

# Appendix D

## Recreation

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### 1 Parks and Recreation

#### A. *Town Recreation Facilities*

For this study, recreation is defined as engaging in activities which provide physical, mental, social, and community benefits, while meeting the leisure time needs of individuals. Participating in these activities with others can help to enhance and cultivate a sense of teamwork, fair play, and goodwill within the community.

The Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1972. The facilities managed by this Department include Barnard Park, Roy Park, the Recreation Center, the Town Common and the playing fields. Since the 1997 Master Plan, the Department has added a skateboard park, a pocket park on Church Street and a large multi-field park in Pinardville. This park includes a football field, two soccer fields and a baseball/soccer field.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining approximately 230 acres of land. The staff consists of three full-time personnel in the positions of Director, a Program Maintenance Supervisor and a Groundskeeper. There are also up to 18 seasonal staff.

The Department operates out of the Recreation Center. An addition was added to the Recreation Center in 1998 and has greatly improved the ability of the Department to serve the community. Increased space and parking has meant that up to three groups can comfortably use the center concurrently.

The Departments manages two swimming pools at Barnard and Roy Parks, which are used heavily during the summer months. The Town also maintains seven tennis courts, one track and field area, two playground areas, a skateboard park and one skating rink.

Roy Park was renovated in 1998. The renovations included rehabilitating the pool bathhouse, the outdoor pavilion, expanding and adding lights to the parking area and improving the basketball area. In the 2005 Capital Improvement Program, funding has been earmarked to revitalize Roy Park. This revitalization will include rehabilitating the pavilion and bath house, upgrading the tennis court and improving the playground/picnic area. If this



project is completed, the Parks and Recreation facilities master plan will be completed.

Additional land owned by the Town across from the beach at Glen Lake has been partially developed into parking space for people using Glen Lake. This land currently serves as "passive recreation" space meaning it offers trails and open space for residents to use. There are no current plans to develop this land into more organized recreation space.

Parks and Recreation maintenance is currently carried out by the full-time Groundskeeper and seasonal help. This situation is currently adequate to maintain existing facilities. But, an additional full time maintenance person may be needed for this Department as more facilities are added to the town's inventory. Table 1 illustrates the recreational facilities available in Goffstown.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Inventory of Recreation Facilities (12/96)</b> <b>Town of Goffstown</b>	
<p><b><u>Barnard Park</u></b>                      22 acre site                      4 tennis courts                      1 outdoor pool                      1 track and field facility                      2 outdoor basketball courts                      playground/picnic area                      1 outdoor volleyball court                      1 outdoor pavilion</p> <p><b><u>Roy Park</u></b>                      3 tennis courts                      1 outdoor pool                      1 baseball/softball field                      1 outdoor basketball court                      1 playground/picnic area</p> <p><b><u>Cemetery Field</u></b>                      soccer field                      baseball field                      softball field</p> <p><b><u>Laurier and Louis Street Complex</u></b>                      football field                      2 soccer fields                      baseball/softball field</p>	<p><b><u>Recreation Center</u></b>                      function room                      office                      storage area                      outdoor skating area</p> <p><b><u>Lions Club</u></b>                      3 soccer fields                      2 baseball fields</p> <p><b><u>Villa Augustina School</u></b>                      3 Little League fields (private facility maintained by Parks &amp; Rec)</p> <p><b><u>Mountain View Middle School</u></b>                      soccer field                      field hockey field                      baseball field                      softball field</p> <p><b><u>Goffstown High School</u></b>                      soccer field                      softball field</p>

**B. Town Recreation Programs**

Currently, the Department offers 64 different activities, including activity period, soccer, basketball, hiking, tennis, aerobics, dog obedience, softball, pumpkin hunts, swimming lessons and field trips. Program participation is evaluated on a year-by-year basis. Some programs are continued on an

annual basis and others respond to demand. Participation in 2003 was 8,063 persons, an increase of 7.5% over 2002 levels. Between 1990 and 1995 the Department operated a reported 91 programs, according to data presented in the annual Town reports. A detailed compilation of data regarding participation in these programs is located in the master plan appendix.

Attempting to analyze this data proved somewhat difficult due to the inconsistent format in which it was reported from year to year. It is recommended that these statistics be reported in a more consistent format in the future, and that multi-year comparisons also be completed, as opposed to the single year of information which is presently included in the Town reports. In addition, this data should be computerized in order to facilitate a more detailed analysis of current demands versus existing staff and facilities, and to help identify the potential need for additional facilities in the future.

### **C. Other Recreation Facilities**

#### **The YMCA**

Located at 116 Goffstown Back Road, the YMCA (the Y) began operation in August of 1993. It hired its first full-time director in the winter of that year. Although the organization had not been looking to expand, a donation by the Allard family (representing 60% of the original facility's size) provided a great opportunity to increase the Y's ability to serve more of the greater Manchester community. This particular site was also an ideal spot to transplant the rapidly growing summer day camp program that was then held at Livingston Park in Manchester.

The major program areas that the Y focused on during its first year were tennis, fitness, gymnastics and summer day camp. Since then, the Y has developed programs in youth and adult sports, youth fitness and a complete adventure program facilities. Also available now is an aquatic program with two new indoor pools.

Initially, the facility was upgraded to improve the fitness offerings and to build a permanent gymnastics facility. In the summer of 1994, renovations to the site's 12 acres began. This included renovation of the outdoor pool, the addition of a pool house, the construction of two outdoor pavilions, the addition of an arts and crafts building, the conversion of clay tennis courts to beach volleyball, and an archery range and four clay courts converted into a multi-purpose sports field. In addition, both high and low rope courses were also constructed, the outside tennis courts were resurfaced and one was converted to a basketball court. Additional parking has also been added over time.

Program offerings have been increased since the facility first opened and now include the following.

- All levels of gymnastics (instructional, competitive, recreational)
- All levels of tennis (instructional, competitive, recreational)

- A complete adventure department, including a challenge course, climbing gym, clubs and outings
- Fitness programs for adults, teens, seniors, and a new youth fitness center
- Two new indoor pools for a complete offering of progressive swimming classes, water exercise, therapeutic programs and programs for special needs, as well as recreational swimming for all ages
- Summer Day Camp 1/2 Moon, which is a summer sports camps for gymnastics, tennis, cheering, and fitness
- Host Coordinator of Youth and Family Services (programs for youth, teens, and families at risk)

The special events schedule includes the following activities.

- Field days for local schools
- Teen nights, youth nights
- After prom parties
- Birthday parties, rentals
- Vacation camps
- Dances
- Playgroups for special needs kids
- Challenge days for school and business groups
- Teen Leaders Corps and Earth Service Corps
- Scholarship program for anyone in financial need

## **D. Future Needs**

### 1) Hiking Facilities

Goffstown has a moderate sized trail network for use by its residents. Maintenance on the mountain trails is mainly done by the Boy Scouts, while maintenance of the major snowmobile trails, which mainly follow powerline rights-of-way through town, is undertaken by the Uncanoonuc Mountaineers Snowmobile Club.

Goffstown's walking and hiking trails are primarily located on the Uncanoonucs which are not convenient for people who cannot drive, or who dislike to drive on winding back roads. Therefore, the establishment of sidewalks and wide shoulders suitable for walking, should be encouraged in residential areas. In addition, such facilities would also benefit rollerbladers and bicyclists, possibly allowing bicyclists to connect with a system of shared use paths/rails-to-trails system (see Appendix F: Transportation chapter for more information).

### 2) Recreation Facilities and Programs

In light of the high demand placed on the current park facilities, another park facility is needed. There is an eight acre parcel (Assessor's Map 23, Lot 11) located on Chatel Road off of Lynchville Park Road, of which at least four acres are usable. This parcel could readily be developed with baseball fields, tennis and basketball courts and a skateboarding facility, along with sufficient

parking to support these activities. Other areas of this park could be used for walking/nature trails and picnic areas. Development of this parcel as a neighborhood park would take some pressure off Roy Park, which is currently over used.

Table 2 presents a summary of some of the additional recreational facilities which the town is expected to need in order to adequately service its residents by the year 2005. These figures assume that participation rates in the various activities will remain relatively constant until that time.

<b>Type of Facility</b>	<b>Additional Needed</b>
Baseball/Softball Field	2
Basketball Court	1
Hiking Trail	5
Picnic Areas	some
Playground Areas	some
Skating Rink	some
Soccer Field	2
Tennis Court	2
Volleyball Court	3

In order to address the Town's existing and future recreation needs, a number of parcels currently owned by the Town were examined to determine their potential for such use. Perhaps most notable of these is a 55 acre parcel (Assessor's Map 5, Lot 14) on the north side of Elm Street, opposite the beach at Glen Lake. The western half has been transferred to the school district for a school site and the eastern half has been retained by the Town. Both portions are controlled by a deed restriction limiting the property's use to a "public purpose." This land was purchased from the NH Water Resources Board nearly 20 years ago. Based on this review, Lot 14 was found to be quite suitable for any and all activities now carried on at existing recreation facilities in town, such as Barnard Park, Roy Park, Lions Club Field, Villa Augustina Field, and Cemetery Field. Its location is well suited to serve the increasing population in the north-central and north-east portions of Goffstown. Development of this parcel for recreational use should not be difficult or expensive, and parking could be created under the PSNH powerlines. The western portion of the property (as delineated by the power lines) is recommended for park use, and the eastern portion should be examined for possible use as an elementary school site.

One piece of property which has remained unused for many years is the abandoned railroad right-of-way, which runs east to west through the town. Although a few small pieces of it have been privately purchased, and some has been informally used by abutters, the Town recently acquired the majority of the right-of-ways for transportation and recreational use.

The City of Manchester has acquired the connecting abandoned railroad line within the City limits and plans to develop it into a Rails-to-Trails artery for walkers, rollerbladers, and bicyclists. If Goffstown were to develop its rail line in the same way, it would provide additional recreational activities for town residents. It might also facilitate some non-motorized commuting of the workforce into the city, thus helping to alleviate traffic congestion, particularly along South Mast Road through Pinardville. The benefits of creating a Rails-to-Trails connection with Manchester appear to far outweigh the potential drawbacks, including the potentially high construction cost.

Consideration should also be given to creating additional neighborhood "pocket parks", which would be scattered throughout the town. This might be possible on Town owned parcels such as the lot on Church Street near the fire station, or on land around the fire station at the Tirrell Hill/Black Brook Roads intersection. These two parcels and possibly others, could be developed by interested neighbors, by obtaining permission from the appropriate Town body. In addition, individuals and/or groups could become involved in "Adopt-a-Park" programs which could serve to improve and maintain park areas.

Another parcel of land which might provide an additional recreation facility for the Town, is the land between the old railroad bed and North Mast Street, which is owned by the Goffstown Village Water Precinct. The Town should consider negotiating with the precinct for use of this property.

## **E. Summary and Recommendations**

The demand for expanded recreational facilities offering a greater variety of activities is expected to continue into the foreseeable future in Goffstown. If these demands are not addressed in a timely manner they will exacerbate the existing stresses which already exist for the town's current parks and natural areas. This type of scenario will eventually have a noticeable negative impact on the community by detracting from the town's quality of life. Continue to use impact fees to develop recreational facilities.

Through its regulatory zoning authority, the Town has had some success in protecting areas of open space, forests, wetlands and water supplies, however, more can be done. The following section contains a number of recommendations as to how the Town can achieve this goal. The information is divided into the areas of general issues, parks and recreation, conservation, and historic preservation.

Goal REC 1: Support the Parks Capital Improvement Program.
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Goal REC 2: Continue support of Parks and Recreation Program through development impact fees.
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**Action REC 1. Continue support for impact fee program and explore opportunities to obtain land grants from developers.**

The Planning Board's awareness and sensitivity to the impact of increased population on the Parks and Recreational facilities is well appreciated.

Impact fees collected from new development has helped the Department purchase new equipment and rehabilitate Roy Park. Continued support from the Planning Board, including the potential to require developers to include accessibly land for neighborhood parks in residential subdivisions of more than 10 lots.

Goal REC 3: Build partnerships to expand Parks and Recreation Programs.

Goal REC 4: Provide better coordination between administrative resources involved in the management of Goffstown's recreation, conservation and historic preservation.

### **Background**

There is currently an overlap of administrative responsibilities in Goffstown within the areas of recreation, conservation and preservation. Since decisions must be made regarding priorities and conflict resolution within all three areas, the various municipal entities involved should have a means by which to develop coordinated budgets and action plans.

*Objective REC 4-1 - Establish a Coordinating Administrative Committee comprised of a representative from the Conservation Commission, the Historic District Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Works Department, and the Goffstown School District. The Selectmen may also choose to have a member of that board act as chair, or to appoint a thoughtful, fair-minded citizen for that position.*

*Objective REC 4-2 - Establish a means by which the use of municipal facilities can be enhanced for the user, while also providing suitable protection for those facilities.*

**Action REC 2. Identify clearly -- with markers, signs, and guidebooks -- all available facilities in town, including public access to lakes, ponds, rivers, rail-trail and mountain trails.**

Goal REC 5 - Promote responsible use of parks, trails, recreational facilities, historic landmarks, etc., and "open spaces".

*Objective REC 5-1 - Provide opportunities for learning about the proper use of natural resources, especially in residential areas.*

**Action REC 3. Organize regularly scheduled informational walks led by knowledgeable volunteers.**

**Action REC 4. Encourage schools to include parks, trails, recreational facilities and historic landmarks in field trips related to the appropriate curriculum.**

*Objective REC 5-2 - Survey and inventory existing parks, potential parks, school properties, cultural facilities, as well as, associated programs and organizations.*

**Action REC 5. Develop reference materials for identified recreational facilities, programs and organizations.**

**Action REC 6.** Publish and distribute this inventory as a tool for planning, as well as to make municipal employees and town residents aware of what is available.

**Action REC 7.** Prepare and develop development plans for the reuse of the abandoned railway for use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goal REC 6 - Provide equal access to recreation and natural areas for residents of all age groups within realistic economic parameters.

### **Background**

Disparities in the amount and quality of recreation facilities throughout the Town should be continuously monitored. In the highly populated area of Pinardville is served by Roy Park, an insufficiently sized neighborhood park, and the newly created John Sarett Recreation Complex. Other less populated portions of the town are currently served by a higher level of recreation facilities. Much of the Town's recreation facilities are centered around the Goffstown Village area, including Barnard Park, the P&R Recreation Center, the high school fields, the Lions Club fields, the Villa Augustina fields, and the Cemetery fields. Some of the Town's facilities are on loaned land and could, in the future, be retracted from public use.

It should be kept in mind that people who use a park area are far more likely to see that it is well cared for and maintained. Also, facilities which are easily reached and have adequate parking are much more likely to be used than those that are not. While the Pinardville Branch of The International Optimists Club has been instrumental in raising funds for the improvement of Roy Park, more can be done. Adopt-a-Park and Make-Your-Own-Park programs can be successful if they receive enough publicity and support.

*Objective REC 6-1 - Continue to maintain Barnard Park and examine the unused space within it for new facilities geared towards youths and the elderly, including uses which may bring both groups together.*

**Action REC 8.** Address the issue of skateboarding in the Village, which is both a popular activity for youths and a nuisance for residents and businesses in the area.

*Objective REC 6-2 - Provide activities throughout Town which are popular with the elderly.*

*Objective REC 6-3 - Expand existing recreation facilities in Pinardville and supplement them with the addition of another neighborhood park on Town owned land.*

Goal REC 7 - Prepare to meet the recreational needs created by new development in the rapidly expanding northeast and north-central portions of Goffstown.

*Objective REC 7-1 - Expand the capacity of recreation facilities located at the Mountain View Middle School.*

Goal REC 8 - Serve all areas of Goffstown with a network of small neighborhood parks.

*Objective REC 8-1 - Use land already owned by the town, where possible, to achieve this goal.*

Goal REC 9 - Evaluate the Town's growth trends in order to identify demographic changes and the demand for future recreation facilities.

Goal REC 10 - Provide additional recreational opportunities in Goffstown for walking, bicycling and rollerblading, and other similar types of activities.

*Objective REC 10-1 - Provide paths and trails on park properties and other Town owned land.*

*Objective REC 10-2 - Develop a "Rails-to-Trails" system which would extend Manchester's existing rail trail, through Goffstown, to the Weare town line.*

**Action REC 9.** Develop a Recreation Plan for the Town of Goffstown to plan for short term and long term programming and facilities/infrastructure needs.

**Action REC 10.** Plan and develop parks by planning district (see Land Use, section I-B) that include small neighborhood parks in urban or village centers; play fields that are equal to those not publicly owned; and, plan for the orderly development of parks as population growth occurs.