

VII. RECREATION

A. Introduction

In 1997, the Salem Planning Board adopted the Salem Recreation Master Plan which had been developed as a cooperative effort among the Salem Recreation Department, the Salem Planning Department, and the Salem Recreation Advisory Committee. The 1997 Plan documents an inventory and assessment of recreational facilities, a projection of need for recreational facilities through the year 2010, and an articulation of recommended actions supported by cost estimates and an implementation strategy. As a recent and thorough effort to address the Town=s recreational needs, the Salem Recreation Master Plan will be supplemented but not supplanted by this chapter. Any previously unidentified needs, or changes in circumstances that affect recommended actions, as well as efforts undertaken pursuant to the Plan will be so noted.

B. Recreation Inventory

The inventory of recreation facilities in the Salem Recreation Master Plan included the facilities in the Town=s parks together with those on School District property adjacent to the six elementary schools as well as Woodbury Middle School and Salem High School. Table VII-1 contains a list of all Town parks. The Salem Schools are described in more detail in the Community Facilities Chapter of this Master Plan. The location of both the parks and schools are displayed on Exhibit 3.

**Table VII-1
Existing Town Parks**

Park	Total Area (acres)
Aberrance Park	10
Boswell Pond	8
Bryan Memorial Field	1.5
Canoe Launch	na
Field of Dreams*	7.6
Hedgehog Park	28
Linwood Park	9
Little Saugus Field	1.5
Michele Memorial Park	55
Millville Beach	2.5

<i>Recreation</i>	
Palmer School & Field	8
Shannon Field	2
Town Forest	179
Total Park Area	312.1

* Privately managed

Source: Salem Recreation Master Plan, 1997

C. Recreation Needs

The 1997 Master Plan employs an accepted methodology for projecting recreation needs based on per capita standards promulgated in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) which are then locally adjusted pursuant to the policies of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The only issue that must be addressed herein is the difference in population projections for 2010. The 1997 Plan used a projection of 30,205 as the 2010 population to which the recreation standards were then applied. The projections that were made for this Master Plan 2001 indicate a 2010 population of 33,000 in Salem. The incremental increase of 2,795 is significant enough to revisit the projections of need. Table VII-2 compares the projections of recreation needs in 2010 as contained in the Recreation Master Plan with projections based on an updated 2010 population estimate of 33,000.

Table VII-2
Summary of Recreation Needs for 2010

Recreation Facilities	Total # of Existing Facilities	Facility Standard per 1,000 Population	For 2010 Pop of 30,205		For 2010 Pop of 33,000	
			Total # of Facilities Required	# of Facilities Needed to Meet Requirement	Total # of Facilities Required	# of Facilities Needed to Meet Requirement
Baseball Diamonds	14	0.77	23.3	9	25.4	11
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	7	0.40	12.1	5	13.2	6
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	8	0.40	12.1	4	13.2	5
Football Fields	1	0.10	3.0	2	3.3	2
Soccer Fields	2	0.23	6.9	5	7.6	6
Tennis Courts	4	0.39	11.8	8	12.9	9
Swimming Pools/Areas	1	0.08	2.4	1	2.6	2

Racing Track	1	0.04	1.2	0	1.3	0
Playgrounds	8	0.40	12.1	4	13.2	5
Picnic Tables	34	2.90	87.6	54	95.7	62
Parks	# of Existing Acres	Acreage Standard per 1,000 Population	For 2010 Pop of 30,205		For 2010 Pop of 33,000	
			Total # of Acres Required	# of Acres Needed to Meet Requirement	Total # of Acres Required	# of Acres Needed to Meet Requirement
Playgrounds	25.67	2.00	60.4	34.73	66	40.33
Community Parks	58.00	3.00	90.6	32.6	99	41
Total	83.67		151.0	67.33	165	81.33

Source: Salem Recreation Master Plan, 1997

When subjected to the revised 2010 population estimate, the recreation standards yield nominal increases in need for any given facility, and the collective result is that another 14 acres of land are needed for recreation use over and above the need identified in the 1997 Plan.

D. The Recreation Master Plan of 1997

The 1997 Plan contains an Action Plan within which recommendations are organized around seven major recreation planning objectives. Repair and replacement of recreational equipment and facilities in existing parks and adjacent to existing schools on School District property comprise a set of recommendations related to the first objective. A second objective is to provide adequate recreation facilities in accordance with accepted standards, recognizing that the Town is deficient at present with regard to certain facilities, and that additional facilities will be needed to accommodate growth that will occur during the planning period through the year 2010. Both the Town and School District annually accomplish a certain amount of maintenance and repair work on their respective recreational facilities, and planning has been initiated for some expansion facilities.

The third and fourth objectives focus on the expansion of recreational use on other Town and School District owned properties as well as the acquisition of privately owned parcels for recreational use.

Table VII-3 is a summary of the sites recommended for recreational use, and these sites are displayed on Exhibit 3.

Table VII-3
Sites Recommended for Recreational Use

Sites Proposed for Park and Recreation Use	Current Ownership	Total Site Area (acres)	Usable Area (acres)	Supportable Facilities
Hampstead Road	Town of Salem	8.8	8.0	2 athletic fields
Lowell Road Site	School District	5.0	5.0	Ball diamond, soccer field, parking lot
Millville Circle	Town of Salem	10.5	10.5	Ball diamond, soccer field, parking lot , playground
Najuck Site	Privately owned	46.7	10.0	Major athletic facility
Former Mika Site	NH Dept of Transportati on	14.0	8.0	Ball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis courts, parking lot , playground
North Main/Wheeler Dam	School District	15.0	10.0	Sports facility, parking lot , playground
Sewage Treatment Plant Site	Town of Salem	32.0	10.0	Major recreation complex, ball diamond, soccer field, parking lot, football practice
Area Totals		132.0	61.5	

Source: Salem Recreation Master Plan, 1997

All of these sites need some level of assessment and planning prior to any site development, and most particularly, prior to any purchase of land. The presence of wetlands, a history of environmental hazards, or the existence of easements and deed restrictions can seriously limit the potential use of a parcel for recreational purposes. Based on the recommendations of the Salem Recreation Master Plan, a site plan has been prepared for the development of two soccer fields, a playground, and a parking lot at the Lowell Road site, and construction funds have been included in the Capital improvement Program for 2001.

It is notable that in the time since the publication of the Recreation Master Plan, three sites have been removed from the list as originally contained in the 1997 Plan, albeit for differing reasons; the status of two other sites that remain on the list has changed; and several recreation facilities, unanticipated by the 1997 Plan, were developed. Of those sites removed from the list, the Town has acquired Palmer Field and the adjacent 8.0 acre parcel; however, a privately owned site, known as the Weiscek Site, is being developed for senior citizen housing and will not be available for recreational use. A third site, the Town owned Abanaki Park, had been proposed as the site for an athletic field, but is now the approved site for development of the new Salem Senior Center, thus supplanting the potential recreational use.

With regard to the other sites that have been subject to a change in status, the former Mika site was acquired by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for consideration, at least in part, for a park and ride lot; however, the balance of this site could still be used for recreation purposes. The North Main/Wheeler Dam site, which is owned by the School District, became the focus of planning for a new elementary school during the recent consideration of providing public kindergarten in Salem. If growth overtakes the capacity of the six existing elementary schools, this site is the School District's primary option for addressing its elementary expansion needs. Any recreational use of this site should be planned with recognition of the need to accommodate an elementary school with all of its attendant facilities on the site.

One unanticipated recreation facility has been created as a result of the expansion of WalMart's retail facility on its property on North Broadway. WalMart is currently developing a small recreational field to be dedicated for public use. A second unforeseen facility is the Icenter, a privately developed, for-profit facility featuring two indoor hockey rinks and a number of outdoor basketball courts.

The fifth objective in the Action Plan addresses pedestrian and bicycle access to recreation areas. Recommendations included a phased construction plan for new sidewalks to provide a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to existing and future school and park sites, and development of a program of preserving and creating trails. A schedule of design and construction costs for sidewalks has been included in the Capital Improvements Program for each of the next six years.

Objective six focused on two policy statements for requiring contributions from new developments to park and recreation facilities. The first proposed policy was to require a dedication of land for recreational purposes from all new subdivisions of 25 lots or more, while the second proposed policy was for the adoption of an impact fee ordinance that would assess all new residential development a fee which would be dedicated to recreation improvements.

The development of a conservation management plan for natural areas and open space was the topic of the last objective. Within the scope of this objective, it was recommended that an earlier Management Plan for the Town Forest be officially adopted by the Conservation Commission, that a greenway plan be developed for linking the various parks and open spaces in the Town, and that action be taken on earlier recommendations for the acquisition of open space parcels.

E. Recreation Recommendations

XImplement the recommendations in the 1997 Recreation Master Plan.

XRepair and replace recreational equipment and facilities in existing parks and adjacent to existing schools on School District property.

XProvide adequate recreation facilities in accordance with accepted standards, recognizing that the Town is deficient at present with regard to certain facilities, and that additional facilities will be needed to accommodate growth that will occur through the year 2010.

XExpand the recreational use of other Town and School District owned properties.

XAcquire privately owned parcels for recreational use.

XConstruct new sidewalks to provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to existing and future school and park sites.

XDevelop a program to preserve existing walking trails and create new trails where possible.

XRequire a dedication of land for recreational purposes from all new subdivisions of 25 lots or more.

XAdopt an impact fee ordinance that will assess a fee to all new residential development with the fee being dedicated to recreation improvements.

XDevelop a greenway plan for linking the various parks and open spaces in the Town.

XEncourage the expansion of private recreation facilities in the community.

Supporting Studies and References

X*Salem Recreation Master Plan*; prepared by the Salem Recreation Department, Salem Planning Department, and the Salem Recreation Advisory Committee; June 1997

XInterview with Julie Kamal, Recreation Coordinator, August 23, 2000.

XInterviews with Ross Moldoff, Planning Director, August through November 2000.

XCapital Improvements Plan, FY2001-2006.