

V. PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of New Brunswick has a wide range of parks, athletic facilities and open spaces to meet the needs of its residents. New Brunswick's parks and recreation facilities make a substantial contribution to the City's quality of life and enhance its reputation as a desirable place to live. In addition to providing a recreational outlet for its citizens, the City's system of parks and recreation facilities also provides a gathering place for social and civic events.

The benefits of open space are myriad and far reaching. Open space not only provides recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat, but it has an effect on human health and community well being as well. Open space creates areas for active and passive recreation, contributing to the physical and mental well being of those who utilize it. The benefits of open space break down into four main types.

- o Aesthetic Value – Open space often protects “beautiful places” and differing landscapes such as forests, fields, waterways, gardens and scenic vistas offer aesthetic benefits to an area. Open space creates
- o A pleasant and vibrant living environment. The restorative powers of natural scenery have been written about since the works of Thoreau. Residents and visitors alike form impressions about an area based on the natural spaces and green areas.
- o Ecological Function – Lands in open space protection can help maintain the important balance in air and water quality. Open space can also help preserve vital storm water recharge lands and protect important environmental features. Floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes can become hazards if developed, but if they are preserved in their natural state, they provide important ecological functions by maintaining their ability to absorb flood waters and retain pollutants, preserving air and water quality.
- o Recreation Opportunities – People of all ages enjoy outdoor activities of all kinds. Whether pick up games or organized leagues, citizens need fields and courts for active recreation. These facilities also

provide citizens meeting areas and comfortable spots to savor the relaxation they require.

- o Cultural Identity – Historic and cultural resources help define who we are and where we have come from. Preserving natural areas, farmlands, battlefields, historic structures and districts are important efforts for maintaining the quality of life for a community.

There are countless types of open space. Everyone has their own conception of what open space is and often times, many seemingly different types of open space occupy the same site. But, open space generally falls into the following categories that play individual roles within a community: active recreation (soccer fields, football fields, baseball and softball diamonds, running tracks, tennis courts, basketball courts, exercise trails, etc.); passive recreation (hiking trails, picnic areas, quiet places, etc.) and natural resource protection (forest lands, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, stream corridors, etc.).

The 1995 Master Plan identified a significant short fall in the amount of park, recreational and open space facilities in the City based on a comparison to federal and state standards. Since that time, however, the City has made a significant effort to address that issue as discussed

below. These efforts include: opening of the 10.5-acre Alice Jennings Archibald Park, which contains a variety of active recreational facilities; extensive improvement and expansion of Boyd Park; improvements to Memorial Stadium; the opening of the 14-acre Youth Sports Complex; a start-of-the-art facility for youth athletic training and competition; expansion of the Raritan River conservation area; and continual improvements to Buccleuch Park. As a result of these efforts, the City's inventory of park and open space land and recreational facilities now exceeds standards. Despite those efforts, however, the following additional needed improvements were identified in stakeholders meetings: additional neighborhood parks; improved maintenance of existing parks; improved and/or enhanced recreation facilities; improvements and access to the canal path, Boyd Park and the Raritan River. Other issues such as the desire to for a community center and the preservation of environmentally-sensitive land have also arisen.

This element provides: an inventory of the City's parks, recreation and open space; a needs assessment, which evaluates the City's inventory in comparison to established standards and the 1995 Master Plan; and concludes with recommendations.

INVENTORY OF PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

City Parks, Recreation Facilities and Open Space

The City's current inventory of park and open space land is described below and is shown on the Parks/ Recreation/Open Space map.

Developed Parklands and Recreation Facilities

The table below provides a description of inventory of the City's developed park facilities.

- o Alice Jennings Archibald Park - Opened in 1998, Alice Jennings Archibald Park is located adjacent to McKinley School in the City's 4th Ward and features over 10 acres of athletic facilities for baseball, softball, soccer, football, tennis, basketball, and handball. Courts and fields are lighted for nighttime play. This park also includes a playground and picnic pavilion. The City Engineer was recognized by the New Jersey Association of Municipal Engineers for the outstanding work done to design the park.
- o Bucclench Park - Bucclench Park is located in the northwesterly portion of the City between the Raritan River and Easton Avenue. It features 78 acres of rolling terrain and many athletic facilities including fields for baseball, softball, tennis, soccer and basketball and a 1.5 mile cross-country /fitness trail. Bucclench Park also has a playground, display gardens and picnic areas. During the winter months and the parks department offers sledding and ice-skating.
- o Boyd Park - Boyd Park is located along the Raritan River. This 15-acre park is home to many festivals and special events including the Raritan River Festival, Hispanic Festival, and the City's 4th of July Celebration. The park also features a 3/4 long mile tow path with lights as well an historic swing bridge, canal, and locks. The park also has a playground and picnic areas, as well as opportunity to fish in the Raritan River. Extensive historical signage has been installed to help visitors learn about the rich history of the Raritan River and the City of New Brunswick.
- o Memorial Stadium Park - Recognized by the New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers as the Municipal Project of the year in 2001, this 14-acre park is located adjacent to New Brunswick High School and is home to many varsity, junior varsity, adult, and youth sporting events. This facility has a football/soccer stadium that seats 2,240 people, a practice football/soccer field, baseball field, softball field, a 440-meter running track, tennis courts, locker rooms, and concession stands. The facility is the home of many teams including New Brunswick High School, St. Peters High School, the Marauders Semi pro football, and the New Brunswick Raiders Pop Warner

- o Football. New Brunswick Recreation's Men's Open League Baseball, Men's and Women's Softball and youth sports programs also call Memorial Stadium home.
- o Alec Baker Park – Alec Baker Park is approximately 7 acres in size and offers a softball field, tennis and basketball courts, a playground and a picnic area.
- o Murphy Park - At 4 acres in size, Murphy Park offers a softball field, a basketball and tennis courts, a playground and a picnic area. It is located adjacent to the Woodrow Wilson elementary school in the Rutgers Village/ Edgebrook area of the City.
- o Recreation Park – At roughly 7 acres in size, Recreation Park contains a softball field, a basketball court, handball facilities, a football/ soccer field, a playground and a picnic area. It is located along Pine Street near the City's Water Filtration Plant.
- o Feaster Park – Feaster Park is located adjacent to Paul Robeson School between Commercial Avenue and Throop Avenue between Handy and Hale Streets. It contains basketball courts, a playground and a picnic area and is roughly 5 acres in size.
- o Joyce Kilmer Park – Joyce Kilmer Park is approximately 5 acres in size and contains a softball field, a basketball court, a restroom, a playground and a picnic area. It is located along Joyce Kilmer Avenue.
- o Youth Sports Complex - The recently opened Youth Sports Complex, located on Joyce Kilmer Avenue, is a 14-acre state-of-the-art facility for youth athletic training complete with three little league fields, one regulation soccer field, a mini-soccer field, scoreboards, lights, dugouts, bullpens, concession stand and patio, meeting rooms, and off-street parking. The Complex hosts all youth little league baseball and softball games as well as all youth soccer games.
- o Simplex Park – Simplex Park is a small park (less than ½ acre) that contains a playground, ½ basketball court and a picnic area. It is located at the end of Simplex Avenue in the City's 4th Ward.
- o Kossuth Playground - Kossuth Playground is located in the City's 5th Ward along Harvey Avenue. This small, roughly 1-acre park contains a ½ basketball court, a playground and a picnic area.
- o Quinten Avenue Playground – This park is located along Quinten Avenue in the City's 4th Ward. It is a small park (roughly 1-acre) that contains a playground and a picnic area.

In addition to the parklands described above, several smaller parklands (all less than 1 acre in size) are located throughout the City. Most of these consist of small monument parks. Such facilities include:

- o Monument Square Park - Monument Square Park (Civil War Memorial) is located along George Street in the City's downtown area.
- o Women's War Memorial - Located at the intersection of French Street and Jersey Avenue.
- o Fireman's Memorial - Located at the intersection of Easton Avenue and Wyckoff Street.
- o WWI Monument Park - Near the intersection of French Street and Jersey Avenue.
- o Pittman Park – Pittman Park, at 0.92-acres in size, is located across Handy Street from Feaster Park.
- o Langley Place Park – Langley Place Park (Lincoln Garden Greens) is located between Quentin Avenue and Lufberry Street in the City's 4th Ward. It is 0.92-acres in size.

The City's inventory of developed or partially developed parklands (consisting of the parklands listed in the table above as well as the six small/ memorial parks above) consists of 163.66-acres.

Numerous other open lands (e.g., areas with road rights-of-way, grounds of public facilities such as the Library grounds, Willow Grove Cemetery) are also maintained by the City.

Conservation Areas

In addition to the parklands listed above, the City's inventory includes the following open space lands. All together, the City's conservation areas total 107.9 acres.

- o Raritan River Conservation Area – Through the help of Green Acres funding, the City acquired a large swath of environmentally sensitive land along the Raritan River in 1997. The City-owned portion of the Raritan River Conservation Area totals over 84 acres. Another 20.73 acres of the Raritan River Conservation Area is owned by the County of Middlesex. Together, the City and County portions of the Raritan River Conservation Area total approximately 105 acres. The City portion is located between the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 1. The County's portion is that located to the west of Route 1.
- o Weston's Mill Watershed Properties – This roughly 13.4-acre area contains a mixture of woodlands and open fields, as well as steep slopes and streams corridors.

- o Mill Run Brook Properties – The City owns nearly 8½ acres of conservation lands along the Mile Run in the northwesterly portion of the City.
- o Rutgers Village Mini Park – Rutgers Village Mini-Park is a small park located along Burnett Street in the eastern portion of the City.
- o D &R Canal Path – This property is 1.7-acres in size.

The locations of the parks and open space lands described above are shown on the Parks, Recreation and Open Space map.

Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)

The table below shows the City’s current Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI).

TABLE 2: City of New Brunswick – Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Block</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Size (acres)</i>	<i>Funded?</i>
Bucclench	437	1	78.1±	F
Boyd Park	103.03	1	2.068	F
(Total 14.988+)	103.02	1	5.2	
	103.06	1	3.04	
		(Part of)		

<i>Name</i>	<i>Block</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Size (acres)</i>	<i>Funded?</i>
	103.07	1	.02	
	103.01	1	4.00	
	103	1 (Part of)	.2	
(PSE&G Easement)	103.01	1.02 (part of)	.46	
Feaster Park	191	1		U
	196	1.01	4.735±	
Memorial Stadium	475.01	1.02		F
	321	12, 12.02	13.92±	
Joyce Kilmer Park (Formerly Codwise)	221	1,101+ 1.02		U
	206	45		
	226	23	4.759±	
Recreation Park (Leased from Rutgers)	223.01	1(Part of)	7.266±	U
Alec Baker Park (Formerly Remsen)	330	1	6.8±	U
Kossuth Playground	418	54	.87±	U
Murphy Park	718	23.02	4.0±	U
Simplex Playground	500	1-6	.34±	U
Quentin Ave. Playground	596	1	1.14	U
Langley Place (Lincoln Gardens Greens)	505	24		U
	506	24		

Name	Block	Lot	Size (acres)	Funded?
	509	24		
	510	24	.92±	
Civil War Memorial (Monument Square)	127	1	.085±	U
Fireman's Memorial	73	1	.034±	U
War Monument Park (Incl. Women's War Mem. Clock) Jersey & Handy	184	1-8	.444±	U
Pittman Park	177	9-16 32-39	.918±	U
Alice Jennings Archibald Park (4 th Ward Park)	596	7.012	10.352	F
Youth Sports Complex	321	4.01	13.989	F
Total Developed or Partially Developed Lands			163.66	
Weston's Mill Watershed Properties	710.03	2(Part of)	13.37±	U
	710.01	2&3(Part of)		
Rutgers Village Mini-Park	710.03	4.01	.11±	U
Mile Run Brook	438	1		U
	435	1		
	441	1 thru 18		
	440	1 thru 20 & 42	7.76±	

Name	Block	Lot	Size (acres)	Funded?
	449	1.02		
	189	7	.68±	
Raritan River Conservation Zone	703.03	1.01,20 20.01, 23,24	84.23±	F
D&R Canal Towpath (West/Northwest Portion)	103.06	1(Part of)	1.76±	U
Total Wholly Undeveloped Lands			107.91	
Total ROSI			271.57	

Date: 5/22/02

*(Less 20 ft. Buffer Zone)

"F" indicates facility received Green Acres funding. "U" indicates facility did not receive Green Acres funding

County, State and Federal Parks

As indicated above, a 20.73-acre portion of the Raritan River Conservation Area located to the west of Route 1 is owned by Middlesex County. There are no other County, State or Federal parklands within the boundaries of the City.

However, two large County parks (Johnson Park and Donaldson Park) are located in close proximity to City and are available to City residents. Johnson Park, located across the Raritan River in Highland Park and

Piscataway, is 473 acres in size and offers a wide range of amenities and activities including lighted tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, a soccer field, picnic groves, playgrounds, a 2.5 mile long bike/walkway, ice skating, equestrian facilities, a petting zoo, and food concessions. Donaldson Park, also located across the Raritan River in Highland Park, is 90 acres in size and offers lighted basketball courts, two lighted street hockey rinks, lighted tennis courts, playgrounds, a picnic area, and a lighted baseball field.

Other Open Space, Park and Recreation Facilities in the City

Although not technically part of the City's park and open space inventory, it is important to note that there are numerous other recreational facilities provided at City and private schools and elsewhere. These facilities provide a broad spectrum of recreational activities and programs. Organized basketball and volleyball games, clinics for tennis, soccer, basketball and baseball are provided at public and private schools. The school gymnasiums and community rooms serve as multi-purpose rooms in which other programs such as dance, aerobics, arts and crafts, movies and other programs and activities are provided. Gymnasiums are located at many of the City's schools including at: New Brunswick High School, McKinley School, Paul Robeson School, Woodrow Wilson School, Redshaw School, Lord Stirling School, Roosevelt School, Livingston School, Bayard School, St. Peters High School, St. Mary's Elementary School, Sacred Heart School, as well as First Baptist Church.

Such recreational facilities supplement the City's park system and provide for expanded and diverse recreational opportunities within the City. In addition, Rutgers University provides numerous recreational facilities for students and staff at both the College Avenue and Cook/ Douglass campuses. Certain areas of the City such as Saint Peter's Cemetery and the Cook/ Douglas provide a sense of open space in their respective areas of the City.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

City of New Brunswick

The 1995 Master Plan indicated that the amount of City park and recreational space (at 158 acres) was deficient relative to standards. The 1995 Master Plan cited a deficiency of 175 acres relative to the 8 acres/ 1,000 population standard (a need for 333 acres was cited). In addition, the 1995 Plan indicated that the City was deficient relative to certain specific recreation amenities. Specifically, the Plan indicated that the City was deficient in terms of the number of baseball fields (-4) and soccer/ football fields (-3); while the City had a surplus of other recreation amenities such as basketball courts (+19) and tennis courts (+7).

The 1995 Plan identified a number of park/open space projects that were planned at that time and made a number of additional

recommendations intended to address the deficiencies identified in the Plan. Most of these planned or recommended projects have been addressed in the 8 years that followed). These include:

- o Provision of a major recreational facility in the Fourth Ward area;
- o Provision of recreational facilities in the vicinity of Abeel Street extending to Boyd Park;
- o Expansion and enhancement of Recreation Park;
- o Expansion of Joyce Kilmer Park;
- o Development of a youth sports complex;
- o Acquisition of the Raritan River Conservation Area properties; and
- o Expansion of Boyd Park.

In the eight years since the 1995 Master Plan, the City's park and open space inventory has been significantly improved and expanded. The highlights are as follows:

- o Development of Alice Jennings Archibald Park - As recommended in the 1995 Master Plan, Alice Jennings Archibald Park (referred to as "Fourth Ward Park" in the 1995 Master Plan) has been completed. This park features nearly 10½ acres of athletic facilities for baseball, softball, soccer, football, tennis, basketball and handball, and includes a playground and picnic pavilion. Courts and fields are lighted for nighttime play.

- o Construction of the Youth Sports Complex – The 1995 Master Plan indicated that the Division of Recreation identified a need for a Little League baseball complex and recommended that the City identify suitable sites. Consistent with this recommendation, the recently-opened Youth Sports Complex, located on Joyce Kilmer Avenue, is a 14-acre state-of-the-art for youth athletic training complete with three little league fields, one regulation soccer field, a mini-soccer field, scoreboards, lights, dugouts, bullpens, concession stand and patio, meeting rooms, and off-street parking.
- o Expansion and Improvements to Boyd Park – As also recommended in the 1995 Master Plan, Boyd Park has been rehabilitated and significantly expanded. This now 15-acre park was reopened in 1999 as part of an \$11 million redevelopment effort of New Brunswick's riverfront. The restoration of Boyd Park received national recognition in 1999.
- o Improvements to Memorial Stadium – Improvements to Memorial Stadium were recognized by the New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers as the Municipal Project of the year in 2001.
- o Acquisition of the Raritan River Conservation area – Another project identified in the 1995 Master Plan that has been followed through is the acquisition of lands along the Raritan River in the northeast portion

of the City. Approximately 84 acres has been acquired and preserved by the City in association with this effort (another 21-acre was preserved by Middlesex County).

These improvements and additions to the City's park, recreation and open space inventory demonstrate that New Brunswick has made it a priority to maintain and improve existing parks and recreation facilities and create new parks and recreation facilities in the City. As a result of these significant projects the City's inventory of parks, playgrounds, passive areas, athletic fields, and other such facilities now totals 271.6¹ acres. This represents a significant increase over the 158-acre² total identified in the 1995 Master Plan.

As a result of the City's efforts, the amount of park, recreation and open space land has increased significantly relative to the City's population. The 1995 Master Plan indicated that the City provided 3.8 acres per 1,000 residents. That ratio has increased to 5.7 acres per 1,000

residents as a result of the new and expanded park and open space facilities in the City (an increase of 1.9 acres per 1,000 residents).

As shown in the table below, the City exceeds the New Jersey Balanced Land Use Guidelines standards of 3% of the developed/ developable land area. In fact, at 272 acres, the City has a 172-acre surplus relative to this standard. However, the City still has a deficit relative to the Green Acres standard of 8 acres per 1,000 persons population (although this deficit has been decreased significantly despite a 17% increase in population over the last decade). It is noted, however, that the Green Acres standard is generally not considered to reflect conditions in fully developed and densely populated municipalities such as New Brunswick, but is better suited to suburban and rural communities where there is available land for park development. Therefore, although the Green Acres standard is an important "measuring stick," it should not be used rigidly as a measure of the adequacy of the City's parks and open space inventory.

¹ This total does not include the 20.73 acres of the Raritan River Conservation Area within the City that is owned by the County of Middlesex

² Numerous other open lands (e.g., areas with road rights-of-way, grounds of public facilities such as the Library grounds, Willow Grove Cemetery) that are maintained by the City within the 158-acre total identified in the 1995 Master Plan. Such lands are not identified in this inventory.

Table 3: City of New Brunswick – Park and Open Space Standards

Category	Parks Area Standard	Recommended Park Area	2003 Park and Open Space Area (Deficiency/ Surplus)
N.J. Balanced Land Use Guidelines	3% of developed/developable land area	100 acres	272 acres (+172 acres)
N.J. Green Acres	8 acres/ 1,000 population	388 acres	272 acres (-117 acres)

While a large proportion of the 75% increase in the amount of total open space and recreation land within the City is comprised of conservation lands (e.g., Raritan River Conservation Area and Weston’s Mill Watershed Properties) which provide little opportunity for recreation, the analysis above also demonstrates that the City has made significant strides in improving opportunities for recreation in the City (e.g., development of Alice Jennings Archibald Park, construction of the Youth Sports Complex, expansion and improvements to Boyd Park and the improvements to Memorial Stadium).

As shown above, the City’s inventory of developed parklands currently stands at 163.66 acres – compared to 133 acres³ identified in the 1995 Master Plan. This represents a 23% or 30.66-acre increase. As

³ The inventory in the 1995 Plan also included Deiner Park (4.5 acres), which resulted in a total of 137.3 acres. However, since this area is not included in the City’s current inventory list of active recreation facilities (even though it still exists), this area is not included in this analysis to provide an “apples-to-apples” comparison.

indicated above, the increase in active and passive recreation land is mostly attributable to the following three significant projects: development of Alice Jennings Archibald Park; construction of the Youth Sports Complex; and the expansion of and improvements to Boyd Park.

As a result of these and other projects not only has the amount of recreational land increased, so has the number of recreational facilities. The number of softball and baseball fields has increased by 4; the number of football/soccer fields has increased by 3; the number of tennis courts has increased by 2; the number of handball courts has increased by 2; the number of playgrounds has increased by 1; and the number of basketball courts has increased by 2.5. The provision of additional softball and baseball fields at the new Alice Jennings Archibald Park and Youth Sports Complex eliminated the four (4) field deficient identified in the 1995 Master Plan; while the provision of these parks, along with other improvements, eliminated the three (3) field deficient for football/soccer fields identified in the previous plan. It is acknowledged, however, that if the City’s population continues to grow it may find the need to seek opportunities for additional active recreational facilities.

The needs assessment in the 1995 Master Plan also identified a deficit of one (1) community center – at the time only the senior center was identified. While the City currently offers two community centers – the Senior Resource Center located on Huntington Street and the New

Brunswick Teen Center located on Joyce Kilmer Avenue, these two centers, while offering important service to special populations, generally do not serve the majority of the City's general population. In January 2004, the New Brunswick Community Center Task Force, a resident task force established by the Mayor, issued a report that evaluated the interest in, need for, and feasibility of developing a community center in New Brunswick. In the report, the Task Force recommends that the City pursue the development of additional community and recreational facilities, particularly the development of a community center that includes a swimming pool and space for community meetings. Facilities and equipment for fitness, weight training, dancing and other similar activities should also be pursued depending on the project's budget. The Task Force suggested that sites at the proposed New Brunswick Middle School and at Recreation Park be explored first for development of such a center as these sites create opportunities for sharing costs with the Board of Education and Rutgers, although other areas in the City such as the Joyce Kilmer industrial area may need to be explored as well if those areas don't prove feasible. The Task Force also recommended that the City actively seek creative and alternative means to fund the development and operation of a community center, including partnerships. For example, the report recommended that the City explore opportunities to share facilities with other organizations such as the Board of Education and Rutgers University since the sharing of facilities may reduce the funding burden on local residents and create additional site opportunities.

Middlesex County's Open Space and Recreation Plan

Middlesex County adopted its latest Open Space and Recreation Plan in February of 2003. The Plan sets forth a number of rather ambitious objectives, including:

- o Acquisition of 5,000 additional acres of open space by 2020 (4,000 acres of which are to be obtained by 2012);
- o Incorporation of acquisition requests by municipalities into the overall acquisition goals for the County;
- o Provision of funds to municipalities for the purposes of open space acquisition and parkland development;
- o Establishment of a linear open space network (e.g., along the Raritan River); and
- o Public access, recreation and resource protection in waterfront areas.

In order to achieve the Plan's objectives the Plan identifies a number of specific recommended actions within the City of New Brunswick. Following is a discussion of those recommendations.

The Plan includes an "Inventory of the Major Remaining Potential Open Space Acquisition Areas of Middlesex County" which identifies the large, undeveloped lands in the County that are not dedicated public open

space and have potential for open space acquisition. Two sites within, or partially within, the City are listed in that inventory. They are:

- o “Rutgers Village Area” – The Plan recommends that the 53.7 land-locked parcel between the Turnpike and Lawrence Brook remains for possible acquisition (as indicated below, the City also recommended that this parcel also be acquired for preservation purposes) as an addition to the Raritan River Conservation Area.
- o Rutgers Display Gardens & Agricultural Experiment Station – The Plan indicates that this area, which is located partially within the City, may be suitable for a number of different purposes. The Plan indicates: that the wooded areas offer conservation opportunities; that a portion of the area may be suitable for active recreational facilities; and that the Lawrence Brook stream corridor should be preserved. The Plan notes that the agricultural lands may be subject to future development pressure. The Plan notes that access would likely constrain potential for future development but notes that due to its central location near Route 18 and Route 1 that “consideration can be given to major cultural facilities here.”
- o Raritan River “Linkage” (Central) – The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a linkage along the south bank of the Raritan River from the D & R Canal at the Albany Street Bridge to the Lawrence Brook and would include Boyd Park and the Raritan River Conservation Area. Objectives of this recommendation consist of providing a trail, as well as flood plain, wetland and habitat protection.
- o Lawrence Brook “Linkage” – The purpose of this recommendation is to establish a linkage along the Lawrence Brook from its confluence with the Raritan River southwestwardly through New Brunswick, East Brunswick, Milltown, North Brunswick and South Brunswick. Objectives of this recommendation consist of providing a trail (which could potentially connect to the one discussed above), as well as stream corridor, flood plain, wetland, water resource and habitat protection.
- o The County’s plan also includes a number of recommendations received from by the City. These City-made recommendations are included below as recommendations of this plan as well.

As indicated above, one of the Plan’s objectives is the establishment of a linear open space network. The following “preliminary linkage recommendations” in the Plan are located within the City:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific Recommendations

1. Seek Opportunities to Add Parks in the City's Densest Areas and Neighborhoods. While the amount of parks and open space is considered sufficient for a mid-sized City such as New Brunswick, the geographic distribution of parks and open space in the City is relatively uneven. New Brunswick has a limited amount of parks and open space in the central area of the City. The 1995 Master Plan noted that pedestrian access to existing facilities is often difficult because many of the City's City-wide and neighborhood facilities are geographically remote, situated near the perimeter of the City and/or separated from the City's residential areas. Thus, access to such facilities is largely dependent upon the automobile. Because New Brunswick is essentially fully developed, there is limited opportunity for the creation of additional parks and open space. The 1995 Plan noted a need to provide City-wide and neighborhood facilities with multiple recreation activities in centralized locations in closer proximity to residential areas. Such a need continues today. The development of additional neighborhood parks with active recreation facilities is recommended. The development of neighborhood open space and "pocket parks" should be encouraged through the conversion of vacant and undersized lots into recreational areas and/or through the creation of pocket parks as part of the redevelopment process. While no neighborhood has been identified as being deficient in the neighborhood park area, the City should

continue to seek opportunities to add park facilities within the City's neighborhoods.

2. Improve Accessibility to Existing Facilities. The City should continue to improve accessibility to existing City-wide and neighborhood facilities by encouraging mass transit use to such facilities and encouraging bus routing to maximize access to park and recreation facilities.
3. Partner with Non-Profit Institutions, Rutgers University and Governmental Agencies. The City should continue to encourage cooperation/coordination among non-profit institutions, Rutgers University and other governmental agencies. The City and sports organizations should partner with institutions to meet each others' needs for recreation facilities, and to assist where possible in site location decisions. For example, the City should consider the coordination of park and recreation plans with existing and planned Board of Education facilities and activities. The City should also consider partnering with non-profit organizations such as the Trust for Public Land.
4. Ensure that Recreation Facilities Meet the Needs of the City's Population. The City should continue to review existing park and

recreation facilities to ensure that they meet the needs of the City's growing and changing population.

5. Seek Additional Funding to Expand, Improve and Enhance Recreation Facilities and Programs. The City should continue efforts in seeking additional funding to expand, improve and enhance its recreation facilities and programs.
6. Extend Usage of Existing City Facilities. The City should continue efforts to find ways to extend usage City facilities. The City should continue efforts in rehabilitating existing facilities and adding recreation amenities to existing facilities in order to maximize the utility of existing active recreation facilities.
7. Continue Efforts to Permanently Protect Environmentally Sensitive Lands. The City should continue efforts to permanently protect environmentally sensitive lands (e.g., expansion of the Raritan River Conservation Area to the east of the Turnpike).

Specific Recommendations

1. Pursue Recommendations of the Community Center Task Force Report. The City currently offers two community centers – the Senior Resource Center located on Huntington Street and the New Brunswick Teen Center located on Joyce Kilmer Avenue. These two

centers, while offering important service to special populations, generally do not serve the majority of the City's general population. As indicated above, the Task Force recommends that the City pursue the development of additional community and recreational facilities, particularly the development of a community center that includes a swimming pool and space for community meetings, as well as facilities and equipment for fitness, weight training, dancing and other similar activities should also be pursued depending on the project's budget. The Task Force recommended that the City actively seek creative and alternative means to fund the development and operation of a community center, including potential partnerships with the Board of Education and Rutgers University since the sharing of facilities may reduce the funding burden on local residents and create additional site opportunities. The Report identified a limited number of locations where the construction of a community center could be most feasible and recommended that that additional sites be evaluated if these sites were deemed infeasible or inappropriate.

2. Creation of a Downtown Park. Consistent with general recommendation #2, above, the Master Plan recommends the creation of a new park in the City's downtown area to serve both the day-time and permanent population that use the City's downtown. A vibrant, well-developed downtown needs public open space as well as buildings. Downtown open space offers opportunities for outdoor

cultural events, lunches in the park or just a peaceful escape on a hectic workday. It is noted that the CORE Vision Plan envisions new open space in the downtown area and this recommendation is reflected as well in the *Middlesex County's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003)*. While an exact location has not been determined, the City should pursue the creation of a downtown park.

3. Expansion of Raritan River Conservation Area. As indicated above, *Middlesex County's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003)* recommends the acquisition of a 53.7-acre (block 703.04, lot 1) environmentally-sensitive area along the Raritan River and Lawrence Brook. The Master Plan endorses the acquisition of that area and its permanent preservation. This land-locked parcel between the Turnpike and Lawrence Brook, which is located to the east of the New Jersey Turnpike, should be acquired as an addition to the Raritan River Conservation Area. Reflective of this recommendation, this area is located within the "Recreation/Open Space/Preservation/ Conservation" land use designation on the Land Use Plan.
4. Establishment of Raritan River and Lawrence Brook "Linkages". The Master Plan endorses the establishment of a linear open space network along the along the south bank of the Raritan River (including Boyd Park and the Raritan River Conservation Area) and the

establishment of a linear open space area along Lawrence Brook. The *Parks/ Recreation/ Open Space* map shows the general alignment of these proposed pathways. This recommendation is in line with recommendations in the Circulation Element to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the City as well as other initiatives to improve regional open space and trailway linkages such as the East Coast Greenway initiative (a proposed trail system that would run from Florida to Maine).