Youth, ages 6 – 12 years
- Teen, ages 13 – 18 years
- Adult, ages 18 – 59 years
- Active Adult, ages 60+ years
- All ages

Table 3.5 displays the Town's 2019 – 2020 program menu's quantity and percentage of programs offered per season and in total, according to each age segment. BerryDunn developed this information by reviewing the summer 2019, fall 2019, and winter/spring 2019/2020 recreation program and event catalogs. The consultant tallied the number of program opportunities geared toward particular age groups for the three seasons. If a program clearly spanned across two age categories (e.g., ages 4 – 7), it was counted in both age categories (e.g., once in the early childhood and once in the youth category). Special events typically service participants in all age groups and were therefore included in the all ages category.

The age distribution within program offerings is as follows:

Table 3.5: Age Segmentation of Programs Offered, by Season

Age Segments of Programs Offered, by Season								
	Summer		Fall		Winter/Spring		Age Segment Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0 - 5 years	197	31.5%	54	25.6%	71	20.2%	322	27.1%
6 - 12 years	191	30.6%	37	17.5%	62	17.6%	290	24.4%
13 - 17 years	21	3.4%	13	6.2%	28	8.0%	62	5.2%
18 - 59 years	53	8.5%	51	24.2%	81	23.0%	185	15.6%
All Ages	75	12.0%	17	8.1%	4	1.1%	96	8.1%
<b>Season Total</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The age group that had the highest quantity of programs planned for them was the 0- to 5-year-old children, at 322 (27.1%) of all programs offered. Programs for youth ages 6 to 12 years was the second-highest total offering with 290 (24.4%). Teens 13 – 17 years were the least likely to have programs designed for them, with 5.2% of total programs available.

Seasonally, the quantity of programs offered in the summer 2019 was the highest at 624. Fall 2019 had the smallest quantity of programs offered, 211.

The teen age category was observed to be a “spillover” recreation category rather than those that were specifically programmed for 13- to 17-year-olds (both from the youth and adult age groups). This is an important note to keep in mind when reviewing the segmentation analysis in this report. Figure 3.3 represents the full year’s programmatic opportunities by specific age segment:

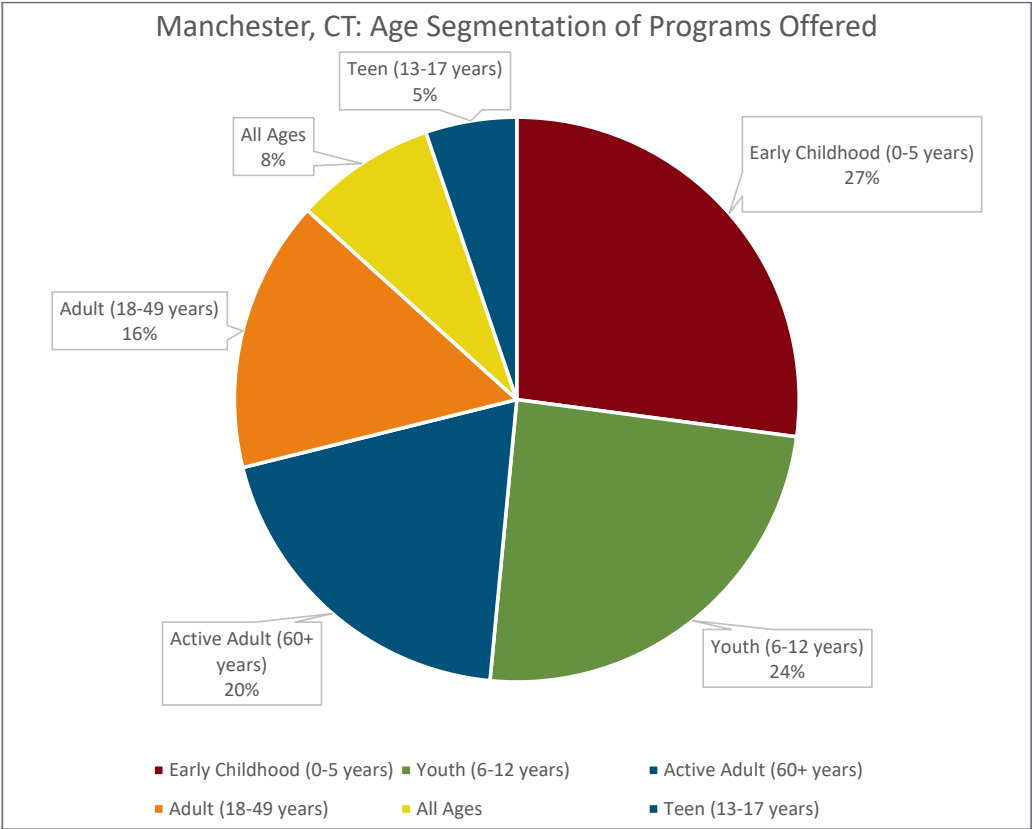


Figure 3.3: Age Segmentation of Programs Offered

A typical goal of a public recreation provider is to offer programs for all ages that balance residential demand with an equitable supply. Figure 3.4 depicts the programming age segmentation that currently exists. The segmentation review can be used to assess the extent to which each age group is being served. The segmentation does not necessarily need to mirror the community’s age demographic in the exact manner; however, an ongoing goal can be to balance the menu toward a reflection of the community makeup. The side-by-side comparison of the Town’s actual population and program offerings in Figure 3.4 demonstrates the current scenario:

Population		Age Category		Programs Offered
22%	←	Youth	→	57%
48%	←	Adult	→	16%
30%	←	Active Adult	→	20%

Figure 3.4: Population vs. Program Menu

As the Town programming staff consider opportunities for expansion, Figure 3.4 can help identify target areas for enhancements, additions, and/or innovations. Extending the programmatic reach to those age segments that have the highest spread between offerings and population is most likely to result in a higher potential of market capture (e.g., adults, with a current 32 percentage-point difference).

Considering the age demographic data of the community, staff should give attention to programming for the growing population of adults over the age of 60. Currently, the Town provides a good menu of offerings for this age group, but in the future, the demand will increase and therefore require additional service provision.

PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

The program assessment included a life cycle analysis of programs selected for review. This type of assessment helps to determine if programming staff need to develop new and more innovative programs, reposition programs that are in the decline stage, or continue with the current balance of life cycle stages. This assessment is based on staff members’ opinions of how their core programs were categorized according to four life cycle stages: introduction, growth, mature, and decline. Table 3.6 outlines the description of those life cycle stages and the Town’s percentage of programs within each stage:

Table 3.6: Life Cycle Stages

Life Cycle Stage	Description	Department Percentage
Introduction	Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	7%
Growth	Moderate and interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	29%
Mature	Steady and reliable performer, but increased competition	53%
Decline	Decreased Registration	11%

Figure 3.6 depicts the percentage of programs in each life cycle stage. A healthy balance between the stages is optimal, with a bulk of the programs in the growth and mature stages. With 64% of all programs in the mature and decline stages, the Town could benefit from an influx of new, innovative programs.



In addition, Town staff should work to decrease the percentage of programs in the decline stage. The staff should review the programs that landed in this category and decide which ones can be re-tooled/re-invested in, and if any can be decommissioned. Also, the staff should review the programs in the mature stage to see if any are in danger of slipping into decline. The consulting team recommends Increasing marketing or redesigning a program to keep it fresh. The recommended goal for staff is to strive for more balance between mature and growth programs.

As a normal part of the planning cycle, there should always be programs in the introduction stage as a means to introduce new and innovative opportunities. As a short-term goal, programming staff could strive to attain a more balanced menu of 10% introduction/32% growth/49% mature/9% decline. A longer-term goal could include 12% introduction/34% growth/46% mature/8% decline.

Figure 3.6 provides a visual representation of all major program categories and their respective spread of life cycle stages.

Staff should strive to have individual areas include programs that fall into all four life cycle stages, with the majority in the Growth and Mature (green and light blue in Figure 3.6). The program area that displays the most balance is aquatics, whereas special events, adult sports, camps, and youth sports demonstrate no programming in the Introduction stages, which indicates the most potential for creating new programming.

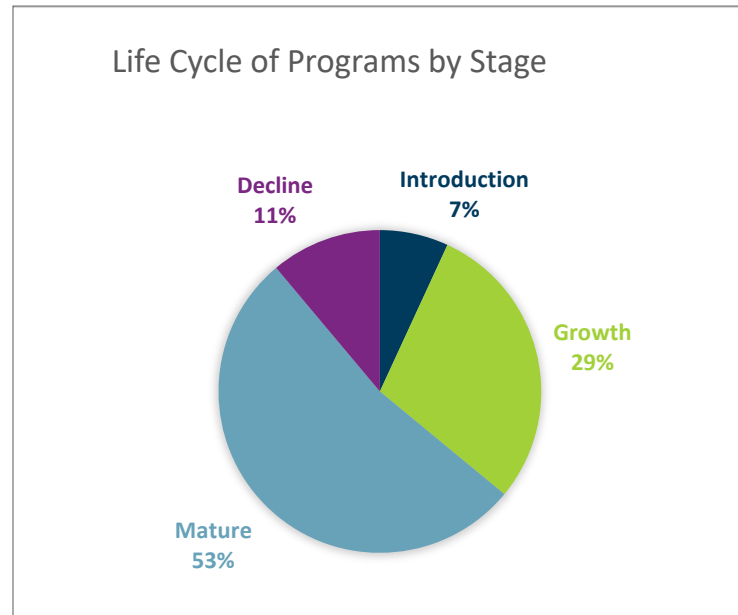


Figure 3.5: Life Cycle Stages

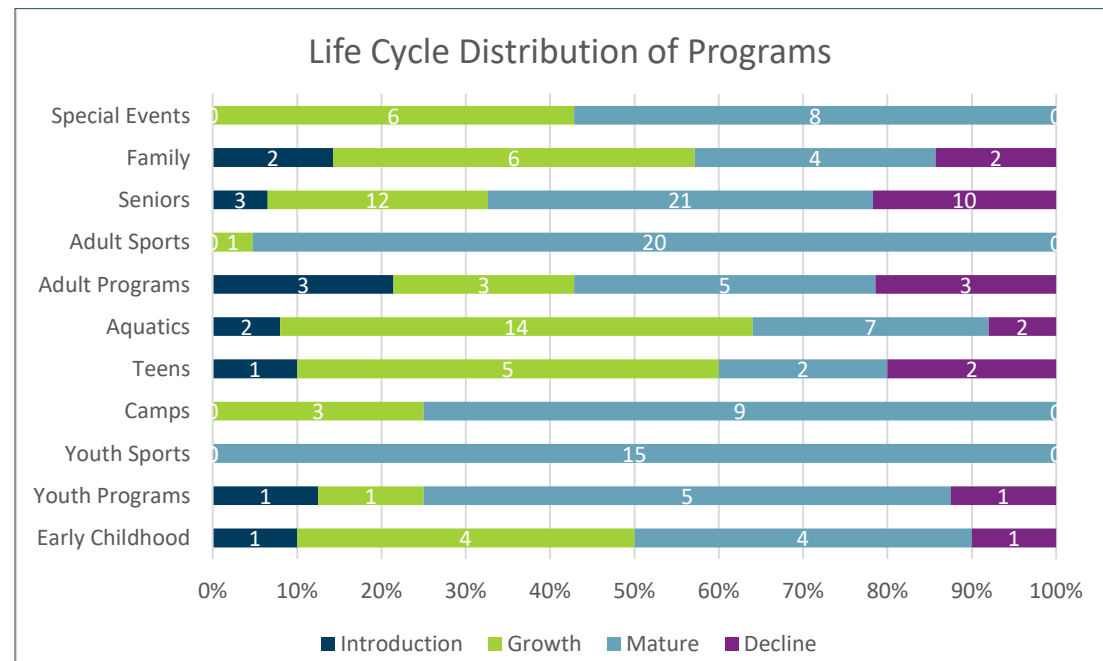


Figure 3.6: Life Cycle Distribution

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The outcomes and conditions analysis uses a quantitative scale to measure qualitative results. BerryDunn asked programming staff to rate their program areas according to seven outcomes and conditions categories, outlined on the following pages:



### Impact

Key categories—such as participant feedback and supervisor observations—can measure the extent to which a program is impactful. Participant feedback gathered through evaluations and dialogue will help measure the level of impact. Supervisors can conduct their observations by taking note of the participant's attentiveness, smiles, and engaging behaviors. It could also be inferred that a program with participants who choose to re-enroll session after session has a positive impact on customers.



### Execution

A service-based agency can gauge its performance by how well it carries out the service. Execution can be measured through instructor and financial performance. Participant feedback data and supervisor observation can inform the degree of the instructor's execution. A service can be considered well executed if the service provided fulfills participant expectations; is a well-organized and comprehensive experience; and if the instructor is engaging, inclusive, and effectively imparts knowledge. Financial performance can be measured against the intended fiscal outcomes, such as the achievement of cost-recovery goals. Measuring financial performance and setting cost-recovery goals are not currently priorities for the Town's recreation programmers, but this is something that could be considered for the future—especially with the increase of minimum wage to \$15/hour in July 2023.



## Community

Two core questions can assess the extent to which the program area positively impacts the community: Does the program foster community collaboration or partnerships? Would there be a significant community impact if the program went away? A park and recreation agency's involvement in the community's provision of leisure services can be achieved using different approaches, depending on the community's need. Coordinated efforts between agencies can pool shared resources to achieve a common leisure goal; alternatively, acting as the community's sole provider can ensure a leisure service is available and accessible to a community.



## Leverage

Sometimes a program adds value to the agency's comprehensive offerings due to a leveraging effect. The program could positively enhance public relations or it could serve as a feeder into other programs.



## Competition

The effect that competition has on service outcomes can be measured by the quantity of providers within a 20-minute drive. A high supply can be considered positive due to the community's increased quantity of choices in service providers; conversely, excess competition can mean that the agency needs to either find its niche or perhaps remove itself from that service provision. An agency can use competition to influence pricing outcomes. Price comparisons against the local competition can help ensure the price point remains affordable for the community. Price comparisons can also help ensure the programs "stay in the market," as prices that are too low could imply low value.



## Equity

Two equity indicators related to recreation service delivery include access and inclusion. The location of a program helps determine whether or not a program is accessible to all neighborhoods. The program's price and the availability of financial assistance can help measure the extent to which the program cost is inclusive for participants within lower income levels. The extent to which a program includes and/or meets the needs of underserved groups can also provide insight into equity performance.



## Diversity

A program menu that offers a variety of program types indicates an effort to reach diverse leisure interests. Additionally, a variety of skill level offerings within a single program signifies an effort to meet diverse leisure needs. The cultural connections with the program content, such as ethnic, artistic, historic, linguistic, culinary, and/or customs included as part of the experience also helps to measure the extent to which a program has a diversity focus.



The seven outcomes and conditions categories were reviewed by programming staff to assess their core program areas. Each outcome or condition was reviewed using a four-point scale, with one being the least effective and four being the most effective. Table 3.7 shows ratings summarized into the seven outcomes and conditions categories.

Table 3.7: Program Area Outcomes and Conditions

Outcomes							
	Impact	Execution	Community	Leverage	Competition	Equity	Diversity
Early Childhood	3.3	3.1	2.1	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.8
Youth Programs	3.4	3.9	3.2	2.6	3.5	3.1	2.9
Youth Sports	3.1	3.2	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.0
Camps	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.3	3.0
Teens	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.6	3.0	3.1
Aquatics	3.5	3.3	2.0	2.5	3.3	2.9	2.5
Adult Programs	2.9	2.8	1.6	1.9	2.8	2.2	2.1
Adult Sports	3.2	3.3	2.9	2.4	3.3	2.8	2.9
Seniors	3.4	2.9	2.2	2.5	3.4	2.5	2.0
Family	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.4	3.2	3.2	2.9
Events	3.2	3.7	2.9	2.1	3.8	2.6	2.7
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Overall, staff ranked impact as the most effective outcome area with a score of 3.3. The lowest scoring area was community at 2.5. The most impactful program is aquatics rated 3.5. The area deemed to have the strongest execution is youth programs rated at 3.9. The Town is most positively impacted by youth and teen programs rated 3.2 and 3.1, respectively. Camps has the highest ranking for leverage at 3.3. Teen programs ranked highest with competition (3.6) and diversity (3.1). The program deemed the most equitable is youth sports at 3.0.

Based on these results, the Town should focus on more impactful community programs as well as intentional leveraging of programs. Specifically, focus on partnerships and collaborations, and tactics by which to cross-promote programs and opportunities for progression within skill-based programs.





## MARKETING SYNOPSIS

In 2019, the Town added a new communications manager position that reports to the deputy general manager. This position focuses on town-wide communication (both internal and external), is responsible for the Town's website, and handles all the social media from a Town perspective.

There are approximately 25 communications ambassadors throughout the Town who focus on marketing and communications within their own area. Some of these staff have knowledge and experience with communications, while others do not. One of the goals of the new communications manager is to build a foundation for all of the ambassadors in order to assist them with their duties and to create consistency across all of the Town departments.

The Department has a position that includes marketing and communication duties as well as programming responsibilities. The Department is fortunate to have someone in the position with knowledge and expertise in the marketing and communications arena. This position is responsible for the creation and distribution of the Better Manchester Magazine that is printed and mailed to residents three times per year and includes the three seasonal program and event catalogs. This magazine is produced digitally the rest of the year on a regular basis when there is content to share.

In addition to producing the Better Manchester Magazine and the seasonal program guides, this staff person handles a number of other marketing and communications tasks, including creating fliers, handling the Recreation Division's social media, and creating a variety of collateral.

Although often asked to provide support for other Town departments, the staff person in this position does not have the capacity to help others due to current workload that includes regular recreation programming.

The seasonal program and event catalogs include programs from the Department (which includes the Youth Service Bureau, the Neighborhoods and Families Division, and the Recreation Division), the Senior Center, and the Library. In addition, the Town includes many events that are sponsored by other organizations that are intended for the entire community and/or held in a Town park. The Youth Service Bureau, and Neighborhoods and Families Division, and the Senior Center all have staff that act as communications ambassadors for the Town and provide marketing for their respective areas.

In the survey results, over 55% of respondents indicated that they learn about Town recreation programs and activities from the program and event catalog in the Better Manchester Magazine. The second highest response to this question was from friends and neighbors (38.8%), newspaper advertisements or articles third at nearly 32%, and social media and email blasts tied for fourth (30.4%).

The survey results indicate that nearly 74% are very satisfied or satisfied with the availability of information about programs and services on the website. Nearly 68% are very satisfied or satisfied with the ease of use of the website. Just under 63% are very satisfied or satisfied with the ease of the online registration process. For those residents who do not take advantage of Town recreation programs or services, just over 28% indicated that they did not know what was being offered.

The Town website has been identified as an important tool that is in need of improvement. Recently, the communications manager created a Request for Proposal to upgrade and improve the website. This project will be started in late spring 2021.





## PROGRAM GUIDE REVIEW

Program guides are tools by which park and recreation departments communicate program and service offerings to the community in printed catalog format. Three Department seasonal program and event catalogs were reviewed: summer 2019, fall 2019, and winter/spring 2019 – 2020.

The covers of the Better Manchester Magazine, which includes the seasonal program and event catalogs, all had bright, full-color covers that were attractive and welcoming and drew the reader's attention to the document. A combination of artwork and photographs are used on the covers and throughout the publication to add color and excitement. The season and year were not clearly communicated on the cover of each catalog. For summer, the season was printed on the bottom of each page, but this was not the case for the fall or winter/spring program and event catalogs.

The program and event catalogs are either 18 or 20 pages. Some pages are dense with program information and include no photos. The program days, dates, times, and fees are all clearly organized. The similar design, layout structure, and organization of information between the seasons all create a synergistic user experience. The font is clear to read, and some photos and artwork were used to add color and interest.

From a catalog perspective, core program and event information was provided as well as directions on how and where to register. Components that were not present, and that could be added to provide a more comprehensive experience, include staff contact information, park locations and amenities, and a park map. It is also not clear to the reader which free programs require advanced registration. Finally, the Department should consider adding more facility rental information. The catalog should serve as a resource for all park and recreation service-related information. Adding a few pages to this publication would allow for more information to be included and some space for additional program photos.

With only one full-time staff person assigned in each area to marketing and communications and the fact that this staff person has additional programming responsibilities, there are limits to the amount of time that can be dedicated to program promotion. At some point in time, the Town may need to consider expanding the resources directed towards this important function.

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the survey results, current programs that are not offered, and age groups where programming is lacking, the Consulting team suggests the Town investigate the following for inclusion in its program mix.

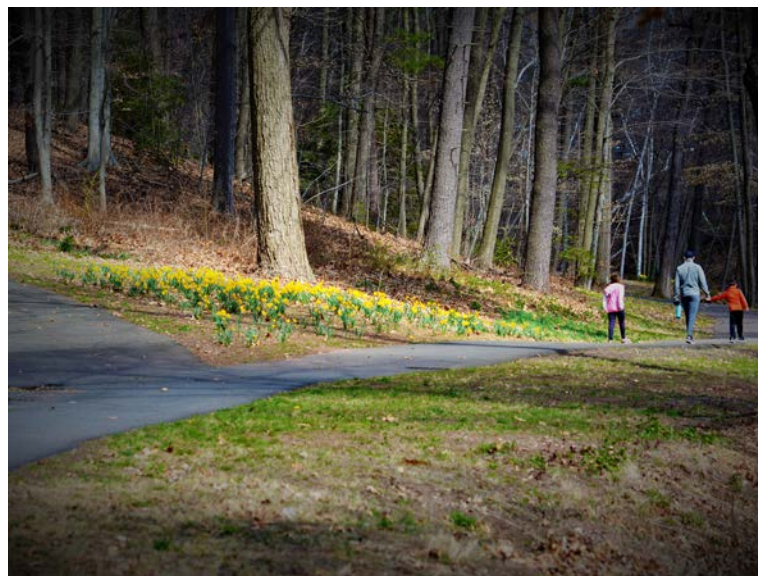
### Nature Enjoyment

The results of the community needs assessment survey show a clear desire for additional programs related to nature enjoyment as it ranked the highest with 59.5% of respondents indicating their household had a need for this type of program. Whether new programs are geared toward children, adults, or families, connecting with nature is becoming more and more important—especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The more exposure to nature, the more likely people are to care for nature. There are many websites that list hundreds of activities for youth (Pinterest has a list of 700 nature activity ideas). For adults, birdwatching is on the rise. Other activities include animal tracking, how to start a garden, sense meditation, and tree and plant identification. Walking, hiking, canoing, boating, and fishing are also activities that provide an interaction with nature.



### Outdoor and Adventure Recreation

There are a number of activities that the Town could offer to attract the teen and adult market. The Town has a number of unique outdoor facilities that could be used for some of these activities with few changes. The activities to consider include BMX (bicycle motocross), climbing (which will be an official Olympic sport beginning in 2021 in Tokyo), camping, hiking, inline skating, parkour, triathlon training, mountain biking, rafting, rock climbing, scuba diving, and skateboarding. This type of activity ranked second highest on the community survey with 53.1% of respondents indicating a desire for these types of activities.



## Wellness Programming

In the survey results, 53.3% of respondents indicated a need for fitness and wellness programming. Of those who have a need, 54% indicate that their needs are partly met or not met. The Town already provides a number of fitness programs for adults and seniors in the studio and in the pool. Wellness programming, however, is missing. Some ideas for new programs include nutrition and healthy living, wellness retreats, healthy shopping and cooking, health fairs, smoking cessation clinics, how to remove meat from your diet, assessing and improving mental health, introduction to meditation, how to improve sleep, and how to increase metabolism, to name a few.

## Boating, Kayaking, and Canoeing

These water-based activities also rated fairly highly in the community needs survey with over 30% of households expressing a need but over 77% indicating that the need is either partly met or not met. With several bodies of water in Town, there is an opportunity to provide these types of instructional classes to the community. Some agencies provide these opportunities through a third party who sets up shop in a park, renting kayaks and canoes.

## Birthday Party Service

Offering birthday parties is a core program area for many park and recreation agencies. Depending on facility availability, birthday parties can be themed and offered at pools, adjacent to gyms, at nature centers, in park shelters, and in multipurpose rooms. Often involving an activity (such as swimming, indoor or outdoor games, a sport, or entertainment) a meal (optional), and cake, many families like to move these events out of their homes in order to include a full class or a big family. Many websites (including Pinterest and HGTV) provide theme ideas for youth in grades 1 – 8. Themes can be built around facilities an agency owns, such as a nature center, gym, or pool. The level of staff support (and cost) can vary from assisting parents or taking full responsibility.





## Childcare

The country had a child care shortage before the pandemic, and it has been estimated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children that thousands of child care facilities will close permanently as a result of COVID-19. People may be looking for municipalities to fill the gap. Planning and implementation can be laborious if state licensing is required or deemed necessary, but park and recreation agencies around the country are offering this type of service to their residents.

## Dance

For many young children, taking a ballet or tap class is one of their first group experiences outside of school. Offering preschool and youth dance programs is a great way to get young families introduced to Town recreation offerings early in life. A multipurpose room will suffice for the introductory levels. As skill increases, a wood dance floor, ballet barres, and mirrors on the walls are necessary. Dance provides children an opportunity to learn about movement and can also provide a venue to perform via a dance recital. Dance is a great way to connect with teens (hip-hop) as well. Many park and recreation agencies form youth dance companies that provide opportunities to perform and to compete.

Dance bolsters physical and mental health by helping to prevent falls, improve posture and flexibility, lift mood, and ease anxiety. Apart from the health benefits, dancing is always a fun way to socialize and make new friends. There are a number of classes that can be successfully offered for adults via a staff instructor or a contractor including ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, line dance, ballroom dance, and belly dance.

## School Break Camps

In addition to summer camps, the Town might consider offering activities when school is not in session due to holidays, institute days, or semester breaks. Parents often have a need for child care on these days, and park and recreation agencies typically have the facilities and the staff to provide this type of service. Similar to summer camps, these days off of school can include sports, games, field trips, swimming, arts and crafts, movies, and more. Before care and after care are typically needed for these types of programs, as well.

## Esports

The Manchester High School has an Esports program/team. Offering opportunities for younger children to get involved in Esports would be a great addition to the Town's recreation offerings. As noted in the Trends section, this is a growing activity across the world. Some park and recreation agencies are building spaces dedicated to this type of activity, but it is not necessary to get started. There are plenty of companies that will provide the equipment and the instruction for Esports programs and events in municipal settings.

## Gymnastics/Tumbling

Similar to youth dance classes, gymnastics and tumbling are popular offerings at park and recreation agencies across the country. Some municipalities collaborate with their high schools to provide instructional classes using their gymnastics equipment when not in use by the school, as purchasing all of the equipment can be cost prohibitive. For a tumbling program, only floor mats are needed.



## Historical Programs

Over 40% of the households that responded to the community survey indicated a need for historical programming. Of those that have a desire for this type of programming, more than half indicated that the needs were partly met or not met. Historical programming can be lectures, tours, trips, or courses. Due to the Town's location and own history, there are a great deal of topics to choose from to create new programming.

## Homeschool Programs

Families that choose to homeschool their children are often looking for programs and facilities to fill the gaps. In some communities, the park and recreation agencies rent spaces to families, such as gyms, art rooms, multipurpose rooms, dance rooms, or pool space, and in others, the agency actually provides the instruction, too. In CT, there is a Homeschool Network that might provide a connection to these families (<https://cthomeschoolnetwork.org/>). There is also a great deal of information on a website called Homeschooling in CT: State Organizations and Local Homeschool Groups (<https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-in-CT/homeschool-organizations-support-groups>). Providing programs to families that homeschool their children can be a service to residents, or it can become a source of revenue depending on how the arrangements are structured.

## Music

Music programs can take many forms in public recreation. Classes that focus on music for moms and their babies can be a great way to introduce young families to the Town's recreation offerings. In addition to classes that focus on singing, some agencies provide lessons on instruments (piano, guitar, etc.). Some public agencies support adult municipal bands or choirs that rehearse and then perform at agencies or events or contractually for other groups.

## Performing Arts

The performing arts includes three disciplines: music, dance, and drama. Each discipline engages the brain, body, and emotions in different ways to encourage confidence and joy in self-expression. There are so many benefits to performing arts programming including building self-confidence, improving communication skills, concentration, and memory, assisting with social-emotional development, increasing academic achievement, and creating fun.

Similar to music offerings, performing arts offerings can be simple or very complex depending on the needs and wants of the community. Programs that provide children an opportunity to be in a play or a musical requiring them to memorize lines, learn dance steps, or sing in a chorus are common within the public park and recreation. Some public agencies have auditoriums allowing elaborate productions presented by preschoolers, youth, teens, adults, families (intergenerational programming), or seniors. For those agencies that do not have performing arts facilities, collaborating with local schools or junior colleges can be a great starting point.

## STEM/STEAM Programs

STEM, STEAM programs—including arts programming—are growing in popularity. Hundreds of businesses and organizations offer these types of programs to preschoolers and youth. Any multipurpose-type space can be used for this type of programming, and there are so many ideas to make these types of programs fun and exciting.

## Youth Fitness

The Town offers many fitness programs for adults and seniors, both in the studio and in the pool. It may be time to expand offerings to the youth population. Many park and recreation agencies are now offering fitness classes designed specifically for youth. As physical education and daily recess has been reduced from school curricula, childhood obesity has increased. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 13 million children between the ages of 2 and 19 years of age are obese, and children who are Hispanic or Black are at greater risk for being obese. Public park and recreation agencies are well poised to help address this serious health problem.

## FEES AND CHARGES

Historically, the Town has operated within a philosophy of charging low fees for programs or no fees at all. According to an NRPA study, the average park and recreation agency in the United States receives a tax subsidy that covers 70% of operating expenses. The remaining 30% is derived from earned revenue, including fees and charges for programs and services. The Town falls below that average as the Department only recovers 10 to 13% of its costs from fees and charges and other earned revenue (prior to COVID-19).

Most agencies throughout the United States have adopted a philosophy that the user of a park and recreation service should bear the cost of providing the service, reducing the need for tax support. Agencies are careful about not excluding participation as a result of financial need of registrants by offering robust scholarship programs and identifying varying levels of cost recovery for programs. For example, an agency may have a low cost-recovery goal for senior programs and a higher cost-recovery goal for adult fitness and wellness programs.

The following narrative provides details about best practices for the determination of appropriate fees and charges, based on BerryDunn's national database of park and recreation agencies, as well as comparisons included within the NRPA Park Metrics program.

Accounting methods vary across municipalities nationwide, especially as they pertain to the identification of indirect costs associated with recreation programming. The Department does have a method of identifying some of the direct costs associated with programs and services (i.e., staff and supplies) to establish a baseline for fees and charges, but it is limited in its approach. Additionally, the Department does not currently fully calculate indirect costs (i.e., overhead), which would provide a more detailed view of the cost of producing services.

Definitions of direct and indirect costs are as follows:

- **Direct Costs** – Costs associated with the particular activity (staff or contractor expense, equipment, supplies) that would not occur if the activity was not offered.
- **Indirect Costs** – Common costs include facility utility costs, permanent salaries (e.g., Director, Administrative, and Human Resources), broad marketing efforts, insurance, etc.

Over a third (35%) of the recreation programs and events offered by the Town from summer 2019 through spring 2020 were free. For recreation programs where fees are charged, the program cost is \$5/hour multiplied by the times of the total number of contact hours. The formula that programmers currently use to calculate the minimum enrollment is as follows:

1. The cost for the instructor is determined by multiplying the instructor class rate by the number of classes.
2. The recreation fee (which is for program supplies) is determined by taking the total instructor cost and multiplying it by 20%.
3. The total cost to operate the program is the total instructor fee plus the total recreation fee.
4. The cost per participant is \$5 multiplied by the number of classes to get the participant fee.
5. The total cost to run the program is then divided by the cost per participant to determine the minimum enrollment number.
6. For courses that are under the minimum enrollment, the instructor rate is adjusted by taking the number below the minimum multiplied by the class fee multiplied by 80% and then divided by the total number of classes. The last step is to subtract the number of classes to get the new pay rate.



The previous list summarizes the six steps the Town generally takes to develop minimum enrollment thresholds and set the initial fee level for programs and services to be offered. And while most of the steps outlined above are common throughout the industry, the adjustment of instructor rates is less so. Though the Town has historically employed this practice in order to account for fluctuations in enrollment levels and perceived ability to pay, it does not reflect best management practices commonly found in fee design. In addition, it does not allow for a more precise calculation to be prescribed to recover a larger portion of the cost of providing the program or service, should the Town so choose.

Some Town program fees, such as swim lessons and youth sports, have been the same for up to 20 years. With costs such as wages going up every year, the Town's subsidy of these programs continues to increase incrementally each year. BerryDunn's recommendation is to develop subsidy-level goals for each program area, calculate existing financial performance for each area, and determine programs that should be assigned with higher fees. It is also important to note that customers associate value with a program's fees. If a fee is very low, a customer may ask if it results in poor quality.

Historically, Town-elected officials made a conscious decision to keep program fees very low in order to ensure that everyone had access. BerryDunn reviewed all Department revenue and expenditures from 2016 to the present in order to create Table 3.8 below. Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 is highlighted in yellow as COVID-19 negatively impacted both program revenue and expenditures.

Table 3.8: Department Revenue, Expense, and Net for Past Three Years

	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21
	actual	actual	actual	actual	projected
<b>Revenue</b>	290,753	244,203	257,306	49,753	271,000
<b>Expenses</b>	2,002,272	1,953,142	2,095,508	3,107,718	3,404,719
<b>Net</b>	-1,712,519	-1,708,939	-1,838,202	-3,057,965	-3,133,719
<b>% Cost Recovery</b>	14.5%	12.5%	12.3%	2.0%	8.0%

The annual subsidy to the Department is increasing and, conversely, the cost-recovery percentage is decreasing. With the minimum wage increasing to \$15/hour in July 2023, the cost recovery of the Department is likely to go down unless changes are made either by increasing fees or decreasing expenses.

It is evident from the analysis that, despite wholehearted attempts to keep fee levels unchanged so as not to price participants out of the market, expenditures are continuing to outpace revenues year-over-year with the most common financial indicators pointing to the continuation of this trend. Left unchecked, these trends might have consequential effects on the Department's budget, and ultimately, the ability for the Department to continue delivering programs and services at current levels.

If the Town is willing to explore new options for developing program fees, the following factors should be considered by Department staff:

- Cost to offer the program (limited direct costs only)
- History of fees charged
- Perceived ability and willingness to pay
- Number of participants per class/activity
- Affordability for target audience
- Ability to attract participants

The consulting team recommends that a more business-minded approach to pricing be taken by the Department. This would include establishing a model for setting fees that encourages realistic cost of service-based fees for those who have the ability to pay, while allowing for expanded subsidy (discounting) for those who have demonstrated financial need. Creating and implementing discount policies (senior, multiple family, financial aid assistance) are important components of effective operationalizing of a cost-recovery process. Expanding the existing scholarship program would also go a long way with ensuring all residents have access to services. Although the Department does have a scholarship program, it is currently only available for youth sports (indoor soccer and basketball), youth swimming, and summer camps. A sliding scale might be an option for the Town. The City of Fairfax, Virginia has a well-established program that could be used as a model for the Town. (<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/home/showdocument?id=2627>).

## Pricing Strategies

There are many reasons for the Department to better articulate service fees and charges. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Recover costs
- Create additional resources
- Establish value
- Influence behavior
- Promote and maintain operational efficiency

Establishing a fee for a program can be based upon a variety of pricing strategies. Arbitrary pricing is not encouraged, as it is difficult to justify and does not articulate use of tax subsidy in a way that ties to the Department's mission.

## Cost Recovery

The Department does not currently have a cost-recovery policy that could be used as a guideline for setting fees and systematic resource allocation. There is some staff interest in researching the implementation of a Department cost-recovery policy and philosophy to give guidance to programmers for prioritizing core program areas, setting fees and charges, identifying tax subsidy levels, and allocating resources effectively within the Department.

An agency built upon sound business principles requires adopting defensible financial management policy and justifying how tax dollars are spent and invested. Adopting a methodology encourages productivity and the pursuit of opportunities for efficiency and revenue growth knowing that these efforts can help strengthen systems for the long term. By creating fiscal policy that aligns with fiscal reality, organizations enhance their chances of being financially resilient.

Incorporating cost recovery as part of a financial plan can be complex and time consuming for organizations, but it yields system-wide benefits. A cost-recovery philosophy embodies a decision to generate revenues by charging fees for programs and services in relation to the total operational costs to provide them. In most cases, undertaking cost recovery as part of business practice does not imply that the goal is 100% recovery of the cost; however, a target cost-recovery goal is established according to a variety of organizational and community values.

Typical cost-recovery goals may range from 0% to more than 100% of costs, and they are often associated with a community's service delivery mission and values. Adoption of conventional, industry benchmarks are often the choice of many organizations, but it is not the most effective way to establish cost-recovery goals. Given that each community's economic conditions and communal makeup, including demographics, are vastly different, benchmarking against other communities can create inaccurate comparisons.

Establishing a cost-recovery policy and implementing the practice into routine fiscal exercises can provide the Department with a number of opportunities to improve service delivery and to align fees with the mission and priorities of the community as a whole. Establishing a formal cost-recovery policy for the Department will:

- Enhance accuracy in identifying the cost of providing each park and recreation service
- Identify and categorize both direct and indirect costs
- Define the amount of tax subsidy allocated to each service
- Establish a basis of fees and rationale for the pricing structure
- Demonstrate consistency, structure, and uniformity throughout the Department
- Promote transparency for the public and staff
- Provide justification for future price increases
- Articulate consistency and responsibility with the use of tax dollars and user fees
- Create a financial management system to sustain in varying economic climates



## BEST PRACTICE

### Quality Standards

A key to developing consistent services is the use of service and program standards, which provides a more consistent service experience. As program growth continues, standards can be deployed throughout the recreation program system, such as instructor standards, safety standards, continuous staff training standards, and program quality standards.

### Customer Requirements

In addition to developing standards, the Department should make efforts to develop a listing of key customer requirements for core program areas. Key customer requirements are defined as those areas of the program purchasing process that are most important to registrants. For example, an adult softball player's key requirements might include: cost of the league, quality of athletic field maintenance, cleanliness of restrooms, quality of the umpires, game times, and location of the facility. Identifying key requirements is vitally important for staff to successfully deliver the items most important to the customer. This also reinforces key elements of service with which staff should become familiar.

Key requirements should be identified by customers and can be included as part of an importance/performance matrix. This determines how important a requirement is to the customer and how the Department is performing. Surveys and program evaluations should include questions that assess customer satisfaction in these areas.

The Department did not have a current, structured program evaluation process at the time of the assessment. It appears some programs are evaluated regularly and others are not.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Another best practice area includes the development of KPIs. Organizations that measure performance also often have a documented process in place to help ensure follow-through on results. A robust measurement system generally includes a more comprehensive set of measures, including:

- Number of programs per age segment
- Customer satisfaction (There should be a system-wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction. In addition, a process should be developed to help ensure follow-through on evaluations and surveys.)
- Facility utilization rate
- Cancellation rate
- Cost-recovery rates by core program area
- Number of new programs offered annually (to drive innovation)
- Household percentage of program participation
- Percentage of programs in introduction and growth life cycle stages
- Market penetration by age group
- Customer retention, repurchase intent, and referral

### Recreation Program Plan

National accreditation standards will be useful guidelines for the Department as it continues to grow. Within those standards is one that requires a recreation program plan. The contents should include the Department's programming purpose, the process, core program area descriptions, program objectives, program and service statistics, program and service determinants, recreation and leisure trends analysis, and community inventory.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations summarize the opportunities to strengthen the Department's performance:

### Demographic Considerations

- The anticipated aging shift of the population should be a catalyst to intentionally develop a more robust program menu geared toward those over 60 years of age. Per the demographic and income profile, the number of residents ages 65 years and up is expected to increase by 3,746 (or 49%) between 2010 and 2025. Senior programming staff might consider inviting a group of adults to assist in expanding programs and to help to create a brand for this important area.
- Extend the programmatic reach to the age segments that have the highest spread between offerings and population percentages—which is adults with a 16-point spread.
- Help ensure the intentional outreach and inclusion of cultural groups in future program development, planning, and implementation to keep services relevant.
- Provide services and price points that consider the community's varying income levels.
- Fill the gaps in service for those with special needs and abilities that are not currently being provided by the Town.

### Programming Considerations

- Review the programming opportunities section to determine which programs should be added to the Town's menu. The Needs Assessment Survey PIR for programs should be used to assist in determining priorities—these include: fitness and wellness; outdoor and adventure recreation; nature enjoyment; senior adult activities; boating, kayaking, and canoeing; and history and museums.
- Work to balance out the mix of programs in the introduction, growth, mature, and decline stages of the life cycle.
- Seek out new programming opportunities to address the mental health needs of the community. These can include programs such as mindfulness, tai chi, and stress relief. Consider offering programs in partnerships with Manchester Health Department. Investigate providing Mental Health First Aid training opportunities for staff.
- Consider more intentional teen programming with activities specifically targeted to teen interests, or activate parks to include amenities that appeal to teens, such as outdoor adventure recreation activities.
- Review the trends report to determine which trending programs might be relevant to the Town and should be added to the program mix. A few examples include: outdoor adventure recreation programs, nature-related programs, and STEM/STEAM programming.
- Create a birthday party service.

## Marketing Considerations

- Seek out new social media outlets to reach local teens and market through the high school.
- Add park and trail maps to the program and event catalogue to market opportunities more broadly.
- Add facility rental information to the program and event catalogue.
- Increase the page count for the program and event catalogue to increase white space and add more program photos.



## Continued Analysis

- Review the life cycle stage breakdown for each program category, and identify opportunities to create a more balanced menu. For example, camps, adult sports, and special events demonstrate no programming in the introduction stages, so these areas are ripe for new, innovative programming.
- Start to monitor program cancellation rates to maximize program planning efforts, efficiently market programs, and meet the needs of more participants. After tracking for a year, set annual goals to reduce the cancellation rates.
- Implement the best practice areas: program standards, customer requirements, performance measures, annual reporting process, and the establishment of cost-recovery goals.
- Investigate if the current chart of accounts will enable the Town to track revenue and expenses by program. This will be necessary to work towards an effective cost-recovery model, if desired.
- Create an equity plan for the Department.



# TRENDS ANALYSIS

The following information details park and recreation program trends grouped according to the following categories:

- General
- Outdoor Adventure Activities
- Fitness
- Age-Related
- COVID-19 Response

It is also important to note the significant impact COVID-19 currently has and will have in the future in park and recreation. The design of parks and facility spaces and the management and offering of recreation programs has already significantly changed the way services are offered as of the summer of 2020. COVID-19 will continue to impact the way park and recreation agencies will operate in the future.



## GENERAL TRENDS

### Environmental Stewardship

Park and recreation officials embrace their roles in environmental leadership, and according to the NRPA, most believe they should be the environmental leader within municipal government and encourage members of the community to be better environmental stewards. In the past five years, environmental stewardship has become more important to 80% of agencies nationwide, and there is a national trend toward providing education and awareness opportunities (classes and special events) that encourage conservation and environmental stewardship.

Environmental education activities are the most commonly planned new program addition for park and recreation departments, with over 60% of organizations reporting that they will offer additional services to meet the need in their communities.

### Partnerships (public, private, and intradepartmental)

Burgeoning populations require access to facilities outside of the current inventory in typical park and recreation agencies, and the ability to partner with other departments within a municipality is crucial to meeting the programming needs of a community. Forming healthy partnerships with public libraries and school districts to utilize facilities and collaborate on programs is one of the top priorities for agencies that do not currently have agreements in place. Additionally, offering cooperative, consortium-based programs with existing nonprofit and private entities allows several organizations to join partnerships to collectively offer programs in specific niche areas. For example, if one organization has the best computer labs, facilities, and instructors, then they offer that program for the consortium. If another organization has largest aquatic center with trained staff, then they offer aquatics programs for the consortium, potentially eliminating duplication in programming. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for partnerships due to budget and staff cuts.

## Niche Programming

Decades ago, recreation agencies focused on offering an entire set of programs for a general audience. Since that time, market segments have been developed, such as programming specifically for seniors. Recently, more market segments have been developed for specialty audiences, such as the LGBTQ community, retirees, military veterans, cancer patients, people needing mental health support, and individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. Organizations are taking a much more holistic approach to program and service offerings, beyond what people typically thought of as a recreation program.

## Generational Programming

There has been an increase in the number of offerings for families with children of all ages. This is a departure from past family programming that focused nearly entirely on younger children and preschoolers. Activities such as Family Fossil Hunt and Family Backpacking and Camping Adventure have proven very popular for families with teens. This responsiveness to the Generation X and Generation Y parents of today is an important step, as these age groups place a high value on family. Game Time's "Challenge Course" is an outdoor obstacle course that attracts people of all ages and backgrounds to socialize with family and friends while improving their fitness. This type of playground encourages multigenerational experiences.





## OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

Consumers are seeking activities to help them stay occupied and healthy as COVID-19 necessitates social distancing. As a result, a number of outdoor activities have experienced growth. Many sought out family-based activities in order to keep everyone safe and increase health. A Harris Poll from October 2020 found that 69% of Americans reported a heightened appreciation for outdoor spaces during the pandemic, with 65% sharing that they try to get outside of the house as much as possible.

### Outdoor Cycling

Outdoor cycling tops the list of popular outdoor activities as bicycle sales increased 63% (as of June 2020) compared to the same time period the year prior. For the first several months of the COVID-19 outbreak, the growth in bicycle sales was from family-friendly bikes. Then the growth in sales shifted to higher-end bicycles (including road bikes and full suspension mountain bikes). This was likely due to a shortage of family-friendly bikes as well as from cyclists more willing to invest in the activity for the future. Connecting local trails in the Town and marketing these opportunities is a great future goal.



### Paddle Sports

Paddle sports (including kayaks, paddleboards, rafts, and canoes) have also increased in popularity as the sale of equipment rose 56% in 2020 over the prior year. Inflatable versions of kayaks and paddleboards have gained in popularity due to their cost and the ability of the consumer to store these bulky pieces of equipment. Adding instructional paddle boarding or kayaking may be advantageous for the Town. Often times, people are interested in a brief lesson before going out on their own.

### Camping

Camping has surged in popularity due to the COVID-19 outbreak as well. Consumers looking for a break from home life pitched tents in their yards or at a local destination. The sale of recreational tents increased in 2020 two times faster than backpacking tents that are favored by serious campers and hikers. Offering camping opportunities in local parks and providing opportunities to try the activity before investing money in the equipment would be a good opportunity for the Department.

### Bird-watching

The New York Times published an article (May 2020) regarding the increase in bird-watching during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak. To aid in their sightings, many purchased binoculars, which saw a 22% increase in sales in June 2020 over the prior year. Unique bird species can be found in rural areas and urban areas, which has contributed to the appeal of this activity. Offering a bird-watching course and then creating a club where Town residents can share what they have seen. The Case Mountain Trail and Oak Grove Nature Center Loop would be great locations for this type of activity.

### Outdoor Walking and Running

Many people will not flock back to fitness centers to exercise following the COVID-19 outbreak. With the desire to keep moving, however, people are walking and running outdoors when the weather is suitable. Outdoor walking and running clubs will continue to be a popular way for people to exercise with others in a safe manner.



## FITNESS TRENDS

Each year, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) conducts a survey of worldwide fitness trends. Now in its 15th year, the ACSM circulates an electronic survey to thousands of fitness professionals around the world to determine health and fitness trends. The COVID-19 outbreak certainly impacted the results of the survey with the top trend now Online Training, which was #26 in 2020. The list below includes the top 10 fitness trends for 2021.



### Online Training

Virtual online training was first included in the survey in 2019 and was number three before dropping to number 26 in 2020 when the word “virtual” was eliminated from the title. The big changes within the fitness industry as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in the temporary closure of fitness centers around the world, forcing innovation in the way classes are delivered. Online training was developed for the at-home exercise experience. This trend uses digital streaming technology to provide group or individual fitness programs online. Online training is available 24/7 and can be a prerecorded or live class.

### Wearable Technology

Wearable technology, which includes activity trackers, smart watches, heart rate monitors, GPS tracking devices, and smart eyeglasses (designed to show maps and track activity), has been one of the top three trends since 2016. Examples include fitness and activity trackers such as those from Misfit, Garmin, Pebble Time, Samsung, Basis, Jawbone, Fitbit, and Apple. These devices can track heart rate, calories, sitting time, and much more. It is estimated that wearable technology is a \$95 billion industry.

### Body Weight Training

Body weight training uses minimal equipment, which makes it an inexpensive way to exercise effectively. Although most people think of body weight training as being limited to push-ups and pull-ups, it can be much more than that. This type of training first appears in the trends survey in 2013 at number three.

### Outdoor Activities

Likely because of the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor activities such as group walks, group rides, or organized hiking groups are gaining in popularity. These can be short events, daylong events, or planned weeklong excursions. Typically, people meet at a local park, hiking area, or bike trail with a designated leader. This trend for health and fitness professionals to offer outdoor activities to clients began in 2010 and has been in the top 20 ever since 2012. This has become much more popular during COVID-19 as agencies work to offer fitness programs outdoors that help to ensure physical distancing.

### High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

HIIT involves short bursts of high-intensity exercise followed by a short period of rest or recovery and typically takes fewer than 30 minutes to perform (although it is not uncommon for these programs to be much longer in duration.) HIIT has been a top-five trend since 2014. Despite warnings by some fitness experts of the potential for increased injury using HIIT, this form of exercise is popular in fitness centers all over the world.

## Virtual Training

This is the first time that virtual training has appeared separately from virtual online training. Virtual training is defined as the fusion of group exercise with technology offering workouts designed for ease and convenience to fit a variety of schedules and needs. Typically, virtual workouts are played in gyms or fitness centers on a big screen attracting a smaller number of participants compared with live classes while providing people of all fitness levels and ages with a different group fitness experience. Participants in virtual training can work at their own pace, making it ideal for those new to the class. As with online training, virtual training may be in the top 10 now due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Exercise is Medicine®

Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) is a global health initiative that is focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other healthcare providers to include physical activity when designing treatment plans for patients and referring their patients to exercise professionals. In addition, EIM recognizes fitness professionals as part of the healthcare team. EIM was number 10 in 2019, jumping up to number 6 in 2020.

## Strength Training With Free Weights

Strength training remains popular in all sectors of the health and fitness industry and for many different kinds of clients. Free weight, barbell, kettlebell, dumbbell, and medicine ball classes do not just incorporate equipment into another functional class or activity. Instructors begin by teaching the proper form and technique for each exercise and then progressively increasing the resistance. New exercises are added periodically, starting with proper form and technique. Many younger clients of both community-based programs and commercial clubs train almost exclusively using weights. In today's gyms, however, there are many others (men and women, young and old, children, and patients with stable chronic diseases) whose main focus is using weight training to improve or maintain strength.

## Fitness Programs for Older Adults

This trend continues to stress the fitness needs of the baby boomers and older generations. People are working longer, living longer, and remaining active much longer. Fitness professionals should take advantage of the growing market of older adults now retiring by providing age-appropriate and safe exercise programs for this once-ignored sector of the population. The highly active older adult can be targeted to participate in more rigorous exercise programs, including strength training, team sports, and HIIT when appropriate. Even the elderly who are frail can improve their balance and ability to perform activities of daily living when given appropriate functional fitness program activities.

## Personal Training

Personal training is a one-on-one workout with a trainer that begins with fitness testing and goal setting. The trainer then works with the client and prescribes workouts specific to their needs. The profession of personal training is becoming more accessible online, in clubs, in the home, and in worksites that have fitness facilities. Many fitness centers continued to offer personal training during the COVID-19 outbreak. Since this survey was first published in 2006, personal training has been ranked in the top 10.



## AGE-RELATED TRENDS

### Trends for Youth Ages 13 and Younger

#### Traditional Sport Programming

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the number of youth involved in team sports was beginning to decline. From 2008 to 2018, the participation rate of kids between the ages of 6 and 12 dropped from 45% to 38% due to the increasing costs, time commitments, and the competitive nature of organized sports leagues.

According to the Aspen Institute, after most athletic programs were shut down in the spring of 2020, 30% of children who previously played team sports now say that they are no longer interested in returning. It is estimated that up to 50% of the private, travel sports clubs will fold following the pandemic, putting pressure on municipal recreation programs to fill the gaps for those children who do want to continue playing organized sports. There is a heightened need to save and build affordable, quality, community-based sports programs that can engage children in large numbers.

#### STEM, STEAM Programs

STEM, STEAM programs— including arts programming—are growing in popularity. Some examples include: learn to code, design video games, Minecraft, create with Roblox (an online gaming platform and game creation system), engineer robots, print 3D characters, and build laptops.

#### Summer and School Break Camps

Participation in park and recreation youth camp programs continues to be very strong. For some agencies, these programs are the most significant revenue producers.

#### Nature-Related Programming

There is an international movement to connect children, their families, and their communities to the nature world called the New Nature Movement, and it is having an impact. In addition to new nature programming, nature-themed play spaces—such as The Mud Kitchen & Word Garden at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, and Bison’s Bluff at the Schaumburg Park District in Schaumburg, Illinois—are becoming popular. Some park and recreation agencies are now offering outdoor preschool where the entire program takes place outside. One example of this is the Forest Preschool at the Prairie School of DuPage in Wheaton, Illinois, which is a full nature immersion based on the German model of Waldkindergartens.

#### Youth Fitness

The organization Reimagine Play developed a list of the top eight trends for youth fitness. The sources for this information include the ACSM’s Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, American Council on Exercise (ACE) Fitness, and the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America).

The top eight trends include:

- Physical education classes are moving from sports activities to physical literacy curriculums that include teaching fundamentals in movement skills and healthy eating
- HIIT classes that involve bursts of high-intensity exercise followed by a short period of rest with classes ranging 30 minutes or less
- Wearable technology and digital fitness media, including activity trackers, smart watches, heart rate monitors, GPS tracking devices, and smart eyeglasses and virtual headsets
- Ninja warrior training and gyms as a result of NBC’s premier shows American Ninja Warrior and Spartan Race
- Outdoor recreational activities including running, jogging, trail running, and BMX biking
- Family (intergenerational) fitness classes such as family fitness fairs, escape rooms, and obstacle races are gaining in popularity among Gen X and Gen Y families who place a high value on family time
- Kids’ obstacle races in conjunction with adult obstacle races such as the Tough Mudder, Spartan Race, and Warrior Dash
- Youth running clubs that also teach life skills such as risk-taking, goal-setting, and team building



## Trends for Teens/Younger Adults Ages 13 - 24

### Esports

Esports (also known as electronic sports, e-sports, or eSports) is a form of competition using video games. Forbes reported in December 2019 that Esports audiences exceed 443 million people across the world, and the International Olympic Committee is considering it as a new Olympic sport. Local recreation offerings can include training classes, open play, tournaments, and major competition viewing. A new recreation center in Westerville, Ohio includes a dedicated Esports room, and college campuses across the country are also launching Esports programs. Marquette University is the first Division I school to launch a varsity Esports program. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many park and recreation agencies are including Esports in their programming mix.

### Parkour

Parkour is a physical training discipline that challenges the participant to move their body through obstacle courses, similar to military training. Using body movements such as running, jumping, and swinging, the participant moves through static indoor courses or outdoor urban environments.

### Outdoor Active Recreation

This includes activities such as kayaking, canoing, stand-up paddle boarding, mountain biking, and climbing. Rentals for those who want to “try before they buy” are popular in many areas. All of these types of activities have experienced an increase since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey by Civic Science found that those between 13 and 34 years were the most likely age group to indicate that they planned to participate in more outdoor activities as a result of COVID-19-related shutdowns.

### Bicycling

According to the Aspen Institute, bicycling became the third most popular sport for kids in 2020. Skate park usage surged as well.

### Life Sports

According to the Learning Resources Network, “Top Trends in Recreation Programming, Marketing and Management” article, “life sports” are a new priority in the recreation world, where the focus is on developing youth interests in activities that they can enjoy for a lifetime, such as biking, kayaking, tennis, golf, swimming, and jogging/walking.

### Holistic Health

Park and recreation’s role in maintaining a holistic lifestyle will continue to grow. People are seeking opportunities to practice mindfulness, authentic living, and disconnection from electronic media. Programs to support mental health, including those that help to combat anxiety, perfectionism, and substance abuse in youth and young adults, are increasingly needed. The United Nations has urged governments around the world to take the mental health consequences of COVID-19 seriously and help to ensure the widespread availability of mental health support to constituents.

## Trends for Adults Ages 25 - 54

### Aerobic Activities

For most age groups, swimming for fitness and weight training are the two most frequently mentioned activities in which people indicate interest. Running, walking, and biking for fitness continue to show strong and consistent growth. A good balance of equipment and classes is necessary to keep consistent with trends.

### Fun Fitness

“Fun” fitness is a current trend. Fitness regimens such as P90x, Insanity, and CrossFit have proven that a lot of equipment is not required to get fit. Since these programs have become popular, newer versions have become available, some cutting the time it takes to look and feel fit in half. These types of classes have been growing and will continue to grow in popularity at recreation departments and fitness centers.

### Group Cycling

Group cycling continues in popularity as the younger fitness enthusiasts embrace this high-performance group exercise activity as well as program variations that are developed to attract the beginner participant. With Peloton, this is still possible during COVID-19 as one can take a group spin class live online with people all over the world.

### Yoga

While Pilates has shown an incredible 10-year growth trend, the past three years have seen a decline in participation. Perhaps participation migrated to yoga, as participation is up across all levels for the year. Yoga is more class based, while Pilates is more of an individual activity. The Gen Y fitness participants (ages 25 – 39) are showing a higher propensity to go with group-oriented programs.

### Outdoor Fitness

Many agencies around the country have added fitness equipment in parks. In Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, outdoor exercise sites are called Fitzones. In order to place the equipment in the most ideal locations, staff evaluated neighborhood health issues such as the obesity percentage, rates of diabetes, and mortality rates. Staff also gathered information regarding household income and population density around each park. All of this information was entered into a geographic information system (GIS) to determine which areas of the community had the greatest health issues and to assist staff in the park selection for Fitzones.

### Bags

Bags is a low-impact, low-cost activity that can be played by people of all ages. Young adults are signing up for leagues (that can be held indoors or outdoors and are offered all year long). It doesn't take any skill, and it's a social activity. Although it can be offered recreationally, some competitive leagues are offered, as well. This would be a great addition to adult programming during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Trends for Adults Ages 55 and over

### Lifelong Learning

A Pew Research Center survey found that 73% of adults consider themselves lifelong learners. Do-it-yourself project classes and programs that focus on becoming a more “well-rounded” person are popular. Phrases such as “how to” can be added to the agency website’s search engine optimization as consumers now turn to the internet as their first source of information regarding how-to projects. Safeguarding online privacy is also a trending course.

### Fitness and Wellness

Programs such as yoga, Pilates, tai chi, balance training, chair exercises, and others continue to be popular with the older generation.

### Encore Programming

This is a program area for baby boomers who are soon to be retired and focuses on a broad range of programs to prepare people for transitions into retirement activities. Popular programs for the 55+ market include: fitness and wellness (specifically yoga, mindfulness, tai chi, relaxation, personal training, etc.), drawing and painting, photography, languages, writing, computer and technology, social media, cooking, mahjong, card games, volunteering, and what to do during retirement. Howard County Maryland Department of Recreation and Parks is an example of an agency that is pursuing Encore programs.

### Specialized Tours

Participants are looking for more day trips that highlight unique local experiences or historical themes. For example, a focus on authentic food, guided night walks, bike tours, concentration on a specific artist’s work, and ghost walks are among the themes being sought out.

### Creative Endeavors

Improv classes are specifically targeting age groups with classes called “Humor Doesn’t Retire.” Workshops and groups help seniors play, laugh, and let loose while practicing mental stimulation, memory development, and flexibility.

### Pickleball

With 2.8 million people in the country playing Pickleball, it is a trend not to be taken lightly. Though not at its peak, Pickleball is still trending nationwide as the fastest growing sport in America with the active aging demographic, as 75% of core players are age 55 or older. It can be played as singles or doubles, indoors or out, and it is easy for beginners to learn but can be very competitive for experienced players. The game has developed a passionate following due to its friendly, social nature and its multigenerational appeal.





## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### Youth Sports

There are many private, travel sports organizations in Hartford County serving children in Manchester. The Aspen Institute estimates that many of these clubs will not survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Sponsorships are likely to diminish, many coaches who have gone without a paycheck for nearly a year might have moved on, and 50% of parents fear that their children might get sick if they resume youth sports when restrictions are lifted. A total of 46% of parents fear they will become ill watching a youth sports event. Financial concerns are also a factor when considering a return to youth sports, as 54% of sports parents' finances have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

It appears from the research that families might be looking to scale back, stay closer to home, and spend less money on youth sports experiences. All of these factors will likely put pressure on public park and recreation agencies to provide local, affordable, equitable, and quality sports options for all children, regardless of ability.

### Child Care

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the value of the child care sector in the United States was \$99 billion prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this is one of the industries that will be hit the hardest, as it relies on the ability of customers to safely show up day after day and to be able to pay for the privilege. It has been estimated that nearly 20,000 day care facilities may have closed across the country due to the pandemic. Those that remain open will likely have to increase tuition. In a study by the NAEYC, 47% of programs indicated that they have raised tuition and taken on new debt to stay open and serve families.

The United States had a child care crisis before COVID-19, and the pandemic is making it much worse. Currently, child care providers receive no meaningful public investment and essentially operate as small businesses. Child care providers are treated like private enterprises, similar to private gyms, as these small businesses rely solely on tuition fees. While there are public subsidies available to child care providers to support the enrollment of children from low-income families, federal and state government support is minimal.

Most child care providers operate on very thin margins with little cash reserves, and the complete loss of revenue has forced many of these businesses to close their doors.

Once child care facilities are allowed to reopen, these businesses are likely to remain unstable due to under-enrollment as many parents will not feel safe sending their child back to a group care setting. Constituents might put pressure on park and recreation agencies to bridge the gap and provide safe, affordable child care options for residents.

# TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS

Approximately 109 miles of formal and informal trails lie within or directly adjacent to the Town.

Many of the formal multiuse trails have important current and future value in connecting various neighborhoods in Town to amenities and each other. Recreational hiking trails have historically been maintained through partnerships between the Town and volunteer groups. Difficulty in recruiting volunteers, combined with increased demand and limited Town resources, have started to put pressure on these resources. The Town's goal for the trails and connectivity analysis is to outline a prioritized scheme for creating and maintaining multiuse trail connections and recreational hiking trails, including recommendation for expansion and maintenance strategies.



## VISION

Connect the Town's parks and recreation locations with a comprehensive network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that benefits residents and visitors who do not have access to an automobile. This network will also function as an extension of the Town's parks, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy walking, running, and bicycling on facilities that are comfortable and safe.

## GOAL

It is the goal of these recommendations to identify options for realizing the parks connectivity vision in a way that is feasible for the Town to implement and maintain. All facilities proposed within these recommendations are made with consideration to the Town's ability to finance and maintain those improvements, the potential benefit of the improvements, and the potential impact to private property and environmentally sensitive areas.

The parks connectivity recommendations are focused on, and are limited to, providing new connections and completing gaps in existing facilities that will allow for a connected bicycle and pedestrian network between parks and recreational facilities. The parks connectivity recommendations do not seek to establish plans for the establishment or improvement of trails within the Town's parks or open spaces unless a trail provides a strategic link within the town-wide network.

## Approach

The following approach was taken in developing the parks connectivity recommendations:

1. **Existing Facilities:** Map the Town's parks and recreation facilities. Map and gather maps of existing sidewalks, bicycle facilities, trails, greenways, pathways.
2. **Gap Analysis:** Identify gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network connecting to and through the Town's parks through mapping, site visits, and communication with key stakeholders.
3. **Stakeholder Input:** Identify facility needs based upon discussions with stakeholders such as residents, Commission members, Town officials, and advocates.
4. **Preferred Connections:** Identify preferred connections, both on and off road. Focus on facilities that provide strategic connections through a park or between parks. Identify recommended facility types.
5. **Implementation:** Provide cost estimates and recommended phasing of improvements.

## Existing Facilities

Manchester has over twenty-five parks and recreation sites spread across the Town. Additionally, Manchester has hundreds of acres of Town-owned water company land and open space that is accessible to the public for walking, hiking, or bicycling. The Town is also home to multiple linear trails and greenways such as the Charter Oak Greenway (the East Coast Greenway is routed along this greenway), Captain John Bissell Trail, Cheney Rail Trail, Hop River Trail, and the Hockanum River Trail. Many of these trails and greenways are accessible to those with mobility constraints such as wheelchair users. The John Bissell Trail, Cheney Rail Trail, Hop River Trail are all accessible with paved or stone dust surfaces. Other trails such as the Hockanum River Trail are restricted to pedestrians without mobility constraints.

The Town is also making progress towards the establishment of on-road bicycle facilities with bike lanes being recently established on Colonial Road and Adams Street, commensurate with the Town's 2020 Draft Bicycle Master Plan. The plan also recommends the use of shared roadway facilities on streets such as Porter Street. The Town also has a Sidewalk & Curb plan, last approved in 2019, that identifies priority segments for the construction of new sidewalks and trails or bicycle lanes, many of which would improve connections to and between parks.

The inventory and assessment of facilities focuses on those that are accessible to a wide array of users including pedestrians, wheelchair users, bicyclists, and roller blade or skateboard users. While the Town has multiple miles of trails, many of those are only accessible to walkers, hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikers. Trails such as the Hockanum River Trail are not accessible to wheelchair users or bicyclists. Other trails such as at Case Mountain Reserve and at the Porter Howard Reservoir are also primarily accessible only to hikers or mountain bikers. These trails hold promise for connecting to a larger bicycle and pedestrian network but may have limited potential for accommodating a diversity of users. In some locations, a specific trail or segment of a trail may be feasible for improvement to expand accessibility.





*Figure 3.7: Children Bicycling on Sidewalk Along Spruce Street – Image Google Earth*

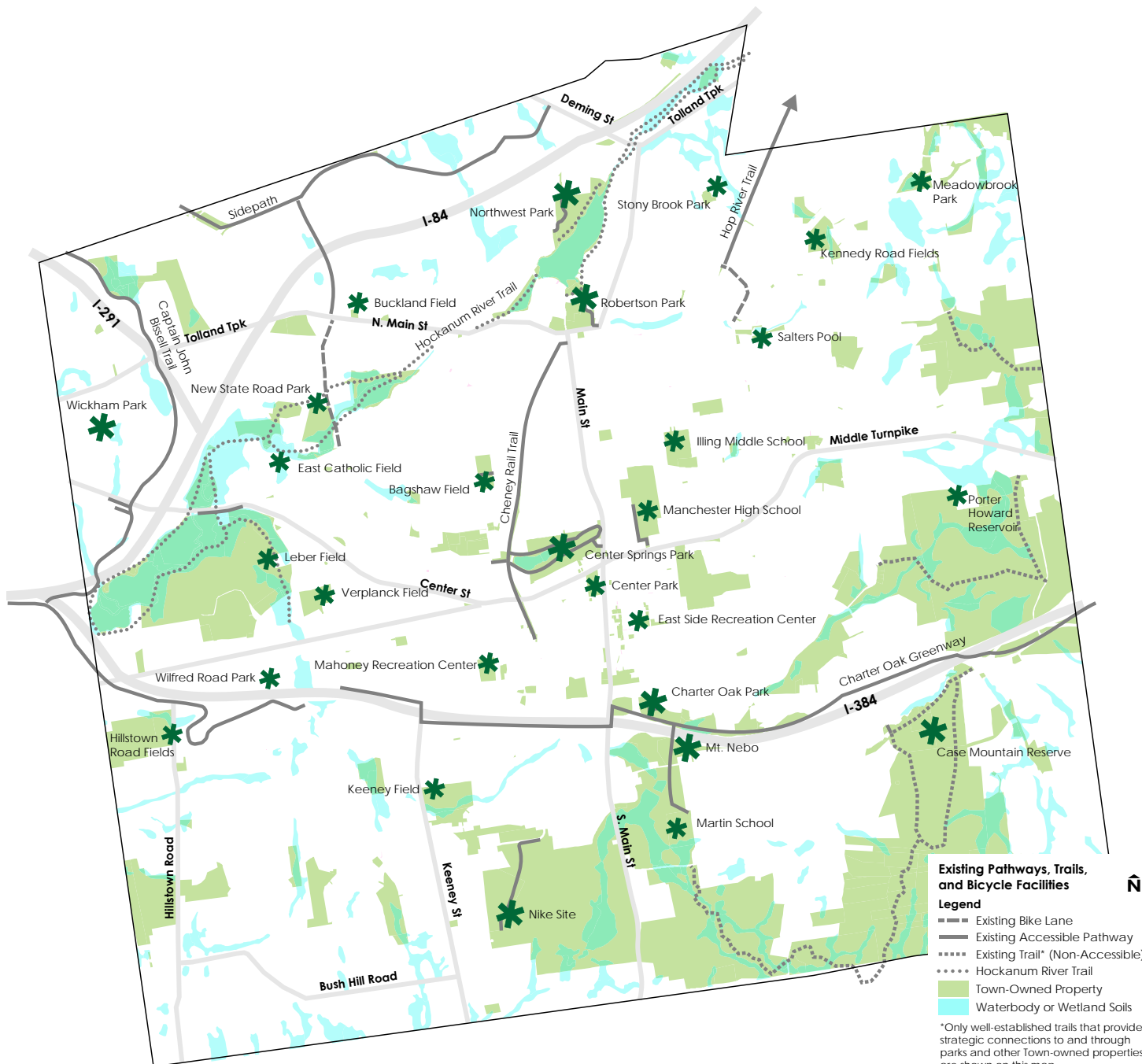


Figure 3.8: Existing Pathways, Trails, and Bicycle Facilities

## Gap Analysis

A gap analysis is a method of identifying the missing links in a mobility system. It is a relatively simple exercise of identifying the general areas that could provide links within a network. Planning a connected parks network requires identifying areas of preferred connections. Once those areas are identified, appropriate facilities can be planned for accommodating users given the conditions in that area.

Manchester has a robust sidewalk, greenway, pathway, and trail network, but it lacks direct connections between many of its parks. While the Town's sidewalk network connects most of its parks, not all of those roadways are suitable to bicyclists or are ideal for recreational use. The gaps in the Town's bicycle and pedestrian network include small gaps such as the gap in the Charter Oak Greenway between Hartford Road and Bidwell Street and larger gaps such as between the Cheney Rail Trail and the Hop River Trail, Charter Oak Greenway, and Captain John Bissell Trail.

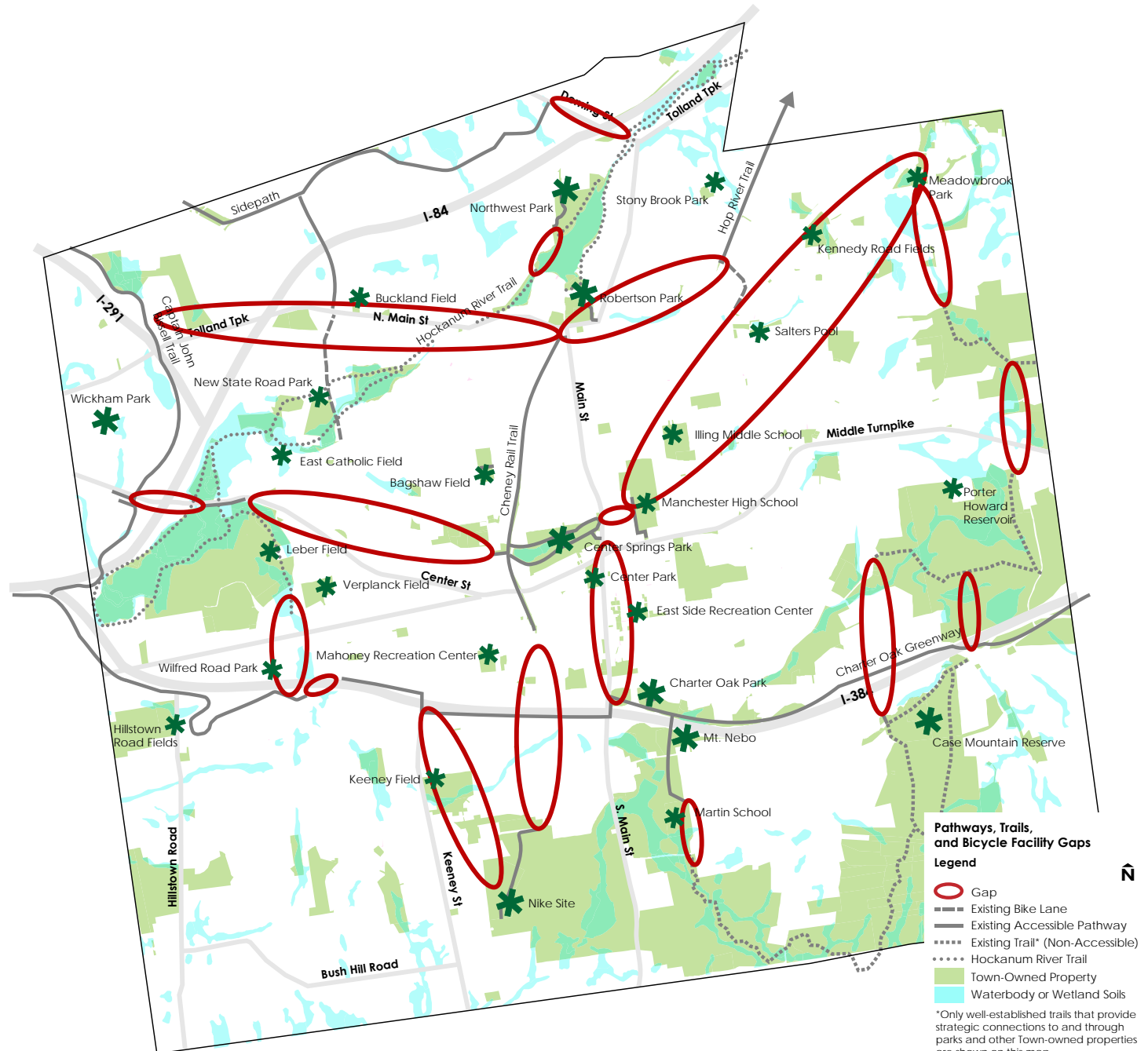


Figure 3.9: Gaps in Pathways, Trails, and Bicycle Facilities



## Stakeholder Input

Discussion with stakeholders such as residents, Commission members, Town officials, and advocates revealed many preferred connections that were not identified in the gap analysis or reinforced the findings of the gap analysis. In general, stakeholders expressed interest in linking the Town's trails and pathways in a connected system that could be used for recreation and transportation purposes. A sample of specific recommendations includes:

- Extend the Cheney Rail Trail south to connect with the Charter Oak Greenway
- Connect the Charter Oak Greenway to Case Mountain Reserve
- Provide connections to and through the Nike Site
- Provide connections to Wickham Park
- Improve and maintain the Hockanum River Trail
- Provide connections to Water Company lands such as at the Porter Howard Reservoir
- Integrate parks connectivity improvements with the Town's bicycle plan
- Create a Bigelow Brook Greenway through the Parkade property
- Connect to the Bush Hill Farm Preserve
- Improve multiple other trails through the Town

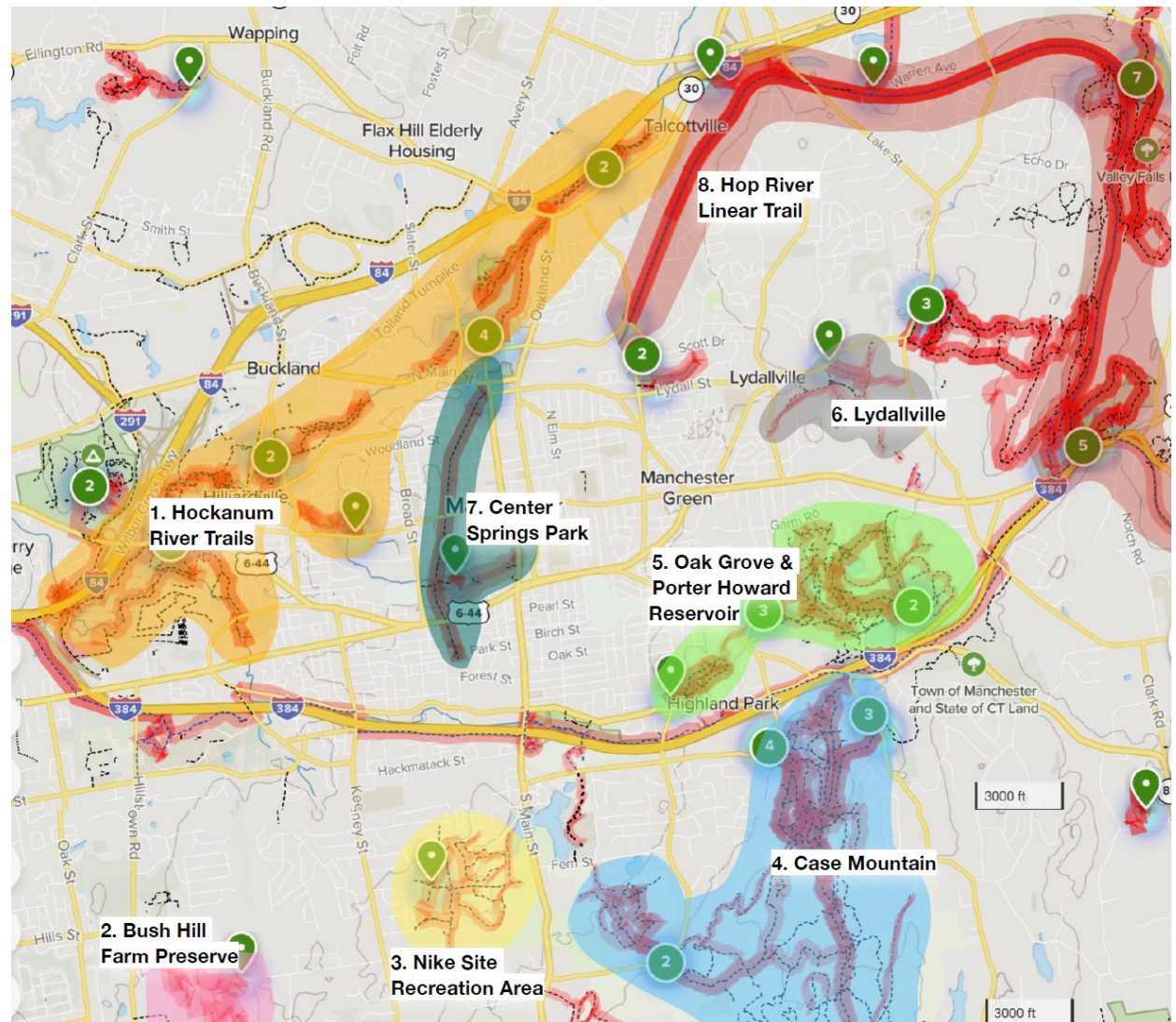
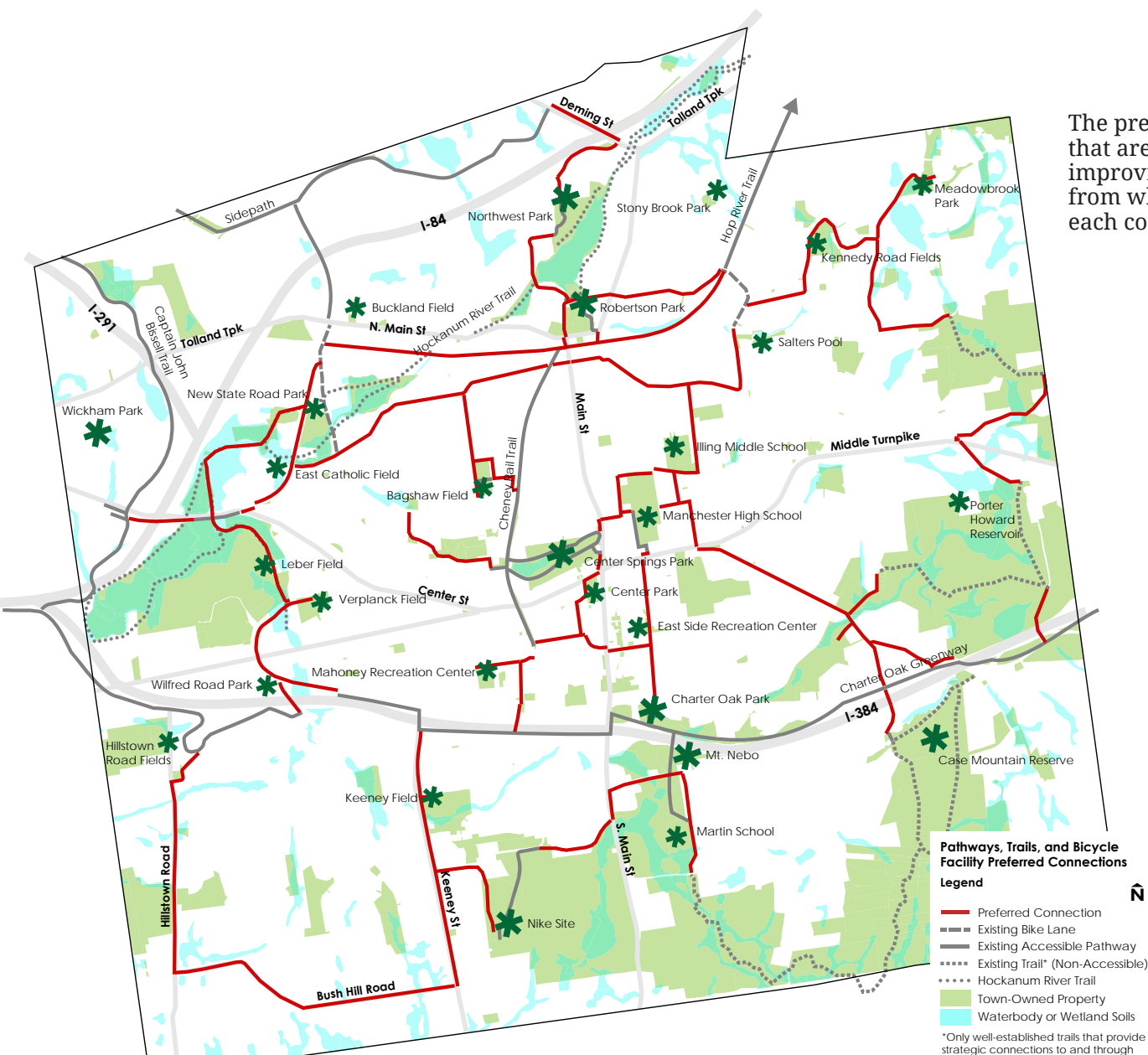


Figure 3.10: Map of trail networks recommended for improvement and connection. Map provided by Michael Farina.

## Preferred Connections

The identification of preferred connections builds upon the gap analysis and feedback received from stakeholders. The first step in identifying preferred connections is to locate existing trails, pathways, sidewalks, roadways, rail lines, or other corridors or properties that would be suitable for the development or improvement of facilities to accommodate a wide array of users. Multiple factors are considered in selecting routes and identifying appropriate facility types. These include:

- **Property ownership:** There is a preference for use of Town property and right-of-way over private property as the Town has control of the property.
- **Property conditions:** Wetlands, flood zones, and steep topography should be avoided due to potential environmental impacts and the cost of providing improvements in those conditions.
- **Right-of-way width:** The width of the right-of-way may limit the ability to accommodate a sidepath or expand the roadway to accommodate bicycle lanes.
- **Roadway width:** The feasibility of on-road bicycle facilities is limited by existing roadway width. The expansion of road width to accommodate bike lanes is costly and reduces feasibility.
- **Traffic conditions:** Traffic volume and speed impact the suitability of accommodating bicyclists and other users on the roadway. Higher volume and speed roadways require separated facilities such as a sidepath or bicycle lane. Lower traffic volume and speed roadways may be suitable for users to walk or bicycle in the roadway.
- **Sidewalks:** The presence of sidewalks impacts the choice of facilities. Corridors with sidewalks accommodate pedestrians and wheelchair users. Bicyclists may need to be accommodated on the roadway or sidewalks could be replaced with sidepaths to accommodate all users.



The preferred connections map identifies corridors that are most feasible for providing new connections or improving existing connections. The map is the basis from which appropriate facility types are selected for each corridor or segment of a corridor.

## Facility Types

Multiple facility types are recommended for use in connecting the Town's parks. This includes shared use pathways, sidepaths, bike lanes, and shared roadways. These facilities are ADA accessible and would improve park access for a wide array of users: pedestrians, wheelchair users, skaters, and bicyclists.

This plan does not recommend the development of new non-accessible trails as part of the park connectivity network. The development, expansion, improvement, and maintenance of trails will continue to be an important component of the parks system that may contribute to parks connectivity but is not the focus of this plan. Future planning should be conducted for the Town's trail system (hiking, mountain biking, and non-ADA accessible trails). The trails system requires a comprehensive inventory and assessment of conditions. Existing mapping is incomplete and out of date as many trails are blazed or abandoned from year to year.

Figure 3.11: Map of Preferred Connections.



## Shared Use Pathways

Shared use pathways provide a separated facility for the shared use of bicycles and pedestrians. Paths are typically recreational in nature but can also be effective facilities for transportation. Examples of shared use pathways in Manchester include the Cheney Rail Trail, Hop River Trail, segments of the Charter Oak Greenway, and the Captain John Bissell Trail. Other characteristics include:

- Typically separated from the roadway by a significant distance and have few roadway crossings.
- Often travel through open space areas and along natural features such as rivers and waterbodies.
- Sometimes developed along former rail corridors and may travel along the rear of residential, commercial, and industrial properties.
- Vary in width but must be a minimum of 8 feet wide with 10 feet as the preferred minimum width.

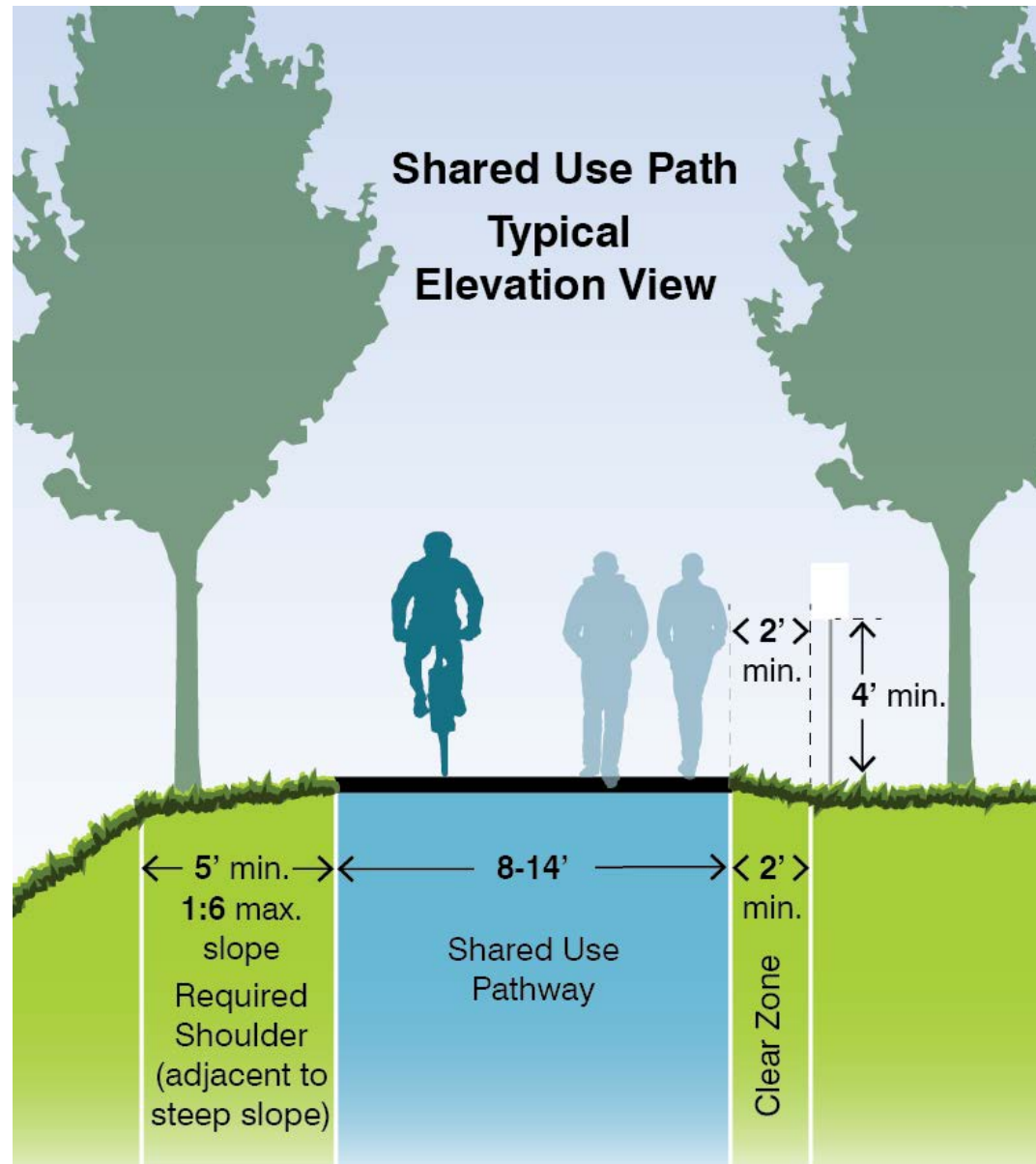


Figure 3.12: Shared Use Path

## Sidepaths

Sidepaths parallel a roadway where a sidewalk would be located. They are similar to shared use pathways and allow bicyclists and pedestrians to share the space. Examples of sidepaths in Manchester include segments of the Charter Oak Greenway at Hartford Road and Highland Street and sidepaths along Buckland Hills Drive and Buckland Street. Other characteristics include:

- Physical separation from motor vehicles by a landscaped buffer, curb, or a barrier.
- Often connect to recreational pathways and are both recreational and transportation facilities.
- May also be used to close gaps in a bicycle network created by features such as a highway interchange.
- Good solution for accommodating bicyclists along high-volume and/or high-speed roadways.
- Vary in width but must be a minimum of 8 feet wide with 10 feet as the preferred minimum width.

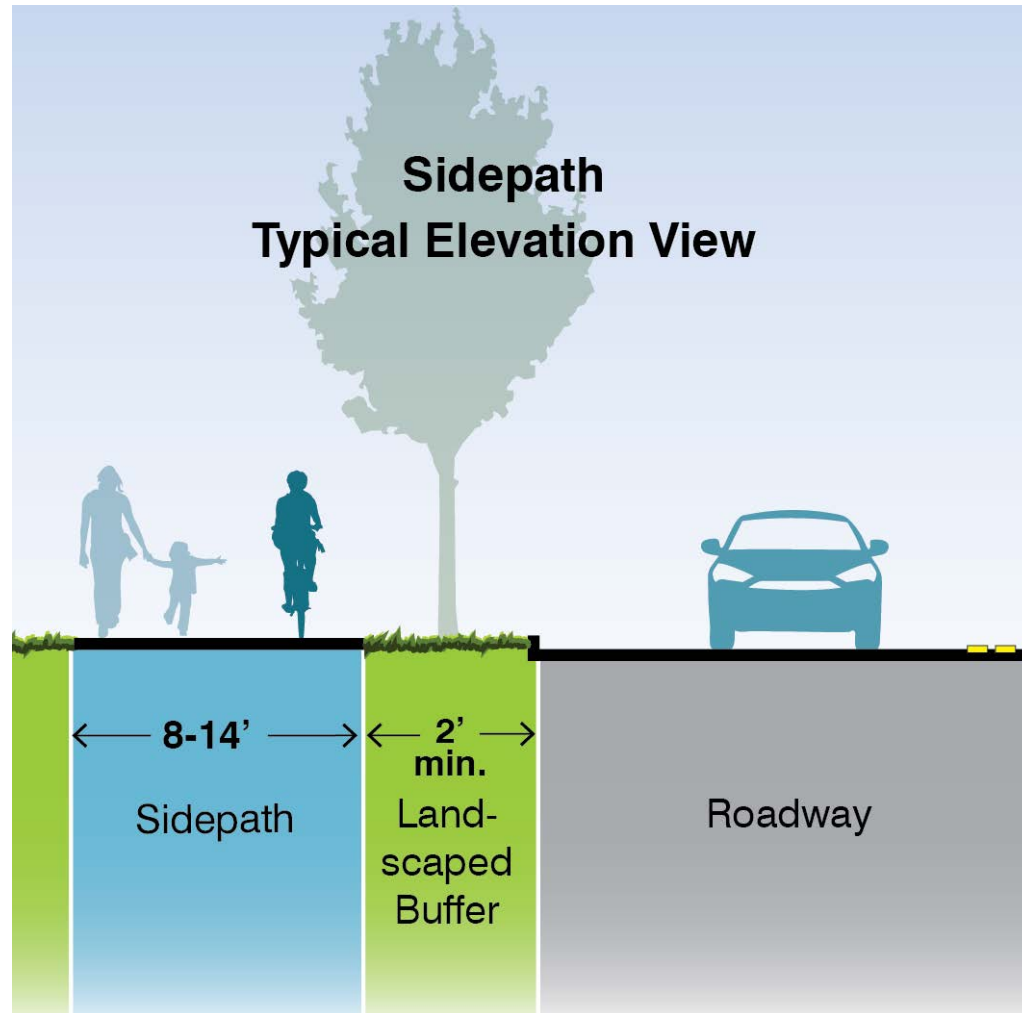


Figure 3.13: Sidepath

## Bike Lanes

Bike lanes designate an exclusive space on the roadway for bicycle travel, which is signified by pavement markings and signage. Examples of bike lanes in Manchester include those on Colonial Road and Adams Street. Bike lanes are most effective for use in a parks connectivity network on roadways that are already served by sidewalks so that all users are provided access. Other characteristics include:

- Typically located between a motor vehicle travel lane and the curb, road edge, or parking lane.
- Used for one-way travel in the same direction as the adjacent traffic lane.
- Most appropriate for low to moderate traffic volume (less than 10,000 vehicles per day) and speed conditions (85th percentile speeds of 35 mph or less).
- Typically 5 to 6 feet wide with a minimum width of 5 feet.

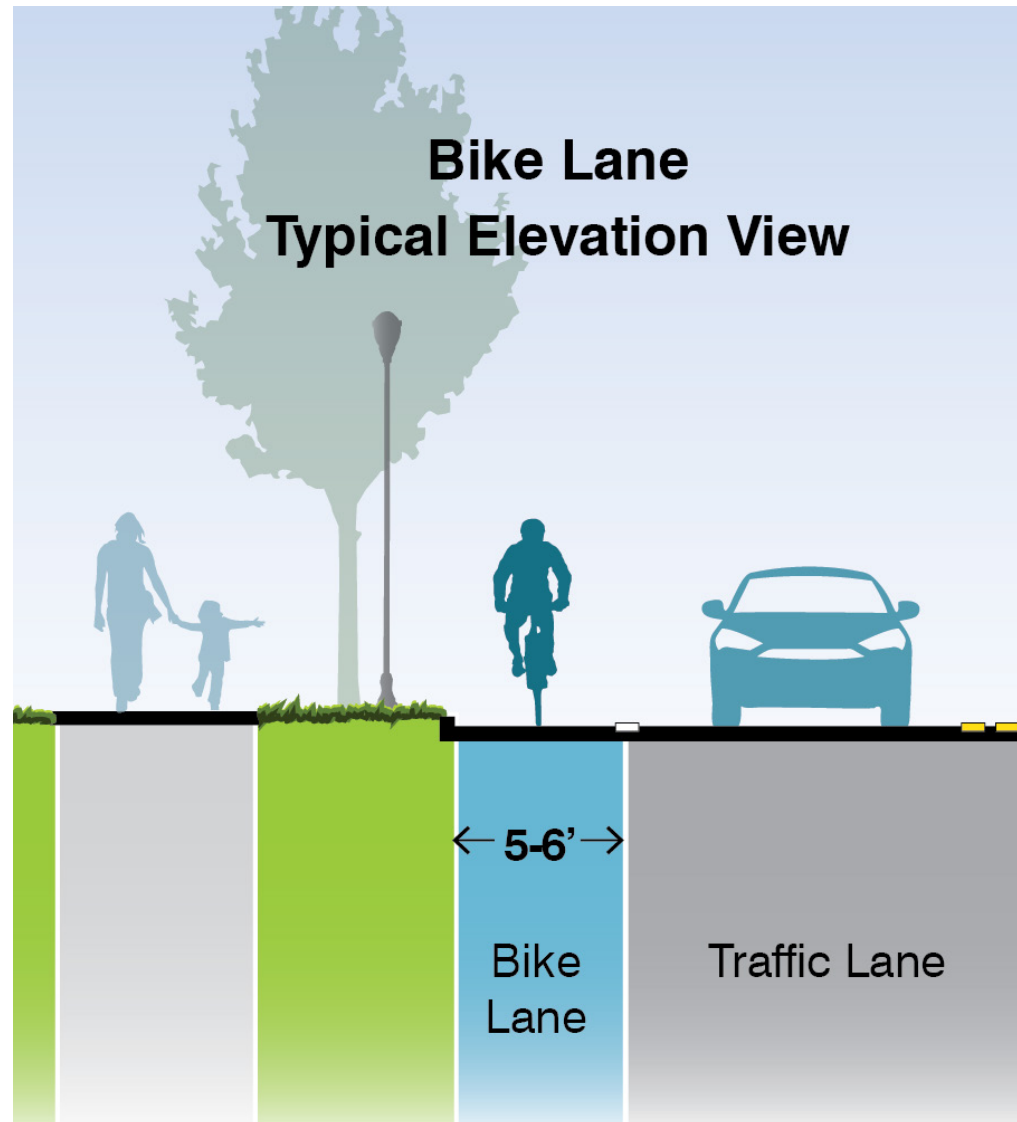


Figure 3.14: Bike Lane



## Shared Roadways

Shared roadways allow bicyclists and motor vehicles to use the same roadway space without separate lane designations. Shared roadways guide bicyclists to the roadways that are safest for their use and provide motorists with a greater awareness of bicyclists compared to roadways that lack bicycle pavement marking or signage. Other characteristics include:

- Should be used where the provision of dedicated bike lanes or other dedicated bicycle facilities is not warranted by traffic conditions or is not feasible due to geometric or right-of-way constraints.
- Should only be designated on low volume (less than 5,000 vehicles per day) and low speed conditions (85th percentile speeds of 30 mph or less).
- May be used on roadways with or without on-street parking and with or without yellow center line markings.
- Designated using shared roadway pavement markings (sharrows) and signage.

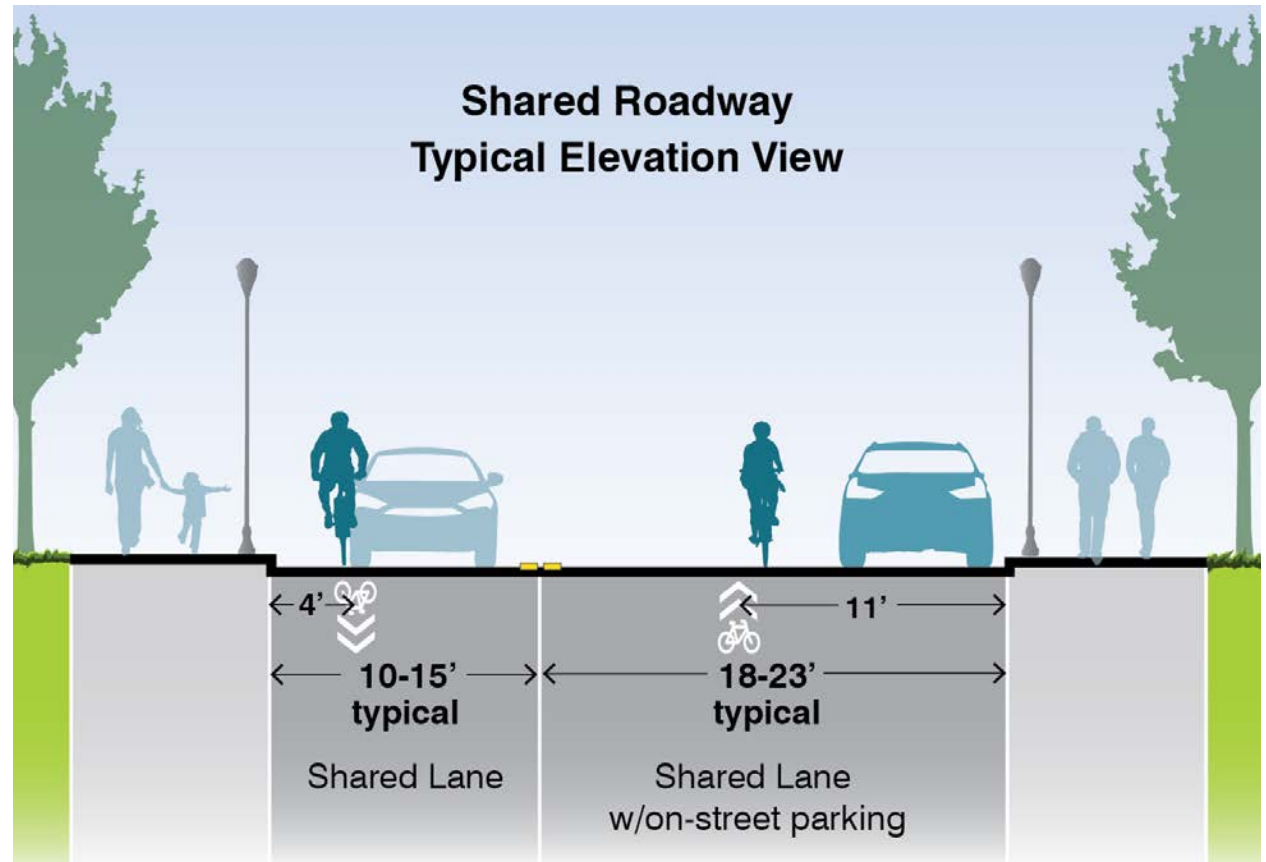


Figure 3.15: Shared Roadway

## Road Crossings

Sidepaths and shared use pathways that cross roadways require facilities such as curb ramps, marked crosswalks, signage, and appropriate traffic signal devices such as pedestrian crossing signal heads at signalized intersections. Pathway crossings are similar crossings for sidewalks. Multiple examples are found in Manchester at road crossings of the Captain John Bissell Trail, Charter Oak Greenway, Cheney Rail Trail, and Hop River Trail.



Figure 3.16: Recently improved mid-block crossing of Middle Turnpike West by the Cheney Rail Trail. Image credit: Google Earth

## Recommended Parks Connectivity Network

The recommended parks connectivity network seeks to link all parks and recreation sites with facilities that can safely and comfortably accommodate a wide array of users. The recommended network includes multiple facility types as described above. This recommended network spans across the Town and is accessible from all areas of Manchester.

In total, this plan recommends development of the following:

- 4.1 miles of shared use pathways
- 12.6 miles of sidepaths
- 1.8 roadway miles of bike lanes
- 18.6 roadway miles of shared roadways
- 5 intersection and roadway crossing improvements

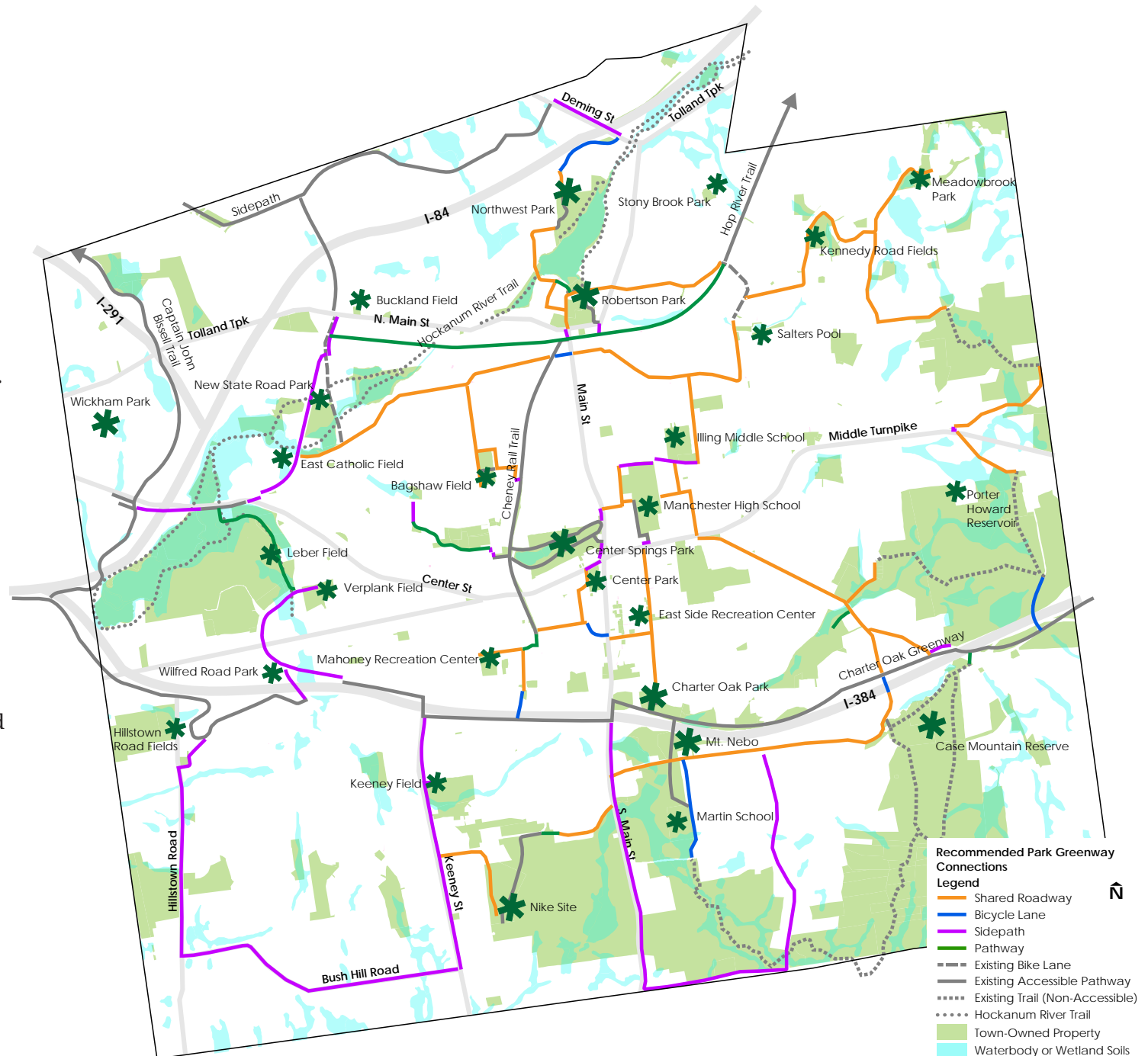


Figure 3.17: Recommended Park Connectivity Network



## FOCUS AREA PLANS

The parks connectivity plan on the preceding page is presented on the following pages in a series of focus areas that allow important details such as roadway crossings and local streets to be viewed. A total of six focus areas are presented. The map below provides a reference for the areas that the focus area plans cover.

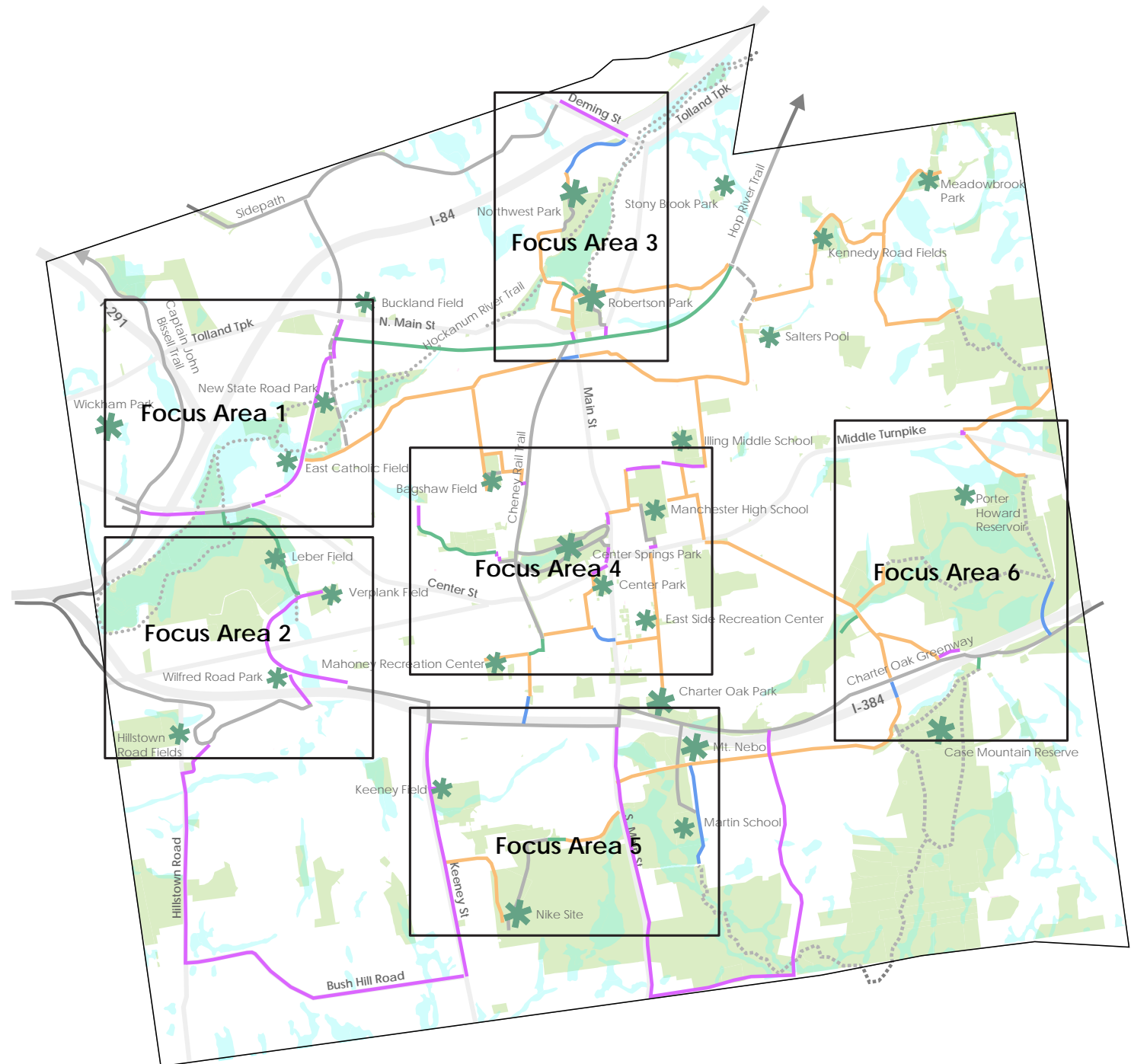


Figure 3.18: Focus Area Key Map

## Focus Area 1

Recommended improvements in this area link Wickham Park to East Catholic fields and Buckland Field. The Captain John Bissell Trail is also linked to the Hockanum River and Laurel Marsh Trails by a sidepath. Improvements in this area comprise mostly of a continuous sidepath on the south side of Middle Turnpike West, west side of New State Road, and east side of Adams Street. This facility would also connect to the existing Adams Street bike lane. Also recommended is an extension of the Hop River Trail along the existing rail line connecting to Adams Street and potentially traveling west to the Captain John Bissell Trail in a subsequent phase. A shared roadway is recommended on Willard Street, this would connect to the Cheney Rail Trail as an alternate route to the Hop River Trail extension. Existing roadway crossings would be used at most intersections except for New State Road at Adams Street where crosswalk and signal improvements would be needed at the existing signalized intersection.

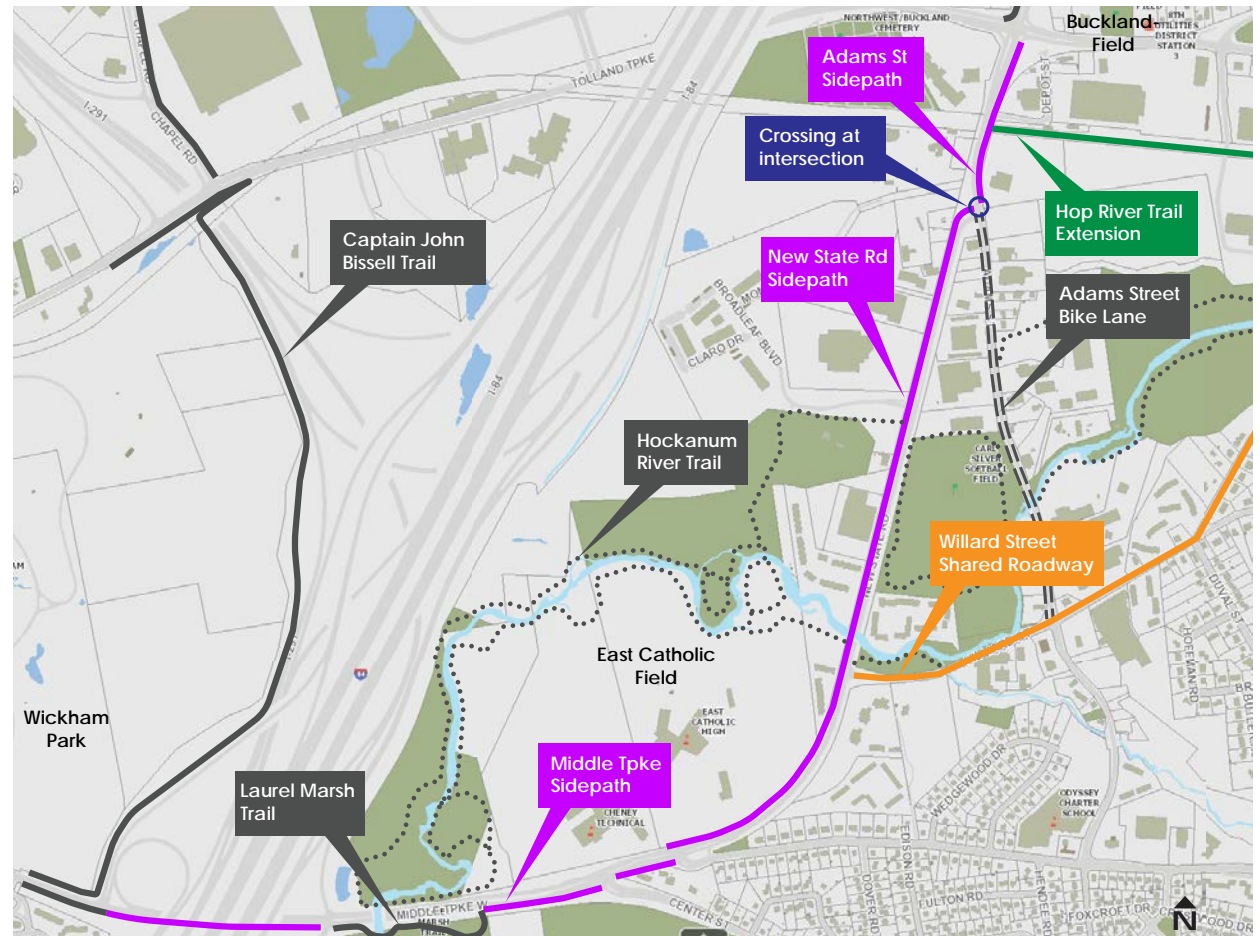


Figure 3.19: Focus Area 1

## Focus Area 2

Recommended improvements in this area would link the Hillstown Road Fields, Manchester Community College, Leber Field, and Verplanck Field. The improvements would also connect the Charter Oak Greenway to the Laurel Marsh Trail system. Improvements are comprised of sidepaths on the east side of Hillstown Road, Hartford Road, and Olcott Street. An accessible pathway is also recommended in place of the existing Verplanck Trail on the east side of Laurel Marsh. This pathway would provide connection north to Leber Field and the Captain John Bissell Trail. Improvements to the Charter Oak Greenway are currently planned in this area and will comprise of a continuous sidepath from Hartford Road to Bidwell Street in place of a sidewalk that currently hosts the Greenway route. Improvements in this area would use existing road crossings with the exception of a crossing that would be needed from the Olcott Street sidepath to the Verplanck pathway.

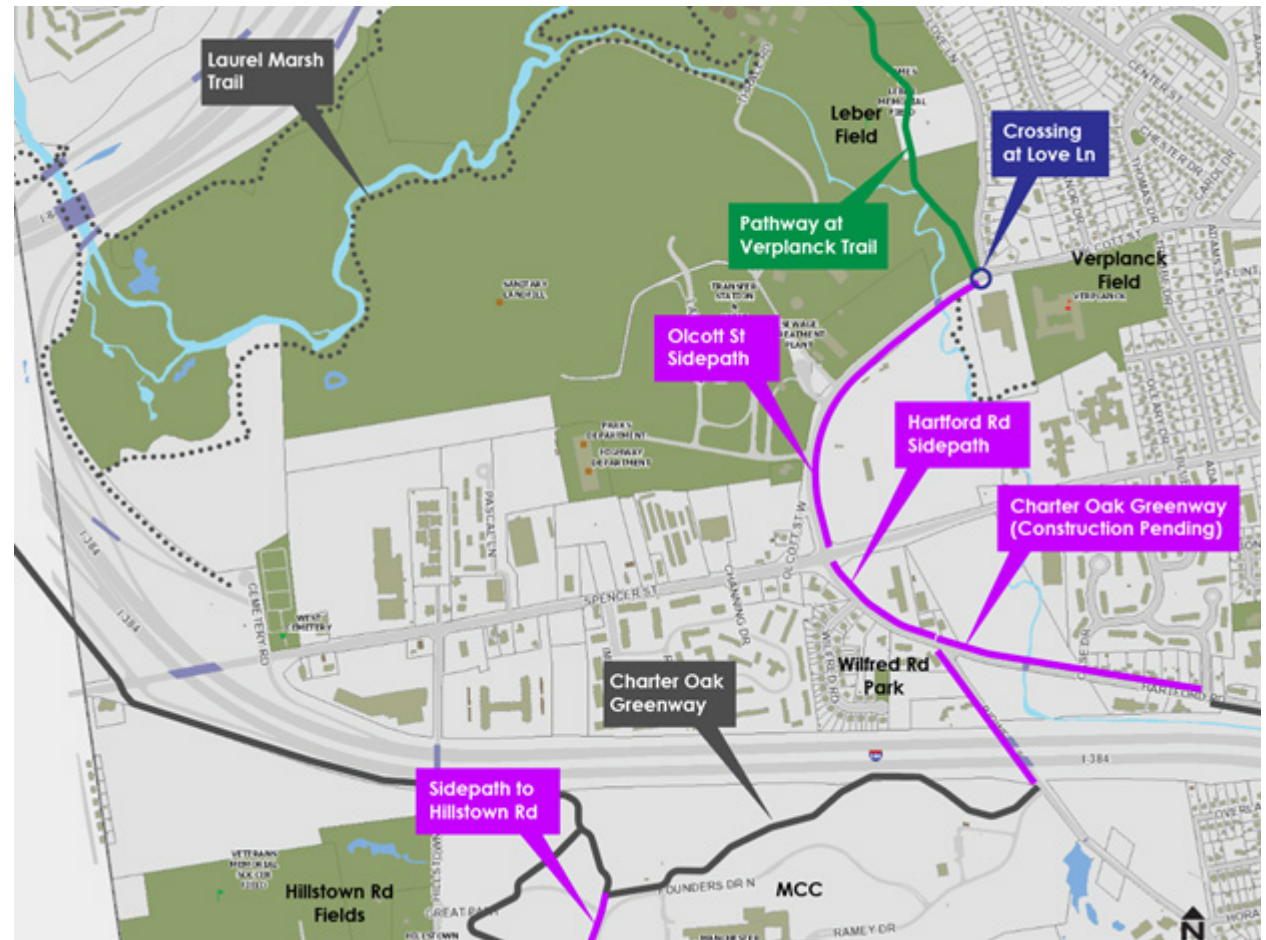


Figure 3.20: Focus Area 2



### Focus Area 3

Recommended improvements in this area seek to link sidepaths in the Buckland Hills area, Northwest Park, Robertson Park, and the Cheney Rail Trail. Several facility types are recommended including pathways, sidepaths, bike lanes, and shared roadways. The connection between the Hale Road sidepath and Northwest Park would be provided by a sidepath that would replace the existing sidewalk on the north side of Deming Street. Bike lanes would connect that sidepath to the Northwest Park entrance road where a shared roadway would guide users to Northwest Park.

The connection between Northwest Park and Robertson Park would be provided using existing pathways in Northwest Park and shared roadways on Union Place, Union Street, Kerry Street, Golway Street, and North School Street. A potential shortcut in this route would be the installation of a pathway between Kerry Street and Robertson Park, however property in this area is not owned by the Town and would require an easement and access agreement or purchase of a sliver of land along the pond to accommodate the pathway.

Connections to the Cheney Rail Trail would be provided using a short segment of sidepath on the west side of Main Street between Robertson Park and the rail line where the Cheney Rail Trail terminates. Extension of the Hop River Trail along the rail line is also recommended as a means of providing east/west connections across town. Because the Town does not control the rail line and this could be a long term improvement if it does occur, shared roadways are recommended on Williard Street, Hudson Street, and Green Road. A short segment of bike lanes would be provided on Williard Street between the Cheney Rail Trail and Main Street where there is adequate shoulder space to accommodate the bike lanes. All roadway crossings in this area would use existing pedestrian crossing infrastructure.

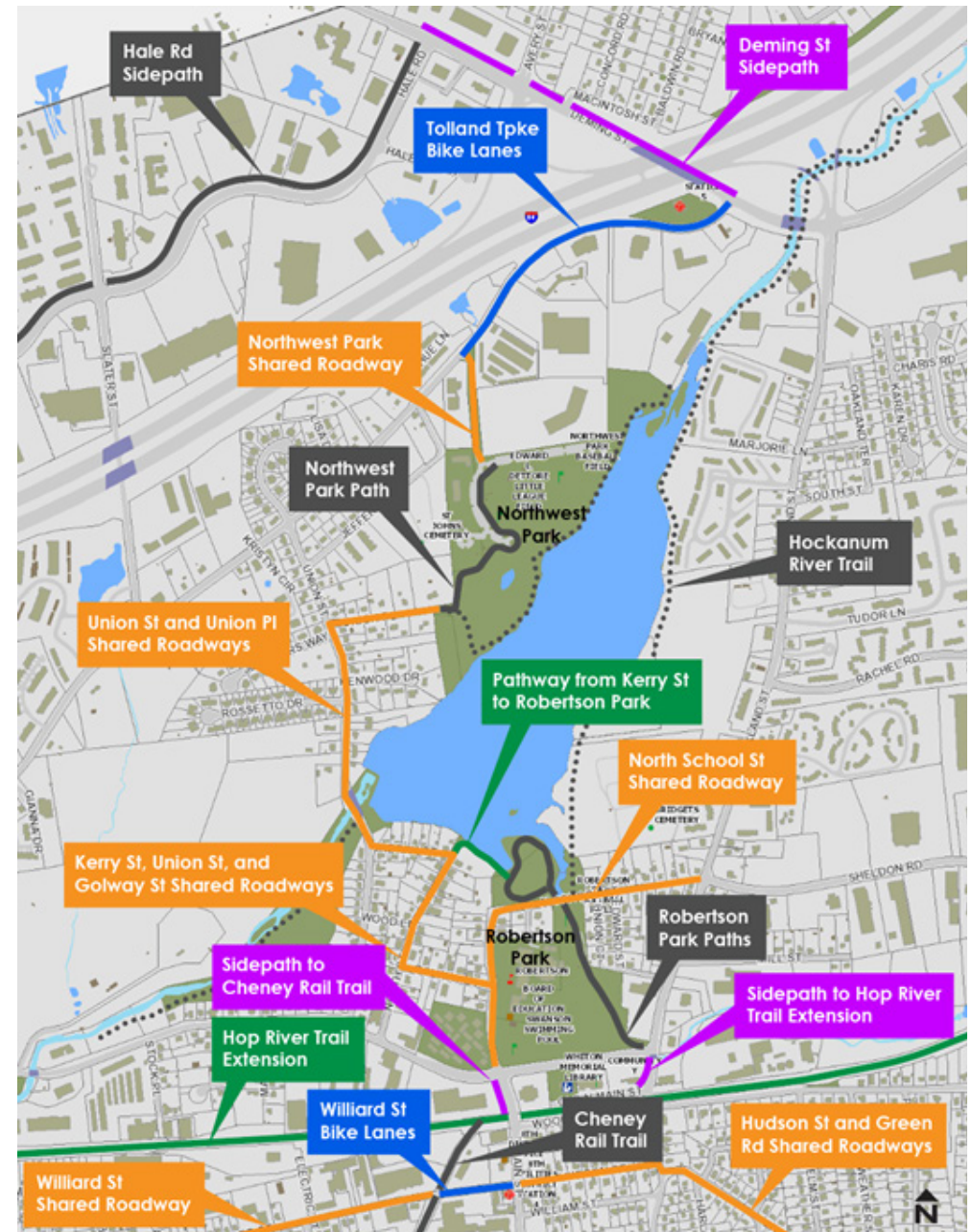


Figure 3.21: Focus Area 3



## Focus Area 4

This area includes Downtown Manchester, Manchester High School, Iling Middle School, Bagshaw Field, Center Springs Park, Center Park, the Cheney Rail Trail, and the East Side and Mahoney Recreation Centers. The recommended improvements seek to provide accessible bicycle and pedestrian connections between all these destinations and facilities. While sidewalks are present in most areas, bicycle facilities are lacking and streets such as Middle Turnpike and Main Street are not conducive to bicycling. A combination of pathways, sidepaths, bike lanes, and shared roadways would provide access across the area for all users.

Specific improvements include an extension of the Cheney Rail Trail to the southwest connecting to a shared roadway leading to the Mahoney Recreation Center. A pathway along the Bigelow Brook would connect through the Parkade property to a sidepath on Green Manor Boulevard. Short segments of sidepath on Broad Street and a mid-block crossing in this location would connect the Bigelow Brook Pathway to Center Springs Park. Similarly, sidepaths along Main Street and Center Street would connect Center Park to Center Springs Park. Shared roadways would be located on low volume local roadways and would connect to destinations such as the Mahoney and East Side Recreation Centers and Manchester High School and Iling Middle School. Sidepaths along the Middle Turnpike East frontage of both of those schools would provide bicycle access between the schools.

In addition to the Broad Street crossing, crossings improvements are needed at Strant Street at Main Street and Spruce Street at East Center Street to connect shared roadways to sidepaths in those areas.



Figure 3.22: Focus Area 4

## Focus Area 5

This area includes Charter Oak Park, Mt Nebo, Globe Hollow, Martin School, Keeney Field, and the Nike Site. Existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is limited to the Charter Oak Greenway and a limited sidewalk network. The Nike Site has many trails, most being narrow hiking or mountain biking trails blazed by local residents and visitors. The site does have a pathway and roadway that connects to Hercules Drive and holds potential for use as an accessible route. The construction of a short segment of pathway between Hercules Drive and Lakewood Circle South would facilitate a connection between the Nike Site and Mount Nebo and Globe Hollow. That connection would be completed by providing a shared roadway on Lakewood Circle South and a sidepath on the east side of South Main Street between Lakewood Circle South and Spring Street. The construction of additional sidepath on South Main Street between the Charter Oak Greenway and Line Street would provide a north/south connection through this part of Town. A shared roadway on Spring Street would connect to Mount Nebo, Globe Hollow, the Charter Oak Greenway, and would continue east to the Case Mountain Reserve.

Additional recommendations include the installation of bike lanes on Dartmouth Road that would connect to the Spring Street, the Mount Nebo pathway, Martin School, and the Case Mountain Reserve trail system. The installation of bike lanes on Prospect Street would provide a connection over I-384 towards the Mahoney Recreation Center. Towards the west, a sidepath on Keeney Street would provide a north/south connection through the area and would connect to a shared roadway at Garden Grove Road and the Nike Site.

Recommended improvements would use existing roadway crossings. Crossing improvements would be needed at South Main Street and Lakewood Circle South to connect the shared roadway on Lakewood Circle South to the sidepath on South Main Street.



Figure 3.23: Focus Area 5



## Focus Area 6

This area provides connections on the east side of Town between the Porter Howard Reservoir, Highland Park, the Case Mountain Reserve, and the Charter Oak Greenway. Those connections are provided by a combination of shared roadways, bike lanes, short segments of pathway, and existing or improved pathways and trails.

Highland Park and Case Mountain Reserve would be connected by shared roadways on Ferguson Road, Porter Street, and Wyllys Street. These low volume residential roadways are suitable for bicycling or walking on the roadway. A short segment of bike lane could be accommodated on the Wyllys Street bridge across I-384 where there is sufficient shoulder space for their provision. A north/south connection on the eastern edge of Town would be provided by shared roadways on Lake Street and Middle Turnpike East, connecting to existing trails at the Porter Howard Reservoir and to bike lanes on Finley Street. The trail connection on the Porter Howard Reservoir property along Finley Street may need improvement to accommodate all users. Alternatively, the shared roadway could be continued on Finley Street (traffic speed data would need to be collected and potential traffic calming measures may need to be employed to assure that this stretch of the roadway is suitable for shared use).

Connections to Case Mountain Reserve and its trail system would be provided from a shared roadway at the Spring Street entrance. Connections at Birch Mountain Road would be provided by segment of pathway between the Charter Oak Greenway and Birch Mountain Road entrance of the Reserve. Significant grading would be required to facilitate this connection, but this improvement would provide a valuable connection.

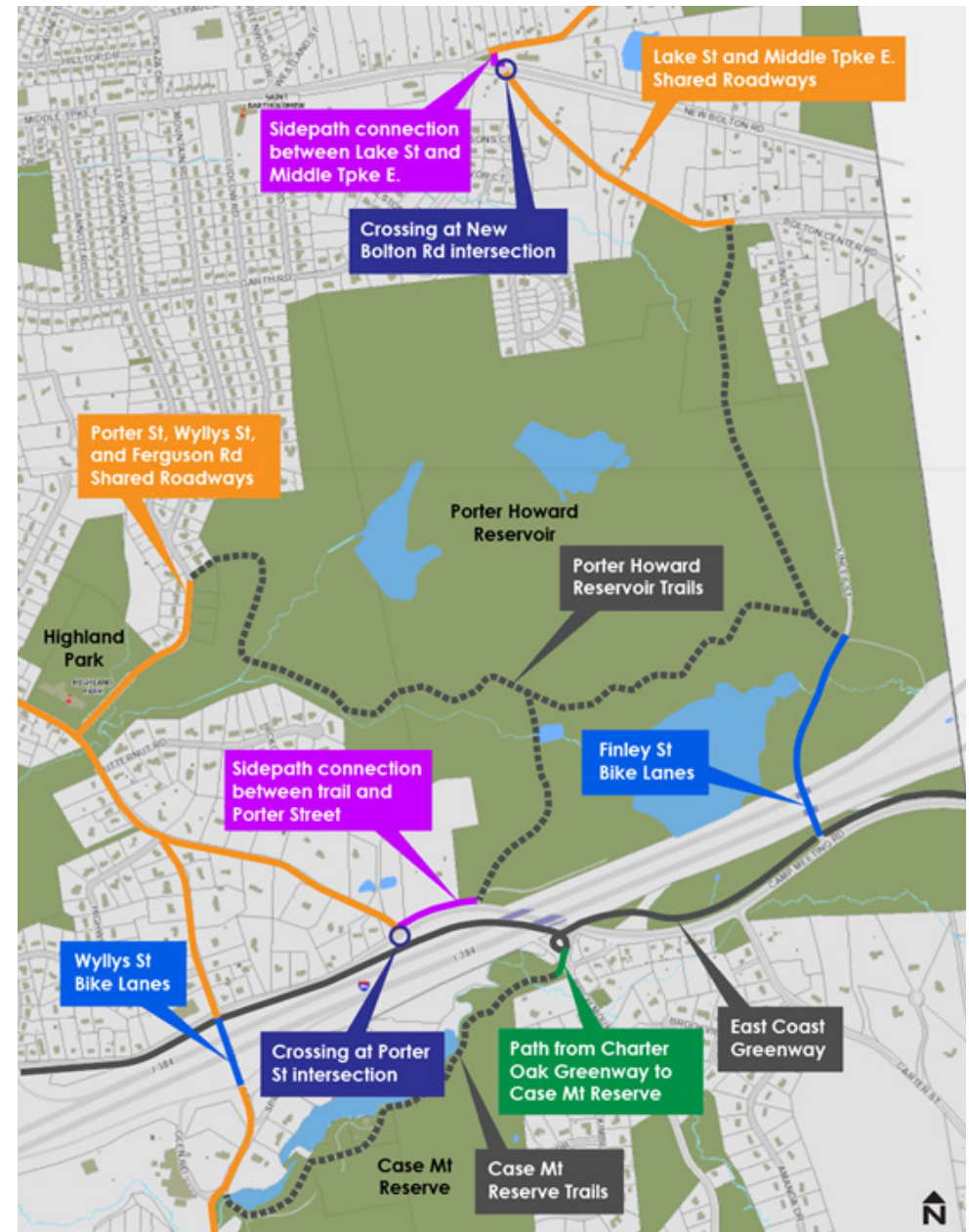


Figure 3.24: Focus Area 6

## PHASING OF IMPROVEMENTS

The parks connectivity network will not be constructed or implemented all at once. It will require several years and perhaps a decade or more to build out the recommended network. Many of the recommendations of this plan, such as shared roadways can be implemented at a relatively low cost and do not require extensive design. Other facilities such as shared use pathways that are more costly but would provide important links in the network, such as extension of the Cheney Rail Trail to Pine Street, should be prioritized.

The recommendations of this plan are organized into three phases. Phase 1 segments of the network are and are recommended for near term improvements. Phase 2 segments should follow completion of Phase 1 improvements and Phase 3 segments are measures that are likely to take several years to fund, design, and construct. The recommended phases of this plan do not preclude a Phase 2 or Phase 3 segment from moving forward in the near term or prior to Phase 1 segments being completed.

Phase 1 Improvements

The Phase 1 improvements include 23 miles of facilities and two roadway crossings. Improvements are outlined in black on the map below.

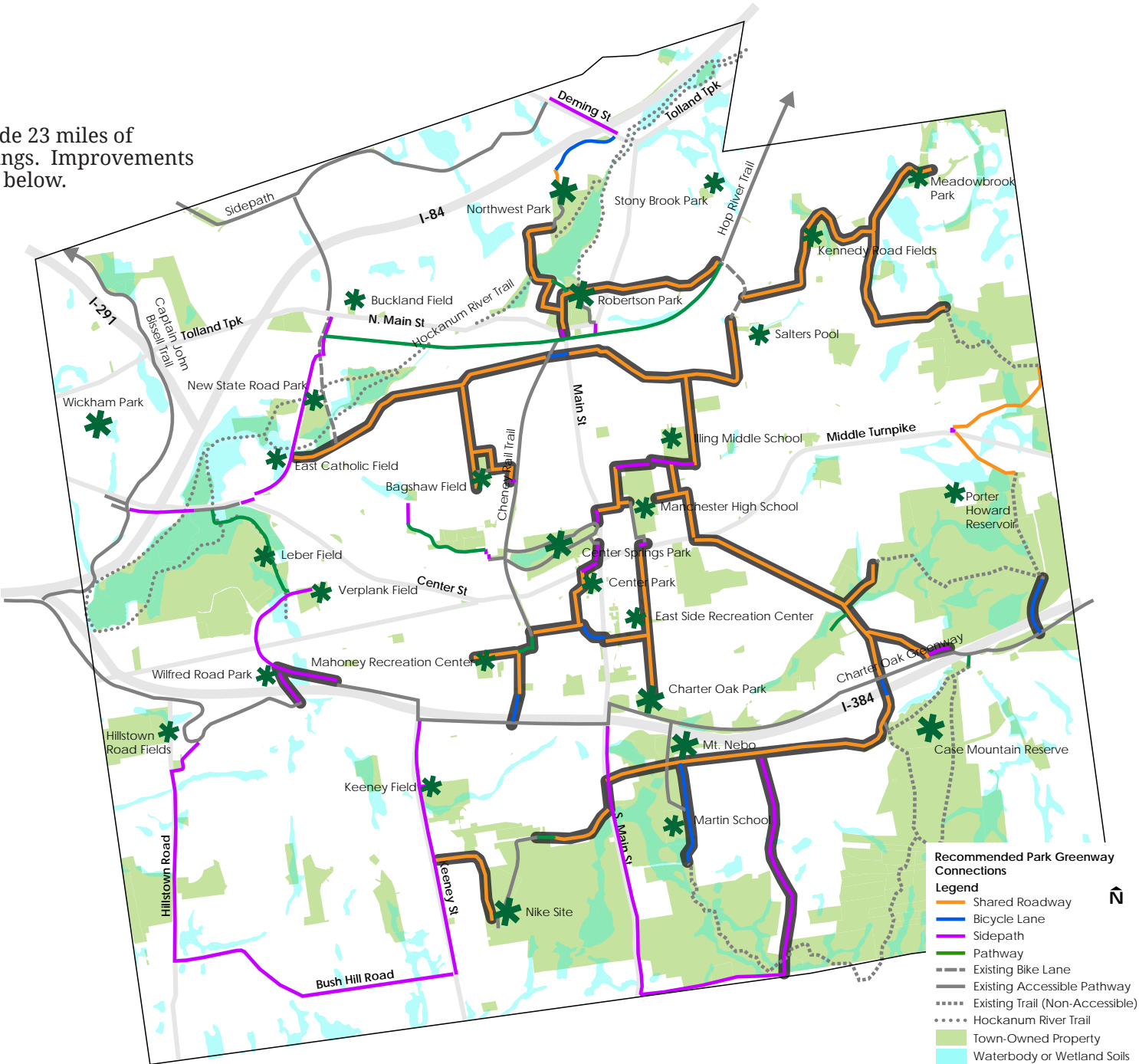


Figure 3.25: Phase 1 Improvements



## Phase 2 Improvements

The Phase 2 improvements include 5.8 miles of facilities and two roadway crossings. Improvements are outlined in black on the map below.

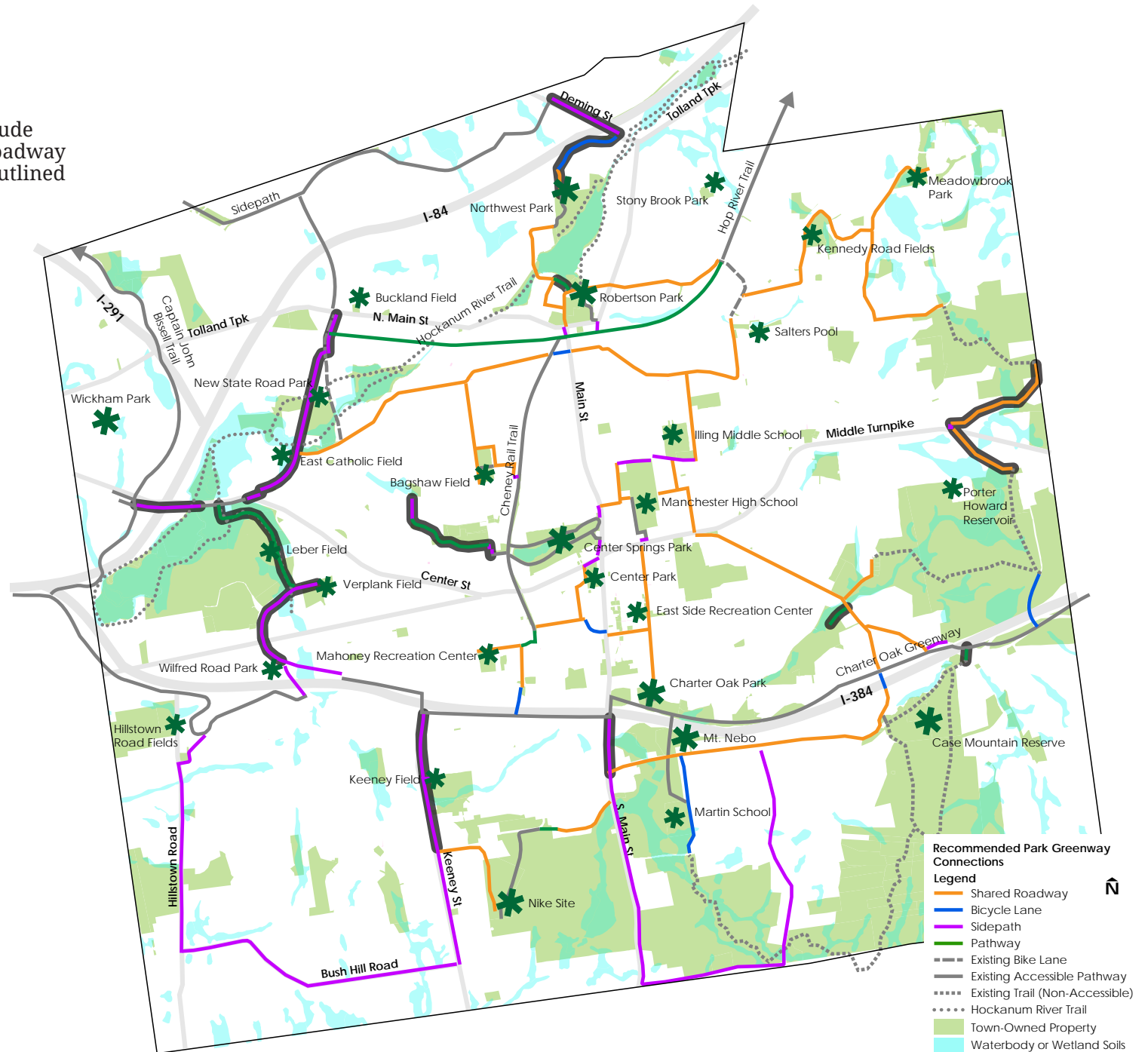


Figure 3.26: Phase 2 Improvements

### Phase 3 Improvements

The Phase 3 improvements include 8.2 miles of facilities and one roadway crossing. This includes extension of the Hop River Trail and the construction of sidepaths on Keeney Street, Bush Hill Road, Hillstown Road, South Main Street, and Line Street. Improvements are outlined in black on the map below.

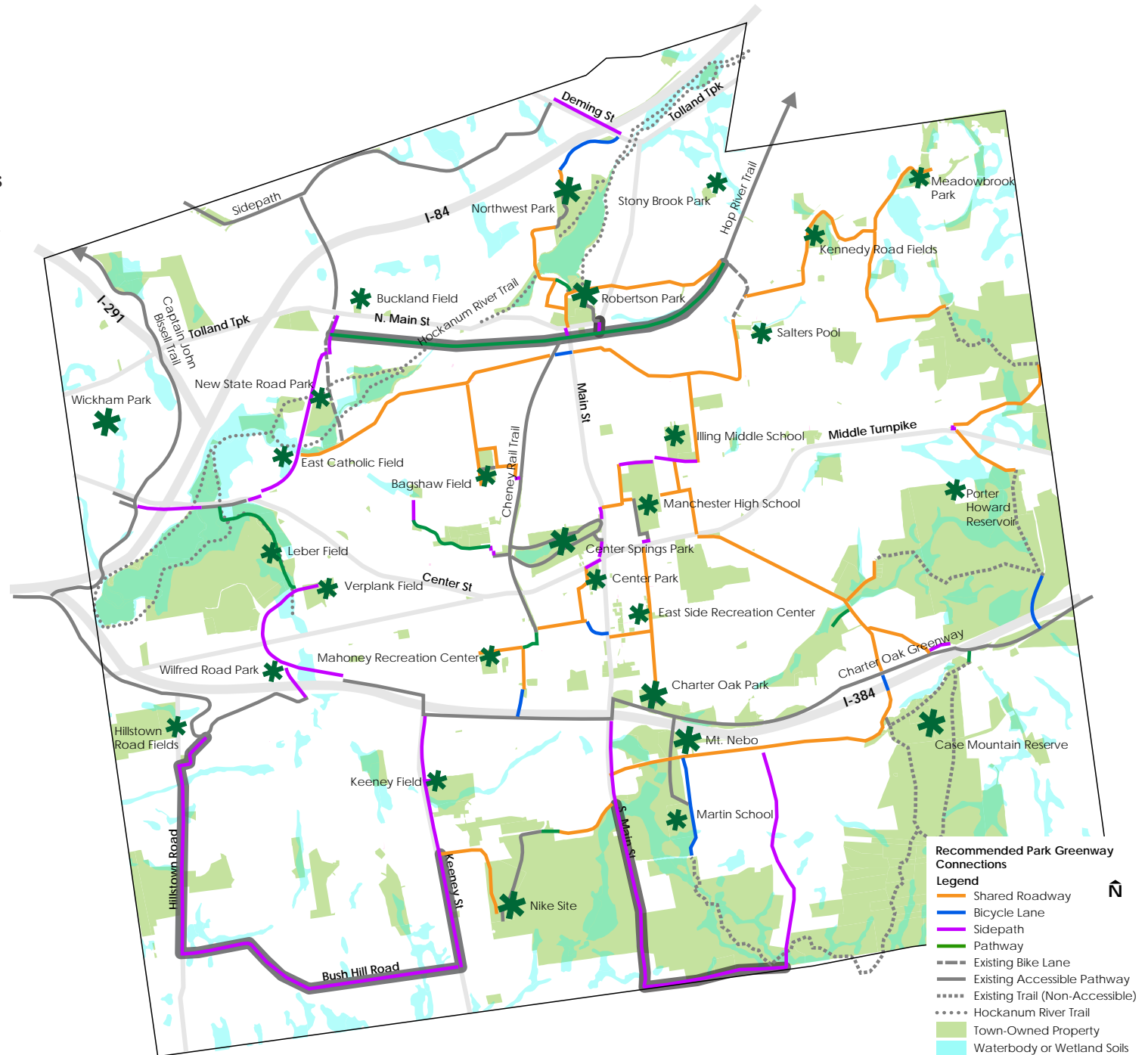


Figure 3.27: Phase 3 Improvements

## COST ESTIMATES

The total cost of implementing the proposed improvements is approximately \$10 million. That cost is spread across three phases as follows:

Cost Estimates	
Phase	Cost
Phase 1	\$1,244,500
Phase 2	\$3,798,250
Phase 3	\$4,980,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,022,750</b>

The most costly facilities to construct are shared use pathways, which often require extensive site work including grading, drainage improvements, bridges or culverts, and fences or railings. These facilities have a typical unit cost of \$200 per linear foot compared to \$100 per linear foot for sidepaths, \$10 per linear foot for bike lanes, and \$2.50 per linear foot for shared roadways.

The actual cost of improvements is likely to vary from this estimate due to conditions that are unique to each of the proposed facilities, variations in material costs, construction bids received, and other unknown factors. This cost estimate is intended for use in budgeting for improvements and for the procurement of grants that would assist in financing the proposed improvements.



## MAINTENANCE OF THE PARKS NETWORK

The Town of Manchester should maintain Town-owned facilities to a level that protects public safety and supports the longevity of its parks network infrastructure. Best practices for maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be employed while balancing department budgets and public expectations.

Maintenance policies and practices are intended to:

- Improve safety by reducing or eliminating hazards
- Deter nuisances such as vandalism, littering, trespassing, and unauthorized uses
- Encourage the use of facilities for transportation and recreational use
- Support positive relations between the Town and adjacent landowners
- Prolong the life of the facilities

Practices and frequencies for various maintenance activities (e.g. sweeping, surface repairs, pavement marking, landscaping, etc.) should be established by the responsible Town department and in consultation with other affected departments and volunteer organizations. For example, the Department of Public Works, responsible for roadway and parks maintenance, should lead the effort to establish practices and frequencies for the activities related to road sweeping and surface repairs. In addition, the Town should meet with representatives of volunteer organizations that maintain segments of pathways on an annual basis, preferably in the winter or early spring, to discuss planned maintenance and maintenance needs for the year.

Specific maintenance recommendations include the following:

### Shared Use Pathways and Sidepaths

- Repair pavement to be in good-to-excellent condition with occasional cracks, but no bumps or potholes;
- Maintain stone dust surfaces sufficient to minimize puddling and erosion
- Weekly mowing of adjacent lawn areas
- Fall leaf removal
- Sweeping of pathways in the spring, summer, and fall
- Pathways on and adjacent to Town properties should be maintained by the Town with snow removed of a minimum of 3 feet of passage immediately following snow events and complete clearing of snow as DPW capacity and schedule allows. Removal of snow from pathways will improve the life span of the pavement.
- Maintenance of drainage and water crossing infrastructure as needed
- Repair and replace deteriorated, failing, and damaged railings and fencing on an annual basis
- Pavement markings should be restored as needed. Epoxy pavement markings should be used. Typical life span of epoxy pavement markings on pathways is 5 to 6 years but pavement markings for road crossings exposed to motor vehicle traffic may be less.

## Bike Lanes and Shared Roadways

- To be maintained on the same schedule as the roadway on which they are located
- Sweeping should be prioritized for roadways with bike lanes and shared roadways. Sweeping is recommended in the spring, summer, and fall.
- Pavement markings should be restored as needed. Epoxy pavement markings should be used. Typical life span of epoxy pavement markings is 4 years but may be less in highly trafficked areas.



Figure 3.28: Faded crosswalk markings at I-384 ramp crossing of the Charter Oak Greenway. Pavement markings on the pathway, installed at the same time, remain in good condition. Image credit: Google Earth



# PARK INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

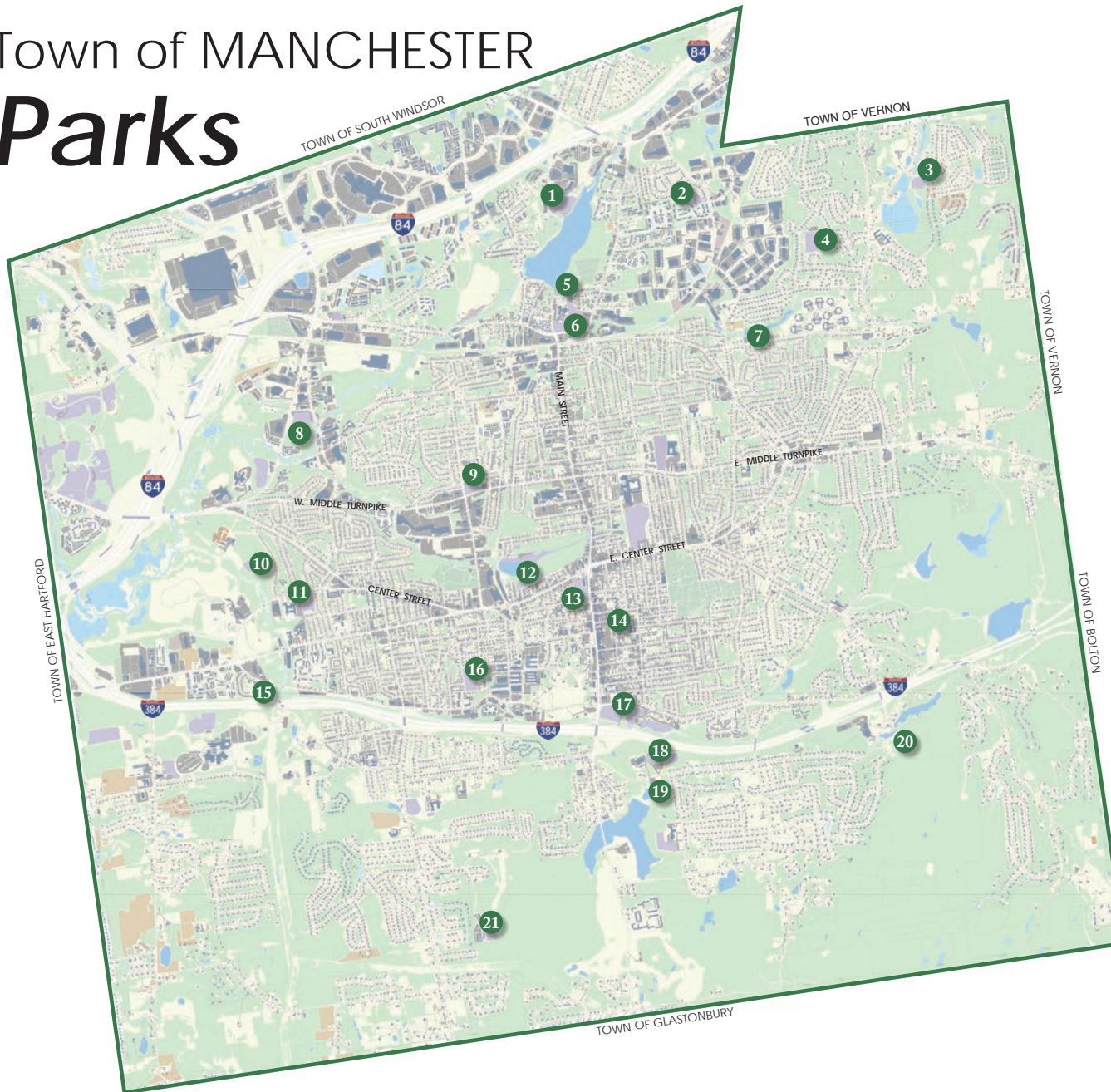
The Town owns 25 parks totaling approximately 685 acres. The Town also has joint ownership or management responsibilities for an additional 191 acres bringing the total acreage to 875 acres. These additional acres include the Manchester public schools, the Community Y Recreation Center, and the Manchester Country Club. On the following page is a map of the Town's parks.





# Town of MANCHESTER

## *Parks*



## LEGEND

- 1 Northwest Park
- 2 Stoneybrook
- 3 Meadowbrook Fields
- 4 Kennedy Soccer Fields
- 5 Union Pond Park
- 6 Robertson Park
- 7 Salters Pool
- 8 Carl Silver Field
- 9 Waddell Recreation Area
- 10 Leber Field
- 11 Verplanck Recreation Area
- 12 Center Springs Park
- 13 Center Memorial Park
- 14 Nathan Hale Recreation Area / ESNR Center / Market Field
- 15 Wilfred Road Park
- 16 West Side Recreation Area / Mahoney Recreation Center
- 17 Charter Oak Park
- 18 Mt. Nebo Park
- 19 Globe Hollow Swimming Area & Camp Kennedy
- 20 Case Mountain Recreation Area
- 21 Nike Site Recreation Area

## SURVEY RESULTS RELATING TO PARKS

In order to learn more about resident needs for parks, there were several questions regarding parks included in the statistically valid survey. The survey results related to parks are included here and will lead into the park assessments.

Respondents were asked if they or anyone in their household (HH) used any of 18 major parks and facilities provided by the Town, and the top 10 responses with the percentage for each used are below. The third column is the percentage who use this park/facility that are “very satisfied” with the condition:

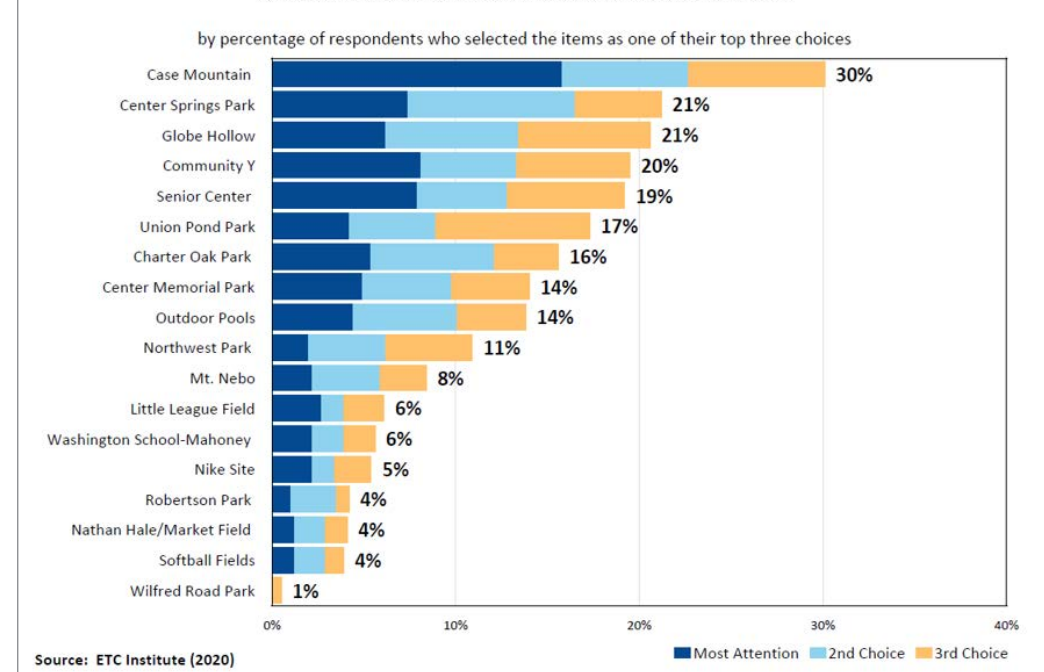
Table 3.9: Top 10 Parks Visited and Percent Satisfied

Amenity/Facility	% That Use This Site	Rate “Very Satisfied”
Case Mountain	64%	53%
Charter Oak Park	56%	61%
Northwest Park	42%	51%
Center Springs Park	41%	37%
Union Pond Park	37%	39%
Globe Hollow	33%	32%
Center Memorial Park	30%	35%
Mt. Nebo	26%	39%
Outdoor Pools	25%	30%
Community Y	22%	29%

When asked if respondents felt if there are sufficient parks and green space within walking distance of their residence, 63% responded “yes,” 21% responded “no,” and 16% did not respond to the question.

When asked which park and recreation facilities/amenities should receive the most attention from the Town over the next two years, the results are depicted in the figure below.

Table 3.10: Parks and Facilities to Receive Attention:



Parks and Facilities to Receive Attention

Survey respondents were asked if they had a need for 29 different facilities. The same question also asked how well their HH needs were being met for this type of facility. The top 11 responses are below in Table 3.11 with the first column listing the facility type, the second column the percentage of households with the need, the third column the percentage of households that view this facility as the most important to their household (combination of top four choices), and the last column the estimated number of households whose need is “partly met” or “not met.”

Maintenance of existing parks, facilities, and amenities is very important to residents. When provided a list of actions the Town could take to improve the park and recreation system, the top three responses for the “very supportive” response were:

Table 3.10: Park and Facility Needs

Facility Type	% With Need	Most Important to HH	% with Need “Fully Met”	Est. # of HH Whose Need is “Partly Met” or “Not Met”
Walking and biking trails	68%	48%	34%	2,710
Natural parks and preserves	58%	38%	31%	3,450
Restrooms	45%	14%	6%	6,596
Community centers/recreation centers	35%	16%	18%	3,453
Picnic areas/shelters	35%	9%	16%	4,224
Indoor swimming pool	35%	17%	9%	5,986
Playgrounds	32%	13%	31%	1,623
Community/social gather spaces	31%	11%	16%	4,104
Performing arts theater	30%	11%	19%	4,494
Smaller neighborhood parks	30%	9%	14%	4,203

76%

MAINTAIN EXISTING  
TRAILS AND  
WATERWAYS

73%

MAINTAIN EXISTING  
PARKS, RECREATION  
FACILITIES, AND  
FIELDS

52%

ADD NEW TRAILS AND  
CONNECT EXISTING  
TRAILS

These three responses are also the top three choices for the question “which actions would you be most willing to fund with your tax dollars?”



# PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

This section of the Master Plan focuses on the Town's existing park system inventory, identifying the existing conditions of their park and recreation facilities.

It begins with a description of park classifications to provide an understanding of their functions. An inventory of park and recreation facilities follows, including park locations, facilities offered, and other observations, as well as a summary of the findings.

These components characterize the existing park system and establish a framework that helps identify current and future park system needs. In total, the Town currently manages and operates over 1,123 acres of park and recreational facilities; however, for the purposes of this section of the master plan, 21 parks were identified for analysis.



				Indoor	Athletic Fields					Game Courts				
	Park Name and Address	Park Type	Acreage (GIS Parcel)	Recreation Center/Offices	Little League Field	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Soccer / Football Field	Cricket Field	San Volleyball Courts	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Pickelball Court	Handball / Racquetball Court
1	Northwest Park 448 Tolland Turnpike	Community	27.63	x	1	1				2				
2	Stoneybrook 866 Parker Street	Neighborhood	2.67								1			
3	Meadowbrook Fields Meadowbrook Drive	Neighborhood	4.00											
4	Kennedy Soccer Fields 103 Kennedy Road	Community	12.45					3						
5	Union Pond Park 78 North Main Street	Neighborhood	4.12											
6	Robertson Park 78 North Main Street	Community	16.02						1		2		2	
7	Salters Pool 123 Lydall Street	Neighborhood	3.43								1			
8	Carl Silver Field 250 New State Road	Community	22.58				1							

Outdoor Recreation					Passive Recreation							Support			
Disc Golf	Playground	Splash Pad	Swimming Pool / Area	Skate Park	Pond / Fishing	Dog Park	Trails / Path	Exercise Stations	Shuffleboard	Bocce Court	Specialty Garden	Concession	Restrooms	Pavilion / Picnic Area	Comments
	1				x		x				1	2	3	2	Boundless Playground; Observation Deck to Union Pond; Children's Butterfly Garden; Picnic Area by Town Bldgs
	1														Lots of open space
	1														Lots of open space
	1														1 full size, 2 JRs; Swings
					x		x	8							Jay Howroyd Fitness Trail, Connection to Union Pond Trail; Fishing Pier on Union Pond
	1		1				x		2						Tennis Courts also used for Pickleball
			1		x		x								Basketball Hoop in Parking Lot; Salters Pond, Salter's Pond Loop Trail
							x								Lots of open space



				Indoor	Athletic Fields					Game Courts				
	Park Name and Address	Park Type	Acreage (GIS Parcel)	Recreation Center/Offices	Little League Field	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Soccer / Football Field	Cricket Field	San Volleyball Courts	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Pickleball Court	Handball / Racquetball Court
9	Waddell Recreation Area 163 Broad Street	Community	10.35		1						1			
10	Leber Field 100 Love Lane	Neighborhood	1.79		1									
11	Verplanck Recreation Area 126 Olcott Street	Neighborhood	13.90		1									
12	Center Springs Park 39 Lodge Street	Regional	55.78	x	1						1			
13	Center Memorial Park 586 Main Street	Neighborhood	6.90											
14	Nathan Hale Rec Area / East Side Neighborhood Resource Center / Market Field 160 Spruce Street	Neighborhood	5.33	x	1						1			
15	Wilfred Road Park 81 Wilfred Road	Small / Mini-Park	0.43								1			
16	West Side Rec Area / Mahoney Rec Center 94 Cedar Street	Neighborhood	7.56	x				1			1			
17	Charter Oak Park 110 Charter Oak Street	Community	22.66	x			3	3			4	2		2
18	Mt. Nebo Park 155 Spring Street	Community	16.73			1		1						
19	Globe Hollow Swimming Area & Camp Kennedy 100 Spring Street	Community	108.59											
20	Case Mountain Recreation Area 670 Spring Street	Regional	309.18											
21	Nike Site Recreation Area 160 Garden Grove Road	Community	36.98	x			1						4	
TOTAL			689.08		6	2	5	8	1	2	13	2	6	2

Outdoor Recreation					Passive Recreation							Support			
Disc Golf	Playground	Splash Pad	Swimming Pool / Area	Skate Park	Pond / Fishing	Dog Park	Trails / Path	Exercise Stations	Shuffleboard	Bocce Court	Specialty Garden	Concession	Restrooms	Pavilion / Picnic Area	Comments
	2		1									1			Trooper Russell A. Bagshaw Memorial Field; Parking Lot doubles as basketball court
							x					1			James N. Leber Memorial Field
		1					x					1			Mike Heffron Field; Verplanck Trail
1					x		x						2	2	Center Springs Pond with Aerators and Fountain; Half Basketball Court
							x		2	2					Walking Paths
	1										1				Basketball Hoop Behind Bldg; Spruce Street Community Gardens and Market Field at ESNR Center (across street)
	1														Half Basketball Court; Play Equipment - Swings, Slide, Climber, Balance Beam
	2		1												Same practice field used for both soccer/football
	1						x				1		1	1	East Coast Greenway; Rotary Music Garden; Andrew Ansaldi Recreation Area; Large Playground
						1	x					1	1		Moriarty Baseball Field; Carlin Football/Soccer Field; Barks & Rec Dog Park; Connection to Charter Oak Park & East Coast Greenway
			1				x						1	2	Globe Hollow - picnic area (tables & grills) inside fence Camp Kennedy - Large pavilion w/ Kitchen inside building and lots of tables
					x		x								Case Pond; Waterfalls under the Case Pond Upper Dam (Stone Bridge)
															Multiple Buildings on site
1	12	1	5	0		1		8	4	2	3	6	8	7	

## PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Parks were assessed by the To Design team based on level of development, amenities, size, and service area. The intent of park classifications is to aid in making acquisition and design decisions, the organization of recreation space, which is responsive to public need, and creating quality recreational experiences and facilities that can be effectively maintained. Park classifications are based on NRPA guidelines and the types of uses, size, and relative service area of each park.

The classifications established for the Town parks include:

- Mini-Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks

### Mini-Parks

Mini-parks, also referred to “tot lots” or “pocket parks,” provide basic recreation opportunities on small lots, generally one acre or less, within residential areas. These parks are designed to serve residents in immediately adjacent neighborhoods, and provide limited recreation amenities, such as playgrounds, gardens, benches, and picnic tables for small social gatherings.



### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are an important component of the park system and provide close-to-home recreation opportunities that serve nearby residents. They typically range from 5 to 10 acres in size, offer a more complete range of recreational facilities, and accommodate the needs of a wide variety of age and user groups. Generally, they are designed with a focus on informal active and passive recreation, and may include amenities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, toilet facilities, outdoor sport courts, sport fields, picnic tables, pathways, and multiuse open grass areas. Connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods is vital to these parks; therefore, establishing sidewalks, bike paths, crosswalks, and connections to larger trail systems is important.





## Community Parks

Community parks are diverse in nature, typically 15 to 50 acres in size, able to accommodate large numbers of people, and they provide both active and passive recreation opportunities that appeal to the entire community. The focus of a community park is to meet community-based recreation, athletics, and open space needs. These parks may contain significant athletic complexes, large play structures, aquatic amenities, wooded areas and walking paths, picnic areas, scenic lookouts, botanical gardens, multiple shelters, and various other active and passive amenities depending upon community needs and site suitability. Community parks require additional support facilities, such as off-street parking for vehicles and bicycles, permanent restroom facilities, and lighting.



## Regional Parks

Regional parks, also known as destination-oriented parks, are generally the largest in size (more than 50 acres) and serve the greatest geographical area, frequently extending beyond the town/city limits to include neighboring communities. Their focus is on providing a variety of park experiences capable of entertaining the entire family for extended time periods, as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces, or environmental features. Because regional parks are centered on unique terrain, extensive natural areas, scenic views, a lake, river, or cultural features, they typically attract large numbers of people from throughout the community and beyond.



Park Classification		
Park Type	Park Name	Acreage
Mini-Parks		
	Wilfred Road Park	0.43
Neighborhood Parks		
	Stoneybrook	2.67
	Meadowbrook Fields	4.00
	Union Pond Park	4.12
	Salters Pool	3.43
	Leber Field	1.79
	Verplanck Recreation Area	13.90
	Center Memorial Park	6.90
	Nathan Hale Recreation Area	5.33
	West Side Recreation Area	7.56
Community Parks		
	Northwest Park	27.63
	Kennedy Soccer Fields	12.45
	Robertson Park	16.02
	Carl Silver Field	22.58
	Waddell Recreation Area	10.35
	Charter Oak Park	22.66
	Mt. Nebo Park	16.73
	Globe Hollow Swimming Area	108.59
	Nike Site Recreation Area	36.98

Park Classification		
Park Type	Park Name	Acreage
Regional Parks		
	Center Springs Park	55.78
	Case Mountain Recreation Area	309.18

## METHODOLOGY

A critical step in the master planning process is identifying how much parkland exists, where parks are located, what facilities and amenities parks provide, and what condition parks are in. This information is used to create both a parks inventory and a classification system. Park assessments identify the strengths and weaknesses of a park system by revealing areas or activities that are underserved by the system, as well as overall improvements that need to be made.

In fall 2020, To Design staff conducted park assessment for 21 parks in the Town. Each assessment established a baseline understanding and a snapshot of the existing conditions of the park and amenities within the park system. In addition, the assessment supports the foundation, or reference point, from which recommendations of the Plan were developed.

Each park assessment consists of a map noting the amenities within the park, and an analysis presented in table form of the park and condition of its assets. Park assets are defined as developed amenities within parks that enhance the recreational experience of users. Specific examples include athletic fields, sports courts, aquatic facilities, playgrounds, picnic areas, shelters or pavilions, restrooms/concession, etc. The analysis also evaluates the condition of pavements, parking, circulation, lighting, site furnishings, signage, vegetation, fencing, and stormwater management.

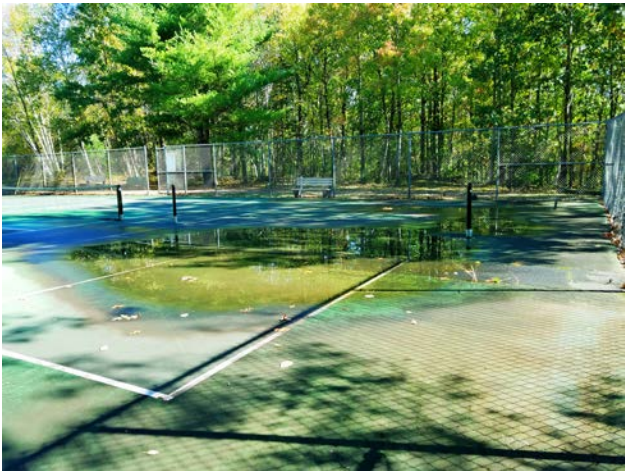
Park and asset conditions were rated using a scale of good, fair, or poor using the following methodology:

**GOOD CONDITION:** Park/amenities are in good condition and feature only minor or no maintenance problems.





**FAIR CONDITION:** Park/amenities are in fair condition and indicate ongoing maintenance problems.



**POOR CONDITION:** Park/amenities are in poor condition and clearly show ongoing maintenance problems or pose safety concerns that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement.





# 27.63 Acres

# Northwest Park

## 448 Tolland Turnpike





# NORTHWEST PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES

Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Edward L. Dettore Little League Field	😊			Premier Field; irrigation, Musco lights (newer), metal stands on concrete pads, 2-story building (scorer's table), fencing - paint coating peeling, electronic scoreboard, dugouts, netting added for protection
Baseball Field	😊			Premier Field; irrigation, Musco lights (newer), metal stands on concrete pads, 3-story building (scorer's table) - some rusting visible, fencing - paint coating peeling, electronic scoreboard, dugouts, netting added for protection
Sand Volleyball Courts (2)		😐		Located in heavily wooded area, lots of leaf litter; nets need replacing; no boundaries; metals posts in good shape
Playground		😐		Mix of mulch, safety surface and bituminous pavement - cracks, holes; aging equipment
Trails	😊			Trail markers are inconspicuous at trail heads; provides views to Union Pond; not a complete loop around pond
Children's Butterfly Garden	😊			Nice addition to park; tripping hazard at one end (embedded rock)
Concession (2)	😊			One located in large pavilion; one located in standalone building between ball fields
Restrooms (3)	😊			One set located in large pavilion; one located in standalone building between ball fields; one located in standalone building by playground
Pavilion / Picnic Areas (2)	😊			Large Pavilion - wooden, has lighting and tables; Smaller one by playground; Additional tables at town buildings
Bituminous Concrete Pavement			😞	142,550 SF of asphalt, lots of cracks; striping faded and worn, no crosswalk markings
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation	😊			Nice variety of tree species; healthy
Site Furniture			😞	At playground - old, outdated, and seem randomly placed; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting	😊			Newer light fixtures and poles; appears adequate
Signage		😐		Outdated; more directional needed inside park; no signage at pedestrian entrance (Union Place)
Circulation	😊			Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is good
Stormwater Management	😊			Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Other Observations	😊			Space maximized for usage; Reminant space east of baseball field could be developed for future use

2.67 Acres

## Stoneybrook

866 Parker Street

This neighborhood park is 2.67 acres and located at 866 Parker Street, in the north end of Town. Serving the needs of the residential community at the Town Homes at Stoneybrook, this park provides a playscape, swings, basketball court, one picnic table, and lots of open space.

- Play equipment is located in mulch bordered by wooden curbing that is rotting and/or misaligned; all equipment is aging with some rusting parts; not accessible. Condition: **FAIR**
- Basketball court surface is in very bad condition - large cracks, uneven surfaces, peeled surface coating, patched areas; old, rusting hoops; no lighting. Condition: **POOR**
- Existing vegetation is mature and could use pruning; some new trees planted. Condition: **GOOD**
- No signage at park.





4.00 Acres

# Meadowbrook Fields

Meadowbrook Drive

This neighborhood park is 4 acres and located on Meadow Brook Drive, in the northeast corner of Town. Serving the needs of the residential community, this park provides a playscape, swings, picnic tables and benches, and lots of open space.

- Play equipment is located in mulch bordered by wooden curbing that is rotting and/or misaligned; all equipment is aging with some rusting parts; not accessible. Condition: **FAIR**
- Site furnishings are old and rusting. Condition: **FAIR**
- Existing vegetation is mature and could use pruning; some new trees planted. Gas pipeline runs north-south through property. Condition: **GOOD**
- No signage at park.





12.45 Acres

# Kennedy Soccer Fields

103 Kennedy Road

This community park is 12.45 acres and located at 103 Kennedy Road, in the northeast section of Town. This park provides one full-sized soccer field and two junior soccer fields, a small storage shed, and small swing set with one bench at the southernmost end of the park.

- Soccer fields are irrigated; no player benches or lighting provided. Condition: **GOOD**
- Parking lot pavement has many cracks, some very large; striping faded and worn. Three HCP spaces. Condition: **POOR**
- Play equipment and site furnishings old and rusting. No picnic area. Condition: **FAIR**
- Existing vegetation is mature and could use pruning; no new trees planted. Condition: **GOOD**
- Old style park sign at entrance to fields; small wayfinding sign at corner of Scott Drive and Kennedy Road. Condition: **FAIR**







4.12 Acres

# Union Pond Park

78 North Main Street



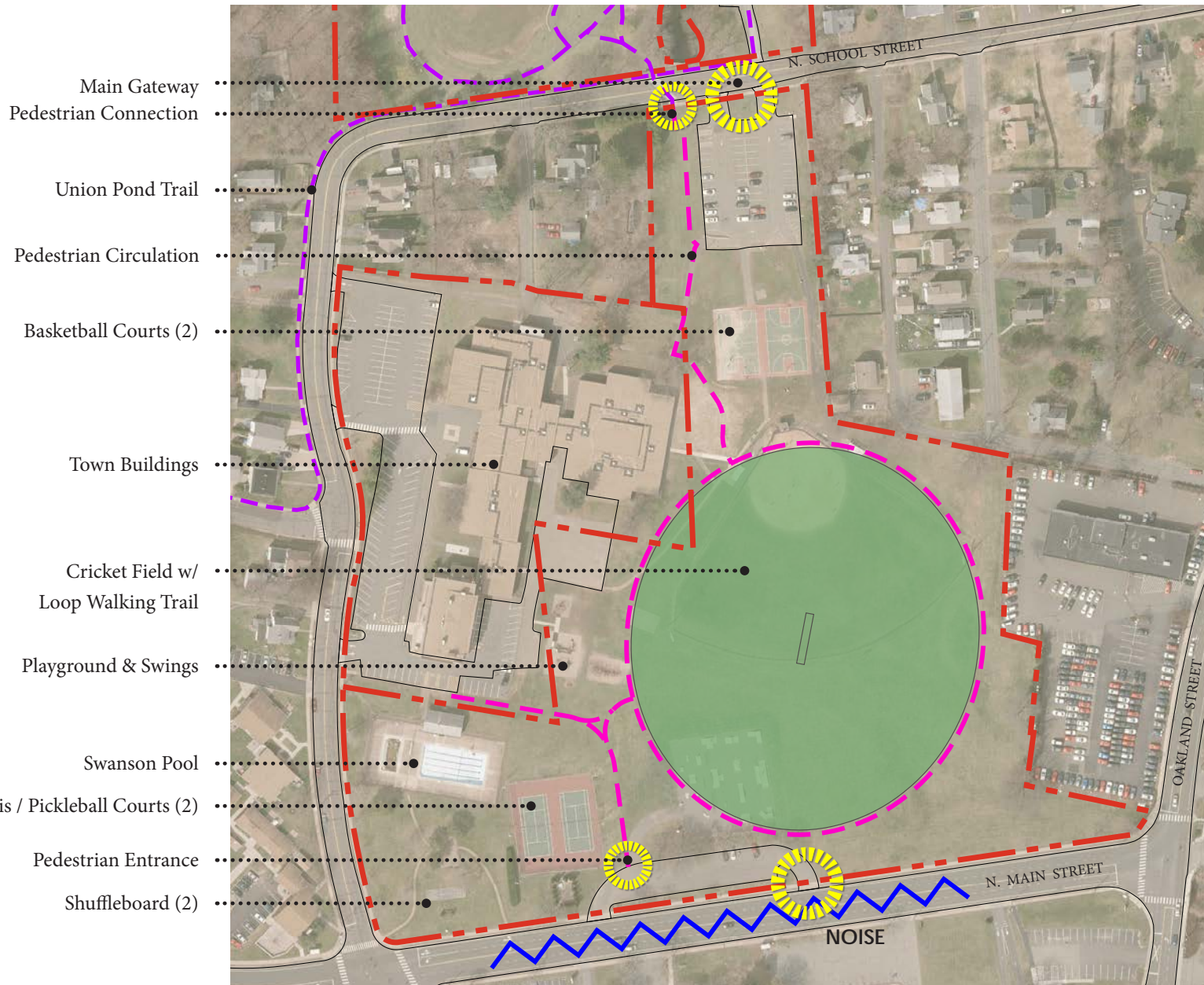


















UNION POND PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Jay Howroyd Fitness Trail	😊			New fitness equipment; stonedust trail, accessible; some mulched fitness areas
Union Pond Trail		😊		2.4 mile trail; part of the Hockanum Linear River Park Trail System; some on street portions of trail; closed section by mills; trail markers?
Union Pond		😊		Water Quality of pond? Consider environmental remediation of water; flooding of pond controlled through a series of basins; fishing at pier (catch and release); ice skating in winter
Bituminous Concrete Pavement			😞	Minimal; mix of asphalt and gravel in parking lot; HCP parking available; striping worn; asphalt cracking
Parking	😊			Adequate for small park; additional parking at Robertson Park
Vegetation	😊			Mature trees located at the perimeter and around pond; nice variety of new tree species planted along fitness trail; healthy
Site Furniture	😊			New tables and benches along fitness trail; trash receptacles available; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting	😊			Six shoebox pole lights; may be adequate?
Signage	😊			New park signage; signage at hiking trail could be improved
Circulation	😊			Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is directed by trails
Stormwater Management	😊			Natural sheet flow over land
Other Observations			😞	Trail connections from Northwest Park, Union Pond Park and Robertson Park

16.02 Acres

# Robertson Park

78 North Main Street



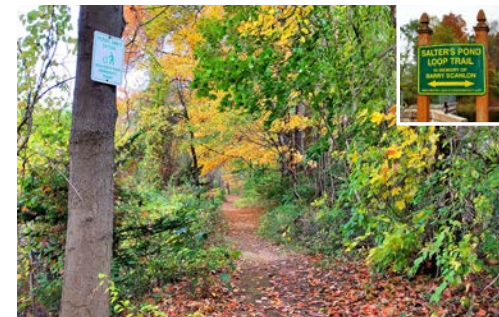
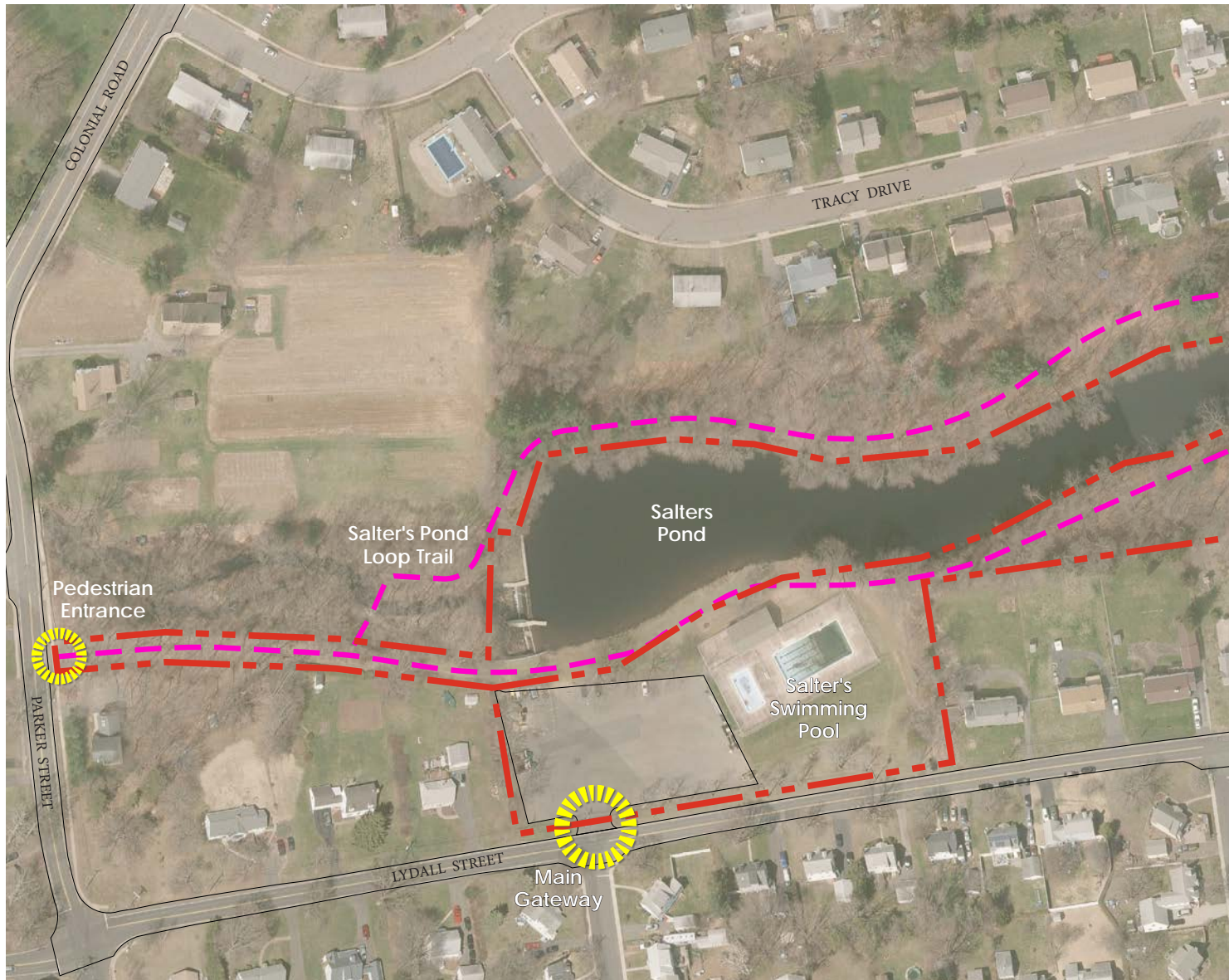
ROBERTSON PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Cricket Field				New field (not irrigated); Musco field lights left over from baseball field; stonedust path around perimeter
Swanson Swimming Pool				Cracked concrete on pool deck; Brick pool building; recent upgrade to pool gate; not certain accessible route to swimming area meets ADA guidelines; rusting metal curbs around pool deck; fencing appears in good condition; old lighting
Basketball Courts (2)				Court surfacing worn and large cracks in asphalt; older hoops; outdated court lighting; evidence of sand/stonedust from walks draining to courts
Tennis / Pickleball Courts (2)				Courts support both tennis and pickleball; courts appear to be in good condition; nets are aging; lighting and fencing are old, outdated and rusting
Playground & Swings				Located in mulch bed; aging equipment
Walking / Hiking Trails				Recently installed stonedust path is deteriorating due to drainage issues; connection to Union Pond
Bituminous Concrete Pavement				104,070 SF of asphalt, lots of cracking, spot repairs; striping faded and worn (includes BOE)
Parking				More than adequate
Vegetation				Mature trees located at the perimeter; Some new trees planted on hill along N. Main Street
Site Furniture				Metal stands located at basketball courts (some damaged areas); older wooden benches located at playground and open space south of swimming pool; one small bike rack found chained to fence of swimming pool
Lighting				Old, outdated light fixtures on wooden poles (except at former baseball field), lots of rust visible; may be adequate?
Fencing				Overgrown vegetation along eastern edge of perimeter fencing; old and rusting chainlink fence
Signage				New park signage at N. School Street entrance and at N. Main Street (orientation could be improved)
Circulation				Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is directed through a series of paths; opportunity to connect to Oakland Street
Stormwater Management				Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land; some grading issues noted
Other Observations				Sports-oriented park space (old facilities); active and passive recreation opportunities; lots of potential for development and connection to Union Pond Park



3.43 Acres

# Salters Pool

123 Lydall Street



### SALTERS POOL - TYPES OF FACILITIES

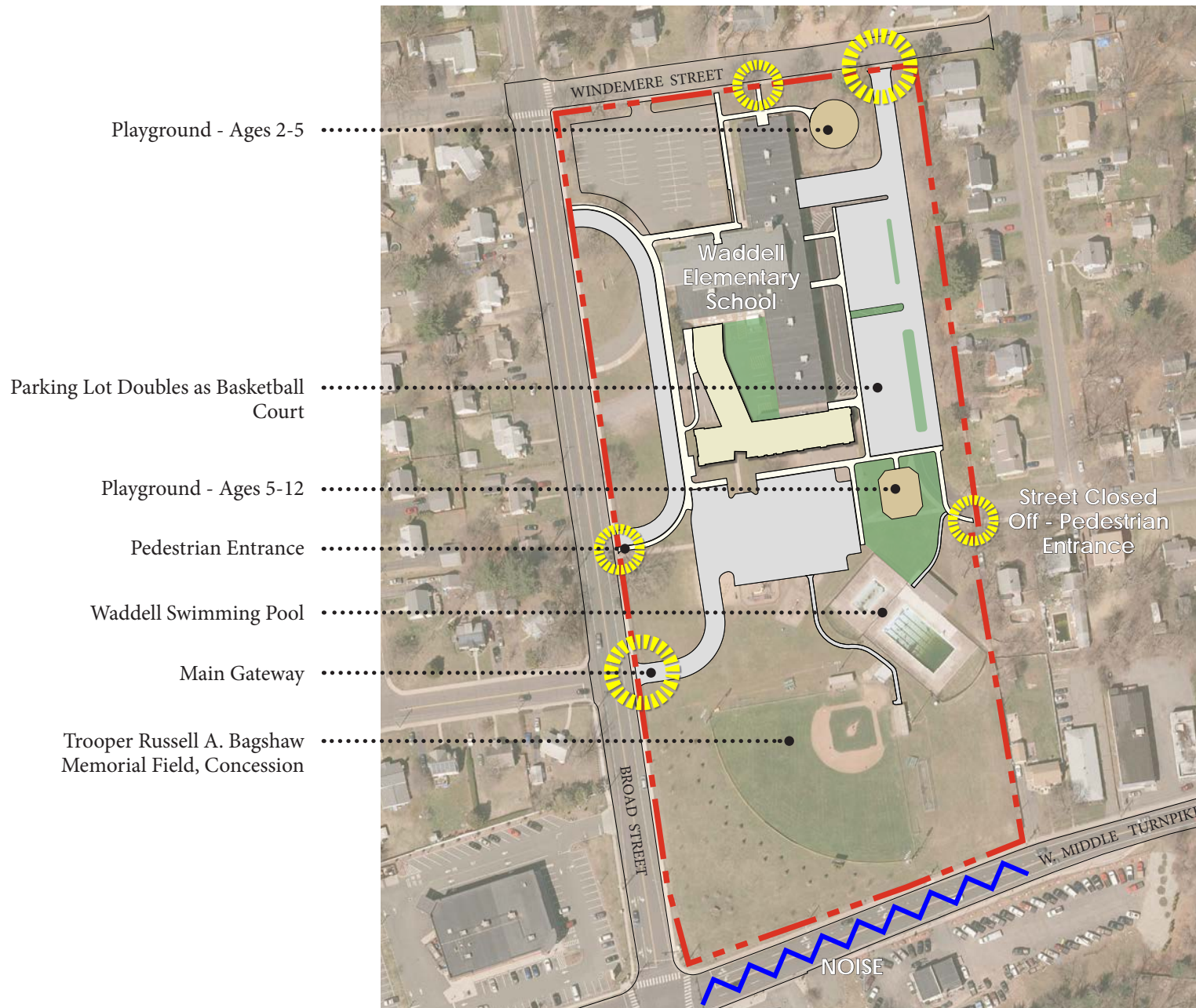
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Salters Swimming Pool		☹️		Pool opened in 1961; Cracked concrete on pool deck; Brick pool building; fencing appears in good condition; old, outdated lighting
Salters Pond	😊			Fishing allowed. Salters Pond got its name from Lorenzo T. Salter. It was created by the damming of Lydall Brook, which, a century earlier, had been a part of the Salters and Strong paper mill operation (now know as Lydall Paper Mill). Salters Pond had underground springs as well as the flowing brook, so the water tended to be cold. The Town offered swimming lessons at Salters and there was a small sandy beach, a roped-off kiddy pool, a small parking lot, and a Quonset hut for changing clothes.
Basketball Court		☹️		Basketball hoop in the parking lot (no court)
Bituminous Concrete Pavement		☹️		35,177 SF of existing asphalt with HCP spaces; lots of cracking, spot repairs; striping faded and worn; new concrete curb ramps and walk to pool entrance
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation		☹️		Mature trees at perimeter; no new trees planted
Site Furniture			☹️	One donated bench and one damaged picnic table at pond; one small bike rack found chained to fence of swimming pool
Lighting			☹️	Old, outdated lighting on wooden poles; one in parking lot, one by pool
Signage		☹️		Old park signage in front of pool located 40ft from street, obscured by street trees, orientation; no signage at trail head on Parker Street
Circulation		☹️		Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is directed by walks to pool or footpath on trails
Stormwater Management		☹️		Not sure where pavement runoff drains as there are no catch basins in parking lot; pool runoff drains to one catch basin on east side near parking lot; sheet flow over land
Trails		☹️		Enter Salter's Pond Loop Trail from Parker Street; not on Town's GIS; not sure how trail loops or connects over pond? Trail markers? Manchester Land Conservation Trust maintain trail?
Other Observations		☹️		Some history to this recreation area, although not historic; park improvements/upgrades needed



10.35 Acres

# Waddell Recreation Area

163 Broad Street





WADDELL RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Trooper Russell A. Bagshaw Memorial Field		☹️		LL Field; irrigation, Musco lights (somewhat newer), metal stands on concrete pads, old batting cage with overgrown vegetation, field fencing is aging but new sections installed, electronic scoreboard, concrete dugouts, no netting for added protection along baselines
Concession	😊			Located in standalone building at ball field
Waddell Swimming Pool		☹️		Pool opened in the 1960s; original brick pool building; newer concrete sections and crack repair; fencing appears in good condition; no lighting
Basketball Court	😊			New, basketball hoops installed in rear parking lot during school renovation; doubles as both parking and court
Playgrounds (2)	😊			New, installed during school renovation project
Bituminous Concrete Pavement	😊			New, installed during school renovation project
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation	😊			Nice variety of tree species and newer plantings with school renovation; healthy
Site Furniture			☹️	None other than at ball field; one small bike rack at back of pool building
Lighting	😊			New, installed during school renovation; lighting at ball field
Signage		☹️		Old park signage at corner of Broad Street and W. Middle Turnpike
Circulation	😊			Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is good
Stormwater Management	😊			Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Other Observations			☹️	Improvements are needed in areas outside of the school renovation project; lots of open space for future development; turf areas need attention

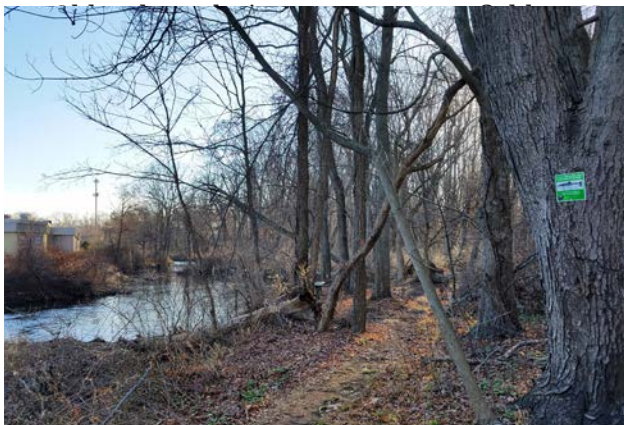
22.58 Acres

# Carl Silver Field

250 New State Road

This community asset is 22.58 acres and located on New State Road, in the west end of Town. The Class A premier softball field was built in 2003 and named in honor of Carl Silver, who helped the Town build a softball empire. In addition to the field, this park provides access to the Hackett Trail section of the Hockanum River Hiking Trail. This tract of land was owned by the John H. Hackett family for many years where tobacco and later corn was grown and harvested. The Town purchased the entire property with its woodland and river frontage in 2001 leaving a large surrounding tract of meadow and forest intact.

- Class A premier softball field is irrigated, has Musco lighting (newer), metal stands on concrete pads, 2-story building (scorer's table), drinking fountain, field fencing, electronic scoreboard (posts are rusted), fenced in dugouts with metal player benches (no shade over dugouts), metal stands on concrete pads, netting along base lines added for protection. Condition: **GOOD**
- Gravel parking lot with lighting. Condition: **GOOD**
- Concrete pavement surrounds 2-story building, and the first and third base sides of field; drainage issue noted on third base side. Condition: **GOOD**
- Spectator stands and metal player benches are metal and rusting. No picnic areas. Condition: **FAIR**
- Hockanum Trail contains a trail marker at entrance located at trail parking area (cut vegetation back for better visibility); a second access point is located at the southeast end of field parking but no trail marker; trail provides views to Hockanum River; a complete loop around park; trail appears to be maintained but some overgrown vegetation requires clearing. Condition: **GOOD**
- Existing vegetation is mature and could use pruning; some new trees planted in open space at outfield. Condition: **GOOD**





1.79 Acres

## Leber Field

100 Love Lane

This neighborhood park is 1.79 acres and located at 100 Love Lane, in the west end of Town. In 1975, the Little League field was named in honor of James N. Leber for his contributions as a longtime coach, umpire, league commissioner and league president of the Manchester Little League. In addition to the field, this park provides access to the Verplanck Trail section of the Hockanum River Hiking Trail as it surrounds the ballfield on the east and west sides, with the west side trail following along the South Fork Hockanum River.

- Little league field is irrigated, no lighting provided, new metal stands on concrete pads in addition to older wooden stands, wooden scorer's table behind home plate, wooden concessions building with speakers, field fencing is rusting, newer electronic scoreboard, old and aging foul poles, fenced in dugouts with wooden player benches (no shade over dugouts), fenced batting cages and pitcher's mound on home and away sides of field, no netting along base lines for protection. Condition: **FAIR**
- Bituminous concrete pavement at entrance drive. Gated entry (gate appears damaged). Asphalt drive converts to gravel and continues to parking areas (no lighting, but utility poles carry electricity to field). Condition: **GOOD**
- One metal picnic table. Condition: **GOOD**
- Verplanck Trail markers difficult to locate; one small, inconspicuous trail marker found at northwest corner of the property; trail maintenance needed to clear overgrown vegetation and debris. Condition: **FAIR**
- Existing vegetation is mature and could use pruning; no new trees planted. Condition: **FAIR**
- Old style park sign at entrance to field on Love Lane. Condition: **FAIR**

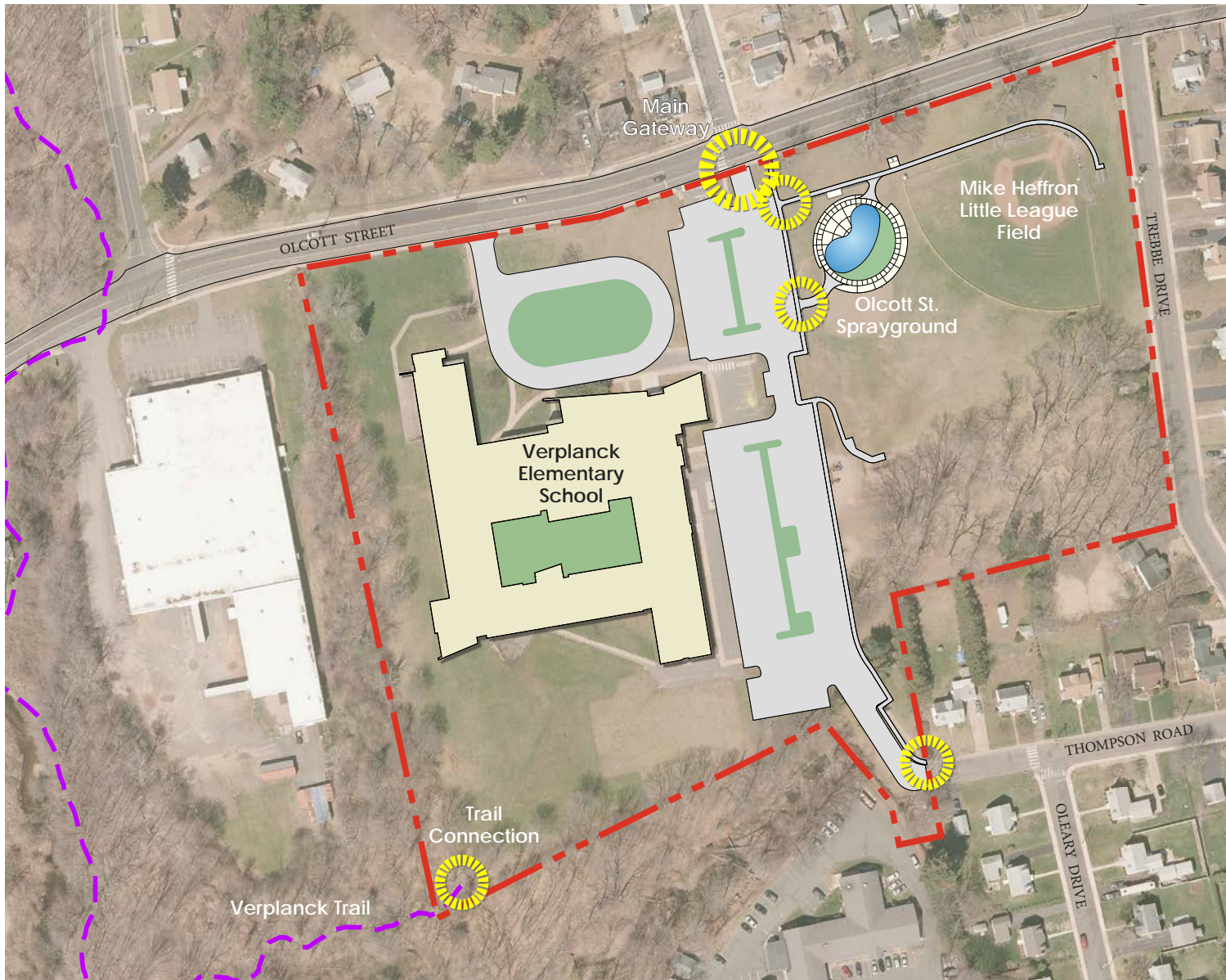




13.90 Acres

# Verplanck Recreation Area

126 Olcott Street



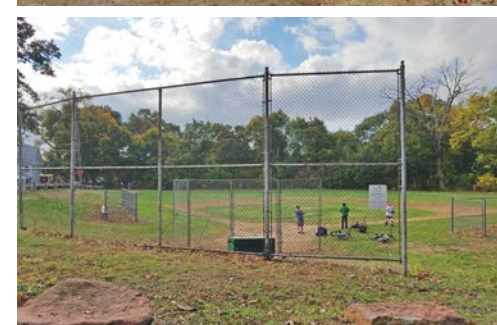
VERPLANCK RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Mike Heffron Little League Field		☹️		Field not irrigated; no field lights; metal stands on concrete pads + wooden stands, fenced in dugouts with wooden player benches; scorer's table?; fencing is aged and rusting, electronic scoreboard, no netting for added protection
Concession (1)	😊			Located at little league field
Restrooms (1)	😊			Two portable toilets located between field and sprayground
Olcott St. Sprayground	😊			Opened in August 2020; nice design and layout, adequate seating, tables and shade structures; mulched landscape beds are spilling over into pad clogging up drains
Bituminous Concrete Pavement	😊			73,151 SF of new asphalt with HCP spaces and striping; crosswalks delineated throughout parking lot
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation	😊			Mature trees at perimeter and new trees planted around sprayground; maintenance and care needed for new trees
Site Furniture	😊			Adequate in recreation area; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting	😊			New lights at parking lot; none provided in recreation areas
Signage	😊			New signs at sprayground; wooden sign by field at corner
Circulation	😊			Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is directed by bituminous walks
Stormwater Management	😊			Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Trails			☹️	Verplanck Hiking Trail enters town property at southwest corner (not maintained); part of Hockanum Linear River Park Trail System; 0.75 mile, one-way; connection?
Other Observations			☹️	Open space south of sprayground could be developed for additional recreation amenity



55.78 Acres

# Center Springs Park

39 Lodge Street





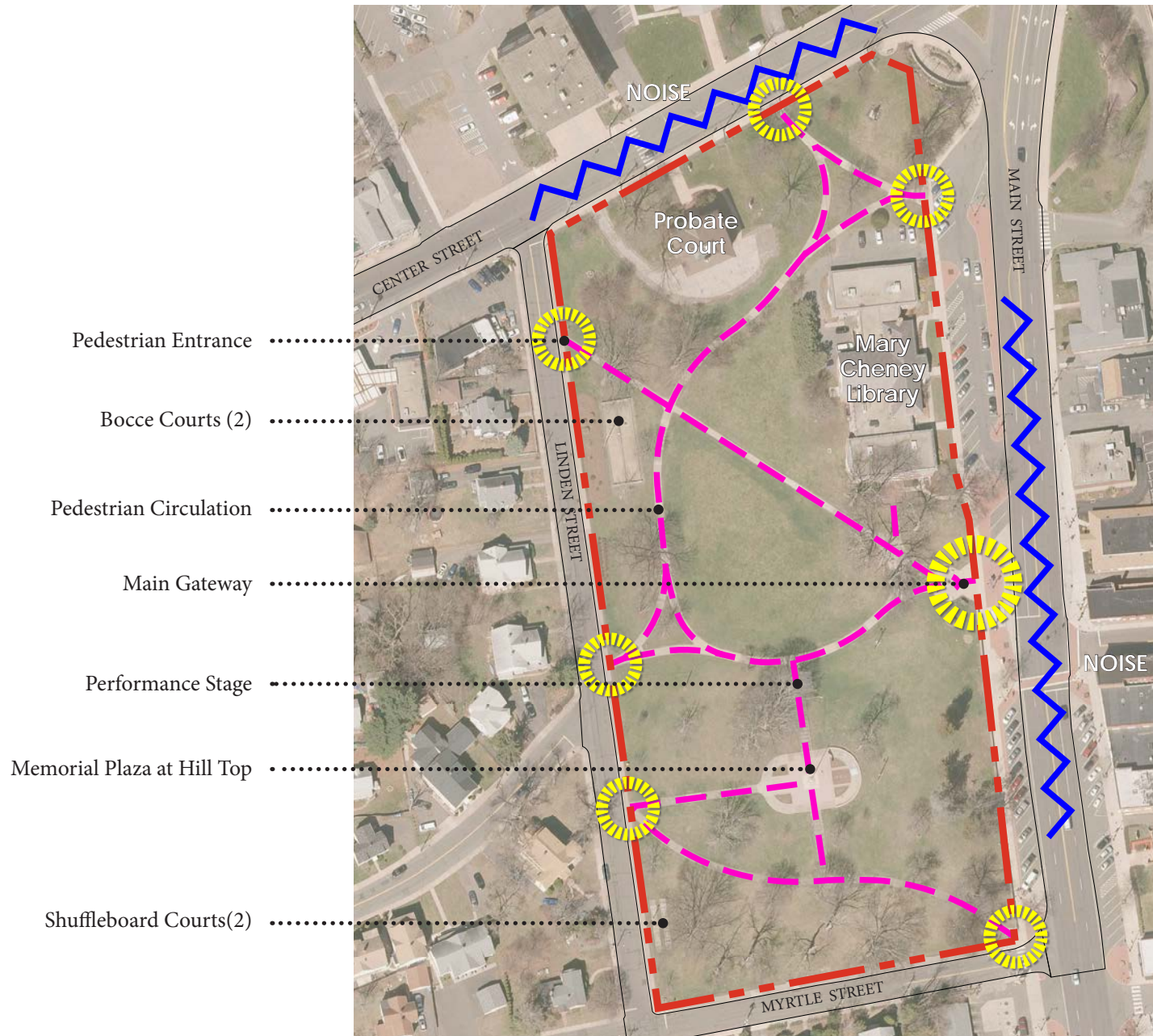
# CENTER SPRINGS PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES

Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
History	😊			Land donated in 1915 by Cheney and Hillard families; Park was founded in 1921; designated in the Manchester Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2000); master plan proposal by Thomas Desmond, Simsbury-based Landscape Architect in 1929; recent master plan developed in 2018
Center Springs Pond & Fishing Pier	😊			Nice amenity; three aerators/fountains; wooden fishing pier - age and safety?
9- Hole Disc Golf Course (2 courses)	😊			Installed 2015; nice amenity; used by community; publicity of course (Facebook, DG Course Review, UDisc, Disc Golf Scene); year round play; online map of course and park sign at course
Trails		😐		Connection to Broad Street end and Cheney Rail Trail; some pavement areas in need of repair
Pavilion/Picnic Areas (2)		😐		Wooden pavilions
Playground		😐		Located in mulch bed; aging equipment with rusted parts; wooden curbing rotting; not accessible; disconnected from rest of park due to location
Little League Baseball Field			😞	Field maintenance needed for turf; not irrigated, no field lights, no stands; fencing is old and rusting; perimeter fencing has overgrown vegetation, player benches are aged and rusted
Half Basketball Court	😊			Court surfacing in good condition; older style hoop; evidence of potential drainage issue from south side slope
Bituminous Concrete Pavement		😐		19,400 SF of asphalt; striping faded and worn in Lodge Street parking lot
Parking		😐		Three parking lots at Lodge Drive, Valley Street and Broad Street; adequate
Vegetation		😐		Very mature trees all located at the perimeter; No new trees planted
Site Furniture		😐		Older style picnic tables, benches and grills at pond; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting			😞	Very old style lights, wooden light poles; many dark areas - insufficient lighting
Signage			😞	New park sign recently installed at Lodge Street entrance; Mostly small street signs on channel posts and gates on Valley Street and Liberty Street
Circulation and Access		😐		Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is directed by bituminous walk around the park - large cracks and broken curbing noting on south side of park; many pedestrian access points; stairs and railings at Lincoln Center and Main Street are in need of repair/updgrade - potential safety concerns
Stormwater Management		😐		Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land; erosion noted on south side sloped areas
Other Observations			😞	Mostly passive recreational use; issues with access and signage; activating park difficult because of visibility - located in residential area and heavily wooded; opportunity to educate public on history of park; strong connections exist to other amenities (parks, municipal, medical, school, etc.) just not visible

6.90 Acres


# Center Memorial Park

586 Main Street





### CENTER MEMORIAL PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES

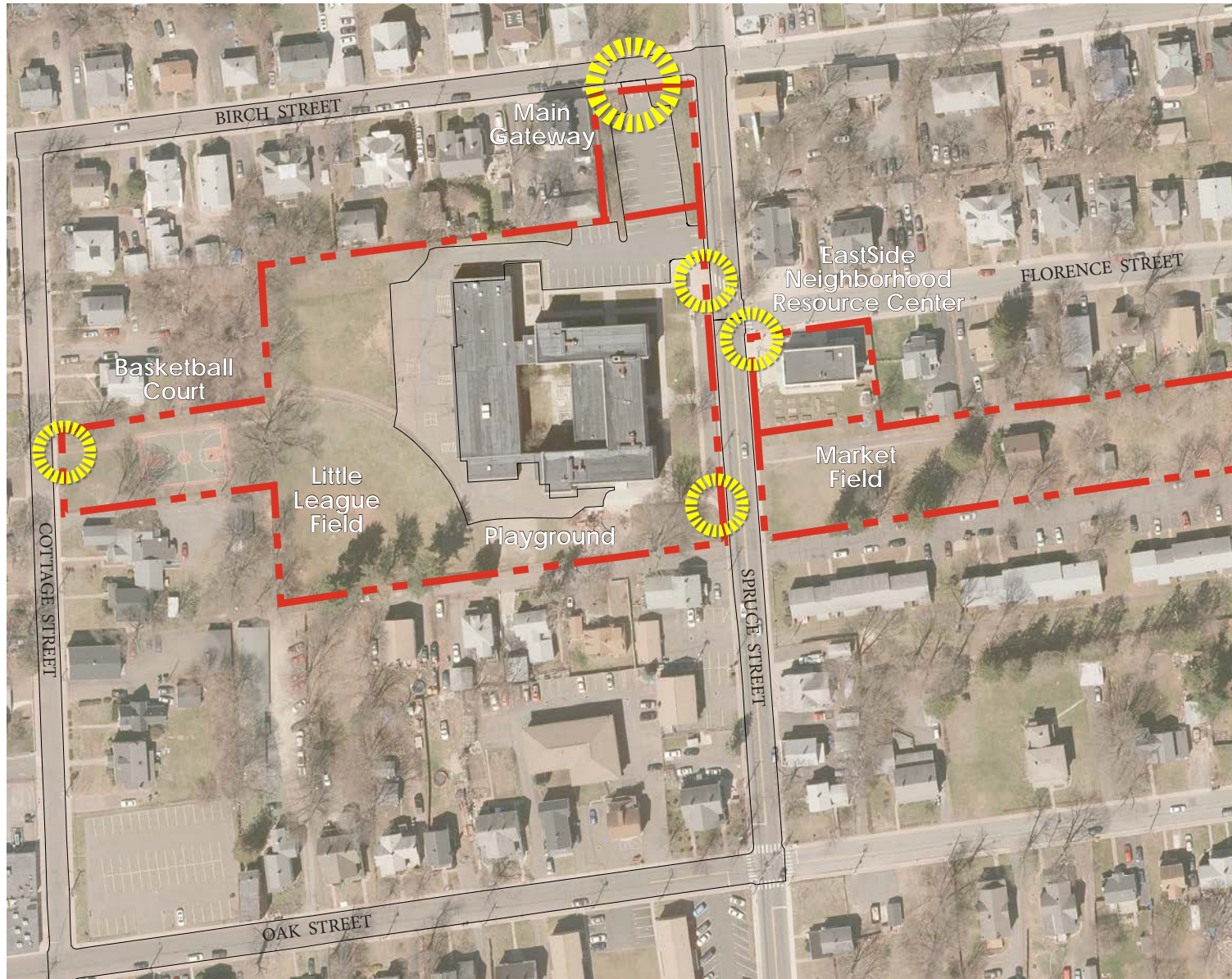
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
History and Monuments				Park established in 1905, designated in the Main Street District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1996); contains three memorials/monuments (Revolutionary War Memorial Fountain, Civil War Monument and Spanish American War monument); Dancing Bears Fountain at main entrance (1909 donated by Cheney Family)
Bocce Courts (2)				Located along Linden Street (residential) on level ground; Wooden framing in good condition
Shuffleboard Courts (2)				Located along Linden Street near Myrtle Street corner and close to sidewalk; courts seem in good shape but court markings are very faded
Parking				On street
Pavements and Other Site Materials				Concrete walks and steps are in very poor condition, many cracks, large gouges, uneven/heaved surfaces, patches (including in right of way); capstone on brick seating wall at hilltop memorial plaza is cracked, uneven, large gaps, and missing grout between joints; some granite steps are cracked, uneven, and at different rises due to settling
Vegetation				Very mature trees - pruning needed (Arborist review); some new trees planted
Site Furniture				Older style benches
Lighting				Very old style, wooden light poles
Signage				New park signage at main entrance and one pedestrian entrance on Linden Street; no signs at any of the additional pedestrian entrances or at corners of park
Circulation				Walks dictate circulation
Stormwater Management				Sheet flow over land and directed to catch basins
Other Observations				Historic nature and materials should be preserved in any future park improvements; many safety concerns at walks and steps; updated lighting needed; opportunity to make a connection to Center Springs Park

















5.33 Acres

# Nathan Hale Recreation Area

160 Spruce Street



# NATHAN HALE RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES

Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Little League Baseball Field				Field not maintained; turf completely grown in; not irrigated, no field lights, no stands; fencing is old and rusting; perimeter fencing has overgrown vegetation, player benches are aged and rusted
Basketball Court				Court surfacing in good condition; older hoops; no court lighting; evidence of potential drainage at west end of court - soil washed up near hoop; additional hoop (old) located behind school building
Playground				Located in mulch bed; aging equipment with rusted parts; wooden curbing rotting; cracked concrete pad; not accessible; possible future safety concerns
Town Buildings				Repurpose school building? EastSide Neighborhood Resource Center
Market Field				Community gardens
Bituminous Concrete Pavement				34,880 SF of asphalt, large cracks, spot repairs; striping faded and worn
Parking				More than adequate
Vegetation				Very mature trees along perimeter; no new plantings
Site Furniture				None at recreation area; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting				None on site; only on street (Spruce Street)
Signage				None at recreation area; only signage at resource center and new sign at Market Field across street
Circulation				Vehicular directed by asphalt; pedestrian circulation is non-existent
Stormwater Management				Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Other Observations				Park amenities available to neighborhood but park has been neglected; large unused areas of open space



0.43 Acres

# Wilfred Road Park

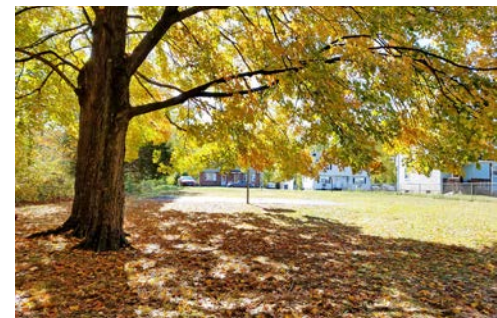
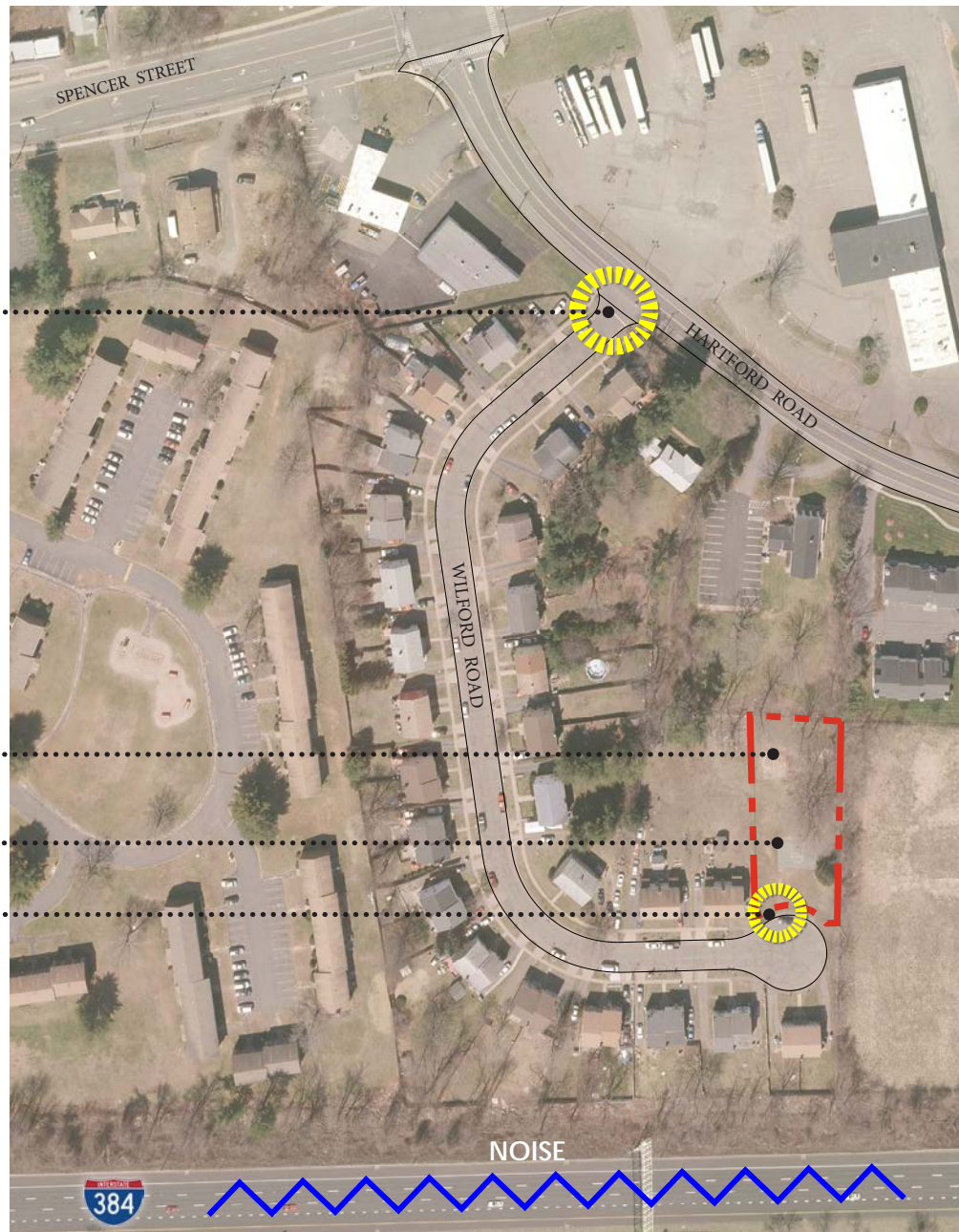
81 Wilfred Road

Main Gateway










Play Equipment - Slide, Swings,  
Climber, Balance Beam

Half Basketball Court

Pedestrian Entrance





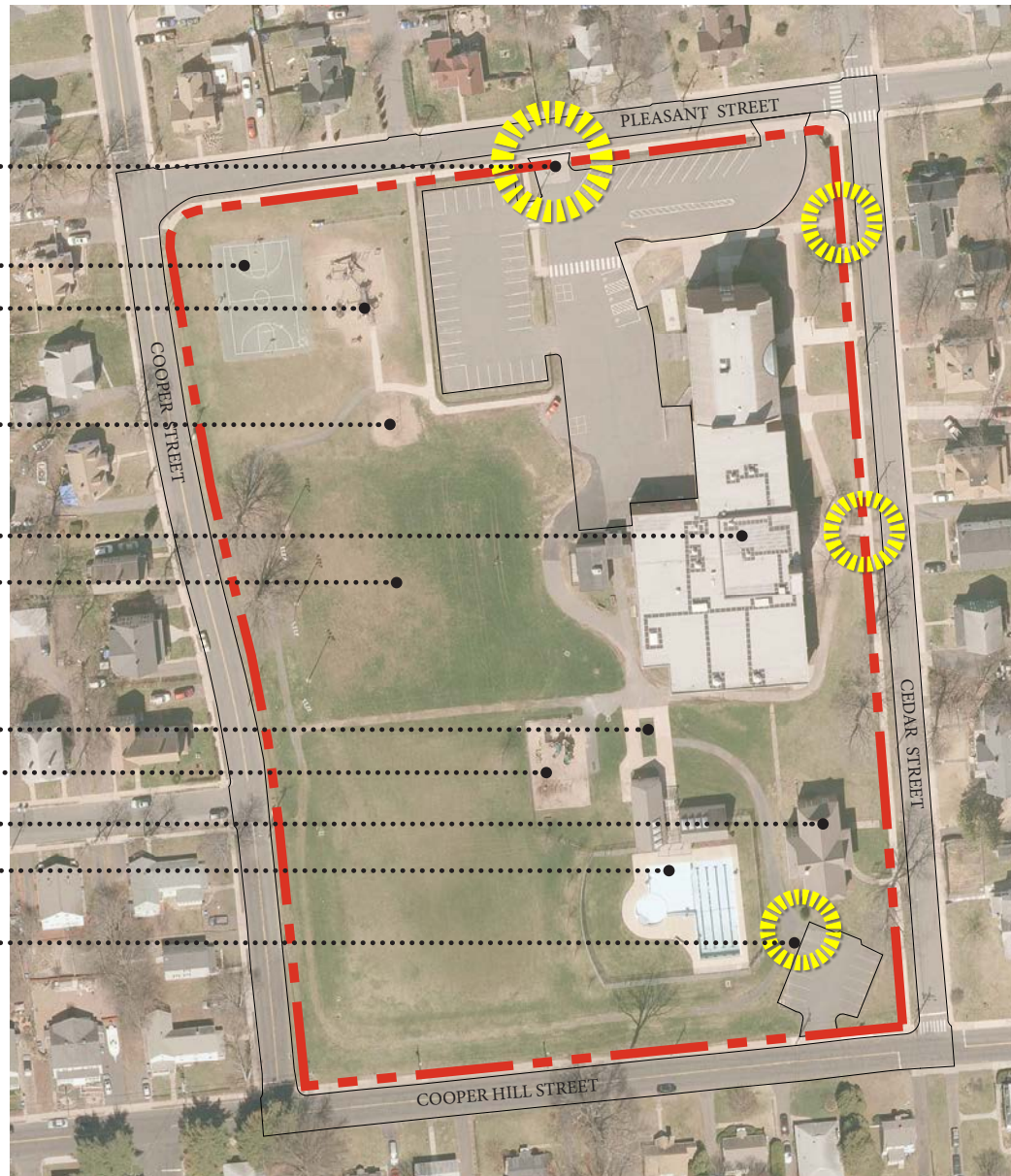
WILFRED ROAD PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Play Equipment				Located at the rear of the property in a depressed mulch bed area; visibility of play equipment blocked by very mature trees with low hanging branches; very dark and damp; lots of leaf litter; aging equipment
Basketball Court (Half Size)				Asphalt appears in good shape; some puddling noted; no striping; hoop in good condition
Parking				Located on street around cul de sac
Vegetation				Very mature trees - pruning needed; clearing and pruning along fence line needed
Site Furniture				No place to sit; no trash receptacles
Fencing				4ft height, borders three sides of property; significant rusting and needs to be replaced
Lighting				None
Signage				No park signage at main road entrance or at park; standard green sign with hours park closed + restrictions
Circulation				Desire lines dictate circulation
Stormwater Management				Sheet flow over land
Other Observations				Security may be an issue for residents and park visitors; popularity of park?

7.56 Acres

## West Side Recreation Area

94 Cedar Street

- Main Gateway
- Basketball Court
- Playground - Ages 5-12
- Swings
- Mahoney Recreation Center
- Balilla "Bill" Pagani Field
- Soccer/Football Youth Practice Field
- Picnic Area
- Playground - Ages 2-5
- Old Manchester Museum
- Marcy MacDonald
- Swimming Pool
- Museum Parking w/ Pedestrian Connection



# WEST SIDE RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES

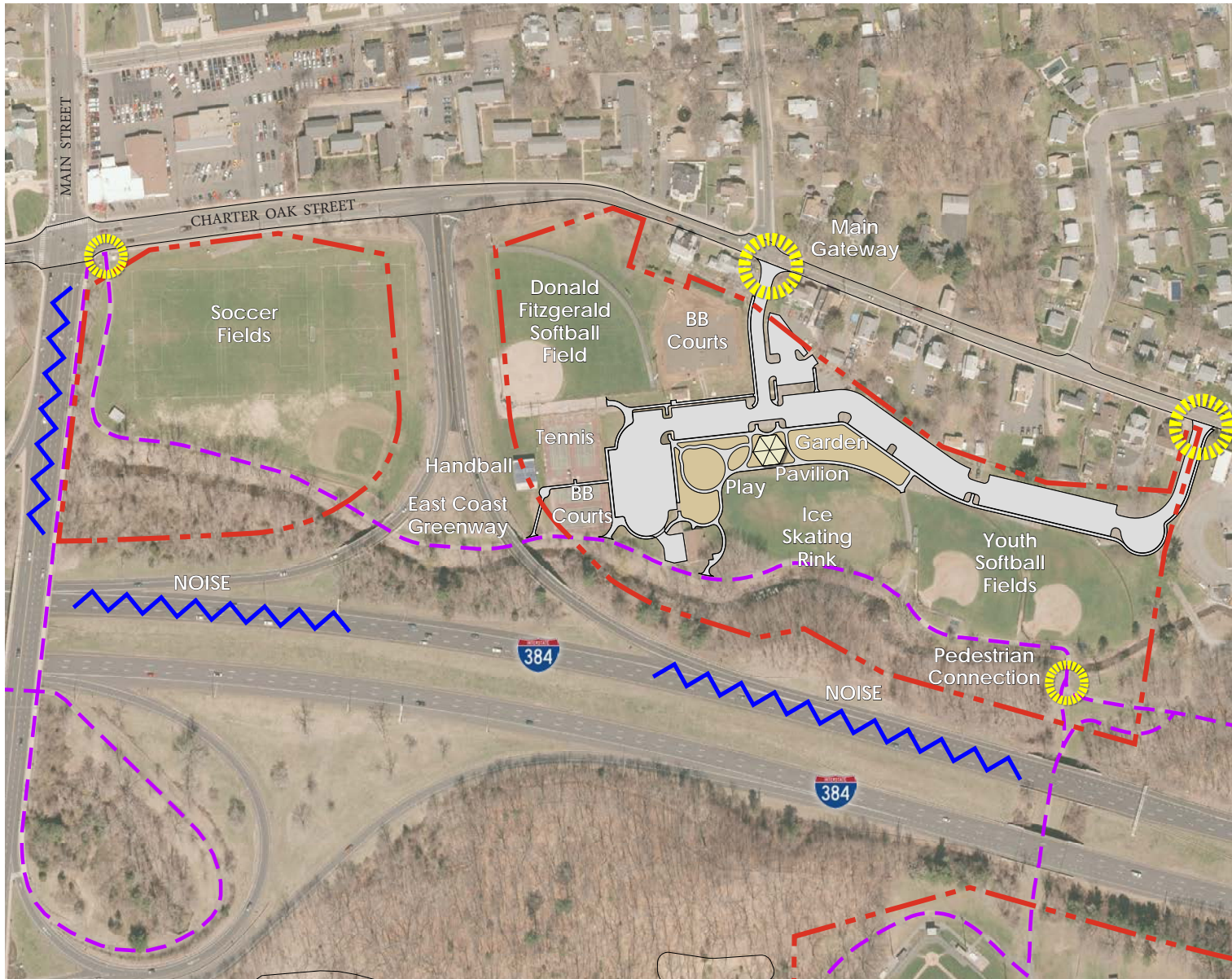
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
History	😊			School opened in 1915, designated in the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1978); the Old Manchester Museum was originally constructed by the Cheney family in 1859 as a school for their children, also formerly served as the Lutz Museum
Town Buildings (Historic)		😐		Original school building (north section) - repurpose for other use? Rest of building not historic - Mahoney Recreation Center; Old Manchester Museum (historic)
Marcy MacDonald Swimming Pool	😊			Opened in 2003; concrete deck and fencing in good condition; large turf areas surround pool
Balilla "Bill" Pagani Field - Soccer/Football Youth Practice Field		😐		Field not irrigated; turf very worn and full of weeds; newer Musco lights
Basketball Courts		😐		Court surfacing in fairly good condition, some cracking and worn areas noted; newer end hoops; court also has a half court with old, rusting hoops; four square courts spray painting on court surface; no court lighting or fencing
Playgrounds (2) & Swings		😐		All play equipment located in mulch beds; all aging equipment with rusted parts; wooden curbing rotting; not accessible; very old, rusting chainlink fencing
Bituminous Concrete Pavement			😞	42,650 SF of asphalt, lots of cracks; striping faded and worn, no crosswalk markings
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation		😐		Not many trees - some mature trees scattered at perimeter; some new plantings around the parking lot and at pool
Site Furniture		😐		Old, metal benches and wooden picnic tables at playgrounds and pool picnic area; two bike racks noted at pool
Lighting		😐		Very outdated lighting at parking lot; none at pool, only field lighting; no additional site lighting at museum parking lot; not sufficient
Signage			😞	None at recreation area; signage at recreation center and pool (on buildings only)
Circulation		😐		Vehicular directed by asphalt, although circulation could be improved; some concrete pavement and stonedust paths direct pedestrian circulation but not throughout; not certain accessible route to swimming area meets ADA guidelines
Stormwater Management		😐		Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; field also drains to catch basins
Other Observations			😞	Park has some identity and serves the needs of the community and neighborhood, but feels somewhat disconnected and underutilized



22.66 Acres

# Charter Oak Park

110 Charter Oak Street



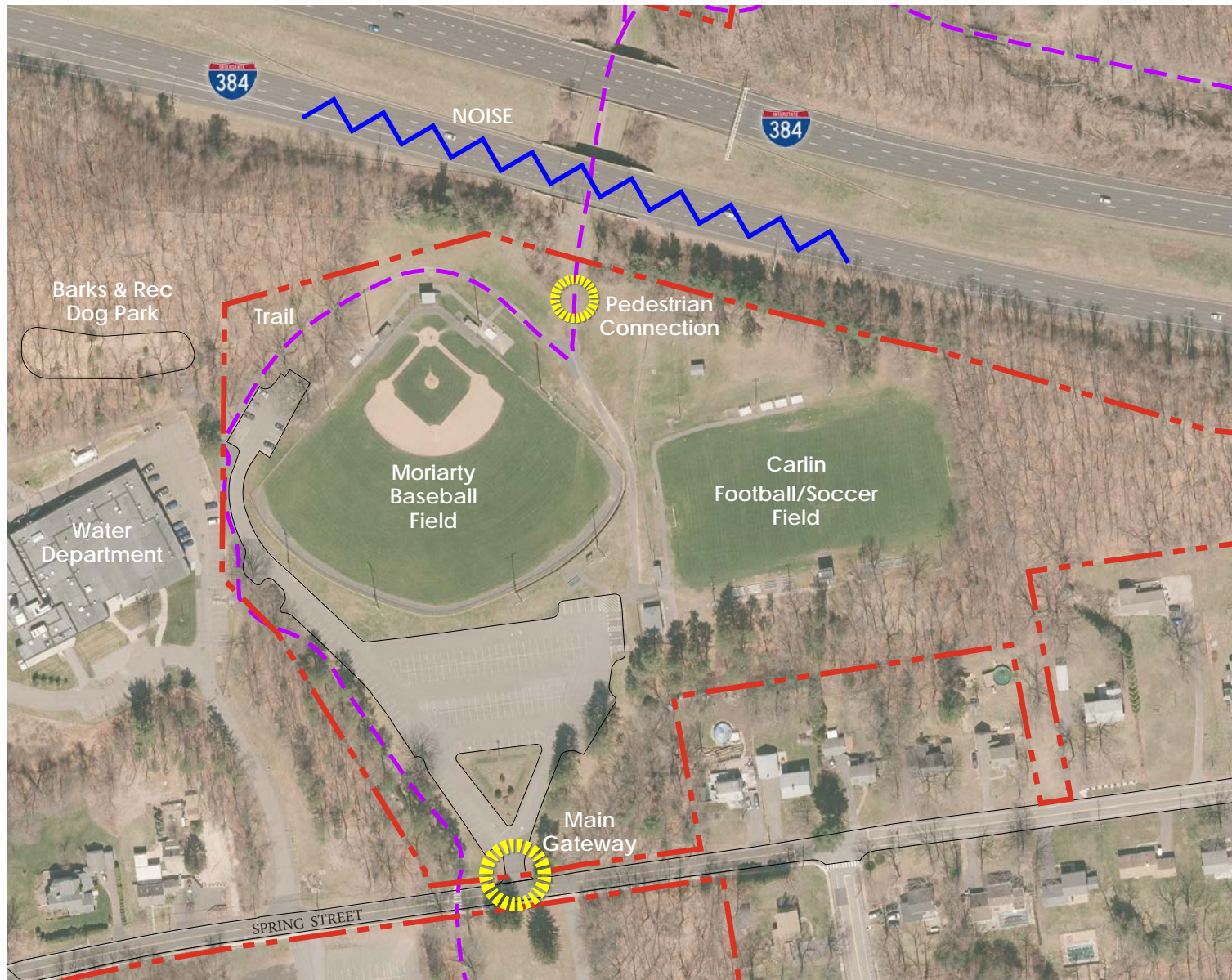
CHARTER OAK PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Softball Fields (3)	😊			All fields in good condition, adult field is the most updated - sand draining outside of field to pavement on first base side; upgrades are needed at youth fields - lighting, bleachers, irrigation
Basketball Courts (4)	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project
Tennis Courts (2)	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project; one gate appears to be broken
Handball Court (2)		😞		Concrete court in good condition but needs a good cleaning and new paint coating; lighting upgrades needed
Soccer Fields (3)		😞		Renovations needed - turf, irrigation and lighting; no parking - access from east side of park
Playground	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project
Pavilion/Picnic Area	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project
Restrooms	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project; more facilities needed due to heavy use
Rotary Music Garden	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project
East Coast/Charter Oak Greenway	😊			New pavement as part of 2017 park renovation project; trail markers; art installations on highway underpasses & park fencing
Bituminous Concrete Pavement	😊			97,900 SF of new asphalt with HCP spaces and accessible walks; part of 2017 park renovation project
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation	😊			Mature trees at perimeter; new trees planted as part of 2017 park renovation project
Site Furniture	😊			New as part of 2017 park renovation project; One bike rack found near Park Ambassador Office - could use another one by Restrooms
Lighting	😊			New lighting throughout as part of 2017 park renovation project; upgrades needed at youth softball fields, ice skating rink and soccer fields; noted rusting base plates
Signage	😊			New park signage as part of 2017 park renovation project; some older signs still remain; no signage at west side of park
Circulation	😊			Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is good; all directed by pavement; accessible routes
Stormwater Management	😊			Upgraded as part of 2017 park renovation project; drainage issues at adult softball field and at music garden
Other Observations	😊			Heavily used park; lots of amenities to offer residents and visitors; improved access and upgrades needed to west side of park



16.73 Acres















# Mt. Nebo Park

155 Spring Street





### MT. NEBO PARK - TYPES OF FACILITIES

Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Matthew M. Moriarty Baseball Field				Irrigation, field lights, metal stands on concrete pads, open wooden structure (scorer's table); fencing is rusting, electronic scoreboard, dugouts, no netting for added protection
Carlin Football / Soccer Field				Irrigation, field lights, metal stands (on ground? Not enough?), elevated wooden structure (announcer's booth); fencing is extremely rusted with bent posts, electronic scoreboard is very rusted and dented
Concession (1)				Located at Carlin Field inside locked fenced area; wooden building
Restrooms (1)				Located at Carlin Field inside locked fenced area; concrete building
Barks and Rec Dog Park				Located in the woods at the back of the property near the interstate; heavily used by town residents
Bituminous Concrete Pavement				77,860 SF of asphalt, cracking, spot repairs; striping faded and worn
Parking				More than adequate
Vegetation				Very mature trees all located at the perimeter; very overgrown by underpass; no new trees planted
Site Furniture				No additional site furniture beyond field stands; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting				Old, outdated light fixtures on wooden poles at fields, lots of rust visible; may be adequate?
Signage				Outdated; main park sign is located 100 ft in from the street; no signage at Dog Park or to identify the connection to Charter Oak Park and East Coast Greenway
Circulation				Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is not directed except for a bituminous walk between fields that connects to Charter Oak Park and East Coast Greenway
Stormwater Management				Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Other Observations				Programming seems to suggest this is a game-oriented park only and not one that is visited for any length of time; no picnic areas, site furniture, bike racks, or play equipment, and lots of unused green space

108.59 Acres

# Globe Hollow Swimming Area

100 Spring Street





### GLOBE HOLLOW SWIMMING AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES

Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
Globe Hollow Swimming Area		☹️		Cheney Brothers constructed the Globe Hollow Reservoir in 1906-07, which flowed down into a swimming area; not certain accessible route to swimming area meets ADA guidelines
Camp Kennedy		☹️		Access through Martin Elementary School and asphalt path from swimming area; pavilion building is aging, roof needs to be replaced; building not evaluated; asphalt pad
Trails		☹️		Trails not marked; asphalt path runs along east side of parcel to Camp Kennedy; additional trails around reservoir (not on town trail map); connection to Mt. Nebo Park
Picnic Areas (2)		☹️		Located at swimming area inside locked fenced area and at Camp Kennedy
Bituminous Concrete Pavement			☹️	65,580 SF of asphalt, cracking, spot repairs; striping faded and worn
Parking	😊			More than adequate; handicap spaces at swimming area and Camp Kennedy
Vegetation		☹️		Very mature trees all located at the perimeter; No new trees planted
Site Furniture		☹️		Picnic tables at swimming area and at Camp Kennedy; one bike rack and basketball hoop located by pool building
Lighting			☹️	Old, outdated light fixtures on wooden poles in parking lot only; none at Camp Kennedy
Signage		☹️		Old park signage at swimming area and Camp Kennedy; Camp Kennedy sign located 200 ft from the street and obscured by vegetation, only visible from northbound side of Dartmouth Rd at S. Farms Dr intersection
Circulation		☹️		Vehicular is good; pedestrian circulation is not directed except for the bituminous walk on east side of parcel
Stormwater Management		☹️		Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land; no drainage infrastructure at Camp Kennedy
Other Observations			☹️	Seasonal use park only; Trails provide connections to other parks/recreation areas but not publicized, visibly marked or evident

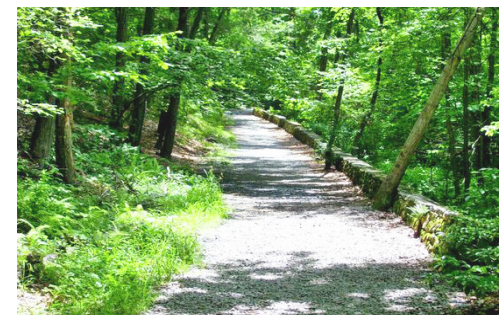
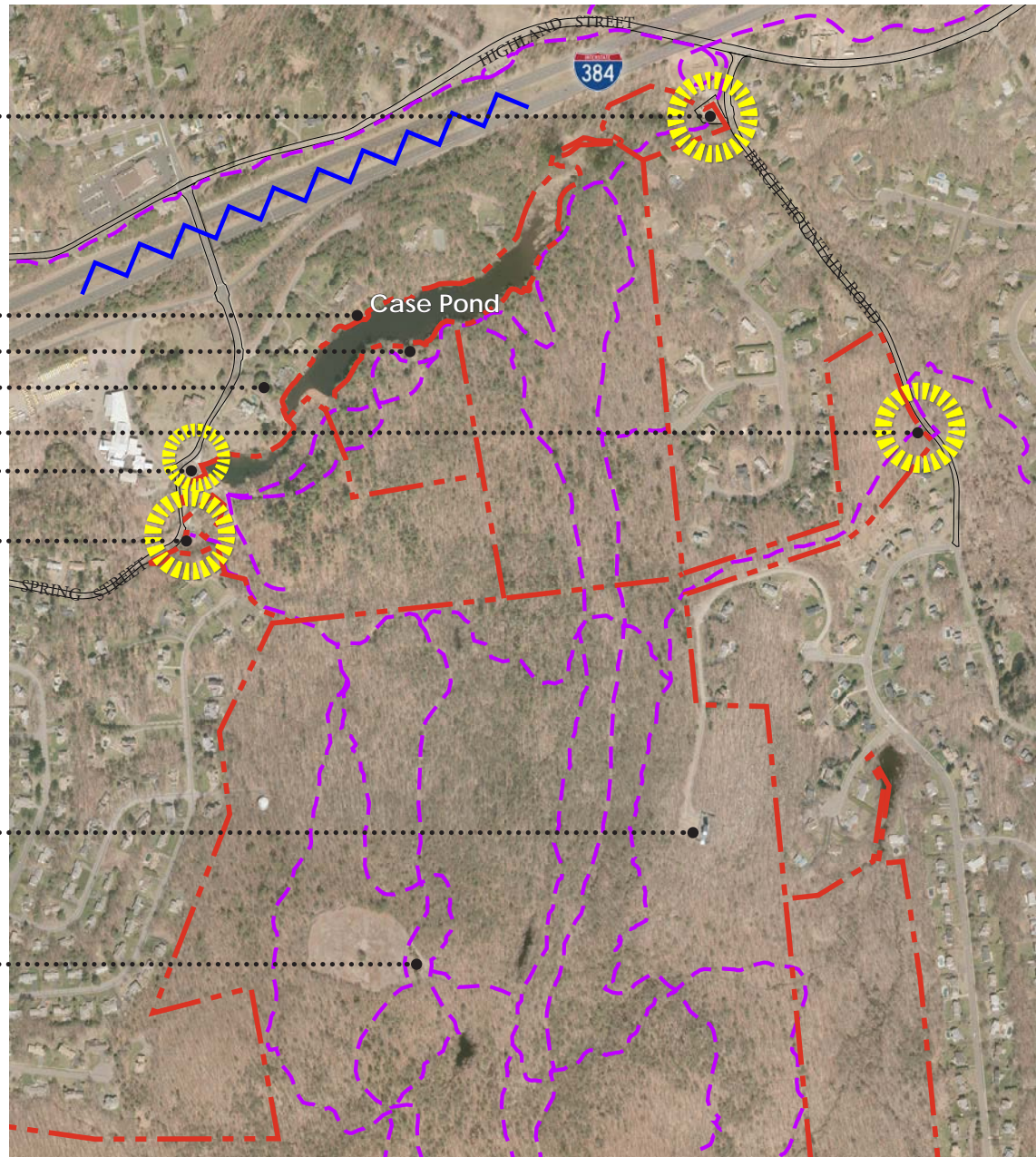


309.18 Acres

# Case Mountain Recreation Area

670 Spring Street

- Main Gateway -  
Case Pond Parking Area;  
Trailhead
- Bathhouse
- Rustic Log Cabin
- Former Case Family Estate
- Shenipsit Trailhead
- Lower Case Pond Dam &  
Carriage Bridge
- Main Gateway -  
Spring Street Parking Area;  
Trailhead
- Water Towers
- Lookout Mountain Summit



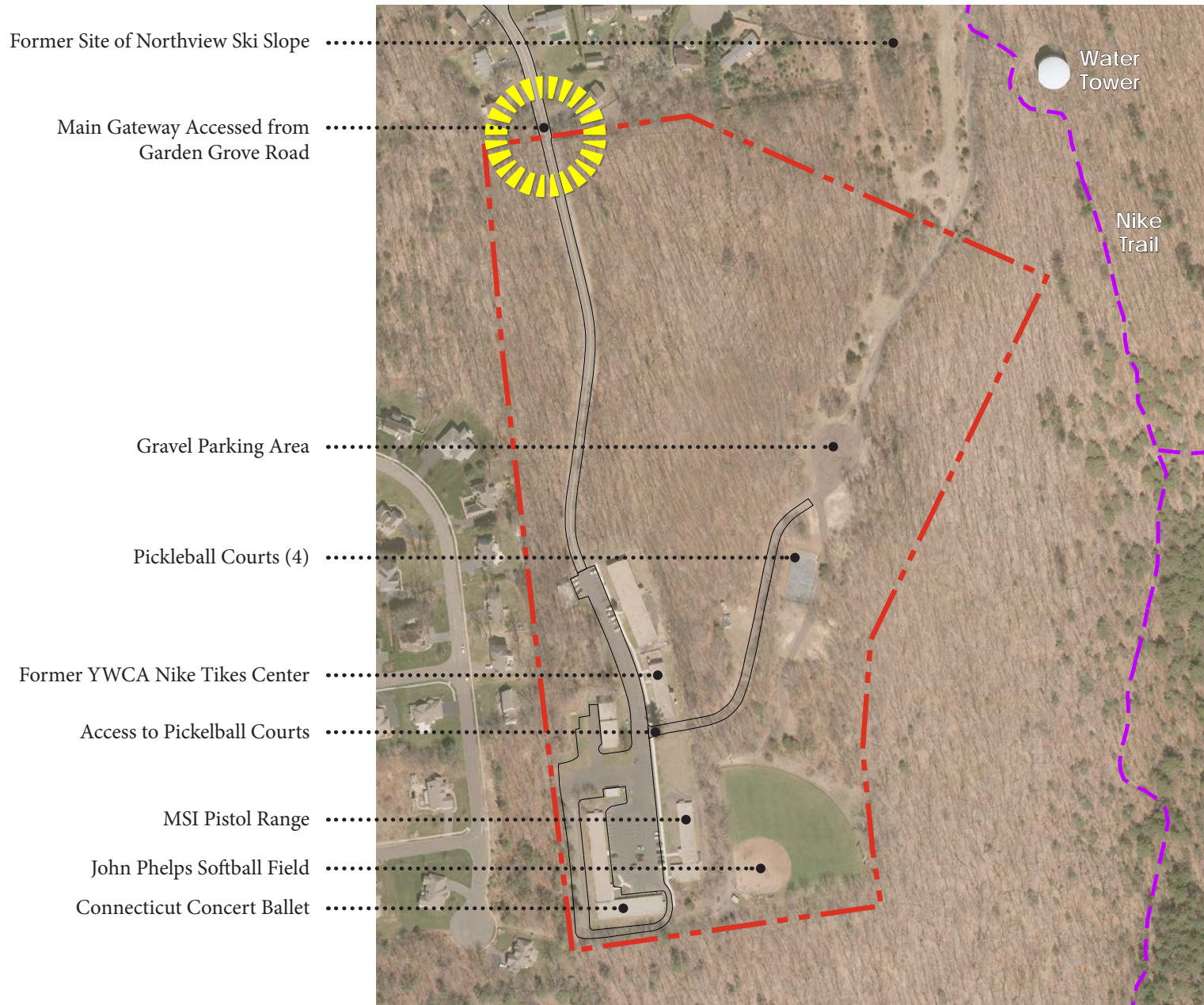
CASE MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
History	😊			Parkland designated in the Case Brothers Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2009); land originally owned by Case Family
Trails		😐		Numerous individual trails; Information Boards at 3 trailheads; provides views to Case Pond/Reservoir; Connections to East Coast Greenway, and towns of Bolton & Glastonbury; not handicap accessible; more trail markers needed; Maps (online/paper)? Trail Maintenance? Some existing stone walls need repairs (broken, fallen off base)
Pavements		😐		Minimal pavements; large cracks in concrete pavement over bridge (potential safety concern)
Parking		😐		Three parking areas - Spring Street, Case Pond and Shenipsit; Additional parking at former Case Brothers Paper Mill on Glen Road; no handicap accessible parking
Vegetation		😐		Natural forested woodland; annual Arborist review; reforestation plan?
Site Furniture			😞	Very few areas to sit on trails; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting		😐		None at parking areas; not necessary on trails
Signage			😞	Old style signage; more trail markers and trail signage needed
Circulation	😊			Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is good
Stormwater Management		😐		Natural drainage; some erosion noted on trails
Other Observations	😊			Historic nature and materials should be preserved in any future park improvements; well-used community asset; parking needs should be organized at Case Pond lot; strong connections to existing town trails and to other towns; plan needed for existing log cabin (c. 1918)



# 36.98 Acres

# Nike Site Recreation Area

# 160 Garden Grove Road





NIKE SITE RECREATION AREA - TYPES OF FACILITIES				
Description	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	Comments
John Phelps Softball Field	😊			Access to field - wooden steps up steep slope to left field/asphalt drive up to home plate/backstop - not accessible; field is irrigated, newer Musco lights; two sets of stands on each side - one metal on concrete pad, the other wooden; scorer's table inside wooden building, newer field fencing, electronic scoreboard, no dugouts or batting cages, no netting for added protection along baselines
Pickelball Courts (4)		😐		3 of 4 courts usable; drainage issue - large puddles and no net at fourth; dirt/residue on court; no lighting; fencing in good condition
Town Buildings		😐		Former missile site - repurposed buildings for other uses (CT Ballet, Shooting Range, town storage)
Bituminous Concrete Pavement			😞	118,897 SF of asphalt, lots of cracks; striping faded and worn, no crosswalk markings
Parking	😊			More than adequate
Vegetation		😐		Very mature trees; no new plantings
Site Furniture		😐		Stands at ball field; wooden benches and picnic tables at pickelball courts; NO BIKE RACKS
Lighting		😐		Very outdated lighting throughout site except for ball field; not sufficient
Signage		😐		Old park signage at entry drive; wooden sign at entrance drive to pickelball courts; Rules at pickleball
Circulation		😐		Vehicular directed by asphalt; pedestrian circulation?
Stormwater Management		😐		Pavement runoff is captured by catch basins; sheet flow over land
Other Observations			😞	Nike Trail does not connect to site? Connection to other parks? Programming? Buildings? Underutilized town asset

## SUMMARY

The Town possesses a rich diversity of parks, recreation, and open space facilities that form the public park system, each with its own distinct character. This network provides numerous and different recreational opportunities and benefits to residents, with a suitable complement of neighborhood and community parks throughout the town. Several signature sites such as Center Springs Park, Center Memorial Park, and Case Mountain possess unique features and celebrate the history and culture of the Manchester community. Other parks within the system are heavily focused on sports and active play, while some display opportunities for passive recreation.

- Mini-Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks



## KEY PARK FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Charter Oak Park and Olcott Street Sprayground are the newest park upgrades in town. Northwest Park contains the town's premiere Class A baseball and Little League fields, and Robertson Park is home to the Town's first cricket field.
- In general, park facilities are in good working order because the town has consistently maintained them.
- Consistent signage is needed at all parks. Park signs should be added at vehicular and pedestrian entrances where none currently exist. Wayfinding signage is needed at larger parks to identify and direct users to amenities and trails. Interpretive signage should be provided at locations of natural, cultural, and historic resources in parks and along trails to provide educational opportunities. This effort will bring a cohesive vision to the entire park system.
- Much of the Town's parkland is designated in historic districts and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but might not be known to the general public. These parks serve a unique role in understanding the values and stories that underpin the community and should be promoted in programmed historic interpretation and on the Town's website. Preservation of the park's historical character, monuments, memorials, and materials is essential in any future park improvements.
- More amenities are needed to allow for casual visitation and socializing.
- Site furnishings such as benches, picnic tables, game tables, and bike racks are minimal or nonexistent. Most existing site furnishings have aged and are not consistent throughout the park system.
- More restroom facilities and drinking fountains are needed.
- Improvements to entry drives, parking lots, walks, and sports courts are needed in many of the parks to address drainage and safety concerns.
- The parks currently contain many disparate path types, widths, and materials. Unifying the pedestrian circulation through the use of consistent materials is encouraged.
- All playground surfacing should be converted to a more resilient and easier-to-maintain, poured-in-place rubber product.
- Add and/or upgrade site lighting across all parks to improve safety.
- Increasing the tree canopy in all parks will grow the urban forest and provide much needed environmental, health, economic, and social benefits to the community. The use of native and other drought-tolerant vegetation can enhance park design and support the ecological systems unique to the region. Existing, mature vegetation should be evaluated by the staff arborists, and pruned as needed, and any exotic/invasive understory plants and trees should be removed.
- Establish strong connections and access to trails and other amenities (parks, municipal, medical, school, etc.) as important links of the park system.



## PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

When developing design principles for parks, it is important that each park be programmed, planned, and designed for use and facilities to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall park and recreation system. The following park design guidelines provide baseline standards to ensure that existing and future parks are designed in a way that promotes enjoyment, safety, accessibility, comfort, and sustainability.

### Signage

Signage at parks provides opportunities to make a first impression and can assist in promoting the image of Manchester. To improve user experiences throughout the park system, a comprehensive, cohesive signage system should be developed that uses consistent design standards for gateway, regulatory, wayfinding, and educational/historical/environmental signs, branding elements, and inclusion of multiple languages. Design standards should also consider modularity of signs (the ability to update signage over time), security and vandal-resistance, illumination and visibility, scale and intended audience, and installation costs.

### Lighting

To improve safety, energy efficiency, and the aesthetic character of the parks, standardized site lighting shall include:

- LED light fixtures, full cutoff, dark sky friendly
- Standard neutral white (4000K)
- Post-top mounted
- Architectural grade fixtures and poles, black powder coated with textured finish

### Site Furnishings

The selection of site furnishings should be based on an established Town standard. Benches, tables, water fountains, trash receptacles, shade structures, and bike racks used in the parks should be consistent with those used in urban environments. Consistency in site furnishings will help establish an identifiable Town image, through the use of repeatable aesthetic elements, for Manchester and the park system as a whole. These furnishings should offer comfort and aesthetic beauty, and be of formidable stature to prevent vandalism.

- **Benches and Tables** – Seating should be made from a material that is comfortable both in winter and the heat of summer while being able to withstand vandalism. Benches and tables should be provided to offer places of rest, opportunities to experience views, and offer social gathering spaces.
- **Water Fountains** – Drinking fountains should be available at a ratio of one per acre with the exception of mini-parks (typically smaller than one acre), which should have one. Drinking fountains should be complementary to other site furnishings, such as benches, and be operational in freezing conditions.
- **Shade** – Many residents indicated a desire for more shade at parks. Accordingly, shade should be provided in the form of trees and structures throughout Manchester parks adjacent to facilities such as seating areas and playgrounds. Wherever possible, shade should be provided through the addition of trees; however, fabric structures will be necessary in many areas.
- **Trash Receptacles** – Just like people judge a book by its cover, they also judge a community by its appearance. There is a major difference between a town whose streets are lined with flowers and one whose streets are lined with debris. An adequate supply of commercial trash cans is critical to provide people opportunities to dispose of their trash in an acceptable manner. Keep America Beautiful, an organization that has dedicated the last 60 years to organizing volunteers to clean up litter, has a very useful Community Appearance Index. Whether you are a city planner, park manager, business owner, or concerned community member, it's essential to put in the extra effort to keep your community pristine. Keep America Beautiful found that a strong contributor to littering behavior is the existence of litter; therefore, the first step in prevention is to find and add an adequate number of quality commercial trash cans. Placement is critical to help your park and recreation facility prevent litter and boost cleanliness.
- **Bike Racks** – When setting out to create spaces intended for bike parking, the key outcome should be an area that allows cyclists to easily park their bikes with a reasonable expectation of security and protection for the short term. The primary feature of a bike parking rack is that it should allow both the frame and at least one wheel to be secured to the rack using a u-style lock. U-racks and Post and Ring bike racks are commonly used in these applications. Grid racks and others that only hold the wheel leave bikes susceptible to theft as the frame can easily be removed from the wheel.

## Restrooms

Restrooms are an important public amenity and, in particular, help to extend park visits, and they should be a priority at the largest and most-used parks. The components, design, and placement of restroom structures are important decisions to consider when specifying facilities. Restroom facilities should be safe, easy to maintain, and consistent with the vision for the park system.

- For permanent restrooms, an architect should be consulted for design.
- Portable toilets can be used in smaller park settings.
- Composting toilet systems are an environmentally sound, practical alternative to flush, vault, and portable facilities. There is no water wasted for flushing, pollution caused by sewers and septic systems is reduced, and composting toilet systems allow nutrients back where they belong.

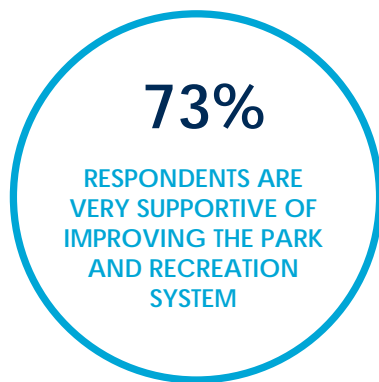


# IMPORTANCE OF PARK MAINTENANCE

The quality of maintenance is one of the most important elements of the park and recreation service delivery process.

As a result, a point of emphasis within the Parks and Facilities Master Plan includes the following narrative about the significance of park maintenance for the community.

One of the questions on the Needs Assessment Survey related to respondents' level of support for 11 various attributes. The two highest scoring attributes related to maintenance. "Improve the park and recreation system, maintain existing parks, recreation facilities and fields" had the highest level of support, as 73% of residents are very supportive and 16% are somewhat supportive of maintenance activities for a total of 89%. The next highest rated attribute for level of support was "maintain existing trails and waterways," also at 89% being supportive.



A similar question was "Which actions would you be most willing to fund with your tax dollars?" Respondents were asked to rank their top four choices among 11 different elements. Again, "maintain existing parks, recreation facilities and fields" had the highest level of support, as 61% of survey respondents placed this category among the top four choices. Additionally, 57% of respondents ranked "maintain existing trails and waterways" as their second highest choice.

At the virtual town hall meeting held on November 19, 2020, results were similar, emphasizing the importance of maintenance. One of the polling questions was: "What is your top choice for where you would like Manchester to focus resources over the next 5 to 10 years?" The highest rated selection related to maintenance staffing as 26% of respondents rated "hiring additional staff to support and maintain clean and safe parks, trails, and facilities." Again, this was the most frequent option selected.

As a result of this feedback from the community, it is obvious that the quality of park maintenance should continue as an important element of the Public Works Department's set of responsibilities. As park improvements continue and amenities are added, it will be important to quantify staffing levels along with the growth in park acreage and assets.

Historically, the Parks Maintenance Division's responsibilities have included maintaining 160 acres of lawn and athletic areas, over 40 athletic fields (29 ball fields, 19 soccer fields, and 2 football fields), six outdoor pools, 14 playground areas, plus an additional five shared with the BOE staff, and dozens of landscaped areas at Town buildings and parks and adjacent to roadways.

While Park Maintenance staffing levels have remained consistent over time, their responsibilities have continued to increase. Since 2000, the Town has added several significant facilities that require regular maintenance, including Northwest Park, softball fields at New State Road, High School, the Great Lawn, Bennet Field, and the West Side Pool/Recreation Area.

Additionally, since 2015 their areas of responsibility have grown to include the following:

- Nathan Hale property (mowing, horticulture, trees, basketball court, and playground)
- East Side Neighborhood area and Market Field
- West Side property (mowing, horticulture, trees, playground, and field)
- Cheney Trail from Forest Street to Middle Turnpike (mowing and tree maintenance)
- East Coast Greenway sections – Charter Oak to Bolton (mowing, horticulture, and tree maintenance)
- Nike Site Pickleball
- Verplanck Sprayground (mowing, horticulture, and irrigation)
- Cricket Field at Robertson Park



Town Parks Maintenance staff have also contributed significant in-house improvements to various park and recreation facilities since 2015, including:

- Upgrades to Charger Oak Park (musical garden, play ground, and courts)
- Upgrades to Center Springs Park (mowing, disc golf, horticulture, and tree maintenance)
- Upgrades to Union Pond Park (horticulture and fitness equipment)
- Creation of Center Springs Park expansion entrance to Broad Street (horticulture and mowing)
- Case Mountain trail work (increased maintenance), mowing, and pruning of Case Falls
- Charter Oak soccer fields upgrade (agronomic program)

Given that staffing levels have remained static while responsibilities have increased, Town administration should consider developing a set of key metrics that can better define appropriate staffing levels such as:

- Number of acres maintained per full-time equivalent staff
- Park and athletic field customer satisfaction ratings
- Cost per acre to maintain
- Establishment of maintenance standards
- Audited results of performance

There are no industry standards for maintenance staffing levels. However, this can be achieved by completing a benchmark comparison of best practice agencies.

Maintenance practices that have historically been performed manually are now moving to various technology and GPS platforms, intended to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This includes the use of drones to complete park inspections and inventories, turf tank GPS paint robots for field lining on athletic fields, use of alternative energy, and the use of mobile devices for inspection processes. As the level of sophistication in maintenance practices continues to evolve and change, the Town will need to continue to advance in these areas as well.



# INDOOR RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

The Consulting team toured all of the spaces used for indoor recreation within the Town. Every single space has been repurposed to be utilized for recreation programs.

In addition, every facility was built decades ago. Although the Town has done a great job of using all of the spaces that they have, it might be time to consider a new opportunity.

## Manchester Senior Center

The Manchester Senior Center, located at 549 East Middle Turnpike East, is the former Green School, which closed in 1978. In addition to receiving some state and federal grants, the Senior Center members raised funds and did a lot of the work themselves to turn this school into a Senior Center. When the funds were depleted, local firefighters pitched in to help with some painting. The space officially opened as the new Senior Center in 1980. Currently, the Senior Center is managed by the Town's Human Services Department.



Figure: 3.29: Manchester Senior Center

In 1999, the facility underwent \$1.3 million in renovations to update the space into a place where seniors could meet comfortably, play cards, read, dance, listen to music, and exercise.

The facility includes a series of activity rooms, including a kitchen and cafeteria for congregate meals for individuals 60 years and over. The meal program is managed by the Manchester Area Conference of Churches. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meals were packed and picked up by residents.

Senior Center programs include support groups such as low vision and caretakers groups, book club, lectures, and discussions such as AARP safe driving, using app-based ride-sharing services, nutrition information, and Zumba Gold classes. Monthly activities were suspended during COVID-19 and have not yet resumed. In addition to programming, there is a community garden, greenhouse, and bocce on site. Transportation services are offered through the Senior Center and Dial-a-Ride service. A social worker and a nurse are on staff when the building is open for programs.

Although the facility is fully accessible, there are some issues. With four entrances, building control is difficult, and the layout is not conducive to modern senior programming needs. In addition, the programming and popularity of the center have grown so much that the facility is out of space and no new programs can be added. Based on the focus group with Senior Center members, more space is needed to meet the needs of the current senior population and the increases in this age group that are predicted.

As the Town adds new indoor recreation spaces, consideration should be given to the growing senior population. Between 2010 and 2025, it is predicted by Esri that the number of adults in Manchester over the age of 65 years is expected to increase by 3,746 people, or 120%. Spaces for seniors to congregate, socialize, and exercise should be included in any new spaces.



## Mahoney Center and Leisure Labs

The former Washington School and Mahoney Center, located at 110 Cedar Street, are currently being used by the Town for a variety of recreation programs. The building has three distinct sections: Mahoney Center (1978) on the south end is currently the space being used by the Town for recreation and includes a large gym and some multipurpose space. The middle portion (1958) is currently not being used, but there is potential to repurpose this space into a conference center with several meeting rooms that could be rented by a variety of Town organizations. The north end of the building is the original Washington School Building built in 1912 and currently unoccupied. Life safety and accessibility are the greatest concerns for the entire complex. The original 1912 portion has fire protection sprinklers, but the 1958 and 1978 sections do not have sprinklers. The accessibility is deficient in many aspects of the ADA guidelines.

There is a long-term staff vision for the Mahoney Center with the implementation of the Leisure Lab concept. This concept would create three distinct levels of programming in the facility with each level having a different theme, including:

- **Level 1:** Exercise (focus on health/wellness/fitness) – Currently, this level includes a large gym with a stage, and the Department uses this space for a number of programs.
- **Level 2:** Create (Focus on art, including visual arts, dance, music, and creative writing) – Planning is being done for these spaces but funds have not been dedicated to build out the spaces in accordance with the planned activities.
- **Level 3:** Organize (community space, DEI and social justice, people's gallery) – Planning for these spaces has started and an art exhibit is planned for June 18, 2021.

With some reconfiguration, there is plenty of room for a registration hub on the first level.

Other possibilities that have been discussed by staff include:

- Redefining the entrance into the park.
- Including a café serving healthy foods and snacks, with charging stations on the first level.
- Renting spaces for artist studios and shared workspace opportunities
- Adding early childhood programming that could act as child care for adults while they are using the facility.
- Creating spaces for the arts on the second floor (e.g. a recording studio, a place to create podcasts, music room, dance studio, silk screening room for kids to make t-shirts, tech labs, and ceramics). A communal makerspace—a room that contains tools and components, allowing people to enter with an idea and leave with a complete project—has also been discussed.

There is a strong desire to link the activities on the inside to the new park that is planned surrounding the building. The building exterior includes a Martin Luther King mural, which is soon to be joined with three additional murals.

The Consulting team fully supports the Town's plans for this space as well as connecting the indoor recreation spaces with the park surrounding the facility.



Figure: 3.30: Mahoney Center and Leisure Labs



Figure: 3.31: West Side Recreation Area



## Community Y Recreation Center

The Community Y Recreation Center, located at 78 North Main Street, is used by the Town for a variety of recreational activities. It includes a large gym with a wood floor, a fitness center, a group exercise room, several multipurpose spaces, an area for registration, and staff offices. The Department's summer camps utilize space in this facility during the summer months. The Community Y is the busiest and most heavily used indoor recreation facility within the Town.

This facility was once a family residence and was converted into a YMCA and operated as such from 1930 until the mid-1950s. The Town does not own the YMCA; it leases the space from the YMCA Board of Trustees. The YMCA Board of Trustees is responsible for any exterior repairs and the Town is responsible for any repairs to the interior of the building and maintenance of the surrounding grounds.

Although the Town has done an excellent job creating appealing recreation spaces in this facility (by repurposing a bowling alley, for example), it is an old building, and it has limitations. There is no spectator seating in the gym, there is no air conditioning, and the building is not accessible. The Town leases this space for \$1/year and will continue to use this space for recreation purposes until new indoor recreation space is available.



Figure 3.32: Community Y



Figure 3.33: Community Y Fitness Center



Figure 3.34: Community Y Gymnasium



## Nathan Hale

Nathan Hale, also a former school, closed in 2013. Currently, the Department has use of the gym (which includes a stage), which is set up for Pickleball, and one other multipurpose space that is also set up for Pickleball. The Eastside Neighborhood Resource Center is right across the street, and there could be some synergy between these two facilities.

According to Department staff, there is little opportunity to change or influence the operations at this facility.



Figure: 3.35: Nathan Hale



Figure: 3.36: Nathan Hale Gym



Figure: 3.37: Nathan Hale Stage

## Robertson School

In 2025, the Manchester BOE will be turning over the ownership of Robertson School, located at 65 North School Street, to the Town. Currently, the Manchester Middle Academy has classes in part of the building. The facility, specifically the gymnasium and cafeteria, is currently used for camp programs run by the Department.

The School Repurposing Committee was formed to determine the future use of four former school buildings: Nathan Hale, Washington, Robertson, and Martin. While that Committee will ultimately make the final determination, the Consulting team is recommending that all of Robertson School be demolished to make room for a future new recreation center (outlined below).

There are many opportunities for this facility to be connected to the parkland that surrounds the old school. In addition, there is an opportunity to connect with Union Pond Park, which is just a short distance away.



Figure: 3.38: Robertson School

## Potential New Community Recreation Center

The Robertson School location is a prime spot for a new facility. Based upon the survey results and the public engagement, a new community recreation center is recommended for this site. A new facility is recommended due to the cost and difficulty of adapting the existing building into a modern community center.

The original Robertson School, built in 1913, has very little, if any, historic value as a contributing structure to the Union Village Historic District, and its eventual removal should be considered. The subsequent additions to Robertson built in the 1960s and 1970s have no historic value and are obsolete. The 2013 report from JCJ Architecture to the SMARTR committee notes that the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are outdated and that the building lacks an automatic fire suppression system. Additionally, the building lacks central air conditioning, which is not desirable for a community center that would likely have a significant fitness and wellness component. The existing classrooms are not easily adaptable to creating a more open floor plan without incurring significant cost. For all of these reasons, the recommended option is to consider the construction of a new community center in this location.

A facility between 65,000 and 80,000 square feet is suggested for placement at the southwest corner of the site, with an optional connection to the historical portion of the old school, should the Repurposing Committee choose to preserve that building. The facility could include the following components:

- A full-size gymnasium (54' by 80')
- Indoor leisure pool and lap pool
- Fitness center
- Indoor track
- Child care
- One group exercise studio
- Senior spaces – including a kitchen
- Multipurpose spaces
- Locker rooms – including one family locker room
- Registration area and staff offices

The current pricing for such a facility is \$400 to \$425 per square foot for construction (\$26 million to \$34 million) with an additional 17% to 21% for soft costs (\$4.4 million to \$7.1 million) for a range of \$30.4 million to \$41.1 million. If the Town were to determine that this is a suitable direction to explore further, the consulting teams recommends that the Town complete a facility feasibility study.



# LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

An important element of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan includes a LOS analysis. This analysis determines how well the Town meets the needs of the community for park and recreation services.

The amenities in this analysis include three categories:

- Indoor Facilities
- Outdoor Amenities
- Parks/Trails

The LOS guidelines assist an agency in determining the appropriate level of parkland, amenities, and facilities. The definition of “appropriate” parkland and facilities varies from community to community. Much depends on the local use and demand for specific services. For example, more playgrounds might be needed than what the guidelines suggest if the community has many young families with children.

For the purposes of this report, the word “guideline” is used, rather than the word “standard.” In the 1980s, the NRPA developed a list of national standards as described by the appropriate acreage of parkland or population served by a specific amenity, such as playgrounds and tennis courts. Standards were applied universally for all agencies, regardless of size, geographical location, or seasonal variation of climate.

However, after 1996, the industry has moved away from established standards to more nuanced ways of determining an adequate number of assets. NRPA maintains a database, Park Metrics, which includes asset inventories from park and recreation agencies located all around the United States. The information can be filtered to create a sample size of like population, geographical area of the country, and types of organizations such as towns, cities, counties, and special districts.

LOS guidelines measure the minimum amount of assets that should be provided to meet the community’s needs and expectations. LOS guidelines are typically expressed as a ratio of a facility capacity to the number of users. For example, a standard for how many park acres are needed per 1,000 people is an example of an LOS guideline.

The following LOS guidelines include the use of the NRPA Park Metrics database. In order to obtain comparisons from similar types of agencies, the database search included town and city agencies with populations between 50,000 and 75,000. The database include 41 agencies that fit these criteria.

The following chart shows the various assets and amenities, and how the Town's park and recreation amenities compare to the median of the reporting agencies.

The columns on the chart represent:

- The facility/amenity designated by category, and the median result of the reporting agencies. The median is used as the comparative number, rather than the low quartile or upper quartile.
- The number of assets for the Town. There are three major categories:
  - o Town owned and managed facilities and amenities
  - o Town owned and managed facilities and amenities plus school assets
  - o Town parks and trails
- The surplus or deficit of Town amenities in 2021, and the estimated surplus and deficits projected in 2035 as a result of continued population growth
- Peer agencies of populations of 50,000 to 70,000 showing the lower quartile, median, and upper quartile of amenities. The lower quartile represents the lowest 25% of reporting agencies, and the upper quartile represents the upper 25% of reporting agencies
- The amenities are listed according to the following categories:
  - o Indoor facilities
  - o Outdoor facilities
  - o Swimming/aquatics facilities
  - o Parks
  - o Trails

Table 3.11: LOS Indoor Facilities

Jurisdiction population per facility or activity areas within indoor facilities:								
Facility Category	Manchester					Peer Agencies 50,000 to 75,000		
	Number of Facilities	Current Population 58,477		Projected Population 70,848		Current Population		
		2020	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	2035	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Recreation / Community Center	2	29,224	0.7	35,424	0.4	23,379	44,367	65,367
Senior Center	1	58,447	0.0	70,848	-0.2	57,000	60,000	71,927
Teen Center	1	58,447	0.0	70,848	-0.2	56,365	58,430	69,957
Fitness Center	1	58,447	-0.1	70,848	-0.4	30,952	51,250	66,220
Gyms	3	19,482	1.1	23,616	0.6	21,344	30,069	41,010
Nature Center	1	58,447	0.2	70,848	0.0	61,433	70,136	72,379

\* Facility Surplus / Deficit Compared to Peer Agencies Median Population

Table 3.12: LOS Outdoor Facilities

Jurisdiction population per outdoor facility:								
Facility Category	Manchester					Peer Agencies		
	Number of Facilities	Current Population		Projected Population		Current Population		
		2020	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	2035	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Playgrounds	13	4,496	-3.3	5,450	-6.7	2,406	3,596	4,935
Community Gardens	2	29,224	1.0	35,424	0.8	28,850	57,000	71,317
Basketball Courts	9.5	6,152	3.6	7,458	2.3	6,370	9,832	20,901
Picnic Shelters / Pavilions	7	8,350	0.0	10,121	0.0	NA	NA	NA
Tennis Courts (Outdoor)	2	29,224	-7.5	35,424	-9.5	3,639	6,182	12,988
Diamond Fields: Little League	4	14,612	-4.4	17,712	-6.2	5,356	6,950	12,662
Diamond Fields: Baseball	2	29,224	-1.0	35,424	-1.6	14,293	19,477	32,683
Diamond Fields: Softball	5	11,689	0.9	14,170	0.0	8,937	14,084	18,443
Dog Park	1	58,447	0.0	70,848	-0.2	37,500	59,670	68,401
Ice Rink (Outdoor)	2	29,224	-0.3	35,424	-0.8	14,261	25,000	55,274
Rectangular Fields: Multi-Use	8	7,306	2.4	8,856	1.3	5,063	10,529	29,136

\* Facility Surplus / Deficit Compared to Peer Agencies Median Population

Table 3.13: LOS Aquatic Facilities

Jurisdiction population per swimming / aquatics facility:								
Category	Manchester					Peer Agencies		
	Number of Facilities	Current Population		Projected Population		Current Population		
		2020	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	2035	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Spray grounds	1	58,447	0.0	70,848	-0.2	31,096	57,415	66,311
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	5	11,689	3.4	14,170	3.0	29,768	36,275	57,538

\* Facility Surplus / Deficit Compared to Peer Agencies Median Population



Table 3.14: LOS Including School Facilities

Jurisdiction population per facility or activity areas within facilities, <u>including school facilities</u> :								
Facility Category	Manchester					Peer Agencies		
	Number of Facilities	Current Population		Projected Population		Current Population		
		2020	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	2035	Facility Surplus / Deficit*	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Gyms	7	8,350	5.1	10,121	4.6	21,344	30,069	41,010
Playgrounds	23	2,541	6.7	3,080	3.3	2,406	3,596	4,935
Basketball Courts	19	3,076	13.1	3,729	11.8	6,370	9,832	20,901
Diamond Fields: Little League	13	4,496	4.6	5,450	2.8	5,356	6,950	12,662
Diamond Fields: Baseball	3	19,482	0.0	23,616	-0.6	14,293	19,477	32,683
Diamond Fields: Softball	7	8,350	2.9	10,121	2.0	8,937	14,084	18,443
Rectangular Fields: Multi-Use	19	3,076	13.4	3,729	12.3	5,063	10,529	29,136
Tennis Courts (Outdoor)	6	9,741	-3.5	11,808	-5.5	3,639	6,182	12,988
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	5	11,689	3.4	14,170	3.0	29,768	36,275	57,538

\* Facility Surplus / Deficit Compared to Peer Agencies Median Population

### INDOOR FACILITIES

For the Indoor Facility Category, the Town closely matches the median number of recreation/ community centers. This metric combines recreation centers and community centers into one category. Recreation centers are defined as multipurpose facilities that draw users from all parts of the Town and are usually at least 50,000 square feet. Community centers are typically smaller in size, more single-purpose focused and draw from a smaller geographical area than recreation centers. In the case of Manchester, the two centers include the Mahoney Center and the Community Y Recreation Center.

The NRPA Park Metric database does not include a metric for appropriate amount of indoor facility space. However, the guideline generally used within the park master plan industry is 2.0 square feet of indoor space per capita. Following that guideline, the Town should have 116,874 indoor square footage. The existing total amount of space is 120,630 square feet. However, the “appropriate” amount of square footage does not take into account the condition or the serviceability of the space or how well-designed it is for the use.

The indoor recreation space square footage includes the following facilities:

Table 3.15: Indoor Recreation Square Footage

Facility	Square Footage
Mahoney Center	60,518
Youth Service Bureau Teen Center and Activity Rooms	7,863
Northwest Park Early Childhood Center	8,000
Nathan Hale Activity Center Gym, Stage, and Cafe	12,000
Community Y Recreation Center	21,963
East Side Neighborhood Resource Center	7,556
Camp Kennedy Building	1,000
Center Springs Activity Center, Lower Level	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,630</b>

The three gymnasiums exceed the median sample by one gymnasium according to 2020 population estimates and will reduce to 0.6 gymnasiums in 2035. When school sites are added, gymnasiums grow to seven in number. Therefore, the surplus of gymnasiums grows to 5.1 currently and 4.6 in the year 2035.

However, it is important to note that school gymnasiums are not available for public use throughout the school year.

The Town has one senior center and one teen center, which are similar to other reporting agencies the size of Manchester. The Town’s inventory of one fitness center and nature center are also appropriate for the current population, based on comparisons to peer cities.

## OUTDOOR FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Playgrounds show a deficit of **3.3**, increasing to **6.7** in 2035. However, when adding school facilities' inventory, a surplus of playgrounds exist: 5.1 currently and 4.6 in 2035. Again, this does not take into account for the lack of availability of playground use throughout the school year when school is not in session.

The two community gardens represent one additional garden compared to the median of reporting agencies. However, with the continued interest in community gardening, the Town's inventory of community gardens more accurately reflects the need in the community.

The seven picnic shelters match the median. Conversely, tennis courts show a deficit of **7.5** courts, growing to **9.5** in 2035. Including school sites, the deficit for tennis courts is reduced to **3.5** currently and **5.5** in 2035. Pickleball is not yet recognized as a metric on the NRPA database, but undoubtedly will be in the near future. As a result, there is no comparative metric for Pickleball.

As for diamond fields, currently there is a **4.4** deficit of Little League fields and one baseball field. These deficits increase to **6.2** and **1.6** in 2035. However, including school fields, these numbers change to a surplus of 4.6 currently and 2.8 in 2035 for Little League fields. For baseball fields, there is no deficit currently, including school sites, and shows a deficit of 0.6 in 2035.

Softball currently exceeds the median by one field and grows to a deficit of **one** field in 2035. When school sites are included, the surplus grows to 2.9 currently and 2.0 in 2035.

Multiuse rectangular fields exceed the median by 2.4 currently and 1.3 in 2035. These numbers grow substantially when school fields are included, with a surplus of 13.4 fields currently and a surplus of 12.3 fields in 2035.

Dog parks and outdoor ice rinks match or closely match the median.

## AQUATICS FACILITIES

The Town's one sprayground matches the median, whereas outdoor swimming pools exceed the median by 3.4. There is no indoor aquatics facility in the Town.





## PARKLAND AND TRAILS

The Town has 21 parks, which is in the lower quartile of reporting agencies. The median for number of parks is 32. However, this is not a critical metric as it does not quantify park type or number of acres.

The Town has a total of 1,123 park acres. This includes school park acreage that is weighted at 50% due to school space not being available to the public throughout the school year when class is in session. This number exceeds the median by 338 acres. Additionally, the number of park acres per 1,000 residents is 19.2 compared to the median number of 13 acres per 1,000 residents. The Town's park acreage even exceeds the upper quartile of 15.8.

The final metric includes miles of trails. Again, the Town greatly exceeds the peer communities having 110 miles of trails. The median is 18.1, and the upper quartile is 39.8.















Ch. 4

# Planning



# CONCEPTUAL VISION SKETCH PLANS

The Plan includes recommendations to guide system-wide improvements, along with more specific recommendations for existing park sites. Together, the goals, objectives, system-wide recommendations, and site recommendations provide direction for how the Town can develop, program, and manage the park and recreation system to better meet community needs.

The project recommendations and improvements described in this section of the report represent the vision of the community and the Department, and will guide the Town's efforts to improve and enhance park and recreation opportunities in Manchester over the next 10+ years.

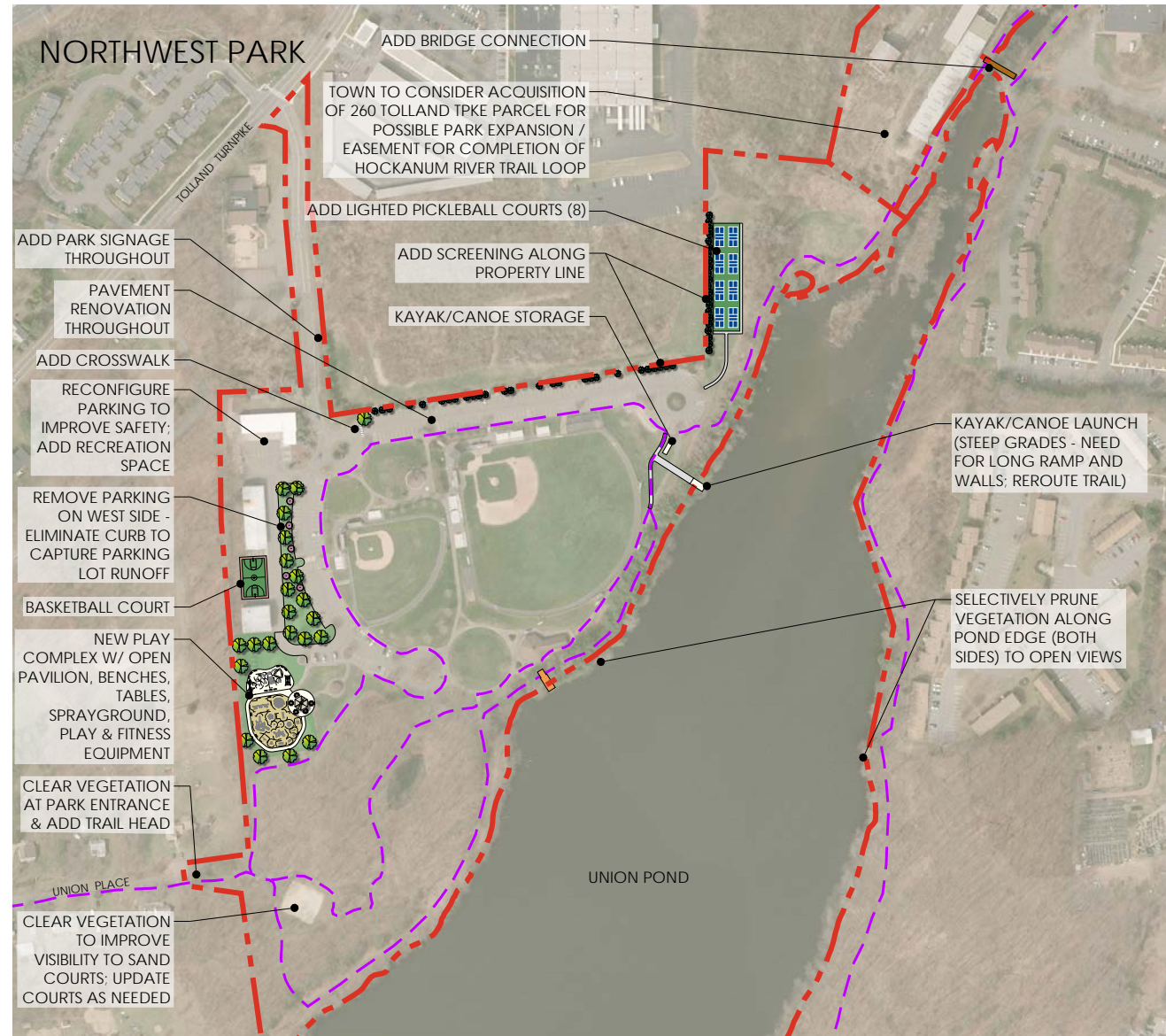
This chapter describes specific actions that are suggested for improvements to existing park and recreation facilities. These recommendations are presented with detailed cost estimates for the particular recommended project. Based upon evaluations of 21 park and recreation facilities, public engagement input, statistical survey results, and input from town staff, a series of conceptual improvement plans for six parks were developed to guide the long-term implementation of future investments in the Town's park system.



## NORTHWEST PARK: “FLEXIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE”

Northwest Park is a popular 25 ± acre community park located on Tolland Turnpike in the north end of the Town. It was established as a dedicated baseball park and is home to premier Class A baseball and Little League fields. The park is well-designed and maximized for usage and offers additional recreational amenities to attract residents and visitors. The Town’s first boundless playground was opened in 2003 to provide inclusive play for all children. A large, 50-foot pier extends over Union Pond at a height of 18 feet above the water and is a great place for birdwatching and observing the breathtaking fall foliage in peak form. For nature lovers and hikers/walkers, the Union Pond Trail portion of the Hockanum River Linear Park extends into Northwest Park, providing trails by the water.

The future vision of this park is centered on flexibility. What started out as a park dedicated to baseball has evolved and adapted to the needs of the community. Projected improvements explore waterfront connections and expand active recreation, while preserving the ability to adapt should changing recreation trends and preferences among residents dictate different uses in the future.



Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include:

- Consider the acquisition of 260 Tolland Turnpike parcel as possible park expansion or easement for completion of the Union Pond Trail of Hockanum River Linear Park.
  - Add a bridge connection to provide pedestrian access from Union Pond Park to Northwest Park.
  - Prune vegetation selectively along Union Pond edge to open views. Clearing and pruning are also required at park/trail entrance at Union Place and sand volleyball courts.
  - Construct a boat launch for access to water for kayaking, canoing, and paddle boarding. Incorporate boat storage.
  - Build eight new Pickleball courts in northeast corner of park. Add benches, lighting, and fencing.
  - Add a continuous row of evergreens to screen adjacent property building from courts, and another row to the north side of parking lot across from baseball fields along property line.
  - Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, rules and regulations, and park amenities.
  - Construct a new play complex that includes a covered, open pavilion, benches, tables, sprayground, play equipment for all ages, and fitness equipment. This new amenity should be fully accessible and incorporate shade features.
  - Add new plantings at new amenities.
  - Renovate and repave asphalt parking lot throughout park.
  - Remove parking spaces on west side of parking lot Island adjacent to the Little League field. Eliminate curb and install green infrastructure (rain garden and wetland plantings) to capture parking lot runoff.
  - Install basketball court between Public Works garage and Building Maintenance Department.
  - Reconfigure parking at Park Recreation Office/BOE Food Service Department and Early Childhood Center building to improve safety, and add recreation space.
  - Upgrade sand volleyball courts as required (i.e., nets, posts, sand replenishment).
- The budget details are included in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





## Before



## After



Improving access to Union Pond is an important element of making Northwest Park a more enjoyable destination. A boat launch would allow visitors to participate in kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding.



## ROBERTSON/UNION POND PARK: "A NEW VISION FOR THE NORTH END"

Robertson/Union Pond Park combine for a total of 20 ± acres in the north end of the Town. This community park forms the southern edge of Union Pond and provides a multitude of active and passive recreation opportunities. The latest addition to the park is a regulation size cricket field due to open this summer. The former North District School of 1914 is designated in the Union Village Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. Now the south wing of a much larger structure, it is now known as Robertson School, which, like the neighboring municipal park (Robertson Park), was named in honor of the Bon Ami inventor J.T. Robertson. Swanson Pool, Union Pond Trail, and the Jay Howroyd Fitness Trail round out the amenities for the community.



The vision for Robertson/Union Pond Park reimagines this park as a community asset for the entire Town. As the current recreation facilities are aged and past their prime, implementation of new park amenities should be to the most current and state-of-the-art standards. Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include the following:

- Construct new 65,000 to 80,000 square foot community center building on corner of North Main Street and North School Street. Add large patio on northeast corner. This center could potentially include health and wellness programs, library services, and programming and activities for both seniors and youth.
- Renovate historic school building and add overhead connector for pedestrian travel between buildings.
- Reconfigure entire vehicular and pedestrian circulation to complement new building and major park improvements. Add roundabout to direct circulation, drop-off area at Community Center, striped crosswalks, and concrete walks.
- Realign park entrance on North School Street to match Union Pond Park.
- Add raised crosswalk on North School Street for safe pedestrian travel between parks.
- Construct new pedestrian entrance at North School Street with landscape wall, sitting area, and benches.
- Add continuous rows of evergreens to screen adjacent property owners.
- Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, rules and regulations, and park amenities.
- Construct a new recreation complex that includes a covered, open pavilion, benches, tables, grills, sprayground, and play equipment for all ages. Add shade features at playground and sprayground. This new amenity should be fully accessible.
- Construct new restroom/storage building.
- Build four new Pickleball courts, two tennis courts, and two basketball courts. Add player benches, lighting, and fencing.
- Add significant new plantings throughout the entire park to increase tree canopy, provide shade, and improve quality of life. Add ornamental street trees to south side of North Main Street.
- Add multiple pedestrian connections to existing cricket field, including connection to Union Court neighborhood.
- Renovate existing walking path around cricket field. Add benches and stands for spectators.
- Add pedestrian entrance at corner of North Main Street and Oakland Street.
- Install bike racks, benches, and drinking fountain.
- Install ornamental site lighting.
- Reconfigure and repave the asphalt parking lot at Union Pond Park to increase parking, and align park entrance to match entrance to Robertson Park.
- Construct a new pier that accommodates picnicking and fishing.
- Add boat storage for kayaks and canoes.
- Explore potential trail connection at 99 North Street.

The budget details are included in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





A modern, multi-purpose community center at Robertson Park at the corner of North Main and North School Streets was envisioned as a way to help revitalize the north end of town while creating greater efficiencies for programming and facility needs.



Corner View of Manchester Community Center at North Main and North School Streets  
Illustration by Ron Quicquaro, Studio Q Architecture





*Birdseye View of Campus Layout of Park and Manchester Community Center  
Illustration by Ron Quicquaro, Studio Q Architecture*





Main Entrance of Manchester Community Center  
 Illustration by Ron Quicquaro, Studio Q Architecture



Entry to Manchester Community Center from Parking Lot  
 Illustration by Ron Quicquaro, Studio Q Architecture



Entry to Manchester Community Center from North School Street  
 Illustration by Ron Quicquaro, Studio Q Architecture



Basketball courts, reimagined with colorful design and Town branding could be relocated to the western edge of Robertson Park to accommodate other uses.



An internal roundabout within Robertson Park would allow greater access to all areas of the park while serving a traffic calming function to maintain a pedestrian friendly environment.



*Concept Model: Tristan Welch*





Concept Model: Tristan Welch



New shaded seating areas will create a more comfortable multi-season environment for families using the park.



A pickleball court adjacent to Union Pond Park will offer an accessible location for users of this fast-growing sport.



Concept Model: Tristan Welch



Night-time lighting is envisioned in this park as a way to increase safety and allow more hours of activities and programming.



Concept Model: Tristan Welch



## WEST SIDE RECREATION AREA: "REVITALIZATION THROUGH ART"

West Side Recreation Area is a 7.5-acre park located on the west side of the Town. This neighborhood park comprises an entire block nestled in the fabric of a residential community. The former Washington School building and the Old Manchester Museum are designated in the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark and were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The Old Manchester Museum was originally constructed by the Cheney family in 1859 as a school for their children, and also formerly served as the Lutz Museum. The Mahoney Recreation Center is located in the main building, adjacent to the historic Washington School. The park also includes an aquatic facility, the Marcy MacDonald Swimming Pool—the newest pool facility in the Town, which opened in 2003.





The vision for this park revitalization project is to develop the site in a way representative of the neighborhood and culture in a creative, vibrant, and artful manner, creating an indoor-outdoor relationship between the building and park site.

Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include:

- Remove satellite/annex building and construct plaza at new building entrance to Mahoney Recreation Center. Incorporate raised platform at plaza for performances and outdoor movies.
- Reconfigure and repave asphalt parking lot, increase parking, and add a drop-off area at new Mahoney Recreation Center entrance.
- Surface materials such as pavements, playground surfacing, and building walls should incorporate art and color.
- Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, historical information, regulatory, and park amenities.
- Install two new basketball courts with lights, fencing, and player benches.
- Build new 5x5 Mini-Pitch with lighting, fencing and benches next to new basketball courts.
- Add small pavilion, tables, and portable toilets at north end of park.
- Construct a new play complex that includes a covered, open pavilion, benches, tables, grills, sprayground, play equipment for all ages, and fitness equipment. This new amenity should be fully accessible and incorporate shade features.
- Add significant new plantings throughout the entire park to increase tree canopy, provide shade, and improve quality of life.
- Construct a pedestrian entrance on Bank Street, including crosswalks and curb ramps.
- Add new concrete sidewalk along entire length of park on Cooper Street.
- Install amphitheater seating on northwest slope of park opposite raised performance area.
- Add covered tables and shade features at Marcy MacDonald Pool complex, and screening along Cooper Hill Street for privacy.
- Add community gardens at south end of Mahoney Recreation Center near water source.
- Install bike racks.
- Install ornamental site lighting.
- Add trail connection to/from Cheney Rail Trail at northeast end of park.

The budget details are in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





Color, creativity and a more intentional use of the available green space are some of the primary design improvements imagined for the West Side Recreation Area.



Concept Model: Tristan Welch



An inclusive and accessible community garden for the West Side neighborhood and the broader Manchester community is included in the design for the site.



*Concept Model: Tristan Welch*



Redesigned basketball courts and new multi-purpose game area would be slightly relocated to create a greater buffer from adjacent residential homes.



Concept Model: Tristan Welch



Modern playscape and fitness equipment will provide upgraded recreational options for neighborhood residents.



Concept Model: Tristan Welch



The western entrance from Cooper Street will be enhanced to create a more welcoming gateway from the neighborhood to the park.



*Concept Model: Tristan Welch*



## MT. NEBO PARK: "CONNECTING TO THE EAST SIDE"

Mt. Nebo Park is a community-based asset with approximately 17 acres of parkland. It is located on Spring Street, just south of I-384, with connections to Charter Oak Park and the East Coast Greenway to the north and Globe Hollow Swimming Area to the south. The park is home to Moriarty Baseball Field and Carlin Football/Soccer Field, and the Town's only dog park, which is heavily used. In the 1960s, Mt. Nebo was once a ski slope with two rope tows but was short-lived and succumbed to the construction of I-384.

There is a strong desire to establish connections to and from this park, with added amenities inside the park that encourage residents to stay and experience the park.



Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include:

- Realign park entrance to match entrance to Globe Hollow Swimming Area. Add raised crosswalk for safe pedestrian travel between parks. Remove trees as required.
- Reroute walking/hiking trail between parks, and blaze a new trail to provide a continuous loop inside park.
- Create a stronger, more appealing connection to Charter Oak Park and East Coast Greenway. Reduce grades where possible. Clear overgrown vegetation along trail. Add painted murals on underpass walls, and overhead and uplighting for safety and security measures.
- Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, regulatory, and park amenities.
- Convert Carlin Field to a turf field and replace existing supporting infrastructure (lighting, goals, stands, scoreboard, etc.).
- Renovate Moriarty Baseball Field to the same standards of the premier baseball field at Northwest Park.
- Remove fence dividing fields.
- Add large, covered, open pavilion with tables and concessions.
- Construct a new restroom/storage building.
- Install an accessible children's play area with equipment for all ages, and incorporate shade features.
- Renovate and repave asphalt parking lot throughout park, incorporating bioswales in double-loaded parking stalls. Add additional parking for food trucks as an added park amenity.
- Add new plantings around new amenities and in parking lot.
- Install bike racks, benches, and drinking fountain.
- Install ornamental site lighting.

The budget details are in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





## Before



## After



Improving the aesthetic appeal and perceived safety of the underpass connecting Mt. Nebo to Charter Oak Park is essential for creating a more inviting and enduring link between these two parks.



## GLOBE HOLLOW SWIMMING AREA: "MODERNIZING MANCHESTER'S AQUATICS FACILITIES"

Globe Hollow Swimming Area is located on Spring Street across from Mt. Nebo Park. With over 100 acres of parkland, the swimming facility offers aquatics programs, lap swimming, free swim, and swimming lessons, and also provides changing rooms and other amenities. In 1906 – 07, the Cheney Brothers constructed the Globe Hollow Reservoir, which flowed down into a swimming area. Back in the 1950s, Globe had shade trees and plenty of grass, a fountain that sprayed water, and sand for a beach where you could spread a towel.

The future vision of this park is to transform the outdated facility on the site into a multigenerational, accessible, full-service aquatic destination.



Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include:

- Realign park entrance to match entrance to Mt. Nebo Park. Remove trees as required.
- Reroute walking/hiking trail between parks for continuous trail to Camp Kennedy.
- Renovate and repave asphalt parking lot for more efficient circulation. Add parking lot islands and trees throughout.
- Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, and regulatory.
- Repurpose existing building for new pool filter system.
- Add single-point entrance.
- Construct a full-service aquatic facility to include zero-depth entry pool with lap lanes, family/kiddie pool, sprayground, and water slide.
- Add concrete pool deck with shade features and outdoor showers.
- Construct new bathhouse with restrooms, showers, and lockers.
- Locate handicap parking and drop-off area close to new bathhouse.
- Add large covered, open pavilion with concessions, tables, and grills.
- Incorporate a picnic and sunning area.
- Install bike racks, lighting, and fencing.
- Repave walking/hiking trail to Camp Kennedy.

The budget details are in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





## Before



## After



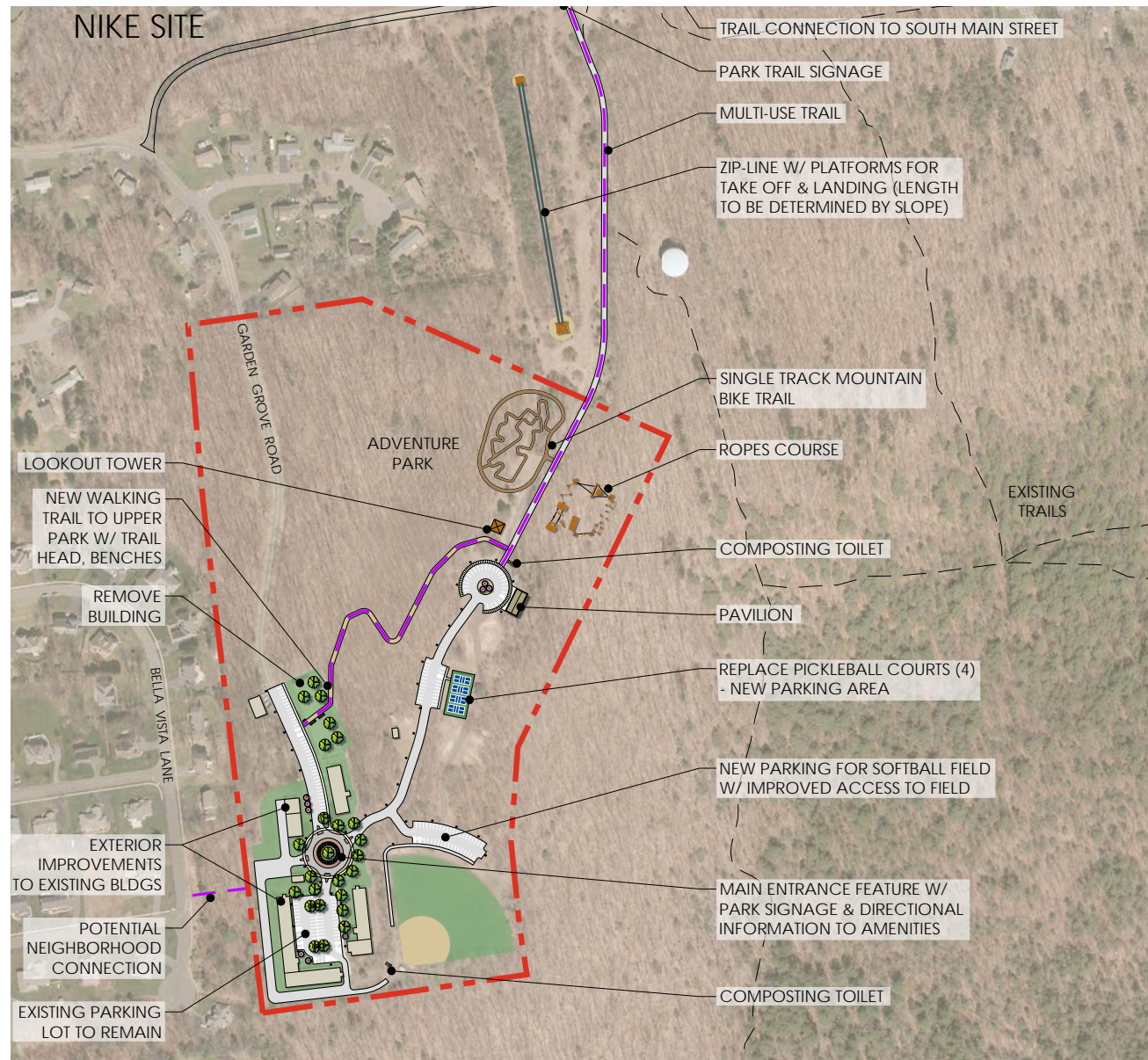
This design imagines a new hilltop pavilion overlooking a modern multigenerational, accessible, full-service aquatic destination at Globe Hollow.



## NIKE SITE RECREATION AREA: "OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HERE IN TOWN"

The Nike Site Recreation Area comprises 37 acres of parkland located off of Keeney St at the end of Garden Grove Road. From 1957 – 1961, this land was a U.S. Army anti-aircraft defense site that used radar and missiles to detect incoming enemy planes during the Cold War. The military decommissioned the site in 1961 as advances in technology made the missiles obsolete. Subsequently, the army returned the land back to the Town. Today, most of the existing buildings are used for storage; however, two buildings are rented by outside groups and provide space for dance and a shooting range.

Activating this park based on adventure-themed activities is envisioned for this site. Recreation advocates and stakeholders would need to have dialogue with the Water Department, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and the Department of Public Health to ensure critical watershed resources in the site's vicinity are appropriately protected and managed. Building stronger connections to neighborhoods to improve access for hiking and biking is also desired for this underutilized community asset.



Park-specific improvements identified in the concept plan include:

- Construct a new adventure park at the top of the hill that includes a lookout tower, single track mountain bike trail, ropes course, and zip line. Add parking and pavilion.
- Construct a new 15' paved multiuse trail from Hercules Drive that connects to the adventure park.
- Add trail connection to/from South Main Street at north end of park.
- Remove first building on east side of Garden Grove Road. Blaze new trail at this location to connect to adventure park. Add new trailhead and benches.
- Incorporate exterior improvements to existing buildings.
- Explore potential neighborhood connection from Bella Vista Lane.
- Reconfigure existing entrance by adding a roundabout to direct circulation.
- Renovate and repave existing asphalt parking lot for more efficient circulation. Add parking lot islands and trees throughout.
- Incorporate new signage throughout the park for gateways, wayfinding, former site storyline information, regulatory, and park amenities.
- Construct new parking lot by softball field with improved access to field.
- Replace four Pickleball courts and add lighting.
- Construct new parking lot by Pickleball courts.
- Install bike racks, lighting, and drinking fountain.
- Install composting toilets at softball field and adventure park.

The budget details are in the appendix.



## Examples of Potential Future Amenity Upgrades





## Before



## After



The entrance at the Nike site can be enhanced with a decorative roundabout, improving the visual appeal while calming traffic into and out of the site.



## CENTER SPRINGS PARK: “IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN”

The Cheneys and Hillards, industrial families from North Manchester, donated the land for Center Springs Park in 1915. Located between Main and Edgerton streets, it was designed in stages. Most of the residential neighborhood between Center Street and Valley Street, which forms the southern border of the park, was in place when the park was founded in 1921. That year, Bigelow Brook was dammed at the west end to create a 12-acre pond, but it was not until 1929 that Thomas Desmond, a Simsbury-based landscape architect, was hired to design the park. Among the network of pathways that wind through the wooded park is one that crosses the stream on a stone footbridge. The present Park Lodge nearby is a 1990 replacement for a 1932 building that burned.

Results from the ETC survey indicate that Center Springs is one of the most used parks in Town, with 41% of respondents saying they have used Center Springs for recreation. The park has already been a significant area of Town focus over the past several years. The Broad Street Redevelopment Plan recognized the park's proximity to the redevelopment area as an asset to encourage and complement prospective redevelopment. The resulting Broad Street Plan specifically called for extending the park west to Broad Street in order to create a new prominent entrance for visitors and connect it directly to the district. An opening was created through the embankment of the former Cheney rail line, and a pedestrian bridge installed over the span. After purchasing the adjoining property on Broad Street, a park entrance was constructed and officially completed in the fall of 2017.

The Town completed a master plan for Center Springs Park in 2018, which called for improving the park's visibility and physical connectivity to adjacent districts. Several significant components of the Plan have since been implemented, including:

- Dredging of the pond: Two decades of mulch and trash were removed in a significant dredging project in late 2018, removing 11,000 cubic yards of sediment from the six-acre pond on the western section of the park.
- In 2020, three illuminated water fountains and an underwater aerator were installed in the pond to improve aesthetics and help combat algae growth.

Enhancements to two significant park gateways at the Main & Bigelow Street and Trotter Street entrances are either already under construction or in the capital project pipeline in the next few years, as seen below:



Figure 4.1: Proposed Enhancements underway for the Main & Bigelow entrance at Center Springs Park. Improvement will include tree art sculptures, a monument wall with park signage, seating areas, an informational kiosk for visitors, lighting, and a sheltered bus stop. This project is currently under construction, with an estimated completion in 2021.



## THE TROTTER STREET CORRIDOR 02

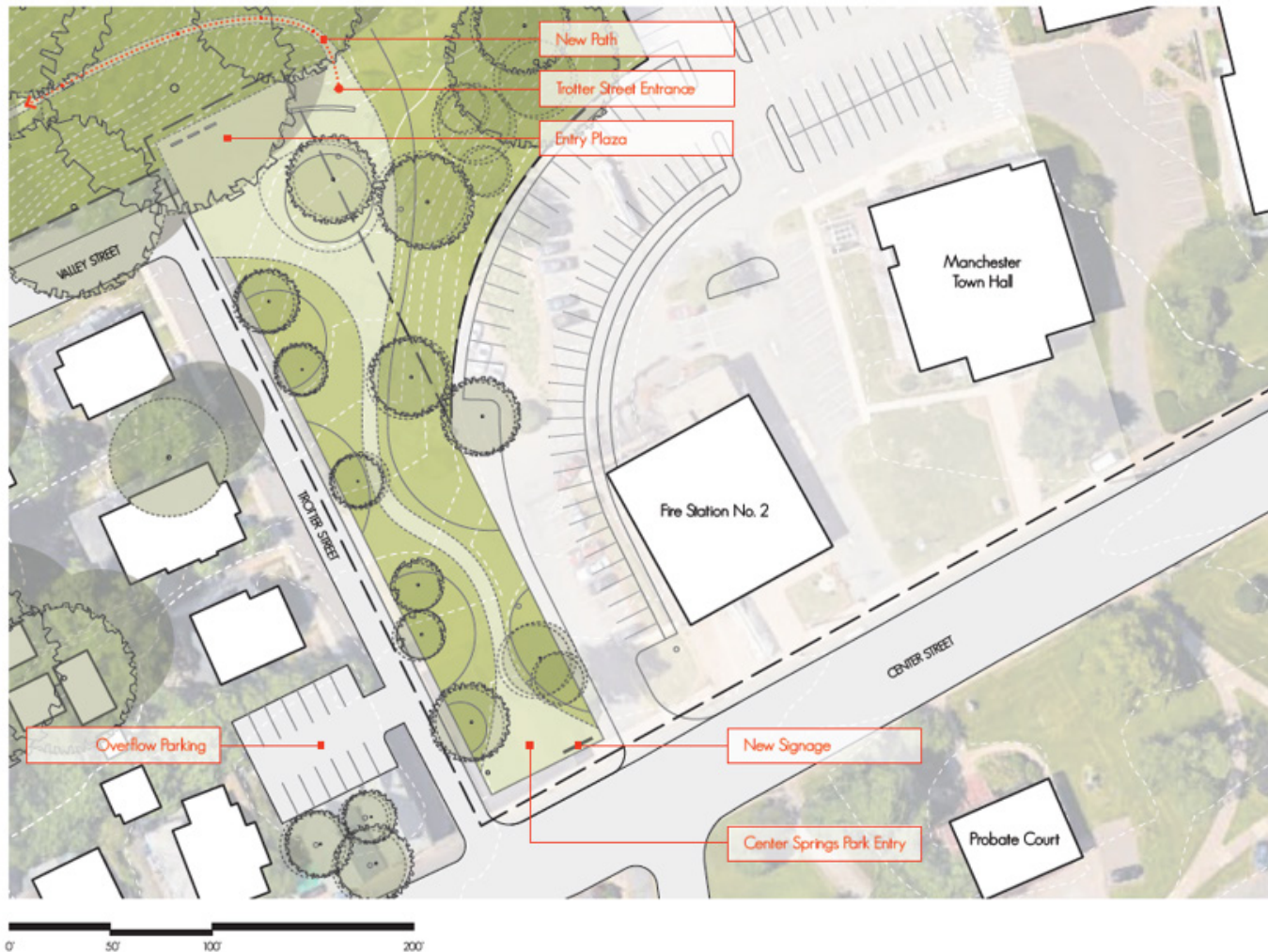


Figure 4.2: The Trotter Street gateway to Center Springs Park will be enhanced with a realigned parking area providing a walking path with views into the park and a green corridor connecting Center Springs Park to Center Memorial Park.

## CASE MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA: “MANCHESTER’S REGIONAL GEM”

Case Mountain comprises over 300 acres and consists of woodlands, ravines, and three mountain summits, and it stretches to the neighboring towns of Bolton and Glastonbury. The parkland is designated in the Case Brothers Historic District and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009. The land was originally owned by the Case Family and is devoted to hiking and mountain biking. The Case Mountain Recreation Area property includes a rustic cabin, stone carriage bridges, and Case Pond, as well as land and carriage drives laid out in the early 1900s.

Case Mountain is a popular regional destination for hiking and mountain biking. The Town is fortunate to have such an amenity in town, and its popularity is reflected in the ETC survey results, with 64% of respondents saying they have previously enjoyed recreation activities on Case Mountain. Respondents also indicated it should receive significant attention from the Town to ensure its usability and accessibility are held to a high standard.

Case Mountain is less a developed park and more a natural area, with some historic elements adding to its charm. There are several ongoing efforts to enhance the main trail system and other high-traffic areas of Case Mountain to maintain its status as a regional attraction for outdoor enthusiasts. Throughout the past several years, the Conservation Commission has worked in conjunction with Town Staff to develop management goals for the park, with the objective to identify the unique features that make Case Mountain a local and regional highlight.

There will be a continual need to address the maintenance and upkeep of some of the historic features and heavily trafficked trails.

Features that have been identified as unique and worth preserving at Case Mountain include:

- Historic carriage paths, stone structures, and dams
- A trail network that connects to local and regional trail systems
- Open space and wildlife habitat
- Unique geological features
- Scenic vistas
- Opportunities for regionally recognized premier mountain biking
- Ecologically valuable large tracts of uninterrupted forestland
- Fishing opportunities
- Educational opportunities to study a wide variety of ecosystems



**PROPOSED CASE CABIN OBSERVATION DECK**

Figure 4.3: A concept under consideration is to remove the currently unsafe and inaccessible Case Cabin and replace it with an observation deck overlooking Case Pond.



## CHARTER OAK PARK: “BUILDING ON SUCCESS”

Results from the ETC survey indicate that Charter Oak Park is one of the most used parks in Town, with 56% of respondents saying they have used it for recreation, with 97% of those respondents indicating they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the park. These responses are a direct result of significant recent investments the Town has made in Charter Oak. The park had not been refurbished since the 1970s, and several years ago, Town stakeholders began improvement efforts.

In 2017, the Town completed roughly \$2 million of improvements to the park, including new playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts, a revamped softball field, a “music garden,” and newly paved parking lot and walkways. Additional upgrades including new bathrooms near the playing courts, an additional 22 parking spaces, a new two-way entry, a resurfaced bicycle path, improved lighting, and video cameras to monitor the park.

Located just south of the Town’s East Side neighborhood, maintaining Charter Oak Park to a high standard and continuing to explore opportunities for enhancements are critical components to ensure residents in this part of town have access to high-quality recreational amenities. The Mt. Nebo concept plan described above includes better connecting these two parks through an enhanced, more inviting, and visible connection.

The area that currently includes soccer fields on the western edge of the park is bisected by on-off ramps for I-384. The Plan calls for placing a new skate park in this location, as its accessibility and more urban setting make it an appropriate site for its potential users. Other potential amenities for this location could include a pump track for BMX-style bikes and a warrior’s obstacle course for users of all ages.



Figure 4.4: Improvements to the western edge of Charter Oak could include a relocated skate park, a bicycle pump track, a warrior’s style obstacle course and enhanced, synthetic turf soccer field. Bathrooms and drinking fountains could also be added to this portion of the park.

## Before



## After



The envisioned concept makes the western portion of Charter Oak more accessible and vibrant, building on the success of prior investments. Soccer would co-exist with the relocated proposed skate park, offering greater access to potential users while activating a section of the park that often lies dormant when games or practices are not in session.







Ch. 5

**Plan**

**Implementation**



# FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGY

This section of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan provides examples of funding and revenue strategies used by systems throughout the United States.

Park and recreation agencies draw on many sources of revenue to help them acquire park land, develop parks and facilities, maintain parks, and offer recreation programs from a variety of revenue options.

Some of the sources relate to operating dollars, some to capital dollars, and the rest can be used for either/both capital and operating budgets.

**Enterprise Funds:** These funds are used for services provided to the public on a user charge basis, similar to the operation of a commercial enterprise. An enterprise fund establishes a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods or services. Under enterprise accounting, the revenues in expenditures of services are separated into separate funds into their own financial statements, rather than commingled with the revenues and expenses of all other government activities from a general fund. Water and sewage utilities and golf course operations are common examples of government enterprises. **OPERATING**

**Land Leases/Concessions:** Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from vending machines and food services to boat rentals and golf course operations. Some agencies enter into a contract with a soft drink company for the right to sell just their line of products. For this benefit, the soft drink company will provide additional dollars as part of the agreement. **Operating**

**Scholarship Programs:** Most agencies have some level of scholarships available to financially disadvantaged households, including the Town. Funding typically comes from general fund support, corporate support, and other programs' fees and charges. Another mechanism is to develop a relationship with a retailer. Some agencies provide an opportunity for residents to add a contribution fee to their program registration, with that money going to support the scholarship program. **Operating**

**Maintenance Endowment Fund:** This is a fund dedicated exclusively for park maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals. For example, a \$1 surcharge can be added to a golf course green fee, with the \$1 dedicated toward maintenance improvements at the course. **Operating**

**User Fees:** User fees are fees paid by participants of programs or recreational facilities to offset the costs of services provided by the municipality. The fees are set by the municipality based on cost-recovery goals and the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer. This does not necessarily imply the need for increasing fees, but rather having a sophisticated approach to the charging of fees. **Operating**

**General Obligation Bond:** A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by the taxing and borrowing power of the municipality issuing it. Many communities seeking to utilize bonds for development require that voter approval be given before issuing debt. **Capital**

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** A TIF is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for re-development, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. Through the use of a TIF, municipalities typically divert future property tax revenue increases from a defined area or district toward an economic development project or public improvement project in the community. **Capital and Operating**

**Business Improvement District (BID):** A defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. The BID is often funded primarily through the levy but can also draw on other public and private funding streams. BIDs may go by other names, such as business improvement area (BIA), business revitalization zone (BRZ), community improvement district (CID), special services area (SSA), or special improvement district (SID). These districts typically fund services that are perceived by some businesses as being inadequately performed by government with its existing tax revenues, such as cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, and marketing the area. The services provided by BIDs are supplemental to those already provided by the municipality. **Capital and Operating**

**Real Estate Transfer Fee or Tax:** This form of funding is being used by a number of agencies and states to acquire and develop park land. The transfer of real estate from one owner to another generates the money, with the municipality retaining a percentage of the value of the property (typically 0.5 percent) at the time of sale. The proceeds can be dedicated to acquiring land or for other green space purposes. **Capital**

**Conservation District:** Conservation Districts operate like a land trust, but they are set up to protect specific property areas with high green space value, such as watersheds or sensitive natural areas. The Conservation District's role is to provide landowners with tax benefits to allow their properties to be preserved as part of the district. **Capital**

**Facility Authority:** A Facility Authority is used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or to develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from sales taxes. The City of Indianapolis has created several recreational facilities to meet local needs and national competition venues as an economic development tool. The Facility Authority is responsible for managing the sites and operating them in a self-supporting manner. **Capital**

**Sports Tourism:** Many agencies throughout the United States have developed sports complexes and venues as a means for creating revenue through sports tournaments and special events. Economic impact can be significant when including hotel room stays and restaurant visits.

Greenville South Carolina County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (GCPRT) generated more than \$10 million in economic impact across the county in 2014. Similarly, the city of North Augusta, Georgia hosts the annual Nike Peach Jam basketball tournament, an elite men's and women's basketball showcase that generates more than \$4.5 million for the local community and generates positive press through coverage by ESPN and other new outlets. The continued success of the event over 20 years has led to increased funding for facility development and improvements. Other agencies noted for sports tourism include Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; Aiken, South Carolina; Rockford, Illinois; and Schaumburg, Illinois. The Park District in Waukegan, Illinois, developed an outdoor sports complex by repurposing an 18-hole golf course.



**Capital Improvement Fee:** A capital improvement fee can be added to the admission fee of a recreation facility to help pay back the cost of developing the facility. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, ice rinks, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used to either pay back the cost of the capital improvement or the revenue bond that was used to develop the facility. Columbia, Missouri, has successfully used this fee for years. Virtually all of its program and rental fees have a capital improvement fee attached to the cost of the service. **Capital**

**Lease Back:** Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private-sector entity, such as a development company, buys the land and develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex. After the purchase, the development company leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 30- to 40-year period. This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development, while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds. Capital Source is a private banking company that provides municipalities this option without going to the voter for approval and/or using municipal bonds to support park and recreation needs. **Capital**

**Improvement District:** An improvement district allows for special assessments on property owners to support acquisition, development, and/or maintenance costs. There are various types of improvement districts that apply to parks and green spaces. Landscape and Lighting Districts are used by California communities to fund park development and ongoing maintenance. Park Benefit Districts establish assessments on properties based on the benefits and costs of acquisition and development associated with a park land improvement. Benefit Districts are typically applied to regional parks, large community parks, event plazas, signature parks, and attractions located in downtown areas or areas slated for redevelopment. In Park Maintenance Districts, the assessments are earmarked to fund park maintenance within a designated area (similar to Landscape and Lighting Districts). Generally Capital, but sometimes **Operating**

**Revolving Fund:** This is a dedicated fund to be used for various purposes that is replenished on an ongoing basis from various funding sources. **Capital and Operating**

**Governmental Funding Programs:** A variety of funding sources are available from federal and state government for transportation, water, green space, and sustainability projects. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provide funds to state and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas. AmeriCorps grants can be used to fund support for park maintenance. Federal Housing Grants can be used to develop recreation-related facilities to support social needs of housing residents. Also, the federal government oversees the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, which assist with reducing energy usage. A listing of federal and state resources is included at the end of this document. **Generally Capital but sometimes Operating**

**Corporate Naming Rights:** In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a parks system in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a 10-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors or users. Naming rights for park facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events. These can be looked into particularly for some of the special use facilities or signature arts facilities. **Capital and Operating**

**Corporate Sponsorships:** Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the costs of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many cities seek corporate support for these types of activities. Illinois park districts that have leveraged good success from the corporate sector include Naperville, Schaumburg, and Rockford. **Capital and Operating**

**Gift Catalog:** This can be a web-based shopping list for individuals to “buy” a gift for the city park and recreation department. This consists of having a list of amenities the public can buy to help fund park development. **Capital and Operating**

**Individual Contributions:** Some agencies provide residents with the opportunity to provide donations to the agency. Many times, this is accomplished from having a contribution opportunity attached to program registration forms. **Capital and Operating**

**Public/Nonprofit Partnership:** The private nonprofit Forest Park Forever entered into a partnership with the city of St. Louis in 2013. Forest Park Forever agreed to raise \$100 million in endowments for the park and buy \$30 million in city bonds that would pay for capital improvements. The city will pay the group back, with interest, over the course of 30 years with money made from existing taxes and park revenue. **Capital and Operating**

**Conservancy or Friends Organization:** This type of nonprofit is devoted to supporting a specific park. New York City and Philadelphia have had great success with conservancies. Initial fundraising has been very successful. Typically, the conservancy manages a large park and is autonomous from City government, and instead is managed by a board. **Capital and Operating**

**Land Trust:** Land trusts are nonprofits focused on preservation. A landowner can donate, sell, or exchange part of their land rights to a trust, in cooperation with a city. There is a tax incentive to donate the land as a charitable gift, although it is the responsibility of the landowner to pursue the tax deduction. Collaborating with land trusts and landowners takes considerable time and effort. **Capital and Operating**

**Parks Foundation:** Established to support system-wide park and recreation needs or individual parks, park foundations have helped many cities across the nation to acquire land and develop parks. These are foundations that are based within a city for the sole purpose of raising funds for that city’s park and recreation system. For example, the Parks Foundation of Houston, Texas raises \$5 million annually, on average, for land acquisition and park improvements. The River Legacy Park Foundation in Arlington, Texas raised \$5 million for a nature center. Foundation members are typically community leaders who are committed to the park and recreation agency. A foundation requires park and recreation staff time as a liaison to the group. **Capital and Operating**

**Greenway Foundations:** Greenway foundations focus on developing and maintaining trails and green corridors on a citywide basis. The City of Indianapolis, Indiana Greenway Foundation develops and maintains greenways throughout the city and seeks land leases along the trails as one funding source, in addition to selling miles of trails to community corporations and nonprofits. The development rights along the trails can also be sold to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per-mile basis to support development and management of these corridors. King County in the Seattle, Washington area has done a very good job in accessing this funding source for greenway development. **Capital and Operating**

**The Foundation Center:** This organization maintains a comprehensive database of United States and global grant-makers and their funding opportunities. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level.

**KABOOM:** KABOOM provides grants for playground projects.



## FEDERAL AND STATE OF CT RESOURCES/GRANTS

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA):** The authoritative source of federal grant programs can be found in the CFDA. This catalog lists all of the available funding programs to all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and other entities. Search Grants within Grants.gov allows you to search, filter, and apply for specific opportunities to receive funding from one of these programs.

**CT Open Space Grants:** The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program, which is administered by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), awards grants that assist local governments, land trusts, and water companies in purchasing open space using funding from the Community Investment Act and state bond funds. This grant program requires a match by the grant recipient and requires the open space land be protected by a conservation and public recreation easement, ensuring that the property is forever protected for public use and enjoyment.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds:** Proposed CDBG projects must be consistent with broad national priorities for CDBG activities that benefit low- and moderate-income people, the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or other community development activities to address an urgent threat to health or safety.

CDBG funds may be used for community development activities (such as real estate acquisition, relocation, demolition, rehabilitation of housing and commercial buildings), construction of public facilities and improvements (such as water, sewer, and other utilities, street paving, and sidewalks), construction and maintenance of neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings, senior centers, public services, and economic development and job creation/retention activities. CDBG funds can also be used for preservation and restoration of historic properties in low-income neighborhoods. The City of Arlington, Texas used CDBG funds to renovate a recreation center and senior center in an underprivileged area.

**State Wildlife Grant Program:** These grant funds may be used to address a variety of conservation needs such as research, fish and wildlife surveys, species restoration, habitat management, and monitoring throughout CT.

**Urban Forestry Program:** This program provides opportunities for municipalities, organizations, and individuals to become engaged in effective urban forestry activities. An important goal of the program is improved care and maintenance of the urban forest. Urban forests consist of those trees most closely associated with the human-developed part of the environment. These forests exist in all communities in CT, from the smallest village to the most densely populated city. The trees of the urban forest are those that people encounter most on a regular basis. They are woven into and around our built infrastructure, provide benefits directly to the communities within the state, and have a substantial impact on people's lives.

**Bikes Belong:** The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry, and its goal is putting more people on bikes more often. They seek to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects that will be funded by Federal Highway Administration Enhancement Grants. Bikes Belong Coalition will accept grant applications for projects up to \$10,000.

### CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Requests Proposals for Recreational Trails Grants:

This grant provides funding for:

- Planning and design of trails
- Construction of new trails (motorized and non-motorized)
- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails (motorized and non-motorized)
- Access to trails by persons with disabilities
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Acquisition of land or easements for a trail, or for trail corridors
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection as related to recreational trails

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Grants:

Provide grants for assessment and cleanup of brownfields through an annual competitive process. The EPA publishes guidance for applying for brownfields grants annually on its How to Apply for Grants webpage. The EPA provides the following types of grants:

- The Area-Wide Planning (AWP) Pilot Program provides funding for grantees to develop an area-wide plan and implementation strategy for key brownfield sites. Such plans will help the assessment, cleanup, and reuse of brownfields properties and promote area-wide revitalization. Funding is directed to specific areas, such as a neighborhood, downtown district, local commercial corridor, or city block, affected by a single large or multiple brownfield sites.
- Brownfields Assessment Grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites.
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants enable states, political subdivisions, and Indian tribes to make low-interest loans to carry out cleanup activities at brownfields properties.
- Brownfields Cleanup Grants provide funds to carry out cleanup activities at a specific brownfield site owned by the applicant.
- Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) Grants provide funding to recruit, train, and place predominantly low-income and minority, unemployed, and under-employed residents of communities affected by pollution with skills needed to secure employment in the environmental field. Nonprofits and other organizations may apply for these grants.
- Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants provide funding for eligible organizations to provide training, research, and technical assistance to facilitate brownfields revitalization.
- The Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) Program helps states, tribes, and municipalities, especially those without EPA Brownfields Assessment Pilots/Grants, minimize the uncertainties of contamination often associated with brownfields.



**Partners in Preservation Grants:** These grants are offered by the CT State Historic Preservation Office and municipalities, and nonprofits are eligible. These grants are for projects that advance the goals of the State Historic Preservation Office through historic preservation, education, awareness, promotion, outreach, and visioning initiatives. These grants are part of CT's commitment to provide increased funding for open space, farmland preservation, historic preservation, and affordable housing.

**Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grants:** These grants encourage the use of old railroad lines as "linear parks," and eligible grantees include: nonprofit organizations; state, regional, or local government agencies, and other organizations. Eligible grant projects include planning and design efforts, legal assistance, brochures, or other educational materials, ecological assessments, and buying land. The Trail Grants Program, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) emphasizes strategic investments that support significant regional and community trail development goals.

### **Grants for Aquatic Invasive Species Control on Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers:**

CT's DEEP provides funding for projects to reduce the impacts of aquatic invasive species on inland waters of CT. Municipalities, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive grants through this program.

### **Recreational Grants-in-Aid Programs:**

These include federal Land & Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), boating access, and trails programs such as bikeway, snowmobile, off-highway vehicle, and federal recreational trails grants.

### **The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC):**

This organization provides financial assistance to local government for the development of local urban and community forestry programs. These activities must help to establish, manage, conserve, and preserve the urban and community forests from inner city to associated public lands. The Council develops annual grant categories and makes recommendations for funding through the Forest Service's National Urban Forestry Challenge Cost Share Grant Program. NUCFAC seeks innovative grant proposals for program development, study, and collaboration.

### **Open Space Lands Acquisition & Development and Land & Water Conservation Programs:**

Local units of government can apply for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. Projects vary from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community and county parks and nature areas.

### **Federal Recreational Trails Program:**

Federal, state, and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private operators of recreational facilities open to the public can apply for funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails.

# STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Town Parks and Facilities action plan is divided into the key concept areas of programs, parks, trails, and facilities, and grouped by the recommended time frame for completion: short-term goals (1 – 3 years), mid-term goals (4 – 6 years), and long-term goals (7 – 10 years). Each goal or strategy is associated with a specific theme from the plan: Dynamic, Connected, Thriving, and Sustainable. While in practice many of the goals overlap in terms of addressing the plan themes, the intent is to illustrate the primary motivating objective of a given goal or strategy.

## MANCHESTER IS...



### DYNAMIC

The Town is known as an agent of change, continuously adapting services in response to changing community demographics and being at the forefront of evolving industry trends. This also entails constantly looking at service delivery through a different lens and being responsive to community needs.



### CONNECTED

The Town is committed to connecting with all residents, creating access and inclusion for all through DEI efforts—with a focus on the equitable distribution of programs, services, parks, and amenities for the entire community. Residents have identified connecting parks and facilities as a major priority. As a result, the Department will continue the development of connectivity throughout the Town, creating ease of access to parks, schools, and other points of interest. This theme also includes establishing, growing, and strengthening community partnerships that augment the Town's ability to provide services and robust outreach to residents.



### THRIVING











The Town's park and recreation offerings are a significant contributor to physical and mental health, education, economic vitality, environment, recreation and leisure time, social belonging, and safety for all Manchester residents. All of these factors, along with other Town services, make Manchester a desirable place to live through its great quality of life. The Plan will influence future parks, recreation, and trail development to keep Manchester growing and thriving for years to come.









### SUSTAINABLE











The Town will focus on meeting the needs of current residents without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainability is about environmentalism and green practices, but it also includes other important focus items, such as social and financial resources, and maintaining facilities and programming to a consistently high standard. Manchester's park and recreation services directly contribute to the economic vitality of the Town.











Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Consider more intentional teen programming, with activities specifically targeted to teen interests or activate parks to include amenities that appeal to teens, such as outdoor adventure recreation activities.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Move senior center programming into the Leisure, Families and Recreation Department to create synergy and consistency with programming.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Ensure the intentional outreach and inclusion of cultural groups in future program development, planning, and implementation to keep services relevant.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Continue the relationship with the Board of Education to offer programs for youth with special needs and increase the messaging to the community regarding opportunities.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Seek out new social media outlets to reach local teens and market through the high school.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Add park and trail maps to the program and event catalogue to market opportunities more broadly.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Add facility rental information to the program and event catalogue.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Increase the page count for the program and event catalogue to increase white space and add more program photos.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Create an equity plan for the Department that is in alignment with the Town's many DEI efforts.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Seek out new programming opportunities to address the mental health needs of the community. These can include programs such as mindfulness, tai chi, and stress relief. Consider offering programs in partnerships with Manchester Health Department. Investigate providing Mental Health First Aid training opportunities for staff.				











Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Create a birthday party service within the Department that will attract families with young children, allowing them to become familiar with facilities and offerings.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Provide services and price points that consider the community's varying income levels.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Programs	Monitor program cancellation rates to maximize program planning efforts, efficiently market programs, and meet the needs of more participants. After tracking for a year, set annual goals to reduce program cancellation rates.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	In conjunction with the School Repurposing Committee, the 21st Century Public Library Task Force, and all of the other decision-making bodies in Manchester, create a 20-year capital plan to address all of the park and facility upgrades included in the Parks & Facilities Master Plan.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	<p>Taking into consideration usage, size, and activities, assess and create plans for Town assets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• site furnishings (lighting, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables, game tables, and bike racks)</li> <li>• consistent signage and wayfinding guidelines</li> <li>• adding restrooms throughout the park system</li> <li>• playground replacement plan (20-year plan)</li> </ul> <p>All of these plans will help to improve the overall enjoyment, safety, accessibility, comfort, and sustainability of the system.</p> <p>Revisit all plans annually and revise to address the changing needs and available funding.</p>				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	In conjunction with adding park sites and facilities, and enhancing park amenities, evaluate the need for adding Parks staff in order to properly maintain all additions to the system to Town standards.				





Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Continue implementing the master plan for Center Springs Park approved in 2018.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Formalize existing and proposed Case Mountain projects into a cohesive plan.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Plan, fund, and implement park upgrades, including a relocated skate park at Charter Oak and selected improvements at Mt. Nebo.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Add signs at vehicular and pedestrian entrances where none currently exist.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Investigate the process to become a “Tree City” designation.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Parks	Create a plan to manage the tree canopy over time with the use of native and other drought tolerant vegetation.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Trails	Inventory and classify all trails by type, difficulty, maintenance, and management to make a complete Manchester Trails catalogue. Coordinate volunteers to assist with this effort.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Trails	Determine and promote the rules, and monitor the trails owned by the Town Water Department. Facilitate discussions between the Department, State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and outdoor recreation advocates; including discussion of potential outdoor recreation activities at Nike site.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Trails	Plan and implement the first phase of the trail connection plan.				
<b>Short-Term</b> (1 – 3 years)	Facilities	The School Repurposing Committee, the 21st Century Public Library Task Force, and Senior Center Advisory Board should coordinate efforts for in-depth facilities assessments, taking the entire Town into account holistically.				

Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
	Facilities	Secure an accessible location to hold indoor health, fitness, and wellness programming in lieu of the Community Y.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Develop a more robust program menu geared toward those over 60 years of age.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Help ensure Department offerings are equitable to residents of all ages by increasing programming to the age segments that have the highest spread between offerings and population percentages, which is adults with a 16-point spread.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Review the programming opportunities in Chapter 3, Section 7, to determine which programs could be added to the Town’s menu. The Needs Assessment Survey Priority Rating for programs should be used to assist in determining priorities—these include: fitness and wellness; outdoor and adventure recreation; nature enjoyment; senior adult activities; boating, kayaking, and canoeing; and history and museums.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Review the Trends report in Chapter 3, Section 8 of this report to determine which programs might be relevant to the Town and should be added to the program mix. A few examples include: outdoor adventure recreation programs, nature related programs, and STEM/STEAM programming.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Continue to evaluate Department offerings annually and work towards a proper balance of programs in the introduction, growth, mature, and decline stages of the life cycle.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Review the life cycle stage breakdown for each program category and identify opportunities to create a more balanced menu.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Implement best practices for recreation programming including: program standards, customer requirements, performance measures, annual reporting process, and the establishment of cost recovery goals.				



Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Programs	Investigate if the Town’s current financial and accounting systems and practices will enable staff to track revenue and expenses by program area. This will be necessary to work towards an effective cost recovery model, if desired.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Parks	Plan, fund, and implement park upgrades for West Side, and selected improvements at Mt. Nebo and Northwest Park.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Parks	Remove the Case Lodge that resides within Case Mountain and erect something in its place allowing visitors to enjoy the pond.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Parks	Using the park assessment included in Chapter 3, section 10, as a starting point, create a plan to address drainage issues by improving entry drives, parking lots, walks, and courts. Consider green infrastructure solutions when feasible.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Parks	Unify the pedestrian circulation in parks through the use of consistent materials.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Parks	Provide interpretive signage at locations of natural, cultural and historic resources in parks and along trails to provide educational opportunities.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Trails	Complete the second phase of the trail connection plan.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Facilities	Conduct a feasibility study to assess the replacement of the Globe Hollow swimming facility with a new full-service aquatic center providing opportunities for the entire community.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Facilities	Incorporating work from the School Repurposing Committee and other facility assessments, conduct a feasibility study for a new community center to be constructed at Robertson Park.				
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Facilities	Explore the viability of selling or otherwise repurposing inadequate or obsolete Town-facilities, including the Youth Services Bureau, the Senior Center, and Whiton Library.				

Time Frame	Category	Strategy	Themes			
			Dynamic	Connected	Thriving	Sustainable
<b>Mid-Term</b> (4 – 6 years)	Facilities	Create and vigorously message the need for a Town bond referendum to fund future park and facility improvements and replacements.				
<b>Long-Term</b> (7 – 10 years)	Parks	Plan, fund, and implement park upgrades for Nike site and Globe Hollow.				
<b>Long-Term</b> (7 – 10 years)	Trails	Complete the third phase of the trail connection plan.				
<b>Long-Term</b> (7 – 10 years)	Facilities	In conjunction with the end of the current agreement with the Community Y Board, discontinue lease and secure or construct another facility to house Department recreation programs and services.				



# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following is a list of suggestions for successful implementation of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan. These elements represent the commitment and discipline required to integrate the process into daily operations, now and in the future.

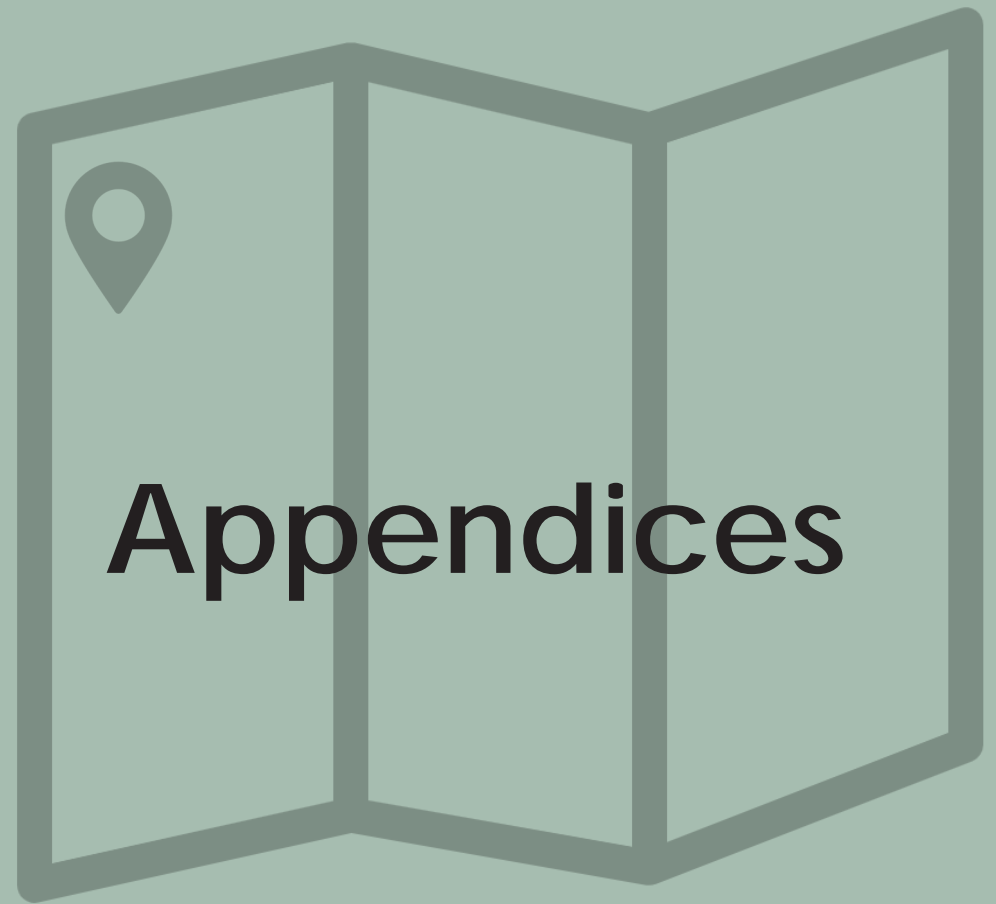
- The Plan becomes the guidepost for the Town. When a new issue or need is brought up by a resident and a response is needed, the Plan becomes the reference point for decision-making. Town staff will need to determine if new issues are of higher importance than what has been established as existing direction in the Plan.
- Plan information should be included as part of the new employee orientation program.
- Post a summary or shortened version of the Plan on the website and track Plan progress on the site. This will assist in providing the community with information about the Town's strategic direction and its commitment to results. It might also be helpful to print a four-color brochure summary of the Plan to distribute to interested partners and community members to provide a quick snapshot.
- A Town staff member or team should have the responsibility of being the project manager or "champion" of the Plan's implementation to help ensure success. This staff person is responsible for monitoring the progress of the Plan and work with other staff, Town management, and other departments, to effectively integrate the Plan with operations.
- A staff member or team should be assigned accountability for each recommendation. The project lead will have responsibility for tracking progress of the Plan.
- Regular reporting of the progress on the Park and Facilities Master Plan should occur. The Plan should be broken down into separate fiscal years and reported on one year at a time. Include Plan items in the annual work plan created for each fiscal year. Each initiative for the year should include a list of tactics that support its completion. The tactics are developed prior to each year for the upcoming list of initiatives and are developed by the staff members involved in completing the initiative. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her initiative, in a quarterly report. We suggest entering each year's data on a spreadsheet or strategic planning software that lists the themes', objectives', and initiatives' start dates and completion dates, and the name of the staff member responsible for initiative completion.
- At the end of the fiscal year, perform an annual review of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan and document any changes to initiatives to reflect any changes in priorities. This process can be included at an annual review meeting in which successive years' initiatives are discussed as part of the annual budget process. Initiatives will tie into both the operating and capital budget processes.

- Update major stakeholders on the Plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Conduct staff meetings on a quarterly or semi-quarterly basis to review the progress on the Plan.
- Post a chart of each year's recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program.
- If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written "parking lot" and review them as part of the annual just-in-time review to determine if these ideas should replace any existing initiatives.
- At the five-year mark of the Plan, complete an update by conducting a new statistically valid survey and update demographic projections and adjust existing recommendations as necessary.









# BUDGET DETAIL FOR TRAIL CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

## SHARED USE PATHWAYS

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase
Cheney Rail Trail Extension	600	\$200	\$120,000	1
Nike Site	500	\$200	\$100,000	1
Bigelow Brook Trail	2,400	\$200	\$480,000	2
Case Mt. / C.O.G Link	200	\$500	\$100,000	2
Highland Park	400	\$200	\$80,000	2
Robertson Park	400	\$200	\$80,000	2
Verplanck Trail	4,400	\$200	\$880,000	2
Hop River Rail Corridor	13,000	\$150	\$1,950,000	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,900</b>		<b>\$3,790,000</b>	



## SIDEPATHS

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase	Notes
Bidwell Street	1,100	-	\$0	1	Funded
Gardner Street	6,800	-	\$0	1	Funded
Greenbrook Manor	500	\$100	\$50,000	1	
Harford Road (Bidwell to C.O.G.)	1,800	-	\$0	1	Funded
Middle Turnpike East	2,000	\$100	\$200,000	1	
Middle Turnpike West	2,900	\$100	\$290,000	1	
Main Street	250	\$100	\$25,000	1	
South Main Street	1,250	\$100	\$125,000	1	
South Main Street	1,300	\$100	\$130,000	2	
South Main Street	5,700	\$100	\$570,000	3	
Adams Street	1,300	\$100	\$130,000	2	
Broad Street	400	\$100	\$40,000	2	
Camp Meeting Road	600	\$100	\$60,000	2	
Center Street	400	\$100	\$40,000	2	
Deming Street	2,300	\$100	\$230,000	2	
E. Center Street	100	\$100	\$10,000	2	
Hartford Road (Bidwell to Spencer St.)	1,000	\$100	\$100,000	2	
Keeney Street (north of Garden Grove)	4,300	\$100	\$430,000	2	

## SIDEPATHS, CONTINUED...

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase	Notes
Line Street	4,500	\$100	\$450,000	3	
New Bolton Road	200	\$100	\$20,000	2	
New State Road	4,900	\$100	\$490,000	2	
Olcott Street	3,000	\$100	\$300,000	2	
Oakland Street	200	\$100	\$20,000	3	
Bush Hill Road	9,000	\$100	\$900,000	3	
Founders Drive	900	\$100	\$90,000	3	
Hillstown Road	5,700	\$100	\$570,000	3	
Keney Street (south of Garden Grove)	3,500	\$100	\$350,000	3	
Wetherell Street	700	\$100	\$70,000	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,600</b>		<b>\$5,690,000</b>		

## BIKE LANES

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase
Hilliard Street	500	\$10	\$5,000	1
St. James Place	800	\$10	\$8,000	1
Prospect Street	1,100	\$10	\$11,000	1
Dartmouth Road	3,100	\$10	\$31,000	1
Wyllys Street	500	\$10	\$5,000	1
Finley Street	1,500	\$10	\$15,000	1
Tolland Turnpike	2,200	\$10	\$22,000	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,700</b>		<b>\$97,000</b>	



## SHARED ROADWAYS

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase
Branford Street	900	\$2.50	\$2,250	\$2,250
Broad Street	3,200	\$2.50	\$8,000	\$8,000
Chestnut Street	300	\$2.50	\$750	\$750
Church Street	1,000	\$2.50	\$2,500	\$2,500
Durkin Street	900	\$2.50	\$2,250	\$2,250
Elridge Street	1,300	\$2.50	\$3,250	\$3,250
Ferguson Street	1,600	\$2.50	\$4,000	\$4,000
Garden Grove Road	2,900	\$2.50	\$7,250	\$7,250
Golway Street	600	\$2.50	\$1,500	\$1,500
Green Road	4,400	\$2.50	\$11,000	\$11,000
Hilliard Street	9,300	\$2.50	\$23,250	\$23,250
Homestead Street	300	\$2.50	\$750	\$750
Hudson Street	900	\$2.50	\$2,250	\$2,250
Hunniford Street	300	\$2.50	\$750	\$750
Irving Street	1,100	\$2.50	\$2,750	\$2,750
Kennedy Drive	4,600	\$2.50	\$11,500	\$11,500
Kerry Street	500	\$2.50	\$1,250	\$1,250

## SHARED ROADWAYS, CONTINUED...

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase
Lakewood Circle South	2,000	2,000	\$5,000	1
Lenox Street	1,400	1,400	\$3,500	1
Linden Street	500	500	\$1,250	1
Lydall Street	2,300	2,300	\$5,750	1
Meadowbrook Drive	500	500	\$1,250	1
N. School Street	2,500	2,500	\$6,250	1
North Street	800	800	\$2,000	1
Park Street	1,400	1,400	\$3,500	1
Parker Street	1,900	1,900	\$4,750	1
Pine Street	1,200	1,200	\$3,000	1
Pleasant Street	1,400	1,400	\$3,500	1
Porter Street	8,200	8,200	\$20,500	1
Princeton Street	2,700	2,700	\$6,750	1
Scott Drive	1,900	1,900	\$4,750	1
Sheldon Street	3,600	3,600	\$9,000	1
Spring Street	9,900	9,900	\$24,750	1
Spruce Street	4,500	4,500	\$11,250	1

## SHARED ROADWAYS, CONTINUED...

Facility Name	Length (lf)	Unit Cost (per lf)	Cost	Phase
Strant Street	600	\$2.50	\$1,500	1
Summit Street	1,200	\$2.50	\$3,000	1
Union Place	500	\$2.50	\$1,250	1
Union Street	1,500	\$2.50	\$3,750	1
Vernon Street	5,100	\$2.50	\$12,750	1
Windemere Street	600	\$2.50	\$1,500	1
Wyllys Street	1,500	\$2.50	\$3,750	1
Lake Street	3,500	\$2.50	\$8,750	2
Middle Turnpike East	2,200	\$2.50	\$5,500	2
Northwest Park Driveway	800	\$2.50	\$2,000	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,300</b>		<b>\$245,750</b>	



## ROAD CROSSINGS

Location	Facility Type	Cost	Description	Phase
Lakewood Cir. South at S. Main St	Mid-block crosswalk	\$10,000	Curb ramps, crosswalk, and crosswalk signage needed to accommodate road crossing of proposed sidepath/shared roadway	1
Charter Oak Greenway at Porter St	Crosswalk at non-signalized intersection	\$20,000	Curb ramps, path segment, crosswalk, and crosswalk signage needed to accommodate road crossing between Greenway and proposed Howard Reservoir sidepath and shared roadway at Porter Street	1
New State Rd at Adams St	Crosswalk at existing signalized intersection	\$60,000	Crosswalk, Curb Ramps, Pedestrian Signal Heads and Actuator needed at existing signalized intersection to accommodate road crossing of proposed sidepath	2
Middle Turnpike East and New Bolton Rd	Mid-block crosswalk	\$100,000	Mid-block crosswalk needed to accommodate shared roadway crossing of New Bolton Road connecting Middle Turnpike East to Lake Street. May require pedestrian actuated signal and pedestrian refuge island	2
Bush Hill Rd at Keeney St	Mid-block crosswalk	\$10,000	Curb ramps, crosswalk, and crosswalk signage needed to accommodate road crossing of proposed sidepath	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$200,000</b>		

# BUDGET DETAIL FOR PARK IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

## NORTHWEST PARK

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
Acquisition of 260 Tolland Turnpike	??
Pedestrian Bridge over Union Pond	\$100,000
Prune Vegetation along Union Pond and at Union Place Entrance	\$25,000
Kayak/Canoe Launch + Storage	\$100,000
Pickleball Courts (8)	\$800,000
Evergreen Screening at Property Line	\$15,000
Signage	\$50,000
Recreation Complex	
• Pavilion	\$200,000
• Sprayground	\$300,000
• Play and Fitness Equipment	\$500,000
• Site Furnishings	\$25,000
• Plantings	\$20,000
Parking Lot Renovation	\$1,000,000
Incorporate Green Infrastructure at Parking Lot Island	\$40,000
Basketball Court	\$100,000
Parking Lot and Recreation Improvements to Park Recreation Office/BOE Food Service Dept and Early Childhood Center Building	\$50,000
Improvements to Sand Volleyball Court	\$20,000
Bike Racks	\$10,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,355,000</b>
<b>10% Contingency</b>	<b>\$335,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,690,500</b>

## ROBERTSON / UNION POND PARK

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
75,000 SF Community Center	\$35,000,000
• Overhead Pedestrian Connector to Historic School Building	??
Removal of Existing Buildings (excludes historic building)	\$1,860,000
Removal of Swanson Pool and Building	\$75,000
New Vehicular Circulation System, Roundabout, Parking, Drop-Off Area	\$2,500,000
• Realign Park Entrances on North School Street (included in above)	
New Pedestrian Circulation System	\$250,000
Raised Crosswalk on North School Street	\$50,000
New Pedestrian Entrance at North School Street, Landscape Wall, Sitting Area, Benches	\$150,000
Evergreen Screening at Property Line (multiple locations)	\$35,000
Signage	\$85,000
Recreation Complex	
• Pavilion	\$200,000
• Sprayground	\$300,000
• Play Equipment	\$500,000
• Site Furnishings & Shade Features	\$20,000
New Restroom/Storage Building	\$300,000
Pickleball Courts (4)	\$400,000
Tennis Courts (2)	\$200,000
Basketball Courts (2)	\$200,000
Significant New Plantings Throughout Park	\$120,000



## ROBERTSON / UNION POND PARK, CONTINUED...

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
New Street Trees on North Main Street	\$15,000
Renovation of Cricket Field Path; Add Benches and Spectator Stands	\$65,000
Add Multiple Pedestrian Connections to Cricket Field; Union Court Neighborhood Connection	\$50,000
New Pedestrian Entrance at North Main and Oakland Streets; Add Wall	\$35,000
Bike Racks, Benches, Drinking Fountain	\$50,000
New Site Lighting	\$550,000
Union Pond Park Improvements	
• Parking Lot Renovation	\$125,000
• New Pier	\$150,000
• Kayak/Canoe Storage	\$10,000
Total Building Costs	\$36,935,000
Total Park Costs	\$6,360,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,295,000</b>
10% Contingency	\$4,329,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$47,624,500</b>

## WEST SIDE RECREATION AREA

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
New Plaza at Mahoney Recreation Center Building Entrance (rear)	\$100,000
Raised performance platform at New Plaza	\$200,000
Parking Lot Renovation with Drop-Off Area	\$550,000
Basketball Courts (2)	\$200,000
5x5 Mini-Pitch Court	\$75,000
Small Pavilion, Tables, Porto-Toilets	\$125,000
Recreation Complex	
• Large Pavilion	\$200,000
• Sprayground	\$300,000
• Play and Fitness Equipment	\$500,000
• Site Furnishings	\$15,000
Signage	\$52,500
Significant New Plantings Throughout	\$75,000
New Pedestrian Entrance at Bank Street	\$100,000
Concrete Sidewalk along Cooper Street; Curb Ramps; Crosswalks	\$100,000
Concrete Walks Throughout	\$200,000
Amphitheater Seating on Northwest Slope	\$30,000
Upgrades at Pool - Covered Tables, Shade Structures, Screening	\$60,000
Community Gardens	\$50,000
Bike Racks, Benches	\$25,000
New Site Lighting	\$250,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,207,500</b>
10% Contingency	\$320,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,528,250</b>

## MT. NEBO PARK

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
Realign Park Entrance; Remove Trees as Required	\$20,000
Raised Crosswalk on Spring Street	\$50,000
Reroute Walking/Hiking Trail at Park Entrance and Blaze New Trail for Continuous Loop Inside Park	\$150,000
Redesign Underpass Area between Mt. Nebo and Charter Oak Park; Reduce Slopes, Clear Vegetation, Add Lighting and Murals	\$750,000
Convert Carlin Field to Turf; Upgrade Infrastructure	\$1,500,000
Upgrade Infrastructure at Moriarity Baseball Field	\$500,000
Remove Fence between Fields	\$50,000
Remove Concession and Restroom Buildings	\$23,500
Pavilion with Concessions, Tables	\$375,000
New Restroom/Storage Building	\$300,000
Children's Playground with Shade Features	\$500,000
Signage	\$35,000
Parking Lot Renovation; Add Bioswales and Islands	\$750,000
New Plantings	\$75,000
Bike Racks, Benches, Drinking Fountain	\$50,000
New Site Lighting	\$200,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,328,500</b>
10% Contingency	\$532,850
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,861,350</b>



## GLOBE HOLLOW SWIMMING AREA

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
Realign Park Entrance; Remove Trees as Required	\$20,000
Reroute Walking/Hiking Trail at Park Entrance; Add Wall	\$150,000
Parking Lot Renovation; Add Islands and Trees	\$650,000
Full-Service Aquatic Facility	\$5,000,000
• Zero-Depth Entry Pool with Lap Lanes	
• Family/Kiddie Pool	
• Sprayground and Water Slide	
• Concrete Pool Deck with Shade Features and Outdoor Showers	
• Bathhouse with Restrooms, Showers and Lockers	
Repurpose Existing Building for New Pool Filter System	\$800,000
Single Point Entrance	\$10,000
Service Entrance, Drop-Off and HCP Parking at Bathhouse	\$75,000
Signage	\$27,500
Pavilion with Concessions, Tables and Grills	\$650,000
Picnic and Sunning Area	\$50,000
Bike Racks	\$10,000
Site Lighting	\$225,000
Fencing and Gates	\$250,000
Repave Walking/Hiking Trail to Camp Kennedy	\$200,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,117,500</b>
10% Contingency	\$811,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,929,250</b>

## NIKE SITE RECREATION AREA

Description of Master Plan Item	Budgetary Estimate
Adventure Park	
• Lookout Tower	\$150,000
• Single Track Mountain Bike Trail	\$250,000
• Ropes Course	\$75,000
• Zip Line	\$500,000
• Pavilion	\$150,000
• New Drive and Additional Parking at Upper Level Park	\$350,000
Multi-Use Trail	\$400,000
Trail Head and Entrance Feature	\$10,000
Remove 1st Building for New Trail	\$390,000
Blaze New Trail Connecting to Upper Level Park; Trail Head, Benches	\$150,000
Exterior Building Improvements (5)	\$1,000,000
Neighborhood Connection at Bella Vista Lane	\$20,000
Roundabout Entrance Feature	\$600,000
Parking Lot Renovation (Lower Level)	\$500,000
New Tree Planting	\$35,000
Signage	\$50,000
New Parking Lot at Softball Field and Path to Field	\$250,000
Pickleball Courts (4)	\$400,000
Bike Racks, Drinking Fountain, Benches	\$35,000
Site Lighting	\$315,000
Composting Toilets (2)	\$140,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,770,000</b>
10% Contingency	\$577,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,347,000</b>





Rotary Music Garden







Our  
**Parks**  
TAKE ME TO THE PARK



 Visit them. Enjoy them. Care for them.