

City of Dover, N.H. Master Plan



Open Space and Recreation

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CITY OF DOVER MASTER PLAN
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION CHAPTER
2000

The City of Dover gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the following citizens who volunteered to serve on the Master Plan Committees. Their time and effort was crucial to the planning process.

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Open Space & Recreation

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Protect and manage Dover’s valuable Open Space resources.

Objective: Identify and acquire key open space areas based upon a systematic inventory and monitoring of Dover’s natural resources.

Objective: Where possible, link open space areas and recreation facilities in an effort to establish an integrated network of resources.

Objective: Improve, protect and encourage public access to Dover’s surface waters—both fresh and tidal.

Objective: Encourage all new developments to protect and where possible, enhance valuable natural and open space resources.

Objective: Encourage public/private partnerships between the City and the other private and civic organizations to provide needed recreational opportunities.

Goal 2: Provide suitable recreation opportunities—land, programs and facilities—to service the City’s existing and projected populations.

Objective: Identify the appropriate amount of land and facilities—by type and location—to meet current and projected recreational needs.

Objective: Provide suitable recreation facilities that are within easy access of the City’s major neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Encourage the long-term use, maintenance and improvement of existing recreational facilities.

Objective: Promote use of available recreation resources for all age groups.

Objective: Encourage cooperation between the School and Recreation Departments in the provision of recreational services.

Objective: Maintain and enhance existing recreation facilities.

Introduction

Dover has a long history of placing a priority on environmental protection and management. Open Space and Recreation Plans were developed in 1973, 1978, 1988 and the 1988 City-wide Master Plan contained a detailed chapter on the open space and recreation needs of Dover. This chapter serves as an update to the 1988 Master Plan and integrates the information and recommendations contained in previous plans with the most recent needs that have been identified in Dover.

The 1973 *Open Space in Dover, N.H.* report defines open space in terms of the five functions it performs:

1. Provision of recreation areas;
2. Protection of natural resources;
3. Preservation of distinctive architectural, historical, geological and botanical sites;
4. The creation of breathing spaces in densely settled areas; and
5. The shaping of urban growth and the preservation of natural beauty near urban and suburban development.

For purposes of this Plan, open space in Dover shall include, but not be limited to, environmental, ecological and natural resource areas.

Open space in Dover is a mixture of public, semi-public and private land. However, there is a difference between *protected* and *unprotected* open space. Protection can come through a variety of methods such as acquisition, conservation restrictions, easements and regulations designed to preserve important resources. While Dover contains several parcels which are owned and protected by the Conservation Commission, a significant portion of remaining land could be sold for development in the future. Dover must take action to protect key parcels in order to meet the open space and recreation needs of the community as well as to protect and preserve the City's character.

The 1988 Open Space Inventory completed for the 1988 Master Plan, identified 758 acres of protected open space. This land consists of property owned by the Conservation Commission, the Audubon Society, the state and the county as well as cemetery sites and municipal well property. For the purposes of open space planning, it is important to be aware of the degree of protection for each parcel. This helps to identify those areas where preservation or acquisition efforts should be targeted. The following categories are a useful way to look at the degree of protection.

- *Highly Protected Conservation and Recreation Land.* This includes all land that is held in fee simple ownership by a municipal, state, or federal agency expressly for preservation or recreation purposes or by a non-profit conservation agency. These lands are owned and managed specifically for the purpose of conservation and/or recreation (as opposed to a municipality which owns land for a future school site, for example).
- *Restricted Open Land.* This category consists primarily of privately-owned land from which development is restricted through a conservation restriction in perpetuity or an agricultural

preservation restriction. A conservation restriction placed on a property allows for the development rights to be held by the state, a municipality or a non-profit agency. It ensures that the land will remain in its natural, open state.

- *Moderately Restricted Open Land.* This includes private land that is taxed as forest, farm, or recreation land under the “Current Use” category for tax assessment or land on which development is restricted through a short term (5-30 years) conservation restriction. These tax programs are often used to lower taxes until such time as development or sale is economically feasible or desirable and are seldom used on a long-term basis. The purpose of the Current Use assessment program is to encourage the preservation of open space. A 10% of market value penalty is paid to the City on lands that are being converted from open space to commercial or residential use. However, in spite of the intent of this program and the financial penalty imposed on lands that are removed from this tax classification, the lands are quite vulnerable to development.
- *Unprotected Land.* This includes all vacant land that is zoned for residential, commercial or industrial development that has not yet been developed. In addition, this category includes open land associated with major institutions (public or private) where the open space use is secondary to a non-conservation use. Examples include schools, colleges, cemeteries, hospitals, and military installations. It also includes commercial recreational facilities such as golf courses. These lands are often perceived as being a secure part of the open space network of a community because of the length of time they have existed as such but most often they are not protected from potential development.

Conservation Lands Inventory

Protected Open Space

Based on the above categories, it should be noted that only 184 acres of the original 758 acres identified in the 1988 Master Plan are permanently protected open space. An additional 115 acres are used for cemeteries and 230 acres are associated with the City’s wells and were considered to be protected by the 1988 Master Plan so long as the wells are in operation. The greatest discrepancy is in the 228 acres owned by Strafford County near the Cochecho River. While this area exists as open space today, the 1988 Master Plan listed the degree of protection as “uncertain” and, in fact, potential plans for development of recreational facilities are underway. While promoting more opportunities for recreation in Dover is an objective of the City, it is important to realize that the parcel could also be used for residential or commercial development and is not protected open space.

The 1988 Master Plan inventory has been updated and revised to reflect only those parcels which are protected open space. Based on the inventory shown in Table 2, 976 acres of land in Dover are considered to be protected open space. Land which is owned by a governmental agency for recreational purposes is considered to be protected “open space” and is shown in Table 5. However, as mentioned above, recreation land owned by a private entity or associated with school property is not protected. While the inventory has been updated based on available data, the Conservation Commission is in the process of completing a comprehensive inventory of all open space (protected and unprotected) in Dover. The Commission raised concerns that the information available through the geographic information system (GIS) of the Planning Department (i.e., mapped open space

parcels) does not represent the data of the Assessing Office and cannot be linked to one another due to incompatibility among computer software systems.

According to the Dover Assessor’s database, there are 517 acres of land within the “tax exempt” category which may be protected open space. The information presented below is summarized from the property tax records by land use code for the 9000 series (tax exempt). Only parcels with a building value of \$0 were included for US Government and State of New Hampshire parcels, indicating that the property is undeveloped.

Table 1: Summary of Tax Exempt Parcels-Potentially Protected Open Space

Use Code	Owner Name	Acres
9000	U S Government	42.2
9010	State Of New Hampshire	437.6
	NH Water Division	1.3
	NH Fish & Game	17.0
9200	Audubon Society Of NH	19.0
Total		517.1

An additional 864 acres of land are classified as land use codes “9030-municipal” and “9035-Town property.” Approximately 536 acres do not have an assessment for a building which indicates the property is most likely undeveloped. While school-owned property, public safety property and land owned by the Housing Authority are not included in these categories, it is not possible to determine how much of the publicly owned land is actually protected open space. The property is most likely a mixture of conservation land, public water supply property, recreation facilities, and public service land.

Table 2: Open Space Inventory

Facility or Parcel Name	# of Acres	Birdwatching/ Sightseeing	Cross Country Skiing	Walking/ Jogging	Nature Study	Nature Education	Nature Walks	Municipal Well	Pump House	Heath Bog	Sand and Gravel Excavation	
Bellamy River Sanctuary; Map J, Lot 25	40	X	X	X		X	X					
Elizabeth Huggins Trust; Map J, Lot 22	80											Pr
N.H. Fish and Game Parcel; Map L., Lot 51	17.8	X			X		X					
N.H. Fish and Game Parcel; Five contiguous lots; Map J., Lot 6 (35 Ac.), Map J Lot 8A (22 Ac.), Map J Lot 20 (34.83 Ac.), Map J Lot 20-1 (271 Ac.), Map J Lot 10-6 (1.49 Ac.)	364.62	X			X		X					
Conservation Land, Map C, Lot 21	23	X	X	X			X					
Municipal Well Property (Smith & Cummings Wells), Map D, Lot 1	47							X	X	X		H
Municipal Well Properties and Adjacent Parcels (Calderwood and 8 Inch Wells Map C lots 7, 8, 12, 19, 20, 22)	109							X		X	X	H
Municipal Well property (Ireland Well Map H lot 58)	54							X		X	X	H
Municipal Well property (Griffin Well Map H lot 63)	11							X				H
Municipal Well property (Hughes Well Map F lot 42)	10							X				H
Municipal Well property (Map A, Lot 29A-1)	42.26							X				High
Watson Property-Tolend Road (Map C lot 46)	35											
Pine Hill Cemetary (Map 18, lot 1)	42											
Pine Hill Cemetary (Map 18 lot 51/52)	35			X								
Cemetary (Map K lot 39)	18											
Cemetary (Map 17 lot 50)	9											
Cemetary (Map M lots 13,14)	11											
Conservation Land (Map J, Lot 3)	4.13	X	X	X	X	X						
Conservation Land (Map M lot 84-1)	23											
TOTAL	975.81											

Unprotected Open Space

As noted above, the 228 acres of land owned by Strafford County have been considered part of Dover’s open space inventory in previous studies but the property is not protected in perpetuity. The area consists of fields and rolling hills which are currently used for agriculture and forestry but could be used for development if approved by the county delegation. In addition, 115 acres of cemeteries should be classified as unprotected open space.

The Complex Systems Research Center (CSRC), Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, University of New Hampshire, conducted a Critical Lands Analysis for communities in southeastern New Hampshire. Dover was one of the 19 communities included in the analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to identify vacant, developable lands within the communities, and to determine which of those lands have outstanding characteristics that are important to maintaining environmental quality.

According to the results of the analysis, Dover has 9,388 remaining acres (55% of total land area) of developable land area. This estimate is based on the total acreage of the City (18,557) minus areas containing surface water, developed land, permanent conservation land, road right-of-ways, transmission line right-of-ways, and large wetlands. The second phase of the analysis determined the development potential of the remaining potentially developable area. Areas were assigned the following classifications:

Category	Distinguishing features	Acres in Dover*
Favorable for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area served by public sewer systems • area served by public water systems • soils with low development costs 	9,148
Less favorable for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “unofficial” conservation land** • steep slopes • soils with high development costs • small wetlands 	3,523
Mixed favorability for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas that have a mixture of features from both the “favorable” and “less favorable” categories 	4,094
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all lands that did not fall into one of the above designations 	1,815

* Note: due to overlap of some categories, the categories do not sum to total developable area in Dover.

** Information from the State’s Conservation Lands data which includes water supply lands and City-managed parcels.

The Current Use Report indicates that there are 222 parcels consisting of 5,237 acres of land that are receiving the Current Use assessment. Approximately 87 acres of land were removed from this category in 1998, indicating that although this program encourages open space protection, it does not do so in perpetuity. The types of lands included in the Current Use category are shown in Table 3, below.

Table 3: Current Use Lands

Type of Land	Total Acres Receiving Current Use Assessment
Farm land	1,990
Forest land	2,924
Unproductive land	164
Wetlands	159
Total	5,237

According to the Assessors database, there are approximately 220 acres of tax exempt land which may be perceived as “open space” yet are not protected as such. The Dover Industrial Development Authority (Dover Economic Development Corporation) owns 86 acres of vacant land; public schools (land use code 9033) consist of 57 acres; cemeteries (land use code 9061) consist of 14 acres¹, and the Boston and Maine Railroad property includes 63 acres. In addition, there are 1,513 acres of undeveloped residential property, 284 acres of undeveloped commercial property, and 187 acres of undeveloped industrial property. This, combined with the amount of land in the Current Use category, equals 7,441 acres of unprotected open space. This is a difference of 1,947 acres from the amount of vacant land estimated by the CSRC analysis. This may be due to a number of factors which may include (1) vacant land that was included in the CSRC analysis may have been developed since the time the CSRC analysis was completed and is therefore no longer listed under vacant parcels in the Assessor’s database, and (2) the CSRC analysis may have included parcels that are listed in the Assessor’s database as developed but contain significant amounts of land that could be developed more intensively.

Lands of Interest

The Conservation Commission is interested in acquiring land or limiting development in certain areas for preservation purposes. Many of the areas which should be prioritized for protection are discussed above in the unprotected open space section. The general guidelines and overall goals as to the types of areas that should be preserved have not changed since the 1988 Master Plan, with the exception of making a concerted effort to protect lands which are currently perceived as open space yet are vulnerable to development. The 1,984 acres of remaining vacant developable land zoned for residential, commercial and industrial use should be evaluated for the potential to protect open areas in perpetuity.

The Cochecho, Bellamy and Piscataqua/Salmon Falls Rivers are a natural focal point for an open space plan. The surface area of the water provides an open space within the City as the rivers wind their way through the developed lands in Dover. The land adjacent to the river corridors provides an opportunity to create a linear open space system which assists in protecting water quality, provides access to water bodies where appropriate, and plays a role in downtown beautification projects. In addition, the rivers link several other communities to Dover and therefore provides an opportunity to address open space preservation at an inter-municipal level. Joint protection efforts among communities will help to protect drinking water supplies and important wildlife habitat.

¹ Note that this figure is substantially less than the 115 acres cited in the 1988 Master Plan. This may be due to the inclusion of cemeteries in the 1988 Plan which are not tax exempt.

The primary purpose of conservation property is to ensure that land is protected and enhances the natural features of the community. More attention should be given to allowing residents to access these areas where appropriate. Public access can be enhanced by providing additional amenities such as improved access for the disabled, informational signs, and picnic tables. However, some areas are not suitable for public access. These areas may be the home of endangered species which are best left undisturbed or may be fragile landscapes that would be destroyed by an increase in pedestrian traffic. Some areas may have adjacent parcels which are not as sensitive and could be used for nature and wildlife observation. Active management of conservation land is necessary to ensure that their quality is maintained.

Wherever possible, open space preservation should address multiple needs. For example, land obtained by the City for a recreation facility would also add to the open space inventory. Similarly, land obtained for aquifer protection could also serve to protect floodplains, river corridors, and wildlife habitat in some areas of the City. This type of multi-purpose approach will help conserve limited financial resources while protecting multiple natural amenities.

The 1988 Master Plan noted that it is often easier to focus open space preservation efforts in rural areas as opposed to urban areas because of the relative ease in obtaining land. However, maintaining open space in undeveloped areas is equally important to preserving urban open space. Dover should continue efforts to provide small scale parks and beautification activities in the urban core.

An important component of an open space plan is to create a network of open lands and parks that provide opportunities to link these amenities to one another when possible rather than existing in isolation. Greenways are open space networks that can be used for preservation, natural corridors and linkages between destinations. Greenways can be established along a natural corridor such as a riverfront or stream valley or along man-made corridors such as an old rail road right-of-way, a canal or a scenic road. These areas become valuable to a community through the multitude of uses that a greenway can provide. Greenways may contain walking trails, bike paths, boat launches, as well as serve as a mechanism for preservation and environmental protection. While it may not be possible to create a greenway which transverses the entire City due to the amount of densely developed land in the urban core, the potential exists to create a series of smaller loops throughout Dover.



Recreation Inventory

Park and recreation properties vary in size, type of facility, and intensity of use. Some are designed to serve nearby residents in surrounding neighborhoods while others may draw users from other communities. categorizes recreational facilities according to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) descriptions:²

Table 4: NRPA Description of Facilities

Classification	Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs	Less than 1/4 mile distance in a residential setting	Between 2500 square feet and 1 acre
Neighborhood Park	Serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	1/4 to 1/2 mile distance	5 acres is minimum, 5-10 acres optimal
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable - depends on function
Community Park	Serves a broader public purpose than a neighborhood park. The focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs.	Site dependent - usually serves two or more neighborhoods and 1/2 to 3 mile distance	As needed - usually between 30 - 50 acres.

These standards are not absolute figures, rather they are guidelines and suggested sizes. Each facility type will vary according to the needs, size, and character of a community. Many facilities may attract users from outside of the expected service area or natural or man-made barriers may limit the accessibility within a given radius of service.

Dover has a very diverse system of parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. There are more than 20 facilities comprising Dover's recreation system ranging from playlots and sitting parks to multi-use City-wide facilities to natural environmental areas. These facilities are operated and maintained to

² *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* by James D. Mertes and James R. Hall, a project of the National Recreation and park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, December 1995, p. 94.

varying degrees by both the Community Services/Recreation Department and School Department. Dover's recreation areas include:

<u>Community Parks</u>	<u>School Parks</u>
Bellamy Park Guppy Park Henry Law Park Cochecho River Walk Maglaras Park Garrison Hill Park Willand Pond Park	Dover Middle School/High School Garrison Elementary School Woodman Park School Horne Street School
<u>Neighborhood Playgrounds</u>	<u>Mini-Parks</u>
Morningside Park Hancock Street Park Park Street Park Long Hill Memorial Park Applevale Park	Amanda Howard Park Fish Ladder Park
<u>Other Facilities</u>	<u>Private Facilities</u>
Hilton State Park	Beckwith Baseball Fields Southside Little League Field Cochecho Country Club

Bellamy Park - 33 acres - Community Park

This park is one of Dover's "natural setting" parks located on Bellamy Road across from the Dover High School. The Bellamy River meanders through the woodlands and grassy open spaces providing a very pleasant setting. Facilities on the property include an area for picnics, a walking/jogging area, and playground equipment. The property also includes an area for fishing, as well as cross-country skiing.

Guppy Park - 39 acres - Community Park

This is one of Dover's primary park/playground facilities. It is located near the Rollinsford town line on Portland Avenue. Guppy Park contains the Dover Arena, a year-round ice arena which is home to youth hockey programs and the Great Bay Skating Club. The park also contains a 50-meter outdoor pool named for Jenny Thompson, Dover resident, who won 5 Olympic gold medals in swimming.

Guppy Park contains approximately 25 acres of woodland, a lighted softball field and family recreation/picnic area. In addition, the park offers a volleyball court and playground equipment for use by visitors to the area.

Henry Law Park - 6 acres - Community Park

Located in the central business district, Henry Law Park is one of Dover's oldest and most intensively used recreation facilities. With approximately 1,200 feet of frontage on the Cochecho River, the park also contains the Butterfield Gym, a year-round indoor pool, a tot lot and wading pool and an outdoor amphitheater for entertainment. The park also provides an area for boat access, a picnic area and playground equipment. The gym features a regulation basketball court, two fully equipped exercise rooms, and a boxing loft.

The state-of-the art Dover Skate Park is located off River Street, at the east end of Henry Law Park. The facility includes an in-line hockey area, an in-line skating area and a skateboard area, complete with obstacles. The creation of the Skate Park, as well as improvements to the garden area and bandshell, were due in large part to contributions of time and funding by the Dover Rotary Club.

Cochecho River Walk - Community Park

The newly revitalized Cochecho River Walk is a cornerstone and central attraction to the downtown. The River Walk contains a footbridge, a canoe launch and picnic areas which have been created since the 1988 Master Plan. The city's sewage treatment plant has been removed from this area and relocation of the Public Works facility from River Street is under discussion. The relocation of these facilities will provide an opportunity to extend the greenbelt created by the Cochecho River Walk to Maglaras Park.

Maglaras Park - 29 acres - Community Park

Situated near Henry Law Park, Maglaras Park has frontage on Henry Law Avenue and the Cochecho River. It presently contains two minor league baseball fields and a multi-use playing field. The privately owned South Side Little League Field is directly adjacent to this park. Maglaras Park has the potential to be one of Dover's outstanding recreational facilities for organized sporting events.

Garrison Hill Park- 55 acres - Community Park

Located on the Rollingsford town line near Wentworth Douglas Hospital, Garrison Hill's 300 foot summit provides some of the most long distance scenic views in the City. The Garrison Hill Committee recently replaced the observation tower with a replica of the original 1913 tower. The park also contains playground equipment and a covered picnic pavilion which have been added since the 1988 Master Plan.

Willand Pond Park- 8.28 acres - Community Park

Located on the municipal boundary with Somersworth, this park features an 84-acre spring-fed natural pond. Dover and Somersworth have worked closely with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation to design and develop a passive recreational facility that includes an improved boat launch, a dedicated parking area, trails and a picnic area on an overlook bluff. The park represents an attractive open space in an area of residential and commercial development.

Dover Middle School/High School - 23 acres - School Park

The Middle School/High School share a variety of recreational facilities which are also used by the City Recreation Department. The campus currently possesses two softball fields, four tennis courts, one multi-use field, a gymnasium and a running track. An additional baseball field and a practice field for football have been approved for construction. As a condition of approval, a portion of the land along the Bellamy River will be permanently protected as open space.

Garrison Elementary School - 22 acres - School Park

The Garrison Elementary School encompasses two basketball courts, two tennis courts, two multi-use fields, a gymnasium, playground equipment and an open lawn area.

Woodman Park School - 17 acres - School Park

The Woodman Park School on Towle Avenue contains several amenities including one baseball field, one soccer field, two basketball courts and four tennis courts. In addition, the school has a gymnasium, a running track, playground equipment and both wooded and open lawn areas.

Horne Street School - 13 acres - School Park

This area possesses one little league field, one basketball court, two tennis courts, a playground area, as well as having a multi-use field. In addition, the school contains a gymnasium.

Morningside Park - 1.6 acres - Neighborhood Playground

This park contains one multi-use field, playground equipment, a pavilion sitting area and open lawn areas. The park also has tetherball.

Hancock Park - 0.6 acres - Neighborhood Playground

The Hancock Park has one basketball court in addition to having a playground and open lawn area.

Park Street Park - 1 acre - Neighborhood Playground

This area contains a small multi-use field, a pavilion sitting area in addition to having a playground and a picnic area. A shelter with picnic tables and new playground equipment were added to this park following the 1988 Master Plan.

Long Hill Memorial Park - 12 acres - Neighborhood Playground

This park is located within a wooded neighborhood in north Dover and has several facilities on its grounds. It has one multi-use field, two tennis courts and one basketball court. In addition, the area also provides playground equipment, a natural wooded area, and an area designated for picnics.

Applevale Park - 2.2 acres - Neighborhood Playground

The Applevale Park is home to a basketball court, playground equipment and an open lawn area.

Amanda Howard Park - 0.5 acres - Mini Park

Amanda Howard Park located at Elmwood and Fairview Avenue is a true neighborhood park with climbers and a swing set.

Fish Ladder Park - 0.1 acres - Mini Park

This small, linear park, located in the center of downtown Dover, is adjacent to the Cochecho River near the dam. It has several benches and a walkway that provide a viewing area for the New Hampshire Fish & Game fish ladder and the dam.

Hilton State Park -10 acres – State Facility

This park is located at the tip of Dover Point and is the location of the first settlement in Dover in 1623. The park contains a boat access ramp, picnic areas and playground. There are outstanding views of the Piscataqua River and Little Bay. There is also an historic monument that commemorates

the site as the first settlement. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation is proposing to widen the Spaulding Turnpike Bridge between Newington and Dover. There is concern that this proposed project will have a negative impact on this park.

The inventory of recreational facilities is provided in and the demand for athletic fields is shown in . Some of the facilities are privately owned but have been included in the inventory to provide a more complete picture of the types of recreational amenities that are available to Dover residents. It should be noted that although Dover has a variety of athletic fields, many of these facilities can only be used for practice and do not constitute regulation fields which may be used for games. The distinction between fields used for games versus those used for practice is shown in .

Table 5: Recreation Facilities Inventory

Facility Name	# of Acres	Birdwatching/Sightseeing	Walking/Jogging	Picnicking	Boat Access	Outdoor Pool	Little League Field	Softball/Baseball Field	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Multi-use Field	Gymnasium	Track	Playground Equipment/Swings	Pavillion/Sitting Areas	Natural Wooded Area	Open Lawn Area	
Bellamy Park	33	X	X	X											X				Cros Day
Guppy Park	39					1	1				1				X	X	X	X	Indc
Henry Law Park & Butterfield Gym	6		X	X	X								X		X	X		X	Indc Ban
Maglaras Park	29						2					1							
Garrison Hill	55	X		X													X	X	Sled
Dover Middle/High School	23		X				3		4		3	X	X					X	Foot
Garrison Elementary School	22							2	2		2	X			X			X	
Woodman Park School	10						1	2	4		1	X	X		X		X	X	Socc
Horne Street School	13.2						1	1	2		1	X			X				
Morningside Park	1.6											1			X	X		X	Teth
Hancock Park	0.6							1							X			X	
Park Street Park	1		X									1			X	X			Wal
Long Hill Memorial Park	12		X	X					1	2		1			X		X		
Applevale Park	2.2								1						X			X	
Amanda Howard Park	0.5														X		X		
Cochecho Riverwalk		X	X	X													X		
Fish Ladder Park	0.1																X		View Lad
Hilton Park	10		X	X	X							X			X	X		X	
Willand Pond Park	25	X	X	X	X												X		
St Thomas H.S.	30							X	2		3								
Beckwith Little League	3						2												
Southside Little League	2						2												
TOTAL	318.15					1	5	7	8	16	1	14							

Table 6: Use of Athletic Fields in Dover

Organization	# of Participants	Game Fields	Practice Fields
SOCCER			
Mens	40	Bellamy 3	Bellamy 3
Youth Spring Travel	144	Bellamy 2, 3	Morningside, Maglaras Multi, Henry Law Park, DHS Softball
Fall Travel	112	Bellamy 1, 3, Woodman	Bellamy 1, 3, Woodman
Fall House	500*	Bellamy 1, 2, 3	Dunaway Baseball
LACROSSE			
U12	25	Maglaras Multi	Maglaras Multi
U14	25	Maglaras Multi	Maglaras Multi
SOFTBALL			
Youth	225*	DHS Softball, DHS Field Hockey	DHS Softball, DHS Field Hockey
Coed Adult	144	DHS Softball, Guppey	DHS Softball
Mens	144	Guppey	
BASEBALL			
Babe Ruth Major	115	Dunaway, Woodman	Dunaway, Woodman
Senior	16	Dunaway, Woodman	Dunaway, Woodman
American Legion	16	Dunaway, Woodman	Dunaway, Woodman
Mens	35	Dunaway	Woodman
Minor League			
Big Minor	110	Maglaras 1, 2	Maglaras 1, 2
Small Minor	144	Garrison 1, 2, Horne St.	Garrison 1, 2, Horne St.
Instructional	100	Morningside	Morningside
T-Ball	100	Elks	Elks
FOOTBALL			
Pee Wee	224*	Bellamy 1, (1)Dunaway	Maglaras 1, 2, Henry Law Park, DHS Softball, Garrison, Morningside, Field of Dreams, Woodman Gulley, Horne St.
Little Green	80	Dunaway	DHS Softball

1997 data except where noted by * which is 1999 data.

In addition to recreation facilities, Dover also provides areas for boating. The Dover Canoe Launch on River Street provides boaters a place to launch canoes and row boats. The state-owned Hilton Park

is located on the Piscataqua River at the entrance to Great Bay. The area provides one boat launch accessible at high tide and one launch accessible at all tides as well as fishing access, picnicking and wildlife viewing. The 84-acre Willand Pond (part of which is located in Somersworth) and associated recreation area provide for fishing and boating in the spring, summer and fall and ice skating and ice fishing in the winter.

Analysis of Needs

Open Space

The primary needs in Dover are to preserve key open space areas in order to manage development, protect natural resources and maintain the community's character. One of the major resource protection needs facing Dover results from the issue of increasing residential development that results in a diminishing supply of open space. This does not necessarily mean acquiring each parcel that is deemed to provide open space values. In many cases, protection can be attained by guiding development practices and working with private land owners to maintain large tracts of land that contribute to the character of the community.

Needs for open space protection are more difficult to determine than those for active and passive recreation. Several areas in which to concentrate preservation efforts were identified in the inventory section describing lands of conservation interest (see page). The primary objective of the Dover Conservation Commission is to protect land of significant value. Most of the Conservation Commission's current activities are already aimed at protecting wetlands from development pressures. However, because wetland areas already benefit from a degree of protection through regulatory control related to dredging and filling at the local, state and federal level, wetland protection is not the primary focus of the Conservation Commission's open space protection efforts. While the Conservation Commission will continue to protect wetland areas, it also plans to increase preservation efforts for upland areas. Upland open space areas such as forests and agricultural land are more susceptible to commercial or residential development than are lands with environmental constraints and are therefore in need of varying levels of protection where appropriate.

Dover will continue to experience growth pressure and this will either move open lands into development or place pressures on those lands for development. Dover currently has many acres of the community protected from development to varying degrees. A critical question to be addressed is "How much is enough?" The answer to this question will not be found in general percentages applied across the community; it will be found in the degree to which a set of clear open space policies, when applied across the City, result in an equal and critical resource driven protection of open lands.

It is important for the City to be able to assess the relative importance of various parcels for acquisition and preservation, otherwise, it is likely to be placed in the position of reacting to individual parcels as they become available for acquisition and/or development. In addition, it is equally important to assess the most appropriate use for each parcel which is currently owned by the City.

This Plan is a starting point for prioritizing parcels for acquisition and protection. However, a detailed acquisition plan that clearly defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisition should be created and utilized in future decision making. Developing a detailed plan will allow for a comprehensive strategy for preservation so that land is not acquired in a piece-meal fashion with little

relation to other parcels and not part of a City-wide open space system. The criteria for selecting parcels for acquisition and protection should be based on the needs, goals and priorities of the City. Suggested criteria are described below. This list should be modified as the needs of the community become more clear and should be sorted in order of importance.

Criteria for Acquisition And Protection of Open Space

- Potential linkages to existing open space, to recreation facilities, and to similar areas in adjacent communities.
- Environmental sensitivity and importance of the parcel such as the presence of aquifers, rivers, wetlands, wildlife and scenic qualities. This includes wildlife corridors, unique habitat, and endangered, threatened and rare species.
- Location in areas that do not have enough public open space or are threatened by continued development. Will the acquisition of the parcel provide additional recreational opportunities in an area of the City that is in need of such facilities? Does the purchase of the parcel encourage City-wide distribution of open space and recreation?
- City-wide versus special group benefit. Would the acquisition of this parcel benefit the City as a whole or a select group of residents in need of additional opportunities? The importance of addressing each need will depend on the specific goals of the City.
- Outdoor recreation potential. This is related to providing additional athletic fields as well as providing areas for greenways and trails that provide opportunities for hiking, walking, running, skiing, and biking.
- Cost and availability of the parcel. This should account for the amount residents are willing to pay to purchase open space (in the form of increased taxes) and the availability of funding sources that would be available if a particular property were targeted for acquisition.
- The financial impact that removing that parcel from development will have on the City. For example, a residential parcel may cost the City in services while a commercial property may be a positive contribution to the tax base.
- Aesthetic benefits to the general public and the preservation of the City character.

In addition to identifying areas for preservation, the City is also in need of a mechanism to fund these efforts. The controversy involving the Garrison Woods subdivision is one example which emphasizes the need to ensure that a mechanism is in place that allows the City to react quickly to opportunities. The developer of the Garrison Woods subdivision approached the City to inquire whether Dover had any interest in purchasing land to provide permanent access to Barbados Pond. The developer was told that the City had no funds available to undertake this type of project. The residential development continued and public access to Barbados Pond was lost. Had a funding mechanism been in place at the time, the City may have been able to work with the willing developer to ensure public access to this natural resource.

The City now has a fund specifically for open space protection. This fund is consistent with the New Hampshire RSA, Title 3, Chapter 36A which establishes the responsibilities and authority of Conservation Commissions. Section 36-A:4 of the statute states that the Conservation Commission may receive gifts of money and property in the name of the City and the City may appropriate money

as deemed necessary for the purposes of open space protection. Money may be placed in a conservation fund and allowed to accumulate from year to year. The municipal treasurer has custody of the money in the conservation fund and can disperse funds upon order of a majority of the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission is required to hold a public hearing prior to the use of the funds for the purchase of any interest in property. The Dover Conservation Commission should work with the City Council and City Attorney to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for authorizing disbursements from the Conservation Fund.

The Dover Conservation Commission should use the Conservation Fund to protect land of significant value. Protection will come from the purchase of development rights through conservation easements, or fee simple or full ownership of specific parcels if necessary. This also includes providing funding for matching grants for open space protection available through federal, state or private programs. The Fund should also be used to assist in voluntary protection by landowners by covering the costs of legal fees for developing deed restrictions, for example. Additional funding for trail building, conducting scientific studies and administrative functions such as record keeping should be supported by an annual budget (rather than through the Conservation Fund) established for the Conservation Commission on an as needed basis.

Recreation

The need for recreational facilities can be assessed in a number of ways. This section will address two of these methods: comparison with national and state standards, and assessment of need by City officials.

Comparison with National and State Standards

The Level of Service (LOS) has been developed by the NRPA and uses a methodology in which current and real demand for park and recreation opportunities are examined. This type of analysis is intended for examining general or area-wide conditions, not for site-specific, short term decision making. The LOS is measured in acres per 1,000 people. It should not be considered as an all-inclusive conclusion as to the needs of Dover residents as many needs may be met by private facilities and other adjustments not considered in the analysis.

Table 7: Comparison of Dover Facilities to NRPA Standards

Activity/Facility	Number per each Dover facility	NRPA Standard (1 facility per population)	Total No. of Facilities for Dover's Population (26,000)	No. of Facilities in Dover	Additional Units to Meet Standard
Basketball		5,000	5	8	
Woodman Park School	2				
Horne St. School	1 (1/2 court)				
Hancock Park	1				
Long Hill Memorial Park	1				
Garrison Elementary School	2 (1/2 courts)				
Applevale Park	1				
Ice Skating		15,000	2	1	1
Guppy Park	1				
Tennis		2,000	13	14	
Dover High School	4				
Garrison Elementary School	2				
Woodman Park School	4				
Horne Street School	2				
Long Hill Memorial Park	2				
Volleyball		5,000	5	1	4
Guppy Park					
Baseball*		5,000	5	7	
Guppy Park	1				
Maglaras Park	2				
Dover High School	3				
Woodman Park School	1				
Little League		5,000	5	5	
Horne Street School	1				
Beckwith Bambino	2				
Southside Little League	2				

Activity/Facility	Number per each Dover facility	NRPA Standard (1 facility per population)	Total No. of Facilities for Dover's Population (26,000)	No. of Facilities in Dover	Additional Units to Meet Standard
Football		20,000	1	1	
Dover High School**	1				
Soccer		10,000	2	1	1
Woodman Park School	1				
Running track		20,000	1	2	
Dover High School	1				
Woodman Park School	1				
Golf - 18 hole		50,000	0	1	
Swimming Pool		20,000	1	2	
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	1				
Guppey Park	1				

* Regulation size fields; there are an additional 4 fields which can only be used for practice

** Regulation size field; construction of a new practice field has been approved.

Note: St. Thomas High School is a parochial school so facilities at this location are not included in the comparison as they are not readily available to Dover residents.

According to this model, Dover has an adequate supply of facilities for most organized sport activities. The City has a shortage of ice skating, volleyball, regulation baseball and soccer fields when compared to the national standards for the population size. However, as will be discussed later in this section, Dover has experienced an increase in the demand for athletic fields and cannot meet the existing population's need for soccer, Little League, and baseball/softball.

The state standards used in Table 8 are recommended by the New Hampshire Office of State Planning. They are based on an analysis of existing standards from other agencies and surveys of recreation leaders around the state. The "multi-use" fields listed under "ballfields" are used by the Dover Recreation Department as practice fields and do not meet regulations for ballfields to be used for official games.

Table 8: Comparison of Dover Facilities to State Standards³

Facility	Type of Field in Dover (#)	Standard per 1,000 population	No. of Facilities in Dover	No. of Facilities per 1,000 of Dover's Population
Ballfields (#)		.6 to 1.0	22	0.85
Guppy Park	Baseball (1)			
Maglaras Park	Baseball (2) Multi-Use (1)			
Dover High School	Baseball (3) Multi-Use (3)			
Garrison	Multi-Use (2)			
Woodman Park School	Baseball (1) Multi-Use (1)			
Horne St. School	Little-League (1) Multi-Use (1)			
Morningside Park	Multi-Use (1)			
Park Street Park	Multi-Use (1)			
Long Hill Memorial Park	Multi-Use (1)			
Hilton Park	Multi-Use (1)			
Beckwith Bambino League	Little League (2)			
Southside Little League	Little League (2)			
Tennis Courts (#)		.5 to 1.5	14	0.53
Dover High School	Tennis (4)			
Garrison Elementary School	Tennis (2)			
Woodman Park School	Tennis (4)			
Horne Street School	Tennis (2)			
Long Hill Memorial Park	Tennis (2)			
Hard Court Games (#)		1.0 to 4.0	9	(0.35)
Guppy Park	Volleyball (1)			
Garrison Elementary	Basketball (2)			
Woodman Park School	Basketball (2)			
Horne St. School	Basketball (1)			
Hancock Park	Basketball (1)			

³ 1988 Master Plan taken from *Recreation Planning, a Guide for New Hampshire Towns* by L.M. Kornfield, L.A., 1981.

Facility	Type of Field in Dover (#)	Standard per 1,000 population	No. of Facilities in Dover	No. of Facilities per 1,000 of Dover's Population
Long Hill Memorial Park	Basketball (1)			
Applevale Park	Basketball (1)			
Playgrounds (#)		.2 to 2.0	13	0.5
Bellamy Park	Present			
Guppey Park	Present			
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	Present			
Garrison Elementary School	Present			
Woodman Park School	Present			
Horne St. School	Present			
Morningside Park	Present			
Hancock Park	Present			
Park St. Park	Present			
Long Hill Memorial Park	Present			
Applevale Park	Present			
Amanda Howard Park	Present			
Hilton Park	Present			
Picnic Areas (acres)		.2 to 5	42	1.62
Bellamy Park	Present			
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	Present			
Garrison Hill	Present			
Long Hill Memorial Park	Present			
Cochecho Riverwalk	Present			
Hilton Park	Present			
Willand Pond Park	Present			
Boating Areas (acres)^		23 to 95		
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	Present			
Hilton Park	Present			
Willand Pond Park	Present			
Outdoor Swimming Pools (#)		.07 to .4	1	(0.04)
Thompson Pool-Guppey Park	Present			

Facility	Type of Field in Dover (#)	Standard per 1,000 population	No. of Facilities in Dover	No. of Facilities per 1,000 of Dover's Population
Gymnasiums (#)		0.2 to 1.0	7	0.27
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	Present			
Dover High School	Present			
Garrison Elementary School	Present			
Old Dover Middle School	Present			
New Dover Middle School	Present			
Woodman Park School	Present			
Horne Street School	Present			
Indoor Swimming Pools (#)		.05 to .2	1	(0.04)
Henry Law Park and Butterfield Gym	Present			
Indoor Ice Areas (#)		.02 to .5	1	0.04
Guppy Park	Present			
Sailing Areas (acres)^		8 to 15		
Beaches (acres)		.1 to 1.5	0	(0.00)
18 Hole Golf Course (#)		.02 to .03	1	0.04
Outdoor Ice Areas (#)		.2 to 1.0	0	0.00
Downhill Ski Areas (#)		.1 to .5	0	(0.00)
Campgrounds (acres)		.5 to 3.5	0	(0.00)

* Excludes schools and private facilities

^ Activity is available but not quantifiable

() Indicates a shortage of facilities

Note: St. Thomas High School is a parochial school so facilities at this location are not included in the comparison as they are not readily available to Dover residents.

According to state standards, Dover is not providing enough hard court game areas, campgrounds, beaches or swimming pools for its population size. In addition, Dover has not exceeded the standard for any of the categories other than for an 18-hole golf course which is provided through a private facility. As noted above, Dover is meeting the standard for “ballfields” but many of the existing facilities in Dover are considered “practice fields” (indicated as multi-use field in the table above). Therefore, Dover is below the standard if only regulation ballfields are considered. This is consistent with the needs cited by Dover City Officials and residents, as discussed at the end of this section.

The national and state models may not be a realistic indication of the recreational demand or need in Dover. The models are based on reality in the sense that they reflect broad objectives of the stated preferences of large groups of people. Nevertheless, they cannot take into account the particular circumstances of Dover or any other community. Dover’s needs for recreational facilities will be different from national and regional norms due to the demographic characteristics of the City and the

variety of recreational opportunities available in nearby communities (for example, the University of New Hampshire in nearby Durham). While the models are useful in determining how Dover compares to the national standards and the state, the most accurate indication of the demand for the facilities is the need expressed by Dover residents and observed by City officials.

Facility Needs Identified by City Officials and Residents

Due to the limitation of standardized models and variations among individual communities, the insights of Dover's recreation officials and residents are a necessary counterpoint to estimates of recreation needs based on standards and comparisons. Several needs have been identified during the course of preparing this Plan: additional playing fields, the rehabilitation of existing facilities and providing adequate funding for acquisition and maintenance of facilities.

A major problem with the current recreation facilities is overuse. With so few athletic fields relative to the demand, there are few opportunities to take one facility out of use temporarily in order to rest the turf. The School and Recreation Departments share the use of many athletic facilities. However, school activities have priority over other teams when games are played on school property which further increases the need for athletic fields for organized sports existing outside of the school system.

There is a current need for at least twelve athletic fields in order to meet the existing demand (see on page). Specifically, four fields for soccer; one field for football and lacrosse; three Little League fields; one major baseball field; and three softball fields are needed. These fields could be located in either one concentrated area or distributed throughout the City. Small neighborhood parks and facilities provide community gathering places and are usually accessible by pedestrians. However, while distribution is desirable in terms of equity among neighborhoods, it will be difficult to accomplish due to the lack of available land in established neighborhoods. The benefits of locating the fields in one concentrated area include: the ability to host tournaments, the fact that games can occur simultaneously in one area for a variety of age groups (i.e. parents would not have to drive between locations when more than one child is involved in a sport), and more efficient use of maintenance staff and time. On the other hand, such facilities may create additional noise and traffic when there is heavy use.

Two potential solutions to provide for additional athletic fields have been explored recently by the City. The first involved the potential use of a City-owned 54 acre site on Mast Road, off Durham Road. However, upon further investigation, it was determined that this site was a valuable asset to the City due to the amount of gravel that could be excavated and sold. In addition, there were concerns regarding safety due to the proximity to other gravel operations and some doubt as to if the site could accommodate the nine fields proposed.

The second proposal involves the use of Strafford County land associated with the County Courthouse and prison area. This is the 228 acres of "open space" originally listed in the 1988 Master Plan inventory (see page). While the area is not centrally located within Dover, it is within a high growth area in the northwest section of the City. The County Commissioners could vote to allow the City to lease this property from Strafford County. The City is currently considering several design options for fields as well as opportunities for picnicking, hiking and walking which are already provided informally. The entire 228-acre area has been surveyed to evaluate the development potential. Funds for the survey work were provided from the revenue generated from the gravel extraction on Mast Road.

The City Council recently approved a Capital Improvement Budget that has allocated funds for design and construction of athletic fields which could be designated for fields on the county land.

Since the 1988 Master Plan, many of Dover's recreation facilities have been renovated which has improved the quality and types of recreational facilities within the community. However, several improvements and repairs are needed in some facilities in order to better meet the existing need for recreational opportunities. The needed improvements described below should be prioritized for action and funding obtained. Detailed descriptions of these facilities can be found in the inventory section on page and in .

Bellamy Park

Almost half of the park's acreage has been taken over by the high school for use as playing fields. In addition, there has been serious encroachment on the park's boundaries by the multi-family housing constructed on Route 155. The 1988 Master Plan recommended that the 28-acre parcel along Route 155 to be added to the park's acreage. However, the property has not been acquired and is currently for sale. If the property is still available, the City should pursue the possibility of acquiring the parcel in order to create a buffer between the park and surrounding development.

The structure on the site was once used as a headquarters for youth programs in the summer and a warming hut for cross-country skiers in the winter. However, the building has been condemned and should be replaced in order to provide an area for functions, day care facilities, and to be used as a warming hut. The ski trails should be re-established and the new park building could support winter use activities.

Erosion control techniques should be implemented along the Bellamy River near the old swimming beach. In addition, the bridge that was originally built on public property along the Bellamy River should be replaced.

Guppey Park

An addition to Dover Arena is needed in order to provide a second sheet of ice and more interior room for the public. A feasibility study prepared by VSC Sports Consultants confirms that more ice is needed.⁴

The City is in the process of evaluating the feasibility of enclosing the Jenny Thompson Pool, which was recommended in the 1988 Master Plan. Swimming was the most popular activity listed in the public opinion survey conducted for the 1988 Plan and the pool at the Henry Law Park receives an excessive amount of use. Therefore, providing a second indoor facility would help meet the demand for swimming facilities. It has been suggested that the design of the facility should include a removable or supported structure in order to allow open-air swimming and sunbathing in the summer season.

A trail system should be created within the 25 acres of woodland and the softball fields should be rebuilt to accommodate adult softball requirements. Improvements to the parking area near the ballfield are also needed.

⁴ *Level 2 Feasibility Study*. Prepared for the City of Dover Ice Arena by VSC Sports Consultants, Sherman Oaks, CA. March, 1999.

Henry Law Park

An addition to the Butterfield Gym and pool complex is needed in order to provide an expanded fitness area and additional office space. The wading pool should be renovated and the creation of a fountain for public use should be considered.

Improvements to the parking area are needed: parking for the disabled should be provided along Washington Street in order to improve access to Butterfield Gym. An additional 10 to 15 parking spaces are needed for general use and the lot should be re-stripped. In addition, provisions should be made to renovate the amphitheater and the bandshell at the current location, or relocate such facilities in an area of the park, or near the waterfront as part of the Cochecho riverfront redevelopment.

Cochecho River Walk

Continuing to pursue efforts to relocate the Public Works barn is recommended in order to extend the greenbelt created by the Cochecho River Walk to Maglaras Park. In addition, the river walk should be extended to Washington Street near the recreation building by constructing a set of stairs to connect the walk to the street.

Maglaras Park

The multi-use field is in need of renovation in order to make it useful for regulation games. In addition, two more regulation fields which could also be used for baseball and softball should be created in this area. Additional amenities needed for this park include the construction of a parking lot, installing bleachers and restroom facilities, and the addition of four tennis courts and two basketball courts. Fields for adult softball, which would include lighting, are also being considered in lieu of youth fields.

The potential exists to create a trail system within this park. A fitness trail loop and riverside footpaths could provide a linkage to Henry Law Park. As mentioned above, the Cochecho River Walk could be extended to this area. In addition, a bike trail system and bike park could be developed.

If the river dredging project provides enough material, it would be possible to create a small sledding hill or snowboard area so long as the development was consistent with the overall landscape and usage of the site. At present, the City is pursuing permits with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the river.

Garrison Hill Park

In order to continue to enhance this area, landscaping and parking for the hilltop area should be improved; an erosion control plan for the upper ski slope area should be implemented; and the lower portion of the ski slope (located in Rollinsford) should be improved for sledding, beginning skiers, and snowboarders.

Dover Middle School/High School

The recreational needs of Dover residents are often met through the use of school facilities. Two recommendations from the 1988 Master Plan have yet to be implemented: the reinstatement of two full length outdoor basketball courts and the extension of Bellamy Park ski trails behind the school as part of the City-wide greenbelt. These recommendations are still applicable and should be implemented.

Garrison Elementary School

The tennis courts at the elementary school have been renovated since the 1988 Master Plan but there is still a need to resurface basketball courts and improve trails through the wooded area on the property. The ball fields are appropriate for instructional use for league practices and are currently in the process of being upgraded to improve the condition of the fields.

Woodman Park School

The running track is in need of repair and resurfacing and the playground equipment should be upgraded.

Horne Street School

Tennis courts have been resurfaced since the 1988 Master Plan but the tot lot equipment should be upgraded and the existing basketball courts should be reconstructed. There is also the potential to create a landscaped picnic area with benches and tables on the grassy slope between the tennis courts and the parking area.

Morningside Park

A multi purpose field should be constructed in this park as well as a basketball court and additional playground equipment.

Hancock Park

This park is in need of more tot lot equipment and park benches as well as vehicle barriers at the entrance on Hancock Street. The basketball court is also in need of a new surface.

Park Street Park

A shelter with picnic tables and new playground equipment were added to this park following the 1988 Master Plan. However, landscape work and turf improvements are still needed.

Long Hill Memorial Park

The park could benefit from the addition of playground and tot lot equipment, picnic tables, a trail system and an open grass area for play. This project is in progress and is expected to be completed by the spring of 2000.

Applevale Park

A shelter with picnic tables should be provided in this park.

Amanda Howard Park

The playground equipment should be upgraded and safety cushion material added.

Strategies

One of the issues raised by workshop participants and City officials is the need to create an open space and recreation plan that is focused on specific recommendations and strategies. One of the primary needs identified for both open space and recreation areas is a comprehensive management plan that evaluates the use of existing City owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements. This section will address some of the changes that will be necessary in order for Dover to meet its open space and recreation goals in a strategic manner. Specifically, the following have been mentioned as primary concerns:

- Developing a central “clearinghouse” within the City government structure to oversee the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of all City-owned open space areas, recreation facilities, and other City-owned property which has not been designated for a specific use.
- Developing a complete inventory of existing resources.
- Identifying specific parcels for acquisition and/or protection.
- Creating a management plan for all City-owned property.
- Creating a mechanism for funding and acquiring property that allows the City to react quickly to opportunities.
- Meeting the immediate demand for recreational fields.

Open Space Committee

The City Council should create a standing Open Space Committee, as proposed by the Dover Conservation Commission. Such a Committee would establish broad goals and coordinate the activities of smaller working groups pursuing open space protection on behalf of the City of Dover. It is recommended that the Committee be made up of representatives from the Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, City Council and others with specific areas of relevant expertise in open space and recreation planning to perform the following:

- Identify and evaluate parcels for acquisition and protection.
- Develop an overall management plan for existing City-owned property.
- Amend the City’s subdivision regulations and adopt other mechanisms that give the City more authority to create permanent, useable open space and recreation areas in and near new subdivisions.

In addition to the specific responsibilities mentioned above, the Open Space Committee would serve as an advocate for the creation and implementation of a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Inventory of Parcels

One of the most important actions that is necessary for the City to complete in order to move forward with planning for open space and recreation is to develop a complete inventory of properties which are currently under City-ownership and those properties which should be targeted for acquisition or protection. This inventory and assessment process will allow the City to combine the assessment of needs presented in this chapter with short-term and long-range strategies for expansion and maintenance of open space and recreation areas. This effort should draw together information available on City and other public agency property as well as privately owned open space and recreation facilities that are of interest that are not protected in order to examine potential connections and strategic planning for facility investments. This inventory process should account for the fact that not all publicly-owned land is protected and some privately-owned land may be through conservation restrictions and other measures. Additionally, it should be recognized that open space protection is not just in the sense of preserving vacant land, but maintenance and upkeep is also needed to retain the attractive qualities of these areas. Redevelopment and rehabilitation applies to open space just as it does to residential neighborhoods or commercial development. Developed land might be reused as open space and existing open space might be renewed or rehabilitated.

The first step in the process is to update the existing inventory. The Conservation Commission has already made efforts to obtain an accurate inventory. A Natural Resource Inventory of conservation lands within the City is currently being completed by students of the University of New Hampshire. This inventory should be compared to and supplemented by information regarding public property which is already protected or known recreational facilities in private use (such as the Southside Little League facility). This type of information can be assembled with relative ease through the Assessor's office which classifies land according to use. Any land classified as public use, recreation use or open space should be noted on a map. Additionally, any information on privately owned parcels with conservation restrictions should also be obtained.

While there are many possible ways to carry out the inventory and assessment, the key objective to keep in mind is to prepare a record that a variety of people will be able to use for evaluating open space and recreation planning as well as the use of City-owned property. Sample forms that utilize the process described below are provided at the end of this document.

The Open Space Committee should organize a small group of volunteers to complete the inventory process. The inventory can be completed in a relatively short amount of time as long as the urge to go into great detail is overcome. Volunteers should be organized into teams, each of whom will be responsible for collecting information in a particular area of the City. The Conservation Commission has discussed the potential for completing the inventory and assessment on a ward by ward basis to ensure that needs are identified and resources distributed equally throughout the community. Each team should be provided with the following:

- A map of the City indicating parcel boundaries, street locations and well known landmarks such as schools, municipal buildings, etc. This map should also indicate the location of public property and other open space areas identified through the Assessor's database, as described above.
- Notebooks and worksheets (see sample at the end of the document)
- Disposable cameras

Each team should visit the areas indicated on the map and assess the current conditions of the parcel according to the information provided on the worksheet. The team should also note any significant

views, places and other features that are noteworthy for open space and recreation purposes or parcels which are obviously in public ownership which have not been indicated on the map.

Existing and potential open space and recreation parcels should be categorized according to the purpose the parcel serves.

- *Managed Resource Production.* This includes land used for mineral extraction, agricultural production, forestry or energy sources (i.e. a dam for hydro-electric power).
- *Environmental and ecological value.* Includes areas for fish and wildlife; watershed; unique geological features; and visual corridors.
- *Health and Safety.* Land used for flood control, water supply, waste disposal, airport flight patterns and hazardous materials storage.
- *Community Development and Social Welfare.* Areas include parks, recreation facilities, historic landmarks, public and private institutional property.
- *Urban Form.* These areas include circulation corridors (such as trails and bike paths), utility easements, and future expansion areas (i.e. future school sites).

The type of information that should be collected for each parcel is listed below. The first three items can be determined from the Assessor's database and information obtained through the UNH Natural Resource Inventory.

- Ownership of the parcel
- Managing agency
- Current use
- Degree of protection
- Condition
- Summary of surrounding uses
- Potential for active or passive recreation
- Appropriateness of public access

It is important to note that while thoroughness is important when completing the inventory, it does not mean that every physical aspect of a site must be recorded. It is more important to record the broad spectrum of resources which are available – there is often a tendency to try to do too much and account for every little detail. It is always possible to come back to a particular inventory sheet to complete details as they are needed.

Once the field work has been completed, the Open Space Committee should review the worksheets to determine where additional data collection is needed. For example, areas that have been identified as being significant open space parcels which have not been indicated on the map should be investigated through the Assessor's office to determine ownership and current use.

Once the inventory of protected and unprotected open space has been completed, the creation of a management plan can begin. All records should be combined into a binder and organized by parcel type. The City's geographic information system (GIS) could then be updated with this information and made available to a variety of City departments, boards and commissions. Recording the information on the GIS will also allow the information to be easily updated and incorporated into a variety of planning projects.

Management of Open Space

The Open Space Committee should be responsible for periodically reviewing and updating the inventory. The inventory should serve as a resource when determining changes in use of a particular City-owned parcel and for determining appropriate locations for meeting the open space and recreation needs described above.

The City Council should rely on the opinion of the Open Space Committee when evaluating the use of City-owned parcels. Any City departments or boards that have interest in the parcels included in the inventory should be required to consult with the Open Space Committee before action is taken. The Open Space Committee should evaluate the request according to specific criteria (see suggestions presented on page) in order to assess how the parcel and proposed use fits within the overall open space and recreation objectives of the City. Priorities for open space and recreation should be on providing additional playing fields, acquiring open space for preservation, and improving accessibility and the existing condition of recreation and open space areas.

In order to make the review process most useful to the City, the Open Space Committee should prepare a detailed acquisition plan that clearly defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisitions on both a ward by ward and a City-wide basis. The inventory process described above will play a critical role in this process.

The City's recent efforts to provide funding for open space and recreation should be continued in the future. Funds which are readily available for open space and recreation purposes will allow the City to move quickly on opportunities which may otherwise be lost if there is a delay due to assembling funds. Potential funding sources are discussed below.

Funding Sources

The City has recently pursued efforts to provide funding for open space and recreation. As mentioned previously, the revenue from gravel extractions from the City-owned site on Mast Road has assisted the Recreation Department in improving recreation opportunities. The Conservation Commission recently received approval from the City Council to develop a fund to support open space protection efforts. Additional funding options for open space acquisition and protection include working with non-profit organizations such as land trusts, public-private partnerships, the use of grants, and issuing bonds to purchase open space.

Public-Private Partnerships and Other Creative Funding Mechanisms

As is the case with many aspects of municipal services, the Dover Recreation Department and Conservation Commission have found it difficult to keep pace with needed repairs and upgrades of existing facilities, as well as the creation of new recreational opportunities and open space preservation efforts, due to a shortage of funding.

The City has been fortunate to have obtained several recreation areas that were set aside by private landowners that were developing their land. Through negotiations with the Planning Board, the developers agreed to include recreational facilities as part of their development. These facilities have included baseball fields, playgrounds, tot lots, and trail easements. In some instances the developers have contributed funds to upgrade existing recreational facilities that were in proximity to their developments. Some examples include the Clay Hill subdivision off Sullivan Drive which contains a baseball field; a tot lot in the Alden Woods subdivision off Sixth Street; a playground and walking path on Danielle Lane in the Mathes Hill subdivision; and funding to improve Applevale Park provided by the Katz subdivision off Middle Road. This type of public-private partnership should be continued in the future.

Another funding mechanism for the City to consider is the implementation of an impact fee ordinance as provided for by RSA 674:21 V. An impact fee is an assessment imposed on new development in order to help meet the needs occasioned by the development for the construction or improvement of municipal capital facilities. The fees collected under an impact fee ordinance could be used to build new ball fields, hiking trails, playgrounds or other recreational facilities.

Creative funding approaches, such as coordinating efforts with school PTO organizations for fundraising and selling small portions of existing property have provided some resources for improvements in Dover. For example;

- One acre of Long Hill Park was sold to a retail building supply company which created revenue for improvements to the park and created a trust fund for ongoing maintenance.
- A Special Revenue Fund has been created to allow donations and fees collected for use of recreational facilities to be directed to improvement and creation of new and existing recreational facilities and programs.
- The PTO and the City have worked together to upgrade Horne Street Park: the PTO raised funds for upgrading the playground and the City will perform some site work.
- The Rotary Club donated time and resources to assist the City in improving Henry Law Park and the creation of the skate park.
- The Seacoast Swimming Association provided the funds necessary to improve the heating system for the Thompson Pool at Guppy Park in exchange for reduced user fees until the debt had been paid off.

Additional organizations such as the Dover Youth Hockey Association, Dover Southside Little League, Dover Northside Bambino, Dover Soccer Association, and other clubs can also provide assistance in improving existing facilities that are used by these organizations. Public-private partnerships between the City and these organizations could potentially be used to create the proposed athletic fields, possibly on the Strafford County property. In addition, some local clubs are part of larger national organizations which could provide funding. For example, the United States Swimming Association provides \$250,000 each year to several swim teams across the country for improvements to pool facilities. With the upcoming 2000 Olympics, there may be new interest in improving swimming facilities by a variety of organizations due to the association with Olympic athlete Jenny Thompson, a Dover resident.

The American Planning Association (APA) published an article in the *Public Investment* newsletter in September 1998 which describes the innovative approaches that municipalities have pursued to raise

non-tax dollars for recreational improvements.⁵ The difference between tax-based revenue and total needed revenue has generated many new fund raising techniques such as corporate promotions, donations, and an increased reliance on user fees.

- *Corporate Promotions.* Businesses will often fund a project in exchange for displaying a company sign or logo at the facility. For example, the H&R Block Foundation donated \$1 million to construct a cancer survivors garden in Chicago. The City of Austin, Texas, worked with Motorola Corporation to buy the community theater a new sign in exchange for placing the company logo on it. A regional example of this type of sponsorship is the Fleet Center in Boston which replaced the historic “Garden” for sporting events. However, the City should develop guidelines for appropriate advertising, such as limiting the number of signs, so that a facility does not become too commercialized.
- *Donations.* Gifts and donations are additional methods of receiving funding that may not be associated with publicity, public recognition or advertising. Many individuals and some corporations are willing to make contributions to park agencies and programs simply to improve the community in which they live or operate. Non-profit and volunteer organizations can provide assistance in generating funds by seeking gifts and donations from individuals and corporations and organizing fund raising events. Examples of this include San Francisco’s Friends of Recreation and Parks which raises \$1.5 million each year for park-related improvements and New York City’s Central Park Conservancy and Prospect Park Alliance.
- *Special Revenue Fund.* Dover currently has a Special Revenue Fund in place to allow for fees and donations to be directed toward recreational improvements. Athletic leagues contribute \$5 per player each season to the fund which is managed by the Recreation Superintendent. A specific league can then make a request to the Recreation Advisory Board to use the funds for a project such as adding a scoreboard, upgrading turf, etc. This program has been very successful in Dover.
- *User Fees.* Most city park agencies charge fees for certain activities but user fees are controversial due to difficulties with public relations. Park users have already paid for the parks once through taxes and many argue that a user fee is perceived to be yet another cost without increasing the benefit. However, most cities do not rely heavily on these fees: park departments in the cities of Baltimore, Providence, and Cleveland generate less than 1% of their total operating budgets through user fees. New York City, one of the largest fee-generating park agencies in the country, generates the majority of its park revenue through parking fees associated with Shea Stadium. On a smaller scale, many New England communities rely on beach parking fees to generate revenue to support park and recreation services and facilities.

New York City also adopted a “voluntary” fee in 1995. For a once-a-year donation, city residents get a membership card for use at local recreation centers. These fees are then used for upgrades of the facilities. Those who are unable to afford to pay, are asked to complete a form to receive a free membership card. The program has been successful as the voluntary donation is less costly to a resident than joining a private sports club.

⁵ *Public Investment.* Published by the American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service. September 1998.

Conservation Fund and Annual Budget Allocation

The City Council has recently adopted a resolution that will deposit fees levied from land being removed from the “current use” tax classification into a Conservation Fund for land acquisition. Between 1988 and 1998, the City obtained approximately \$300,000 in fees due to removal of property from the “current use” classification. Prior to this resolution, these revenues were added to the general fund for City-wide use. The fees are imposed when a property owner no longer wishes to receive the tax benefits of maintaining the property for open space or recreation purposes. Consequently, the Current Use fee will provide Dover the opportunity to offset or mitigate the loss of open spaces which have been previously protected by tax incentives.

The Conservation Commission proposes to use the funds for obtaining property easements or purchasing the development rights of a parcel; purchasing the property through fee-simple ownership; or assisting landowners with voluntary protection efforts such as deed restrictions or conservation easements that can be coordinated with non-profit preservation organizations.

In addition to using the fees generated from properties being removed from the Current Use tax classification, the City may appropriate funds to the Conservation Fund. This may be in the form of a dedicated amount each year or through the issuance of a bond. Private gifts and donations for the purposes of open space acquisition and protection may also be added to the Conservation Fund.

New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Commission Proposal

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Commission (LCHC), has been lobbying the state legislature to create a new program that would create a public/private partnership supported by funding to protect natural, cultural and historic resources. The Commission envisions that the public program would be funded at \$12 million annually and would provide financial assistance to communities, publicly supported non-profit organizations and state agencies through grants, block grants, loans, and loan guarantees. The funds would be used to acquire resources in fee simple ownership; through conservation, scenic or preservation easements; for restoration or rehabilitation; for acquisition costs (surveys, appraisals, title work, etc.); feasibility studies, resource inventories, planning; and other professional services.

The private sector role in the partnership would include providing at least a 40% match for all project funding; identification of potential projects; preparation of project applications and supporting materials; volunteer time on the public board through providing staffing to the effort; stewardship of resources and contributions to private endowment created for the program, among other responsibilities.

While this public/private partnership is still in proposal form and is therefore not available at the current time, it could prove to be a valuable resource for Dover in the future should it be implemented. Therefore, Dover should support the LCHC in pursuing this effort.

TEA-21: Transportation Enhancement Program

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) is a source of funding distributed by the state transportation departments (previously known as ISTEA) for transportation enhancement activities. The Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) provide funding for projects which will enhance the overall transportation system through the Transportation Enhancement Program. Eligible projects include

facilities for bicycles and pedestrians; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; landscaping and other beautification projects; preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion to a trail); environmental mitigation; and historic preservation.

River and Trails Conservation Assistance Program

This program is provided by the National Park Service and is a technical assistance program for trail development. The program essentially funds 20% to 33% of a staff person's time for one year in order to assist a community in developing a trail. The application for funding consists of a letter which describes how the project will meet the following five criteria:

1. Resource significance
2. Tangible conservation
3. Public support
4. Project goals
5. Broad cooperation

Implementation Program

Based on the discussion above, the following action recommendations for enhancing open space and recreation in Dover are proposed. In order to achieve a workable and realistic program, these actions will need to be implemented over varying time frames. For instance, some actions may require a relatively long time frame to implement, while others should be addressed over a much shorter term. The Natural and Historic Resources Chapter of this Plan also has recommendations that may be applicable to open space.

The implementation program organizes the recommendations discussed in the chapter by type of activity and identifies the local department and entities that will be most responsible for carrying out the actions. These categories are organization and management, inventory, funding, and improvements.

The timeline involves the following classifications for each action:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Ongoing | Actions which are continuous or are already being carried out |
| Immediate | Actions which should be undertaken in 1-2 years |
| Short | Actions which should be undertaken within 3-5 years |
| Long | Actions which will take more than 5 years to be initiated or completed. |

Organization and Management

1. Establish a standing Open Space Committee to improve open space and recreation opportunities in Dover.	Immediate	City Council, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
2. Institute a coordinated field allocation system for all City fields that would provide for a single field coordinator.	Immediate	City Council, School Department, Recreation Dept.
3. Develop clear criteria for open space acquisition and protection.	Immediate	Open Space Committee
4. Prepare a detailed open space acquisition plan that clearly defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisitions on both a ward by ward and a City-wide basis.	Short	Open Space Committee
5. Develop an open space management plan that evaluates the use of existing City-owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements.	Short	Open Space Committee
6. The City shall take appropriate actions to clearly communicate to the NHDOT and NH Division of Parks and Recreation the desire to protect Hilton State Park.	Immediate	City Council

Inventory

7. Complete an accurate inventory of currently protected open space parcels.	Ongoing/ Immediate	Open Space Committee, GIS Technician, Assessors Office
8. Complete an inventory of areas in Dover that should be targeted for varying levels of protection or areas to be used as recreation sites. Prepare a map showing where open space and recreation sites are needed.	Immediate / Short	Open Space Committee, Planning Department, Recreation Department
9. Maintain an inventory of existing and desirable open space and recreation parcels on the City's GIS and ensure that the information is easy to update and accessible to all City departments.	Immediate	GIS Technician, Open Space Committee

Funding

10. Create a mechanism for funding and acquiring property that allows the City to react quickly to opportunities.	Immediate / Ongoing	City Council, Open Space Committee
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11. Support the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Commission (LCHC) in lobbying the State legislature to create a program that would provide funding to protect natural, cultural and historic resources.	Immediate / Ongoing	City Council, Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
12. Allocate an established amount of funding to the Conservation Fund each year as a regular budget item to supplement the revenue generated by the Current Use change fee.	Ongoing	City Council
13. Apply for grants and technical assistance available through non-profit, state and federal agencies for open space protection, development of recreational facilities, and trail construction.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
14. Work with local organizations who use existing facilities in order to raise funds for necessary improvements.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
15. Encourage business sponsorships, gifts and donations from individuals and corporations to create and improve open space and recreation areas.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
16. Encourage the Planning Board to negotiate with developers to obtain recreational facilities as part of the development process.	Ongoing	Planning Board, Planning Department, Recreation Department
17. Consider adopting an impact fee ordinance for the Recreation Department that would enable the City to collect fees to offset the fiscal impact of new development	Immediate	Planning Board, Planning Department, Recreation Department

Improvements

18. Continue to work with non-profit and volunteer organizations to improve recreational opportunities and enhance existing open space areas.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee, City Council
19. Continue to pursue development of the Strafford County property for City-wide open space and recreational purposes.	Immediate /Ongoing	Recreation Department, Open Space Committee
20. Implement erosion control program along the Bellamy River in Bellamy Park.	Immediate	Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
21. Complete the improvements to Long Hill Memorial Park such as providing playground equipment, picnic tables, a trail system and an open grass area.	Ongoing	Recreation Department
22. Construct a new park building in Bellamy Park to provide an area for functions, day care facilities, and to be used as a warming hut.	Immediate	Recreation Department

23. Pursue the development of 12 additional athletic fields to meet existing demand for soccer, football and lacrosse, Little League, and baseball/softball.	Immediate	Recreation Department
24. Acquire property adjacent to Bellamy Park in order to create a buffer between the park and surrounding development	Immediate	Open Space Committee, Recreation Department, City Council
25. Repair the basketball courts at Garrison Elementary School, Horne Street School, and Hancock Park.	Short / Ongoing	School Department, Recreation Department
26. Upgrade the playground equipment at the Woodman Park School, Horne Street School, Morningside Park, and Amanda Howard Park.	Short / Ongoing	Recreation Department, School Department
27. Renovate the wading pool at Butterfield Gym to create a play area fountain.	Short	Recreation Department
28. Renovate or relocate the amphitheater and bandshell in Henry Law Park.	Short	Recreation Department
29. Expand the Dover Ice Arena in order to provide a second sheet of ice and more interior athletic space for the public.	Short	Recreation Department
30. Enclose the Jenny Thompson Pool by providing a removable structure that would cover the pool in the winter but allow open-air swimming in the summer.	Short	Recreation Department
31. Evaluate the rebuilding or re-location of the softball fields in Guppy Park to accommodate adult softball games.	Short	Recreation Department
32. Improve the parking area in Guppy Park near the softball fields in connection with the proposed addition of a Park & Ride.	Short	Recreation Department
33. Improve the parking area in Henry Law Park by improving access for the disabled and creating additional space.	Short	Recreation Department
34. Extend the Cochecho River Walk through Maglaras Park.	Short	Community Services, Recreation Department, Conservation Commission
35. Construct two additional recreation fields at Maglaras Park.	Short	Recreation Department
36. Construct up to four tennis courts and two basketball courts at Maglaras Park.	Short	Recreation Department
37. Consider the creation of a sledding hill or snowboard area in Maglaras Park.	Short	Recreation Department
38. Enhance Garrison Hill Park through landscaping and erosion control improvements.	Short	Recreation Department

39. Extend the Bellamy Park ski trails behind the Dover Middle/High School.	Short	Recreation Department, Dover School Department
40. Repair and resurface the running track at Woodman Park School.	Short	School Department, Recreation Department
41. Create a landscaped picnic area at the Horne Street School.	Short	School Department, Recreation Department
42. Provide tot lot equipment, park benches and vehicle barriers on Hancock Street at Hancock Park.	Short	Recreation Department
43. Improve landscaping and the turf at Park Street Park.	Short	Recreation Department
44. Provide a shelter with picnic tables at Applevale Park.	Short	Recreation Department
45. Renovate the multi-purpose fields at Maglaras Park and Garrison Elementary School.	Long / Ongoing	Recreation Department, School Department
46. Plan and create a City-wide greenbelt by linking open space and recreation facilities.	Long	Open Space Committee
47. Replace the bridge over the Bellamy River within Bellamy Park	Long	Community Services, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
48. Develop a trail system within Guppey Park.	Long	Conservation Commission, Recreation Department
49. Expand Butterfield Gym and pool complex to provide an expanded fitness area and additional office space.	Long	Recreation Department
50. Provide additional amenities at Maglaras Park such as a new parking lot, bleachers, and restroom facilities.	Long	Recreation Department
51. Provide lighted softball and other related fields at Maglaras Park for use by adults.	Long	Recreation Department
52. Develop a trail system within Maglaras Park for fitness, walking and biking.	Long	Recreation Department
53. Re-install two full-length basketball courts at the Dover Middle/High School.	Long	School Department, Recreation Department
54. Improve trails through the wooded area at Garrison Elementary School.	Long	School Department, Recreation Department
55. Construct a multi purpose field and a basketball court at Morningside Park.	Long	Recreation Department

Appendix 1 – Open Space Inventory Worksheet