

Borough of

Highlands

Recreation and Open Space Plan



Monmouth County, New Jersey

February 2008

~ Prepared by T&M Associates ~

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS

FEBRUARY 2008

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Recreation and Open Space Plan Element

Borough of Highlands, County of Monmouth

February 2008

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INTRODUCTION

This plan's focus is to provide guidance regarding the location, acquisition, development, and improvement of an optimum distribution of neighborhood and Borough wide recreation and open space areas. Such areas should provide for a variety of uses and be easily accessible. The Plan also incorporates the need for a cooperative and coordinated working relationship between the Borough's Recreation Department, the School District, and the Borough in order to most effectively and efficiently provide the needed and desired facilities.

The plan includes an inventory of existing open space and recreation resources, an analysis of present and future open space needs, and identifies lands that have the potential for meeting community needs. The plan establishes open space objectives, identifies the actions needed to achieve the objectives, and maps a proposed open space and recreation system for the Highlands Borough.

This Master Plan Element focuses on exploring options for improving deficiencies in the Borough's available recreation and open space lands, engaging the community and creating a custom solution that is suitable for Highlands. It is designed to set a clear vision and to confirm the steps required to achieve the vision.

The resulting framework will be workable, dynamic and sustainable. It will be flexible and adaptable, yet clear and strong. It will reflect Highlands as a community in transition, moving towards improving the quality-of-life of its residents.

RELATIONSHIP TO COUNTY RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN¹

On August 21, 2006, the Monmouth County Park System adopted the Monmouth County Open Space Plan. The purposes of the Plan are to:

1. Establish direction and priorities for the Land Preservation Program of the Monmouth County Park System;
2. Communicate the Park System's Vision to other agencies and the public; and
3. Satisfy the Statutory Requirements of N.J.S.A 40:12-15.2 Governing "County Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Funds."

This Plan builds upon two other open space plans that were prepared by the County. These include the:

- Recreation Services Plan, adopted by the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners on June 27, 2001, which establishes the Park System's goals and objectives for recreation services and articulates the Park System's role as one of many recreation providers in the county.
- The Park Development and Maintenance Plan, adopted by the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners on February 24, 2003, includes a description of existing park

¹ Monmouth County Park System, Monmouth County Open Space Plan, August 21, 2006.

improvements and general maintenance requirements, Plan goals, objectives and strategies/ actions, and a list of anticipated development projects.

The 2006 Plan in the Additions to Existing County Parks section indicates the following two recommended improvements for lands that are within Highlands or adjacent to its borders. These include:

- Hartshorne Woods Park – Acquire additional open space lands adjacent to the park to infill the irregular boundaries of the park. Increase access to the Navesink River for views and water activities.
- Henry Hudson Trail Additions – Improve the entrance to Popamora Point within Popamora Park. Other improvements include the creation of off-street parking and activity areas along the southerly extension of the park and to eliminate gaps in continuous trail and incompatible neighbor uses, which includes trail realignment in difficult areas. It is the intent for the Henry Hudson trail to link with the multi-use path at Gateway/Sandy Hook via the potential new Route 36 Highlands Bridge.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE AREAS

Recreation Space Classification. The following is a list of recreation area classifications and respective definitions that are referenced throughout this Plan:

Mini-parks are specialized facilities serving a limited population. They are typically one acre or less in area and located in neighborhoods in close proximity to apartments, townhouses, or age restricted housing. The facilities within a mini-park may be oriented to serve a specific population such as tots or senior citizens. A benchmark park system standard for mini-parks is 0.25 to 0.5 acres per 1,000 people.

Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds are ideally 15 acres or more in area and developed for a diversity of active recreation uses such as water contact activities, field sports, court sports, playground apparatus, designed to meet the needs of a neighborhood population of up to 5,000 people. Neighborhood parks should be located to have safe walking and bicycle access for the benefit of children. A benchmark park system standard for neighborhood parks is 1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 people.

Community Parks are larger parks, 25 acres or more in area, that are designed to serve more than one neighborhood. Community parks may contain areas for both passive and active recreation. Passive areas may include natural features or areas reserved for viewing, sitting, or picnicking. Active areas may include playgrounds, swimming pools, skating rinks, athletic fields, court sports, and similar athletic complexes for organized activities and team competitions. A benchmark park system standard for community parks is 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people.

Linear Parks are areas developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, such as walking, bicycling, horseback riding, canoeing, or pleasure driving. Linear parks may include active play areas. Such parks are sometimes also termed "greenways" or, when they follow water corridors, "blueways" . A linear park may follow built or natural corridors such as utility rights-of-way, vegetation patterns, or roads, to link parks or community facilities such as schools and libraries. The linear park should be wide enough to protect the desired resource and accommodate mobility for the desired modes of transportation. There is no benchmark park system area standard for linear parks.

Special Use Areas are parks or recreation areas that serve a specialized or single purpose. Examples are golf courses, marinas, zoos, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, gun ranges, outdoor theatres, areas that preserve, maintain, or interpret historic buildings or sites, and plazas or squares near commercial centers, boulevards or parkways. There is no benchmark park system area standard for special use areas.

The total benchmark standard for the close-to-home park space, in the mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks provided by municipal government, is 6.25 to 10.5 acres per thousand population.

INVENTORY OF PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The starting point for a needs assessment is the inventory of existing public and private open space and recreation resources within the Borough. The inventory provides a baseline of information for developing a local open space plan to meet public recreation and open space needs.

The Highlands Borough's inventory of park and recreational facilities is related to its location in New Jersey near the Sandy Hook Bay and the Navesink River. The early development patterns of this area of the State play a significant role in the distribution of recreation and open space resources.

Most of the Borough's local close-to-home active recreational open space is found in smaller neighborhood parks and in mini-parks.

The total area of the Borough is approximately 0.7 square miles. Of this, nearly the entire Borough is developed. Thus, the Borough is limited in its options for providing new outdoor recreation and open space.

EXHIBIT 1 - DEDICATED PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION LAND HIGHLANDS BOROUGH, NEW JERSEY*

	<u>Area (Acres)</u>	<u>Percent of Borough Area</u>
State of New Jersey	5.2	28.4%
Monmouth County	2.5	15.3%
Highlands Borough	8.7	52.7%
Total Area	16.4	100%

STATE PARKS

The Twin Lights National Historic Site, which comprises the lighthouse and surrounding grounds contains 5.1 acres. Gertrude Ederle Park, a 0.1 acre green space adjacent to the Highlands Bridge, pays tribute to the American swimming great who became the first woman to swim the English Channel in 1926. She trained in the nearby swift currents of the Shrewsbury River.

COUNTY PARKS

Monmouth County maintains and operates a scenic lookout at the top of Mount Mitchell, which provides scenic views to Sandy Hook and surrounding lands and waterways. While not located in Highlands, Popamora Park, which is located in Atlantic Highlands, is on the Borough's municipal border. While Popamora Park is located in Atlantic Highlands, vehicular access to the park is obtained through Highlands.

HIGHLANDS BOROUGH PARKS

Highlands has ten (10) sites dedicated to recreation and open space use. The sites total 8.6 acres and are distributed throughout the Borough.

EXHIBIT 2 - INVENTORY OF BOROUGH PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

NO.	PARK	APPROX. SITE ACREAGE
1	Veterans Memorial Park	2.2
2	R.D. Wilson Community Center	2.4
3	Matthews Street Beach	0.91
4	Miller Street Beach	0.42
5	Huddy Park	0.46
6	South Bay Avenue Beach	0.39
7	Beach Association	0.84
8	Public Park (near Route 36)	0.07
9	Open Space	0.65
10	Open Space	0.42
TOTAL		8.7

Individual parks in Highlands have been classified based on their size, location and function as either mini-parks, neighborhood parks, or special use areas. Each of the Borough parks is described below.

VETERANS RIVERFRONT PARK

Veterans Riverfront Park is a 2.2 acre special use park located at Bay and Shrewsbury Avenues. Active recreation facilities include one (1) basketball court, and a children’s playground. No off-street parking exists within the park. Passive recreation facilities include walking areas and benches. The park includes memorials dedicated to Veterans and the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks on New York City. The park is maintained by the Borough of Highlands.

Scheduled Park Renovations

Resurfacing of the basketball court.

Park Condition Assessment

The park is well maintained.

Recommended New Park Facilities

Park upgrades are pending approval and may include the Memoria Project - enhancements – lighting, walkways, boardwalk along the river, etc.

COMMUNITY CENTER

The Highlands Recreation operates a 4,000 (+/-) square foot community center, which provides indoor meeting space for the community. Situated adjacent to the Community Center Park and beach, it serves as the recreation focal point of the Borough. Active recreation facilities at the community center facilities include a tennis court, basketball court, skate park and beach volleyball.

Center/Park Condition Assessment

Renovations to the community center consisting of: Complete interior & exterior renovations: main floor – bathrooms, kitchen, foyer, main room, lighting, air conditioning, heating, floors, ceilings, windows, doors, siding, roof, ADA accessible ramps, doors, fixtures have recently been completed.

Additional park renovations included the resurfacing of the tennis, basketball courts and the playground structure. Courts now have an interlocking sports surface with adjustable basketball pole/ backboard systems and roll away tennis net. The playground structure consists of a cable climber piece with wood carpet safety surface. Other improvements include new fencing and associated walkway and drainage repairs.

**EXHIBIT 3
ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES
WITHIN HIGHLANDS BOROUGH PARKS**

Number of Uses	Active Recreation Uses
1	Tennis Courts
2	Basketball Courts
0	Football Field
1 multi-use*	Soccer Fields
0	Stadium
See Soccer	Baseball Fields/Softball Fields
3	Playgrounds
3	Pools / Beaches
1	Henry Hudson Trail (Biking)

The recently made improvements fully rehabilitated the community center. The scheduled renovations to the active recreation areas adjacent to the community center will fully rehabilitate these facilities.

Recommended New Park Facilities

None

HUDDY PARK

Huddy Park is a 0.46 acre neighborhood park located at Waterwitch and Bay Avenues. It is predominantly a passive park which provides public space near the Borough's downtown.

Park Condition Assessment

The water fountain has recently been repaired at the park. Accordingly, the park is in good condition; however, littering continues to be a problem at the park.

Recommended New Park Facilities/Improvements

As a gateway location into the Borough, this Plan recommends placing additional ornamental plantings to beautify this park.

BOROUGH BEACHES

The Borough is fortunate to operate four (4) beaches; Matthews Street Beach, Snug Harbor Beach (Community Center), Miller Street Beach and South Bay Avenue Beach, which are equally distributed along the Borough's waters edge.

Scheduled Renovations

- None

Recommended New Facilities

Snug Harbor Beach:

- Restroom / Storage facilities
- Improved walkway to beach area for access
- Crosswalk / Flood gate replacement
- Parking area improvements (Beach Blvd)

Miller Street Beach:

- Restroom / Storage facilities
- Improved walkway to beach area for access
- Parking lot improvements

South Bay Ave Beach:

As part of any proposed replacement of the Highlands' Bridge, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) proposes the creation of a fishing pier to off-set the loss of parklands as a result of the potential construction of a larger bridge. This improvement is contingent upon the implementation of a new bridge by NJDOT.

ADDITIONAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

Marine place bulkhead – Improvements/repair to street lighting, fishing access, and bulkhead

Ederle Park – repairs to the existing retaining wall, walkway and fencing.

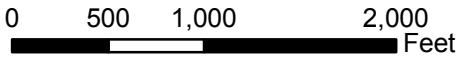


Open Space and Recreation

- Municipal
- Board of Education
- County
- State

T&M 11 Tindall Road
 Middletown, NJ 07748-2792
 Phone: 732-671-6400
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Exhibit 4
Recreation and Open Space Lands
Borough of Highlands
Monmouth County, New Jersey



Prepared by: PNR, August 8, 2007, Revised January 3, 2008
 Source: Highlands Borough GIS
 File Path: H:\HGHL\00440\GIS\Projects\basemap.mxd



NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION PROGRAMS

The Borough of Highlands Recreation Department is operated under the direction of the governing body. The Department focuses on conducting recreational activities, sports, leisure, educational and special events. These programs are offered through the Robert D. Wilson Memorial Community Center and the use of other facilities – Kavookjian Field, Henry Hudson Regional School facilities, and the Highlands Elementary School. Some of the Recreation Departments programs include: After School Drop-In programs for children and teens, senior citizen group activities on a weekly basis. In addition the Department offers programs or provides access to residents to participate in baseball, softball, tennis, basketball, volleyball, kickball, arts and crafts, soccer, football, swimming, and many special events throughout the year.

All citizens have access to these programs. Costs are based on fees assessed by the sponsoring organization, i.e., Sandy Hook Little League runs the baseball / softball program and has a set fee for participation. Football is offered through the Keansburg Pop Warner program. The Highlands Recreation Department and the Atlantic Highlands Recreation Committee jointly offer soccer that has a user fee. The Highlands Recreation Department also provides many programs and special events to residents for free. These programs include the local basketball league for 4th, 5th, 6th grade, adult open gyms for volleyball, basketball and indoor soccer, movies on the beach, and the Summer Kidfest for children. In addition, there are holiday events including Halloween, Christmas, Easter, as well as the annual Clamfest, Baby Costume Contest and an annual September Fishing Derby.

The Recreation Department office is located at the Robert D. Wilson Memorial Community Center on 22 Snug Harbor Avenue. The Recreation Department's staff is comprised of two full-time positions: the Director of Recreation and one recreation program assistant. In addition, there are 3 part-time program persons for the drop-in programs, 2 part-time program aides, and approximately 10 seasonal positions, and 6 Lifeguards that are hired for the summer.

The Recreation Department believes that a strong recreation and open space program creates numerous benefits to the Highlands Borough. These benefits include:

- **Personal Benefits** of strengthening self-esteem, improving health & fitness and reducing stress
- **Social Benefits** of building stronger families, reducing isolation, promoting ethnic & cultural harmony, and providing positive alternatives to anti-social behavior
- **Economic Benefits** of contributing to a more productive workforce and being a catalyst for community involvement in issues related to the overall quality of life.
- **Environmental Benefits** of protecting and maintaining Parks, Natural Areas, and Open Spaces that contributes to overall community livability.

The Recreation Department is responsible for managing the municipal recreation programs. The Department is well organized. They have prepared a Strategic Plan which identifies the Department's mission statement, vision, goals, program inventory and scheduled improvements. However, a more formal approach is needed to organize its efforts with the Borough's overall efforts and a means of funding and implementing necessary park and recreation improvements. A primary goal of this Plan is to provide strategic recommendations for continued growth in the recreation program, the acquisition of available open space and facilities, and improvements to the organizational structure of recreation services.

Over the past several years, Highlands's Recreation Department has had continued success in improving and expanding its programs. However, as recreation demand increases so does the demand on staff, maintenance and existing facilities. As indicated in the needs analysis, there is a shortfall in the amount of recreation and open space lands needed within the Borough. Shortfalls in recreation land and the recent increased demand from municipal recreation programs results in a significant gap between the demand for recreation and the Borough's ability to satisfy all recreation needs.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION PROGRAMS – SERVICES OFFERED

The Recreation Department of Highlands sponsors programs and helps facilitate participation by promoting recreation and leisure activities and other events for children, youth, teens, adults and the senior citizen population. The following is a listing of some of the programs offered:

1. After School Drop In Program: Teen Zone
2. After School Drop In Program: Kids on the Move
3. Youth Soccer (Operated in cooperation with the Atlantic Highlands Rec. Committee)
4. Pop Warner Football (Participation in the Keansburg Pop Warner Program)
5. Kids Fishing Derby
6. Halloween Parade
7. Senior Citizen Halloween Program
8. Senior Citizen Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon
9. Annual Holiday Breakfast with Santa
10. Annual Holiday Helpers – (Holiday child care program)
11. Annual Senior Holiday Luncheon
12. Youth Basketball League at Highlands Elementary School
13. Adult Volleyball program
14. Adult Indoor Soccer program at Henry Hudson Regional School
15. Adult Basketball Program
16. Annual St. Pat's Luncheon for Seniors
17. Annual Egg Hunt and Candy Bingo
18. Volunteer Youth Sports Coaches Training
19. Baseball / Softball sponsored by Sandy Hook Little League
20. Senior Memorial Program and Luncheon
21. Annual Pepsi Pitch Hit and Run Event
22. Senior Salute to the 6th Grade Class of H.E.S
23. Soccer Camp (provided by outside vendor)
24. Pony Share Program (provided by outside vendor)

- 25. Movies on the Beach (2)
- 26. Summer Kidfest (7 week summer program)
- 27. Summer Kids Connection (after program drop-in activities)
- 28. Annual Baby Costume Contest at Clamfest
- 29. National Night Out
- 30. Mad Science Camp (provided by outside vendor)

In addition to the Recreation Department offerings, the Community Center provides meeting or event space to over 30 groups during the year. These uses include either one time events or regularly scheduled meetings. Events include but are not limited to health screenings, blood drives, boating safety programs, and meetings for homeowner associations, the historical society, the garden club, the Cub Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Police Department, and municipal alliance activities. The Community Center/Recreation Department also acts as an informational and referral resource for residents or visitors in search of assistance for either recreation, leisure or other human service type needs. These requests range from local to county, state or federal programs or services that may be required.

SCHOOL RECREATION FACILITIES

There are two schools within Highlands Borough. The existing schools are limited in the outdoor recreation space and facilities they provide. The Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Objectives section of this Plan recommends creating a recreation and open space advisory board.

EXHIBIT 5 - INVENTORY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

SCHOOL	CURRENT FACILITIES	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS
1) Henry Hudson Regional School	Lower Field – One multi-use field Junior varsity field Upper Field – One multi-use field Softball and field hockey field	None
2) Highlands Elementary School	Practice field limited to children up to 8 years old. Baseball field Lower playground area – basketball court	None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC SITES

Highlands contains landmark sites that are listed or are eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. At the time of adoption of the 2004 Master Plan, the Twin Lights and the Route 36 Bridge were identified as the only two historic sites in Highlands. In September of 2004, Bahr's Landing and Marina, located at 2 Bay Avenue, the Murray/Masciale House, located on Lighthouse Road and the Wodward/Schenck Tavern/House archaeological site were identified as being eligible for historic status. In October of 2006, the Twin Lights was recognized as a national historic landmark. Currently, less than 2,500 national historic landmarks in the United States bear this national distinction.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The needs analysis for open space in Highlands Borough estimates the land area which should be owned and controlled by the Borough and dedicated for public use and access for outdoor recreation. To evaluate the need for parkland, generally accepted planning standards are applied based upon the Borough's population and land area and its existing inventory of recreation facilities and parkland. In addition, the needs analysis takes into account the community's demand for different types of recreation facilities and activities. This was accomplished through key person interviews with Borough officials involved with recreation programming and through the public participation process. Finally, consideration is given to the need for open space to protect the important natural resources of the Borough.

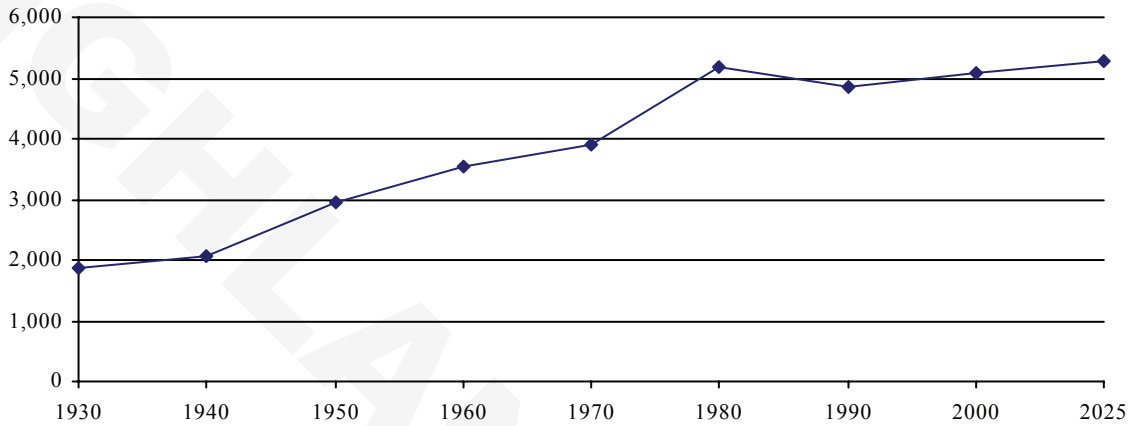
To analyze the current and future need for close-to-home park and recreation land controlled by the Borough, three methods were used. One method is based upon the allocation of land to different uses within a community. The second method is based upon total community population. The third method is based upon professional judgment based upon interviews with Highlands stakeholders, field investigation, existing demographics, citizen survey responses, an evaluation of user participation levels and services offered in the Borough's recreation program.

OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS

Highlands relies on Middletown Township for a portion of its active and passive recreation needs. As a built out community (minimal unimproved land exists in the Borough), minimal opportunities to construct outdoor recreation areas on unimproved vacant land exist. While several opportunities exist to construct small playgrounds or tot lots, creative solutions are necessary to consolidate sufficient land to construct outdoor fields for soccer, baseball, etc. Consequently, to ensure that the Borough can provide residents with a variety of needed recreation programs and facilities, there should be short and long term strategies to reduce recreation shortfalls.

Population characteristics are important considerations in park and recreation planning. Since 1980, the Borough's population has been somewhat level. Ranging from 5,187 in 1980 to 5,097 in 2000. Less than 200 persons are projected to be located within the Borough from 2000 to 2025. The Borough of Highlands is a dense community, with 7,964 people per square mile, which makes Highlands the fifth densest community in Monmouth County.

**EXHIBIT 6
POPULATION 1930-2025
BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS BOROUGH**



**EXHIBIT 7
POPULATION 1930-2000
BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS BOROUGH**

Year	Population	No. Change
1930	1,877	
1940	2,076	+199
1950	2,959	+883
1960	3,536	+577
1970	3,916	+380
1980	5,187	+1,271
1990	4,849	-338
2000	5,097	+248
2025	5,270	+173

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1930-2000. New Jersey Dept. of Labor Estimates & The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Highlands is predominantly a built out community. New development and construction will primarily be in the form of redevelopment of existing buildings. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) projections for Highlands through the year 2025 anticipate the increase of approximately 173 persons. To determine Highlands' open space and recreation needs, two distinct methodologies were utilized.

The first analysis, called the Balanced Land Use Approach, estimates the land area which should be owned and controlled by the Borough and dedicated for public use and access for outdoor recreation. The second analysis, known as the Core System Standard, predicts the necessary amount of open space to protect the important natural resources and to retain a high quality of life for Borough residents.

Recreation is required to maintain a healthy way of life. What people do to recreate is a response to their internal needs and desires. The quality and quantity of recreational opportunities available to a community has a direct effect on the community's general quality of life. To satisfy the recreational needs and wishes of an entire community, many variables must be considered. It is important to realize that the recreational opportunities will serve a variety of different individuals. To ensure that the Borough can provide residents with a variety of needed recreation programs and facilities, there should be a core system of lands owned and controlled by the Borough and dedicated to local public recreation use.

Estimate of Need Based Upon Balanced Land Use Standards

The first estimation method is the Balanced Land Use approach. Balanced Land Use is the methodology utilized by the State of New Jersey to calculate public open space needs. This approach estimates the *minimum* land area in Highlands that should be dedicated as Borough public open space. The approach takes into consideration that recreation and open space demands are generated by development, which will occupy the remaining land area of the Borough.

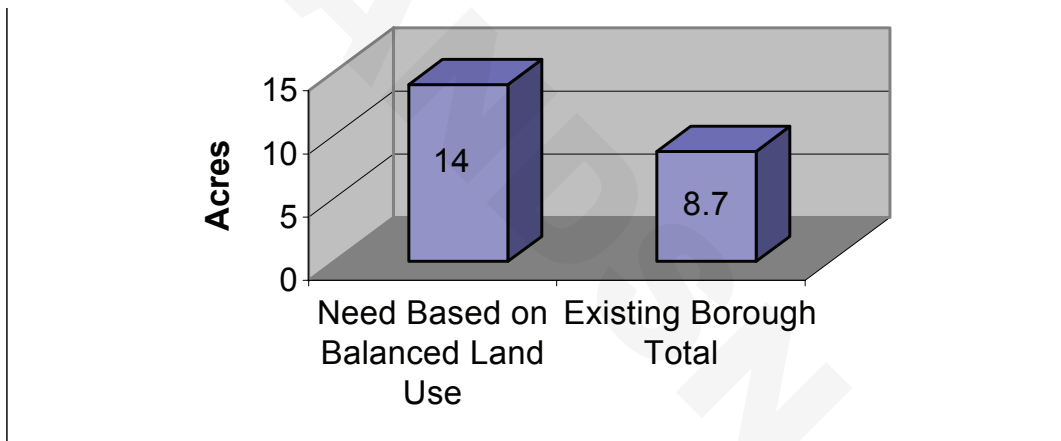
The Balanced Land Use Standard indicates that individual municipalities should set aside 3% of their developed and developable area for recreation. The guidelines also suggest 7% be set aside by each county, 10% by the state, and 4% by the federal government. Undevelopable land such as wetlands and land preserved as open space by the County or State governments is subtracted out of the total land area to calculate the municipal need for public recreation and open space land.

EXHIBIT 8 - BALANCED LAND USE CALCULATION

	ACRES
Total Township Area =	459
(-) Undeveloped Wetlands and Floodplains =	0
(-) State, and County Parklands =	8
Total =	451
<hr/>	
3% of Total =	13.5

Source: NJDEP GIS Data & T&M Associates

**EXHIBIT 9 - NEED FOR MUNICIPAL PARK AND RECREATION AREAS
(BALANCED LAND USE)**

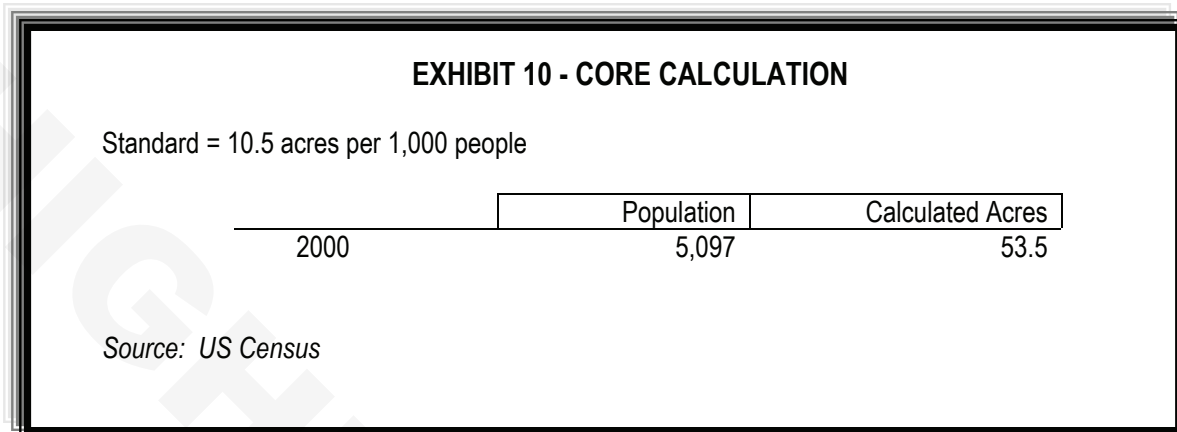


Compiled by: T&M Associates

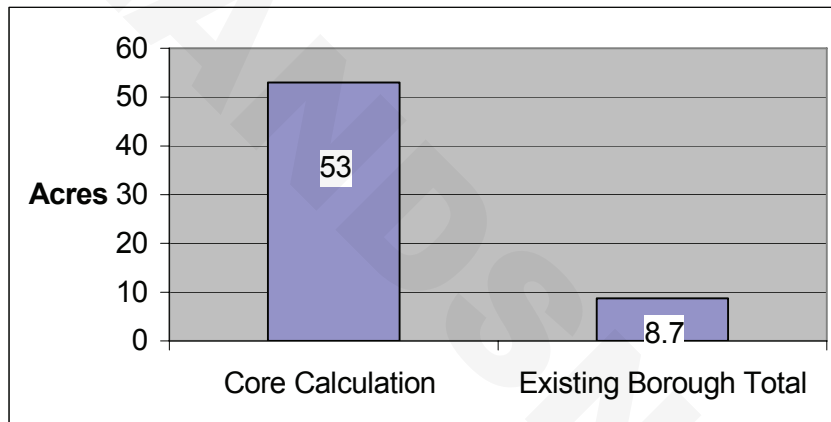
Using the Balanced Land Use standard, the estimated land required for local public recreation and open space in Highlands is 14 acres (see Exhibit CF-5). Based upon the existing 8.7 acres of park and recreation land in the Township, a deficit exists in comparison to the minimum suggested by the Balanced Land Use criteria.

Estimate of Need Based Upon Core System Standards

The second estimation of need method is the Core System standard. The National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) developed this method. The Core System standard is used to estimate need based on existing and projected population. The NPRA standards, published in the *NPRA Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, provide guidance for developing a core system of public parks for local close-to-home recreation uses. The standards suggest public park and recreation areas be provided to local residents at the ratio of 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 people.



**EXHIBIT 11 - NEED FOR MUNICIPAL PARK AND RECREATION AREAS
(CORE CALCULATION)**



Based upon the existing 8.7 acres of Borough park and recreation land and the Borough's 2000 population of 5,097 people, there is a shortfall of open space and parklands. In summary, the Core System approach suggests that the Township park system can not adequately support the existing or future population.

The Balanced Land Use Standard and the Core System Standard are methodologies that should be used with caution. They are intended to serve as a guide to determine the necessary open space in a community and are not an exact science. This Plan specifically recommends that the Borough create a Recreation and Open Space Committee to identify local recreation and open space needs.

Estimates of Needs Based upon Local Conditions

Site and Facility Needs

To determine future recreational needs, citizen surveys were analyzed, existing recreation and open space facilities were surveyed, stakeholders were interviewed, participation rates were analyzed and professional judgment was applied to create quantifiable park and recreation standards for Highlands. This Plan identifies Highlands as being under served by existing recreation and open space facilities. These areas are under served as a result of one or more of the following: (1) the recreation facilities which serve the area do not supply a wide enough range of recreation opportunities to meet neighborhood needs; (2) the area may be isolated from a recreation facility due to a highway or other high volume roadway; or (3) the existing and projected population of a particular area will create a much greater demand than the existing recreation facilities can provide or (4) the area may be outside of the service radius standard of an existing neighborhood park or playground.

This Plan previously addressed standards developed on a national basis using criteria developed by the Department of Interior and the National Recreation and Park Association. However, standards should be adapted to local circumstances and local demand levels, as is the case in Highlands. Standards act as guidelines for determining the quantity of park, recreation and open space areas and facilities that may be necessary in a community. Facility standards should be perceived as flexible and changing with the needs and attitudes of the public. They must be adjusted to reflect local interest levels, available land, population characteristics and anticipated future trends. This Plan identifies shortfalls of recreation and open space lands based upon the previously mentioned Balanced Land Use and Core Calculation methodologies. However, it is important to note that Highlands' location on the Sandy Hook Bay and the Shrewsbury River provides numerous active and passive recreation opportunities to its residents and the region.

Acquiring new parklands to provide outdoor recreation fields may be the greatest challenge facing Highlands recreation and open space future. In a community where the population density is high and where the land use is almost entirely developed, locating new park facilities to compensate for the lack of active recreation space will be challenging. Consideration should be given to incorporating plans for new parks in any redevelopment plans, acquisition of Brownfield sites, and expansion of the existing park system into areas of the community that are already built up. Ideally, in Highlands, several neighborhood level parks and facilities are more appropriate than one large community park. The focus to expand neighborhood parks in the community should predominate over the desire to centralize recreation and open space planning to one particular area of Highlands.

Facility standards for specific features used in this plan are shown in the following figure.

EXHIBIT 12 - PUBLIC RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITY STANDARDS DETERMINED FOR HIGHLANDS

Facility	Number/Population	Highlands's Need	Existing Facilities	Surplus/Deficit
Arboretum	1 per 500,000 or 1 per region	0	0	0
Athletic Complex	1 per 30,000	0	0	0
Baseball/Softball Field	1 each per 2,500	4	2 ²	-2
Football/Soccer Field	1 each per 2,500	4	2	-2
Lacrosse Field	One per community	1	0	-1
Tennis Court	1 per 3,000	2	1	-1
Basketball Court	1 per 5,000	1	2	+1
Botanical Garden	1 per 500,000 or 1 per region	0	0	0
Community Center	1 per community	1	1	0
Convention Center	1 per 500,000 or 1 per region	0	0	0
Golf Course 18 holes	1 per 50,000	0	0	0
Ice Skating Rink	1 per region	0	0	0
Major Pool (for competition)	1 per 30,000	0	0	0
Wading / Spray Pool / Beach	1 per 5,000 or 1 per neighborhood playground	1	3	+2
Outdoor Stadium	1 per 50,000	0	0	0
Playgrounds	1 per neighborhood	3	3	0
Volleyball Court	1 per 15,000	0	1	+1
Track & Field Facility	1 per 20,000	0	0	0
Bicycle Trails	Continuous system connecting recreational, educational and community facilities and other points of general community interest. One per community	1	1 ³	0
Picnic Areas	Areas developed according to public interest and site availability.	1	5	+4

Standard adjusted to the local needs and capabilities.

Taken from OUTDOOR RECREATION SPACE STANDARDS, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1970, or RECREATION PLANNING AND DESIGN, Seymour Gold, 1980.

The Recreation and Open Space Facility Standards table indicates that Highlands has several recreation and open space shortfalls. This table is designed as a barometer indication of local recreation and open space needs. It is important to note that because of Highlands' relatively low year-round population of 5,097 persons, existing needs may be greater than identified in Exhibit 13. Most notable, Highlands requires athletic fields to be utilized for soccer, football, baseball and softball. Collectively, a minimum of 2 new fields are recommended to service Highlands. However, rather than constructing individual fields, fields should be designed for multiple uses to be utilized for baseball and softball in the spring and summer and football and soccer in the fall. Designing fields under this approach will reduce the number of needed new fields in half. Accordingly, Highlands should construct one (1) new multi-purpose play field in Highlands or in an adjoining

² Two multi-use fields for baseball/softball and soccer are located at the Henry Hudson Regional School.

³ The Henry Hudson Trail – This trail is located on the shoulder of Shore Drive that currently allows on-street parking.

municipality in the immediate proximity to Highlands. This multi-purpose field could also be used for a Lacrosse program in the future.

Additional shortfalls have been identified as follows:

- One (1) tennis court
- One (1) lacrosse field

Popularity of New Sports

Recreation and open space planning must constantly react to changing needs and desires. The growth of such sports as soccer and lacrosse over the past decade is an indication of this trend. As a result, recreation planners are required to understand the facilities used for sports that scarcely exist today. Examples of new emergent recreation activities/facilities include: skate parks, dog parks, water parks, snow boarding, kite boarding and others.

Local Hiking - Local hiking, characterized by day trips, has undergone a long term trend of increasing popularity, particularly among those aged 40 years and over. Its highest participation rates come, however, in the age groups under 35 years. It is an activity that appeals to both genders and is expected to continue to appeal to age cohorts in their 40s, 50s, and 60s.

Fishing - Participation in fishing is highest in the age groups of 44 years and younger. The sport, however, has appeal throughout the life course and participation through the late 50s is significant. As an activity, it appeals primarily to men.

Nature Study / Wildlife Observation - The long term trend for nature study and wildlife observation has been one of increasing participation. Interest has been stimulated by general concern over the environment as well as television programming that feature nature subjects. As an activity, it has broad age appeal and continues into the retirement years.

Bicycling - Bicycling appeals to both genders and is expected to continue in popularity. Participation rates are highest among those ages 54 and under and have appeal as both a weekend family recreational activity and as a fitness activity. Mountain biking, in particular, has grown in recent popularity, creating conflicts in some case with trail use by hikers.

Golf - As a sport, golf enjoys stable participation from the ages 18 through 65. The demand for golf has increased with the "baby-boomer" generation. As this generation ages and enters its retirement years, the popularity and demand for golf is likely to continue. While there is not sufficient room for an 9 or 18 hole golf course in Highlands, the Borough could offer instruction at facilities in neighboring communities.

Swimming - Swimming includes pools and lakes. Although participation in swimming declines with age, all groups participate in the activity. It is highest among children and youth, but participation rates remain substantial for all age categories in the 60s. As an activity, it appeals equally to both genders. Its popularity is expected to continue with perhaps an increasing demand as the "baby-boomers" age.

Tennis - Tennis is most popular with the younger cohort's age 24 years and under. Participation then declines with age.

Roller Blading (In-Line Skating) - Roller blading has enjoyed increasing popularity. As an activity, it appeals primarily to pre-teens, teens, students, and young adults.

Outdoor Team Sports - Outdoor team sports include soccer, football, volleyball, basketball, softball, and baseball. Historically, participation in outdoor sports was concentrated among males. However, female participation has grown enormously and this trend is expected to continue.

Participation in team sports is age related and two periods of decline can be anticipated in a population. The first period comes at the end of the school years. For those no longer in school, participation drops off year by year. For those who continue team sports, a second period of decline in participation occurs between the ages 35 to 45. This second period is related to the increasing physical limitations and injury that come with age.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Developing partnerships with other government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector will be a critical component of the delivery of park and recreation services for the foreseeable future.

Participants in the Borough's recreation programs would benefit from utilizing facilities at non-Township recreation sites, which may include facilities at Popamora Park (Monmouth County Park) and the Highlands public school system. Historically, the Highlands Board of Education has shared both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities when not in use by the school system.

Monmouth County Parks System⁴

The Monmouth County Park System recently adopted an Open Space Plan in August of 2006. As indicated in the Plan, the County controls and operates 12,503 acres of land or 19.5 square miles in the form of regional parks, recreation areas, special use areas, conservation areas, golf courses, greenways, open lands and unclassified areas. A formal description of each type of park is discussed within the County Plan. Accordingly, Monmouth County provides significant recreation and open space opportunities to residents of Monmouth County and the region. Adjacent to the Highlands municipal border are the Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook and Pompamora Park located in Atlantic Highlands and Hartshorne Woods Park, located in Middletown.

Board of Education Facilities

There are presently two public schools in Highlands. These include the Henry Hudson Regional School and Highlands Elementary School. The Board of Education is currently implementing its Long Range Facilities Plan for their school system. As reported by the Borough Recreation Director, the Borough has an excellent working relationship with the Board of Education and utilizes Board of Education facilities on a regular basis. This Plan supports a continuation of this existing relationship.

Middletown Township

The only active recreation fields for baseball, soccer, football, etc. are located at the Henry Hudson Regional School and the Highlands Elementary School (used for children that are eight (8) and under). The Borough has deed restricted use of Kavookjian Field in Middletown Township for baseball, softball and soccer. However, it is anticipated that additional active recreation fields will be needed to expand existing programs and to accommodate projected growth.

⁴ Monmouth County Open Space Plan, Adopted August 21, 2006

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES FOR RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The Highlands Borough establishes the following goals, objectives, and policies for providing open space and recreation within the Borough and conserving its important natural and cultural resources.

GOALS FROM THE BOROUGH'S 2004 MASTER PLAN

1. Provide adequate park, open space, and recreational facilities for all Borough residents.
2. Provide a marine landscape setting; to maximize public access to both informal and formal spaces; to capitalize on the Veterans Park formal play area and to develop areas of public art.
3. Encourage use of high quality landscaping design - to enhance dramatic views to the bay, to develop civic space and public art, to develop and to screen and integrate development.
4. Encourage the use of low maintenance, hard-wearing materials in parks and public places.
5. Cooperate with public and quasi-public institutions to utilize and maintain their undeveloped land for open space or recreation.
6. Consider enhancing regulations to assure that quality open space is provided and maintained as redevelopment occurs.
7. Provide through block pedestrian paths to parking and recreation facilities when feasible.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The development concept of this Recreation and Open Space Facilities Plan recognizes past and present trends, existing sites, assumptions, future needs and desires, and the need for cooperative planning and development. The concept is to locate, acquire, develop and improve a good distribution of both neighborhood and community recreation and open space areas that provide for a variety of recreation opportunities and are easily accessible. The improvement or development of neighborhood parks and playgrounds with their variety of features including play fields, play equipment, picnic facilities and other such features will provide residents with close to home recreation opportunities. Improvement and expansion of Highlands recreation facilities is necessary to improve recreation service. The improvement and development of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, tot-lots and small mini-parks will provide recreation opportunities close to where people live. This will enhance the neighborhood environment. Provision of facilities which will accommodate recreation programs needed by special population groups, such as elderly or disabled people, is also necessary. This includes development of new facilities and/or upgrading of existing facilities.

This Plan places a greater need on providing recreation needs in the form of neighborhood parks and playgrounds that contain active athletic fields rather than open space acquisition. A secondary, but equally important part of the Borough's park, recreation and open space planning, is the recognition of Highlands as a pedestrian and bike friendly community on the waterfront with the goal of increasing public access and public ownership of the waterfront. This includes retaining public view sheds to the waterfront as part of new development and redevelopment.

This Plan recognizes that Highlands is primarily built-out with limited opportunities for acquiring unimproved land. Strategies for increasing the amount of public recreation and open space properties must be creative and establish a strategy of incrementalism. By employing several action strategies and funding sources, over-time, the Borough's goal's will come to fruition.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

1. Designate and set aside a minimum of 4 additional acres of land for development of dedicated community park and recreation areas.

Improvements to existing facilities and the construction of new facilities (athletic fields, etc.) could enable the Borough to expand the programs it offers for organized team sports and the number of participants involved. Due to the limited number of fields, etc., in the Borough, and the strong competition to gain use of the fields, a defacto cap is placed on the number of individuals who can participate.

To accommodate future growth, Highlands Borough should acquire additional acreage and expand the Borough park system. This will help ensure that the Borough will have a core system of parkland, owned and controlled by the municipality that can support a variety of recreation facilities and programs needed by residents. This plan recommends four (4) additional acres of public park, recreation, and open space sites be included in the Borough system.

As there is limited vacant land in Highlands, consideration should be given to leasing or purchasing lands in Middletown Township for this purpose. As an alternative, the Borough should continue opportunities to share fields with Middletown Township.

2. Develop at least one new large neighborhood park and recreation area.

The Borough lacks any large neighborhood park and recreation areas. To accommodate future growth and development, the Borough should plan at least one large neighborhood park having at least two (2) multipurpose fields. The park(s) should be accessible to the resident population by a variety of modes of transit including automobile, walking, and bicycling.

3. Create a boat ramp (Car Launch Only)

During the creation of the 2004 Master Plan and during stakeholder interviews to create this Plan in 2007, the single greatest desire of Borough residents is a boat ramp. At this time it has been determined that there are limited opportunities to create a boat launch ramp that is accessed by trailers do to limited available waterfront property, cost and the availability of deep water along the bay front.

As an alternative, this Plan proposes the creation of a non-motorized boat launch area, possibly utilizing the area at Waterwitch Beach.

4. *Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church (OLPH)*

Located on Route 36 near Miller Street exists the OLPH religious use. While religious uses are considered to be inherently beneficial to communities, there is concern that this facility may be vacated by the religious use in the near future. If the one (1) acre facility is vacated, the Borough should consider strategies to include it within its system of recreation facilities primarily for additional indoor recreation and meeting space.

5. *Create a public pier or waterfront promenade*

With the exception of Veteran's Park, limited public spaces or access exist along the Borough's waterfront. While the Borough has public beaches and areas for fishing, an opportunity exists to develop a waterfront pier or a public promenade. The intent is to make the waterfront accessible to the public to the greatest extent possible. Concepts to develop a municipal marina and pier have been discussed in Borough Planning documents since 1994. Ideally, waterfronts are developed with continuous public access. Given that Highlands' is a fully developed community, a lesser goal of creating a public pier or waterfront promenade has been identified in this Plan. The goal is to create a place that is accessed by other means than private vehicles. Ideally, this area would be frequented by pedestrians, bicycles, boats in addition to cars. Also, the development of such a space should include wayfinding signs. While multiple locations are appropriate to implement this recommendation. Areas near and adjacent to Veteran's Park should be considered first.

6. *Use of Shore Drive as a "shared road" bike path and paving improvements*

The northern section of the Henry Hudson trail extends from Aberdeen to Atlantic Highlands. In Highlands along Shore Drive from the area adjacent to Pompamora Park to the Highlands Bridge, signs are in place indicating the intended use of the shoulder as a continuation of the Henry Hudson Trail. From a recreation and open space perspective, the creation of a dedicated trail along the shoulder of Shore Drive would be ideal. However, Highlands, the fifth densest community in Monmouth County requires this space for the parking of vehicles. Over the years, the concept of converting Shore Drive and Bay Avenue into a one-way circulation loop has been discussed. This concept would create the necessary space to construct a dedicated bike lane from Atlantic Highlands to Sandy Hook. This Plan recognizes the need to analyze the feasibility of converting these roadways into a one-way system. This study should analyze the net gain or loss of on-street parking, any potential circuitous vehicular movements as a result of implementing this alternative, costs and implementation mechanisms.

Nonetheless, this Plan recommends activities that encourage sharing the roadway to encourage bicycle users having a seamless connection from Atlantic Highlands through Highlands to Sandy Hook. For this to occur, improvements through Pompamora Park to Shore Drive are required. This Plan also recognizes the deteriorating condition of Shore Drive and a need to improve the existing condition of the pavement.

7. *Link the Henry Hudson trail to Popamora Park in Atlantic Highlands*

The 2006 Monmouth County Open Space Plan recommends improvements to the entrance to Popamora Point and to eliminate gaps in the continuous trail to link with the multi-use path at Gateway/Sandy Hook via any Highlands Bridge improvements. This Plan supports improvements to Popamora Park that improve the connection to the portion of the trail within Highlands.

8. *Pedestrian/public walkway improvements on Marine Place*

Around 2002 bulkhead and streetscape improvements were constructed on Marine Place. To date the bollard style decorative street lights have been vandalized, paint is chipping on the bulkhead, and landscaping is in poor condition. Overall, this area of the Borough requires improvements. This Plan recommends removing the existing broken lights. Given that vandalism has occurred in this area, the Borough will have to consider whether they wish to replace this amenity. At a minimum, the bulkhead should be repainted. Areas for pedestrian activity should be maintained. Ideally, the garden club or another local entity would embrace this area with volunteerism as seasonal landscaping improvements that provide visual interest throughout the year are needed.

9. *Plant additional shade trees*

Trees are important to urban and suburban areas. The planting, maintenance, and protection of trees benefit the urban and suburban environment. Planting or preserving trees in strategic locations can reduce energy demand in buildings and heating and cooling costs. Trees are beneficial for stormwater management, for controlling erosion, and for masking urban noise. Trees can mitigate the adverse impacts of the urban heat island effect. When planted in parking lots and streets, trees are effective in cooling and beautifying the urban and suburban environment.

The Tree City USA® program, sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides technical assistance, national recognition and other services for community forestry programs throughout the country. According to the National Arbor Day Foundation⁵, every community, regardless of size, benefits in different ways from being a Tree City USA. Benefits include: education, public image, citizen pride, financial assistance and publicity. This Conservation Master Plan recommends applying for designation as a Tree City USA® community. This Plan recommends that the Borough take the necessary steps to be designated as a Tree City USA®.

10. *Investigate with Borough Council increased police surveillance and enforcement at parks*

To discourage vandalism, littering and other activities that impact the general welfare of the community, this Plan recommends to Borough Council a need to increase police surveillance and enforcement within the parks.

11. *Create a Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee*

⁵ <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA.cfm>

To focus implementing capital improvements recommended in this plan and coordinating park maintenance, a recreation and open space advisory committee should be created. The committee should consist of a Council representative, Planning Board member, Recreation Director, Business Administrator, Police representative, public works representative and two (2) citizen members. The committee could meet monthly during initial implementation stages and quarterly thereafter. The committee should create a work plan each year to establish the desired level of annual performance.

The committee should be responsible for establishing the maintenance program and identifying individuals accountable for each facility.

12. Create a DPW park and beach maintenance plan.

This Plan recommends creating a Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee to oversee the development and maintenance of the Borough's existing recreation and open space lands. The creation of a formal plan for park and beach maintenance should be a priority effort of this newly created committee.

13. Incorporate in lieu payments into redevelopment planning projects.

As properties are redeveloped in the Borough over time, consideration should be given to requiring a recreation fee in lieu of providing on-site recreation at a subject property.

14. Optimize the use of existing facilities

The Borough should consider utilizing man-made surfaces such as artificial turf to maximize active play time on fields. Due the current demand on the Borough's fields, their grass and general condition are deteriorating since fields are not "rested".

15. Evaluate the existing recreation organizational structure

The Highlands Borough should evaluate the authority given to the Recreation Director to ensure the proper running of programs and maintenance of parks. Under the existing system, the Recreation Director does not have personnel under his authority to maintain parks, which affects the quality of recreation programs.

16. Continue a vigorous program of improving and maintaining Borough park and recreation facilities

The Borough's program to upgrade and maintain Borough park and recreation facilities needs to be ongoing. The Borough should continue this program and commit sufficient resources to ensure that all facilities are improved and maintained at a high level for the benefit of Borough residents and visitors.

17. Provide a stable source of funding for local open space and recreation and supplement those funds with other revenue sources.

The Borough, should establish a stable revenue source for the acquisition, development, and improvement of public parks, open spaces, historic sites, and recreation sites in the Borough. If a stable

funding source is established that is acceptable to the State, then the Borough may qualify for State grants of 50% of the cost of acquisition of land for recreation and conservation purposes. Upon a demonstration of special need or exceptional circumstances, the State grant may be increased to 75% of the acquisition cost.

18. Solicit grant monies to supplement local expenditures to satisfy Highlands's local recreation and open space needs.

The financing option section of this Plan in the State Funding section identifies several grant and service opportunities that could assist in implementing this Recreation and Open Space Plan. Independent of the "well known" Green Acres program, there are several other opportunities that the Borough should investigate. These include the following programs:

- Aid for Urban Environmental Concerns
- Athletics for Individuals with Disabilities
- Green Communities Challenge
- Paying Communities Back
- Recreation and Park Assistance
- Southern State Industries

19. Improve signs at parks in the community

The Borough should repair existing signs and add new signs for each park that indicates the rules and regulations.

20. Continue to monitor user fees for programs

The Borough should study user fees to participate in recreation programs. A balance exists between generating revenue to manage programs while still providing opportunities to the Borough's residents. It should be noted, that some of the costs incurred for recreation programs aren't directly related to the recreation program offerings, and shouldn't be expected to be recovered through user fees.

21. Provide bike racks at Seastreak ferry locations and other community facilities as necessary

This Plan recognizes a need to encourage nonvehicular circulation opportunities. The inclusion of bike racks at community facilities and public transportation nodes will support this goal.

22. Continue to provide fishing opportunities at the Highlands Bridge

At the time of the writing of this Plan, it is unclear whether the Highlands bridge will be replaced with a new bridge. As part of initial bridge plans prepared and/or approved by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), an area along the eastern side of the bridge was planned to be improved as having a handicapped accessible fishing pier. This Plan recognizes a need to continue to provide a public fishing area at the Highlands Bridge.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan is intended to provide concrete steps towards implementing the objectives of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. This Plan recommends the acquisition of parcels to fulfill recreation and open space needs, potential funding sources and procedures for park maintenance. The Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee (recommended to be created by this Plan) should be responsible for implementing the goals and specific objectives of this Plan.

Successful implementation will require the participation of existing Borough boards, committees and staff, including but not limited to the Borough Council, Planning Board, Recreation Department, Public Works Department, Neighborhood Preservation Program and others.

Accomplishing the open space, recreation and conservation objectives will require time and commitment from Borough personnel. Where money is required, it may be sought from state, county and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, foundations, and individual donations in addition to municipal funds (see the Financing Options section of this Plan).

The action plan identifies the measures that should be taken to achieve the goals and objectives for the Borough open space system. To implement the plan, the Borough should coordinate with State and County programs to acquire and develop parkland for public recreation.

COORDINATION WITH STATE OPEN SPACE PROGRAMS

- The Borough should submit the open space, recreation, conservation plan for approval by the Office of Green Acres in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The approved plan can then be used to secure grants and loans from the State for land acquisition and development for public park and recreation sites.
- A portion of the stable revenue funding should be earmarked for local park and recreation acquisition and development.
- The Borough should initiate an acquisition program to implement the open space, recreation, and conservation plan. The Borough should negotiate with property owners for the acquisition of land for additional park and recreation sites. The acquisition program should be reviewed annually by the Borough to assess progress in implementing the open space, recreation, and conservation plan and to determine whether the sites identified for acquisition should be modified to reflect changes in the availability of land or new opportunities for meeting the plan objectives.
- Upon acquisition of new parkland, the Borough should prepare a design plan to guide its future use and improvement to meet Borough recreation needs.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STUDIES/ACTIONS

As part of the Highlands Borough's recreation and open space implementation efforts, the following studies and/or actions should be explored:

1. Conduct the necessary steps, including economic feasibility study to create a public pier/promenade;
2. Evaluate the feasibility of adopting a local open space tax;
 - If yes, determine an appropriate tax rate to begin implementing this Plan;
3. Create a Waterfront Master Plan to guide its future development;
4. Conduct appraisals on properties that Highlands is interested in acquiring to determine current market value and potential acquisition costs;
5. Evaluate the benefits and costs associated with:
 - Installment purchases – an agreement that provides for transfer of fee title to the land in exchange for the payment of the purchase price over a period of time;
 - “Floating” general obligation bonds;
8. The Recreation and Open Space Committee should study or create a policy to maximize the joint use of Board of Education facilities;
9. Investigate the costs to install artificial turf on fields to increase usable field time;
10. Explore/encourage partnerships with non-for-profit organizations to maximize local recreation and open space funding; and
11. Prepare engineered design plans on any acquired parcels.

PROPOSED BOROUGH PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

The Borough has identified sites adjacent to existing park facilities for future acquisition and development to expand the Borough park and recreation system. The sites are identified in Exhibit 14 and 15.

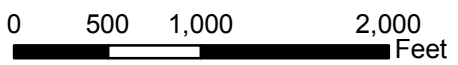
EXHIBIT 13 - POTENTIAL RECREATION ACQUISITION SITES

Site #	Block, Lot(s)	ACQUISITION AREA	APPROX. SITE ACREAGE	Proposed Use	Notes
1	98,1	Waterwitch Beach Association	0.84	Beach	
2	37, 12.01 37, 13	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	1.0	Indoor Recreation / Meeting Space	Facility may be vacated in the near future.
3	N/A	Areas located adjacent to existing park, recreation and open space uses	N/A	Active and Passive Recreation	
	TOTAL		1.84		



T&M ASSOCIATES
 11 Tindall Road
 Middletown, NJ 07748-2792
 Phone: 732-671-6400
 Fax: 732-671-7365

Exhibit 14
Potential Aquisition Sites
Borough of Highlands
Monmouth County, New Jersey



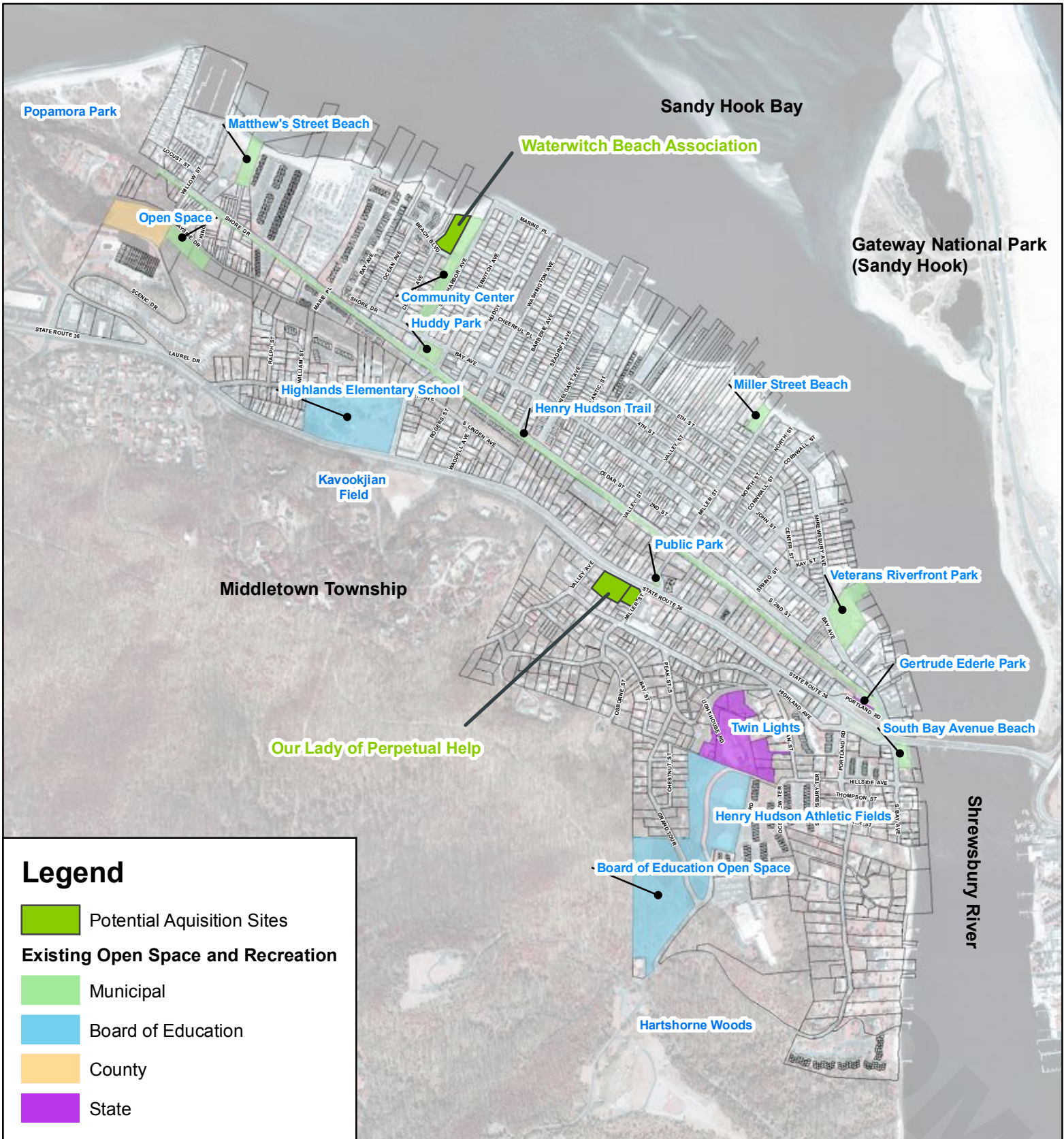
Prepared by: PNR, August 21, 2007, Revised January 3, 2008
 Source: Highlands Borough GIS
 File Path: H:\HGHL\00440\GIS\Projects\exhibit 14.mxd



NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.

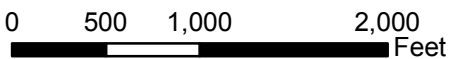
OPEN SPACE SYSTEM MAP

The Borough of Highlands Borough Open Space System Map shows the location of the Borough's existing and proposed park, recreation and open space areas.



T&M 11 Tindall Road
 Middletown, NJ 07748-2792
 Phone: 732-671-6400
 ASSOCIATES Fax: 732-671-7365

Exhibit 15
Open Space System Map
Borough of Highlands
Monmouth County, New Jersey



Prepared by: PNR, August 21, 2007, Revised January 3, 2008
 Source: Highlands Borough GIS
 File Path: H:\HGHL\00440\GIS\Projects\exhibit 15.mxd



NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.

FINANCING OPTIONS

Open Space Taxes

Monmouth County

Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program

According to Monmouth County, the Board of Chosen Freeholders has allocated \$2 million from the annual Monmouth County Open Space Trust Fund for cooperative projects with Monmouth County municipalities. Both land acquisition and development for park, recreation, and open space purposes are eligible for funding.

The Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program is a competitive program. The project eligibility and evaluation criteria are described in the Policy and Procedures Manual.

State Funding

Green Acres Planning Incentive Programs

Type of Grant: Implementation

Offered by: Green Acres

Contact: Martha Sapp (609) 984-0570

The Green Acres program is responsible for the State's purchases of open space and recreation lands. Green Acres provides open space matching grants and loans to municipal and county governments, and grants to tax-exempt non-profit organizations. Highlands Borough may qualify for 50 percent matching grants upon creating a dedicated local open space tax. Planning incentive grants are attractive to local governments since grants can be applied for similar to a credit line. Upon completion of a Recreation and Open Space Plan, parcels designated in the approved Plan are pre-screened so that Highlands will not have to start from scratch in the application process for each purchase. For a community that envisions making multiple land purchases, this option saves valuable time, especially when negotiating with land owners.

Green Acres also offers loans to local governments at a 2 percent interest rate, payable over 20 years, for purchase of open space and also for the development of recreational facilities.

Aid for Urban Environmental Concerns

Type of Grant: Implementation

Offered by: DEP Office of Business & External Affairs

Contact: Joseph Rodgers (609) 984-0828

The Aid for Urban Environmental Concerns (AUEC) Grant is designed to provide funding for the State's urban communities to enhance the environment in the urban settings. Eligible projects include: urban environmental redevelopment planning projects, urban environmental inventories (UEI's), street scaping art work in public places, etc.

Athletics for Individuals with Disabilities

Type of Grant: Planning

Offered by: DCA Housing and Community Development

Contact: (609) 984-6654

The program is designed to provide grants to increase the availability of athletic events for individuals with disabilities by assisting and encouraging statewide nonprofit organizations in sponsoring sports training and athletic competitions for people with disabilities.

Green Communities Challenge Grants

Type of Grant: Implementation

Offered by: DEP

Contact: Mike D'Errico (609) 984-6654

Assists municipalities in developing a community forestry program. The management plan helps local government agencies implement urban and community forestry projects. These projects are provided under four themes: Program Development, Implementation, Tree Maintenance and Research Projects. These grant monies could be utilized to create a pruning and maintenance plan to properly manage Borough trees.

Paying Communities Back Program

Type of Grant: Implementation

Offered by: DOC Corrections

Contact: William Freeman (609) 984-7414

Provides inmate labor details in a wide variety of supervised projects. These may include building of children's playgrounds, park cleanup, park restoration, and other related activities.

Recreation and Park Assistance

Type of Grant: Planning

Offered by: DCA Housing and Community Resources

Contact: William Freeman (609) 984-6654

Program is designed to assist community recreation and park departments with the initiation, development, administration and management of recreation sites, resources and programming. Operates as a clearinghouse for service requests for technical assistance to local governments.

Southern State Industries Program

Type of Grant: Implementation

Offered by: DOC Southern State Correction Facility

Contact: Richard Lore (856) 785-1300

This program provides at a minimal cost, recreational products to interested cities and towns such items as park benches, picnic tables, bird baths, storage sheds, and other standard items normally associated with

public recreational facilities. The items are manufactured by the correctional facility, providing both training skills and work to inmates, while providing low cost products to government agencies for community use. A catalog and price list is available upon request. Mr. Lore's extension is 313. Also call DEPTCOR Sales at 292-1399. Ask for Dick Wolf or John Tandy.

Financing Through Borrowing

Long Term General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds are a type of Municipal Bond where principal and interest are secured by the full faith and credit of the issuer and usually supported by either the issuer's unlimited or limited taxing power. In addition, General Obligation Bonds are voter-approved.

Features:

- Income from General Obligation Bonds is free from federal taxes, and in most cases, it is also free from state taxes.
- Income from interest and repayment of principal is generally regarded with a high degree of safety.
- If circumstances change, General Obligation Bonds are actively traded in the secondary market. You are not locked in until the bond's maturity.
- You receive semi-annual interest payments and get their principal payment back at maturity.

Prudent fiscal practice requires that borrowings be amortized over periods no longer than the useful life of the amount financed. While this is typically 30 years, New Jersey Law allows debt issued to finance land to be amortized over 40 years.

For more information on debt service see the New Jersey Local Bond Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:2-1)

Installment Purchases

In an installment purchase the government entity enters into an agreement with the landowner that provides for transfer of fee title to the land in exchange for the payment of the purchase price over a period of time, which might be up to 30 years.

Municipal Benefits Include:

- The Township will establish a price that is payable in 30 years and as a result, the government entity will acquire open space or a conservation easement that should appreciate substantially in value over the term of the installment purchase. As the result of the payment of interest over 30 years, the government entity is spending the payment for the open space over part of the period during which the general public will enjoy it.