

Township of Middletown Master Plan

October, 27, 2004

Prepared by the Middletown Township Department of Planning and Community Development

Objectives

1. To encourage municipal actions which will guide the long range appropriate use, development and preservation of lands within Middletown Township in a manner designed and intended to promote health, safety, morals, and general welfare of present and future residents
7. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations within the township for agricultural, residential, business, office, industrial, mixed use, and public and quasi-public uses in a manner which will provide for balanced Township growth and development.
12. To promote the conservation of open space through protection of wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes and valuable natural resources and prevent degradation of the environment through improper use of land
13. To acquire, develop and maintain park and recreation facilities as well as lands for purely open space/conservation purposes within the Township to meet reasonable needs and demands for recreation for present and future residents and to balance inevitable growth and land development with preservation needs.

Principles

3. Protection of natural and environmental resource including floodplains, wetlands, marshlands, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes and areas suitable for public and quasi-public recreational activities.

Policies

1. Land use planning will provide for a variety of residential and non residential uses; will encourage continuation of and enhancement of Middletown Township as a quality suburban/rural residential community. This includes a continued strong commitment to providing housing opportunities for families and individuals of all income levels.
2. Land development should be designed to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Township and preserve and protect valuable open spaces and natural resources
3. The township will continue its program of updating and supplementing the Master Plan and Land Use and Development Regulations as new data becomes available, as land development patterns and trends change and as community goals and objectives are modified.
4. The Township should continue to promote the construction of sidewalks in conjunction with new development and should develop a long term capital program for annual sidewalk installation and repairs.

Standards

The Master Plan provides general standards for development, including type, density and location of development and delineation of areas which are generally not developable. The Master Plan also provides recommended standards for roadways and other facilities. The Township Land Use Ordinance, including zoning, site plan, land subdivision and design regulations, provides specific standards for design, construction and development of individual land uses and development sites within the Township. In addition, Township regulations pertaining to utilities, fire prevention, on-site septic disposal, flood plains, wetlands, soil erosion, street trees and other development factors have been adopted and are applied by the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Environmental Commission, Board of Health, Board of Fire Commissioners, and others. Monmouth County, the State of New Jersey and Federal planning and regulatory agencies also have detailed standards pertaining to environmental features, roadways, utilities, etc. which are utilized in the overall development process in Middletown Township.

II. Land Use Element

Public Parks/Open Space

A total of 3,671 acres of land comprising 15% of the total area of the Township is devoted to public parks and open space. Of this amount 2,430 acres or 66% are owned and operated by Monmouth County. 1,241 acres or 34%, comprising 69 parks, are either Township owned lands or are included on the Township's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). The Township and County Park lands offer a wide array of recreation opportunities including fishing, tennis, baseball, softball, roller hockey, platform tennis, soccer, miniature golf, theater, and passive recreation such as hiking trails and nature observation. It should be noted that the 1,792 acre Gateway National Recreation Area, a Federal Park was excluded from the above parkland calculations.

Vacant/Undeveloped Land

Vacant/undeveloped land occupies 1419 acres or 6% of the total land area of the Township. However, approximately 1183 acres or 4.8% consists of tidal and freshwater wetlands which are essentially not developable. Clearly this leaves very little vacant developable land. However it is important to understand that there is still a significant amount of farmland, much of which will still have development potential. It should also be noted that while it appears that since 1993 it appears that slightly over 1000 acres of land has been developed, one must look more closely. Clearly a certain amount has been developed, however since 1993, 324 acres of new parks and open space acquisition and preservation, utilizing Open Space Trust Fund and dedicated tax revenue. At this time the Township is in negotiations to acquire and preserve approximately 180 additional acres of land.

Other recommendations

4. A new “Park” Zone should be established for all public parks in the Township. This will provide for a more realistic view of the Township on maps and will result in more precise calculations of land uses and potential future build-out data.

III. Circulation Element

Bicycling

1. Bike paths- Monmouth County’s Henry Hudson Trail provides an extensive, nine-mile bike path along a previous railroad line in the Bayshore neighborhoods. This bike path will eventually be extended an additional 12 miles towards Freehold Borough, and may also connect with the recently improved Gateway National Recreation Area Bike path. On and off-road, well delineated bike path spurs should be encouraged to extend from Henry Hudson trail towards other Bayshore recreational facilities. In particular, the feasibility of extending a new bike path between the Belford section of Henry Hudson Trail and Navesink River Road should be investigated. This bike path would run along an old trolley right-of-way and that is currently owned by an array of entities. Moreover, the Township should seek to improve and better identify and existing bike path in the New Monmouth area between Harmony Road and Tindall Road.
2. Standards- The Township should identify suitable roadways and areas for on- and off- road bike paths. Bike paths can be required as on- and off- tract improvements for new infill development. Monmouth County bikeway plan can provide a template for the prioritization of important routes and suitable roadways.

Sidewalks

1. Prioritization for Capital Improvements- Sidewalk installation projects are currently scattered throughout the Township. While certain projects undoubtedly have merit, a comprehensive plan has not been utilized to interconnect the existing sidewalk system to provide safe and efficient pedestrian pathways. It is recommended that the Township establish a Sidewalk Installation Plan. This plan would inventory all sidewalks along primary, secondary, and collector roadways, and should prioritize future sidewalk construction. The plan would also have as a goal to install new sidewalks to connect existing public places. Such a sidewalk plan should determine where sidewalks are essential and then prioritize future installation where they are desirable. Priorities should be based upon such factors as proximity to schools, bus stops, park and other public facilities.

2. Primary Arterials- At present, the Planning and Development Regulation require the installation of sidewalks along all right of ways unless unusual and specific circumstances are present. Pedestrian safety and mobility is a top priority throughout the Township, but is particularly essential along primary collector roadways such as Routes 35, and 36, and Newman Springs Road. Sidewalks should be provided for all new infill development along these roadways, and intersection improvements such as crosswalks and signage should be considered.

VI. Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Plan

Introduction

The parks and Recreation and Open Space Plan Element of the Master Plan is intended to provide a comprehensive set of goals and objectives designed to identify and address both the short and long term needs of present and future residents of the township. This plan will consist of four primary categories:

1. An inventory of existing park and recreation facilities
2. An analysis of existing and future needs for park, recreation facilities as well as open space and farmland.
3. An action plan describing the process of plan implementation and the use of funds earmarked for open space preservation
4. An analysis, inventory and ranking of privately owned properties suitable for acquisition and or preservation.

There are presently 78 parks totaling 5,395 acres in Middletown Township providing a wide array of recreational opportunities to the public. Of the 78 parks there is (1) National Park, (8) County Parks, and (69) Township parks.

National Park

Gateway National Park on Sandy Hook consists of 1,792 acres of land and is located east of the Highlands Borough. Sandy Hook offers a variety of activities; such as; hiking, fishing, and vast natural areas, however, the public beaches are the main attraction. Also, located on Sandy Hook is a U.S. Coast Guard Installation, Fort Hancock Army Museum, Marine Academy of Science and Technology. Due to Sandy Hook's historical significance, dating back to the American Revolution, the entire peninsula has been designated a National Historic Landmark. Every effort should be made to preserve the character, history, and environmentally sensitive features of Sandy Hook, while minimizing the intrusion of private non-recreation or non-educational oriented land uses and activities.

County Parks

The Monmouth County Parks Department has eight parks in the Township totaling approximately 2430 acres. Hartshorne Woods Park is their largest park in Middletown. Thompson Park in Lincoln is their second largest and one of the most heavily used parks. It houses the County Parks administrative offices. In recent years, the county has placed emphasis on developing the Bayshore. Most recently they have acquired two separate parcels of land in Port Monmouth. One is now the site of the County Marina known as Monmouth Cove Marina, consisting of 23 acres. They have also acquired the Bayshore Railroad right-of-way, which is known as the Bayshore Trail System which connects Matawan to Atlantic Highlands. The Trail System consisting of three separate sections: Henry Hudson Trail; Baywalk, a proposed walking path to be located along Ideal and Leonardo Beaches with branches from the trail; and Bay Bikeway, to be located along local roadways off-shooting from the Trail. This Trail system is heavily used by walkers, joggers, runners, skaters, and cyclists.

In addition, the County is nearing the completion of the Bayshore Waterfront Park, consisting of 145+ acres along nearly the entire Port Monmouth waterfront. This park, which begins at the Pews Creek inlet on the west, encompasses a continuous wild beach front and natural dune environment for approximately 1 mile, due east. The park also includes the historic Seabrook/Wilson House and the Port Monmouth fishing pier, both of which were recently acquired from the Township.

Municipal Parks

At this time, there are 69 municipal parks totaling 1,241 acres located in the Township. Of those, 50 are developed with recreation facilities and 19 remain undeveloped. In addition there are 17 public schools in the township, each of which provides a wide variety of recreational facilities. Despite the existing facilities in the township, deficiencies remain. Middletown is almost entirely developed and zone residentially with the vast majority of residential areas containing single family dwellings. Some residential areas of the Township remain under-served with respect to neighborhood parks and playgrounds, as well as community and teen centers. Another deficiency is areas for passive recreation and conservation. Numerous privately owned properties contain critical environmental features which will be lost or at least harmed forever, should development occur.

Plan Goals and Objectives

1. The establishment of realistic projections for the short term and long term recreational needs of the residents of Middletown.
2. The establishment of realistic projections for the short term and long term open space preservation needs of the residents of Middletown
3. The establishment of policies, procedures and resources for the acquisition and/or preservation of land for open space, recreation, historic preservation, conservation and agricultural purposes.
4. Preparation of a comprehensive plan which will address the wide variety of recreational needs of the residents of Middletown.

5. Establishment of a methodology for evaluation and prioritizing land for its potential value as public open space and/or recreational land.
6. The plan should emphasize tracts for open space purposes that will contribute to and enhance the scenic and aesthetic quality of neighborhoods.
7. The plan should emphasize the value and importance of farmland preservation. Efforts should be made to encourage the continuation of agricultural activities wherever possible as a fiscally sound and culturally valuable land use
8. The preservation of historically important properties, buildings and structures should be considered when seeking to acquire property.
9. The Plan should emphasize tracts of land for active recreational purposes that are well suited for such development and where environmental disturbance will be kept to a minimum. Recreational uses which are presently unavailable or have limited availability within the Township include but are not limited to indoor swimming facilities, a skateboard park, public golf facilities, indoor ice hockey facilities, field hockey, and lacrosse.
10. The plan should emphasize the development of the smaller “pocket parks” primarily in the more densely developed portions of the Township. Such parks are intended to be accessed primarily by pedestrians and will service residents within five neighborhoods. Generally “pocket parks” can range from 10,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet in area and may contain such facilities as: a tot lot, swings, a half basketball court, open play area, benches, etc. The development of any recreational facility within a neighborhood shall be undertaken with the input of area residents. The township shall meet with area residents to obtain input prior to the development of any new pocket park.
11. A significant potential resource for open space and recreational land is “underutilized” properties. These are properties that are neither vacant or farmland. They are potentially suitable for acquisition. Such properties have not been mapped or identified on the list of possible open space/recreation sites. This is due to the fact that they are somewhat difficult to define and categorize. However; it is recognized that in some cases it may be appropriate and in fact beneficial to acquire all of or portions of partially developed properties.
12. In considering the acquisition of property, the Township Committee shall make every effort to negotiate an amicable and fair transition. The use of condemnation and/or eminent domain shall only be applied as a last resort, where the land is considered to be of vital importance to accomplishing the goals of this plan, and all reasonable efforts to reach a fair arrangement have been exhausted.

Needs Analysis

Projected Recreation Needs

1. Mini Parks: Many areas of town including the Bayshore have a distance of ½ mile to 1 mile or more to a park site. More pocket mini-parks on lots between ¼ and 1 acre in size would serve this need
2. Trails: Trails within Township's Parks system can accommodate varied uses such as biking, walking, running, equestrian activities and nature interpretation. The Township should explore and study the feasibility of utilizing the exiting JCP&L/GPU right-of-way, extending from approximately Leonardville Road to the Navesink River.
3. Court Sports: Additional court sport facilities with some multiple use options, such as basketball courts with the capability to also play volleyball or other similar court sports should be explored.
4. Access to Waterways: Additional public access to local waterways such as Sandy Hook Bay, Navesink River, Poricy Pond, Shadow Lake, and the Swimming River must be made a priority. The Township's recent agreement to acquire the Chris's Marina property on West Front Street is an excellent step in improving water access in Middletown
5. Golf facility: Golf is a fast growing, extremely popular sport. The need exists for additional public facilities for instruction, practice and play. These facilities could include a driving range, a small par-3 course, executive 9 hole course or a full public 18 hold golf course.
6. Indoor facilities: Aquatics, Ice Hockey, Basketball and Tennis are just 4 areas where there is a need in our township as well as our region for these type facilities. Public private partnerships should be explored, particularly for the development of Ice and aquatic facilities due to their substantial cost and unique management needs.
7. Athletic Fields: Any new fields developed should be designed for multi-purpose use and for varied ages. Sports such as Field Hockey and Lacrosse should be accommodated.
8. Sports Lighting: Additional sports lighting on existing facilities would make them more useable and therefore present less of a need for other new facilities
9. Senior Citizen Facility: Additional Senior Citizen Satellite facilities, in addition to the center at Croydon Hall, are needed to serve seniors in all areas of the Township. An improved system of transit and access is important in order to improve services to seniors.

Other Assumption Regarding Existing and Future Recreational Needs
Athletic Facilities:

- Baseball/Softball – Two (2) new fields were completed at Croyden Hall in recent years, these along with maximum utilization of school sites, baseball/softball needs at current participation levels should be adequately addressed, with the possible exception of 90ft. fields. Two new baseball fields are planned for a newly acquired tract of land on Rt. 36 in the Navesink area.
- Soccer Fields – A need remains for soccer fields to address an ever growing level of participation. There is particular need for smaller fields to accommodate younger players. Development of such fields will also free up larger fields were recently completed on Oak Hill Road and another new field is planned for a newly acquired tract of land on Rt. 36 in the Navesink area.
- Roller Hockey – With three full size rinks now available in the Township, roller hockey demands at current participation levels appear to be adequately addressed. Some need does exist for smaller practice areas, which would be most suitable nearby existing rinks.
- Equestrian – There is presently a shortage in the area of opportunities for horseback riding and other equestrian activities. There is also a shortage of boarding space in the area. Opportunities should be explored to acquire land that would be suited for these activities.

County Facilities:

- Regional facilities – The Monmouth County Park System does an outstanding job in providing regional park and recreation needs. The only facilities not provided for which an apparent need does exist is for one or more major indoor recreational facilities. Specifically, indoor ice hockey and swimming facilities are needed. The Township will continue to maintain a cooperative relationship with the County and will participate in any way that it can in providing suitable locations for such regional facilities.

Poricy Park:

- Environmental/Natural Resource Ed. – The Poricy Park foundation along with the Townships Park and Recreation programs provide exceptionally high quality opportunities for education in the areas of natural resources and environmental protection

Existing Facilities:

- Playground Areas – Some need exists for playground facilities, particularly in certain under-served areas. In addition, some existing park sites should be upgraded with new/better equipment to help fulfill this need.

- Long Term Maintenance – The Township must continue its commitment to providing annual funding for the maintenance and upkeep of existing park and recreation facilities. These efforts result in long term savings and will minimize the need for “new” facilities in the future.

Green Acres:

- Funding – The Township has had an excellent relationship with the New Jersey Green Acres Program. Middletown has successfully implemented several grants and loans from Green Acres. It is our expectation that such relationships and support will continue.

Policies

1. The residents have voted to dedicate their tax dollars to open space acquisition and preservation. The Township therefore ensure that the funds collected will be utilized to address the wide variety of interest amongst residents
2. All of Middletown’s recreation facilities shall be open and accessible to the public. Maximum effort will be made to ensure that facilities are available to meet the needs of all our residents including youth, senior citizens and those with special needs
3. All categories of open space acquisition shall be accommodated. It is recognized that sound and adequate recreation facilities are vital to a community. However, equally important is the acquisition and preservation of land for conservation purposes. The protection of environmentally sensitive lands is vital to the overall ecology of a community and a key factor in establishing a quality of life.
4. The Township will continue to work with the State of New Jersey, Monmouth County and the Middletown Board of Education in efforts to preserve and provide recreational opportunities. In addition, the township will continue to work with private sector entities devoted to open space preservation, such as the Monmouth Conservation Foundation and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation.
5. The Township shall continue to seek public input and participation on all aspects of Plan implementation. Decisions made regarding property acquisition and property utilization shall be made after seeking and considering public comments
6. The Township in concert with willing and interested farm owners shall seek to participate in any available State, County, or federal programs dedicated to farmland preservation. In addition, other techniques such as farmland easements, purchase of development rights and transfer of development rights will also be utilized whenever appropriate.

Strategies

1. The primary strategy for successful plan implementation shall be the use of a comprehensive approach to all aspects of decision-making. The site evaluation criteria should aid in sound property acquisition decisions and should be considered in conjunction with other influencing factors.
2. Public participation, input and support will also be sought for every action taken in furtherance of this Plan. It is understood that opinions may differ as to specific actions to be taken. All viewpoints shall be considered before action is taken.
3. The Township will work closely with other governmental agencies as well as the private sector. The township understands that some properties will require a coordinated effort amongst various entities if acquisition is to be a realistic goal. Lack of such coordination will reduce the effectiveness of this Plan and prevent the achievement of its goals.
4. Public information and awareness efforts will be paramount in Middletown's overall approach to open space preservation. The Township will provide the public with information on the wide array of methods which can be utilized to save land.

Property Inventory

- Regional Park – Typically a large facility providing recreational opportunities not readily available in most areas, serving local residents and residents outside of the Township. Such parks can contain multiple uses such as athletic fields, passive use areas, equestrian facilities, ice hockey, or swimming facilities
- Recreation Area - A part primarily for the use of more localized residents and athletic leagues. These facilities are most commonly associated with active recreation as a primary use.
- Conservation Areas – Areas containing natural features such a woodland, wetlands, ponds, streams etc. These areas should be preserved and limited only to passive reaction activities.
- Neighborhood Park – Typically smaller properties located within residential areas and most often visited by walkers. Such parks typically contain a basketball court and a playground area. Very small neighborhood parks are often referred to as pocket parks
- Active Recreation – Park facilities devoted to physical activities such as athletic fields for soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, softball, roller hockey, football etc. Other forms of active recreation may include playgrounds, skateboard facilities, and open play fields.
- Passive Recreation – Activities generally not involving athletic fields, facilities or equipment. Activities may include hiking, bird watching, jogging, nature study, camping, and fishing

- Agricultural Potential - A property which in whole or in part can sustain agricultural activities including active crop farming, horse farming, beekeeping, raising of livestock, aquaculture, equestrian activities, etc.
- Mixed-Use Park – A park facility which is suitable for a combination of uses and activities. Some parks for example may have acres suitable for athletic fields while at the same time also containing natural areas for conservation.

Recreation Plan

Goals:

1. To acquire, develop and maintain park and recreation facilities as well as lands for purely open space/conservation purposes within the Township to meet reasonable needs and demands for recreation by present and future residents and to balance inevitable growth and land development with preservation needs
2. To promote the conservation of open space through protection of wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes and valuable natural resources and prevent degradation of the environment through improper use of land.

Municipal Parkland

- The Township recreation and open space inventory includes 50 sites developed or partially developed for active recreation and 19 sites that are wholly undeveloped. In total, the Township is the steward for approximately 1,241 acres of active and passive recreation areas. This represents a 21% increase, or 220 additional acres of recreation and open space area since the completion of the 1993 Master Plan.
- Over 70% of the Township-owned open space is developed or partially developed for active recreation. This represents an exceptional commitment to providing Middletown residents with an array of recreational opportunities. Middletown's parks also serve regional recreation needs based on the Township's extensive land area and central location.

County Parks

- 2 goals form the foundation of the County's Plan
- 1. To preserve open space in sufficient quantities, as determined by analysis and use of established standards, to create a diverse and comprehensive system of open space throughout Monmouth County
- 2. Locate and preserve remaining examples of our natural environment as open space in an effort to maintain natural resources, wildlife, environmentally sensitive areas, etc. of Monmouth County for future generations.

National Park

- Gateway National Recreation Area on Sandy Hook comprises 1,792 acres and is located northeast of Highlands Borough. The Park contains vast natural areas and offers a variety of recreational activities such as hiking, fishing and biking. An extensive network of biking and walking trails was recently constructed by the National Park Service (NPS). Vast public beaches remain the Gateway's main attraction.

Recommendations

1. Shared Facilities – The township should continue to encourage public use of recreational facilities and services at all public schools. Middletown's high, middle and elementary school campuses include numerous modern amenities that can readily complement and supplement the Township's parks and recreation facilities. Continued cooperation and communication with the Board of Education is essential to the shared use of the facilities by the entire community.
2. Neighborhood and Pocket Parks – The vitality of neighborhood and pocket parks that are proximate to established residential areas should be reinforced. Parks containing active and passive recreational opportunities that are within walking distance to densely populated areas and employment centers contribute to neighborhood well-being and character. Sufficient parking should be encouraged at neighborhood parks to encourage use by all Township residents. Sidewalk and bike path improvements should be provided on- and off- road to encourage safe and convenient access. A balance should be struck within neighborhood parks between relaxation and solitude, and active recreation. Pocket Parks containing less than three acres are not intended to house basketball or baseball fields, but are specially geared for more passive types of recreation for the immediate neighborhood. Adequate screening and buffering is essential to offset any negative noise or lighting impacts on adjacent residential areas. Neighborhoods that currently lack such facilities include Oak Hill, Chapel Hill, and River Plaza.
3. Bikeways – Bike paths should be encouraged to promote active recreation and to encourage alternate forms of transportation. Monmouth County's Henry Hudson Trail provides an extensive, nine-mile bike path along a previous railroad line in the Bayshore neighborhoods. This bike path will eventually be extended an additional 12 miles towards Freehold Borough, and may also connect with Gateway National Recreation Area bike paths. On- and off- road, well delineated bike path spurs should be encouraged to extend from the Henry Hudson Trail and Navesink River Road should be investigated. This bike path would run along an old trolley right-of-way and that is currently owned by an array of entities. Moreover, the Township should seek to improve and better identify an existing bike path in the New Monmouth area between Harmony Road and Tindall Road.

4. Indoor Recreation – Consideration should be given to identifying a suitable location for multi-purpose indoor recreation facility to provide opportunities for sports, exercise and leisure. Such a facility could provide a year-round venue for ice related sports, swimming, soccer and other fitness activities. Indoor recreation is particularly needed by the Township’s growing senior citizen population. The adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial property along the Route 35 and 36 corridors for such a facility should be considered. A public-private partnership may be forged in order to secure adequate land area.
5. Equestrian Activities – The Township should identify suitable locations for an equestrian facility for people of all abilities. In addition to providing riding and educational programs, such a facility could provide boarding opportunities for the individual horse owner, which is a service that continues to diminish as small horse farms evaporate from the local landscape. A partnership with the non-profit sector could be established to help operate such an equestrian facility.
6. Park Development and Maintenance Plan – Sustained utility and enjoyment of Middletown’s recreation facilities requires municipal investment in park infrastructure and services. The development of new facilities and the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities is essential. Accordingly, a Park Development and Maintenance Plan (PDMP) should be prepared to inventory current conditions of municipal park facilities, and develop a long-term maintenance and improvement plan.
7. County Plan Participation – The Township should actively participate in the adoption of Monmouth County’s new Park, Recreation and Open Space plan.
8. Survey- The Township may wish to conduct a public interest survey in order to gauge public interest in existing and proposed programs and facilities. A survey would assist municipal officials in capital planning and annual programming.
9. Waterfront Access – As recommended in the 1993 Master Plan, improved Township access to the Navesink and Swimming Rivers is strongly encouraged to encourage water-based recreation activities. The Township has recently entered into a contract with the owners Chris/s Marina along the Navesink River in the River Plaza neighborhood. Successful acquisition of this parcel would at least provide the Township with sufficient public access to its southerly waterfront. Fee Simple purchase of land or acquisition if access easements at eastern portions of the Navesink Rover should still be investigated.

Conservation Plan

3. Utilization of Open Space Resources

Natural resource areas and special features should be incorporated into an overall open space system designed to meet the leisure needs of the township's residents. The system can be used for a combination of active and passive recreation as well as for conservation purposes. Middletown already has a number of parks and other open space tracts but they need to be augmented in several areas to form a unified network of protected open spaces.

The basis for an open space system already exists in Middletown. In addition to a system of public parks and school sites, the township has acquired a number of conservation easements and required open space preservation in new developments through cluster zoning. A comprehensive open space inventory of sites including easements should be an initial step in the implementation of this plan. The inventory should include up-to-date surveys and a catalog of restrictive or permissive conditions that apply to these tracts.

- Additional sites are needed to augment the system
 - (i) System linkages tie individual open space parcels together into one integrated system. By interconnecting the individual sites, accessibility is increased, recreational capacity is enlarged, and a separated pedestrian/bicycle circulation system can be provided. New open space parcels should provide additional linkages.
 - (ii) Buffers soften the transitions between different types of land uses; they insulate different uses; and they separate similar but intensive uses. New open space parcels should establish needed buffers.
 - (iii) Wildlife habitats offer a haven for protected animal and plant species. New open space parcels should provide suitable refuges.
 - (iv) Reservations ensure the availability of land for the development of future recreation requires suitable slope and soil conditions. Sites meeting the necessary criteria are limited and others require considerable expense to develop and maintain. Open space parcels for active recreation should create new reservations in accordance with the Recreation Plan.
 - (v) Educational opportunities are provided at historic, architectural, or geologic sites and nature study areas. New open space parcels should expand those opportunities.

5. Establishment of a Greenway System

In concert with the overall goal of conservation and preservation of open space, the township should prepare and implement a Greenway Plan. The goal of such a project should be to provide linkage between existing public lands, natural resources and points of interest. The land which makes up a greenway system can be attained through acquisition, conservation easements, dedication, land exchange or other means. The plan should be compatible with Monmouth County's Open Space Plan, including the Bayshore Trail and the Bayshore Access Plan.

**Township of Middletown Master Plan 1981
Middletown, New Jersey**

Middletown Township Planning Board
Objectives

1. To encourage municipal actions which will guide the long range appropriate use and development of lands within Middletown Township in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of present and future residents.
2. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other natural and man-made disasters.
3. To provide adequate light, air and open space
4. To ensure that development within the Township does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the County, the region, and the State as a whole.
5. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities in locations that will contribute to the well being of persons, neighborhoods and preservation of the environment.
6. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by coordinating public and private development within a framework of land use and development principles and policies.
7. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations within the Township for agricultural, residential, business, office, industrial, and public and quasi-public uses in a manner which will provide for balanced Township growth and development,.
10. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques with respect to environmental assets and constraints of the overall Township and of individual development sites.
11. To promote the conservation of open space through protection of wetlands, stream corridors and valuable natural resources and prevent degradation of the environment through improper uses and development densities of land.
12. To acquire, develop and maintain park and recreation facilities within the Township to meet reasonable and affordable needs and demands for recreation by present and future residents.

13. To encourage the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and sites within the Township in order to maintain the heritage of Middletown Township for enjoyment of future generations.
14. To encourage coordination of the numerous public and private regulations and activities which influence land development with a goal of producing efficient uses of land with appropriate development types and scales
15. To encourage economic development through new investment and maintenance & reinvestment in existing commercial and industrial activities within the Township in areas suitable for such development.
17. To encourage the efficient management of storm water through the development of appropriate guidelines which will prevent future drainage problems and provide environmentally sound land use planning
18. To encourage the preservation and active use of prime farmland for agricultural production through development of appropriate guidelines based upon State and municipal legislation and preservation techniques.

Principles

1. Encouraging residential development in locations and at densities which are compatible with existing development patterns and which can be properly serviced by public roadways, utilities and services
2. Locating public, commercial, industrial, professional office and agricultural uses at sites and locations which are suitable for their use environmentally, economically and geographically, and are compatible with existing uses, public facilities, roadways, and natural features.
3. Protection of natural and environmental resources including floodplains, wetlands, marsh and aquifer recharge areas, and areas suitable for public and quasi-public recreational activities
4. Encouraging a development pattern which will protect and enhance the long term economic, social and welfare interest of present and future residents of the Township.

Policies

The Middletown Township Master Plan is based upon policies which have been developed by the Planning Board and other land development review agencies

1. Land use planning will provide for a variety of residential and non-residential uses, will encourage continuation of and enhancement of Middletown Township as a quality suburban/rural residential community

2. Land development should be designed to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Township.
3. The township will consider and evaluate innovative development proposals which would enhance and protect environmental features, minimize energy usage and encourage development densities consisted with existing patterns of development.
5. The Township will encourage and provide for review of the development of social, health, welfare, cultural, recreational, service and religious activities within the Township to serve present and future residents of the Middletown area.
6. The township will continue its program of updating and supplementing the master plan and land use and development regulations as new data becomes available, as land development patterns and trends change and as community goals and objectives are modified.

Parks and Recreation objectives

The basic goals and objectives of the Middletown Township Parks and Recreation Plan are to acquire, develop and maintain park and recreation facilities within the Township to meet reasonable and affordable needs and demands for recreation by present and future residents of the Township.

- Acquire, develop and enhance park and recreation facilities which are in appropriate locations and sufficient in size to service present and future residents
- Preserve and protect sensitive natural and aesthetic resources including floodways, wetlands, marsh areas and areas suitable for park, open space, and recreation activities.
- Encourage multiple purpose user oriented and resource oriented parks and recreation areas within a coordinated public lands management program for the Township.
- Encourage compatible and complementary private recreation resource including marinas, indoor recreation facilities and other commercial activities which would enhance the overall development of the Township while supporting economic and land use goals of the Township.
- Provide for coordinated park, recreation and open space areas within the Township in conjunction with County, State and federal agencies.
- Preserve, protect and enhance historic archeological and cultural buildings and activities.

Parks and Recreation Needs and Deficiencies

Include soccer, football and baseball fields which are in high demand by youth athletic leagues. Public boat launching ramps, indoor community facilities, public swimming pools, and racket court sports have also been noted as inadequate facilities.

There are no public marinas, boat launching facilities, or public fishing piers. The township also does not have an estuarine nature study area.

The lack of water based facilities is directly attributable to the limited amount of park and recreation areas along the bayshore and riverine areas of the Township. One of the long-term goals for the future park and recreation facilities is the Township should be waterfront and water based facilities.

Standards

Overall standard is 5 acres of neighborhood and community recreation land; 5 acres of parks/open space; and 10 acres of regional parks for every 1,000 persons. This includes all types of active and passive recreation, including nature preserves.

1. Neighborhood Playgrounds

A playground of at least 5 acres in size should be provided for each residential neighborhood of 4,000 persons. These playgrounds may be provided in conjunction with an elementary school. Where schools are not within walking distance of residential areas, additional playgrounds of at least 2 acres in size are needed for each 1,000 to 1,500 populations. The following are examples of facilities that should be included in playgrounds:

- a. Area for pre-school children
- b. Apparatus for older children
- c. Open space for informal play
- d. Surfaced area for basketball, handball, volleyball, dancing, skating
- e. Field for games such as softball and touch football
- f. Area for storytelling, crafts, dramatics, quiet games
- g. Shelter pavilion
- h. Wading or spray pool
- i. Tennis courts
- j. Landscaping

2. Neighborhood Parks

Parks of approximately 5 acres in size should be provided for each neighborhood. These areas should be utilized for picnics and general family use and can aid in preserving attractive natural features such as forests, streams, aesthetic amenities and historic entities. Where possible, neighborhood parks are best located adjacent to and in conjunction with neighborhood playgrounds

3. Playfields

Playfields of approximately 25 acres in size should be provided in conjunction with senior and junior high schools. These playfields should provide community-wide facilities for older children and adult including baseball, football and soccer fields; basketball, volleyball and tennis courts; running tracks; recreation buildings; and other such facilities

4. Regional Parks

Large scale park areas should be provided on a regional basis and need not necessarily be located within the Township. These park areas should be located within easy driving distance of the Township, providing facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, water sports, hiking, day camping, field sports, nature study and historic preservation

Recommendations for Future Park and Recreation Planning

- Plans should be made to develop existing park and recreation areas.
- Plans should be made to upgrade existing park and recreation areas.
- Based on current population and projected growth, data should be gathered via public surveys, public meetings, etc. , and analyses made to determine the need for:
 - (a) indoor facilities
 - (b) Public swimming facilities
 - (c) Water-oriented activities
 - (d) Municipal golf facilities
- Plans should be made, based on projected population growth to acquire additional properties for future development
- A plan should be developed, based on anticipated growth for the restructuring of the administration of the Parks and Recreation Department
- A plan should be made to establish a comprehensive maintenance and beautification program for existing and proposed park and recreation areas

Monmouth County Open Space Plan

Prepared by the Monmouth County Park System
Adopted August 21, 2006

Purpose

Three Main purposes

1. The plan establishes direction and priorities for the land preservation program of the Monmouth County Park System
2. The plan communicates the park system's vision to other agencies and the public.
3. The plan is intended to satisfy the statutory requirements of N.J.S.A 40:12-15.2 governing "county open space, recreation and farmland and historic preservation funds"

County parks function as a system

- Regional parks are the backbone of county parks and they combine the functions of recreation and conservation areas.
- Recreation areas are intended to provide outdoor active recreation facilities.
- Recreation areas are intended to provide outdoor active recreation facilities.
- Special use areas serve a special purpose or meet a specific need
 - Ex. Historical site
- Conservation areas are created to permanently protect a natural resource of County significance, and are actively managed for that purpose
- Greenways are elongated and usually continuous strips of land or water under public control through ownership, easement, or other agreement.
- Open lands are intended primarily to advance regional objectives for watershed protection and growth development patterns.

Needs Analysis

- Likely future recreation land needs as communities approach build out.
- The balanced Land Use Guidelines recommend that 3% of the developable area of the municipality be acquired for municipal-level public recreation. "Developable area" is intended to include areas that are already developed and to exclude acreage of slopes over 12%, wetlands, and federal and state-owned open space. The balanced Land Use guidelines for state and federal levels are 10% and 4% of the total area of the State respectively.

- In strict accordance with the guidelines, to be considered as supply towards meeting the Balanced Land Use goals, public open space areas must be environmentally suitable for the recreation activities generally provided by the particular level of government.
- The acreage per population method is a method that derives short-term goals or current needs based on the actual population.
 - i. The standards are 12 acres per 1000 persons for the County and 8 acres per 1000 persons for municipalities.
 - ii. Unless a concerted effort is made to have open space acquisition keep pace with population growth, the number and degree of short-term deficits is likely to increase in those communities experiencing development and redevelopment. (Appendix D)
- Neither of the methodologies includes goals for the acquisition of public land for conservation of natural, scenic, cultural, or historic reserves. Nor do they include private lands such as golf courses, farms, and water supply reservoir properties that are an important part of the overall open space system and are particularly vulnerable to redevelopment.
- Preservation of habitat for plants and animals and natural corridors for migration is critical to the ecological diversity of the county, the enrichment of human life, and the understanding of our natural environment.
 - iii. Resource protection can be accomplished through regulations to ensure conscious land development practices, but such regulatory protections are vulnerable to change.
 - iv. Public acquisition is appropriate and necessary to protect those important natural resources that cannot be permanently protected by other means and to preserve and inventory of natural areas representing the major habitats of the region.

Mission Statement

The board of Recreation Commissioners is committed to improving the quality of life of the citizens of Monmouth County by providing park and recreation areas, facilities, programs, and services of the highest quality and to furnishing these recreational opportunities in the most effective, efficient, and economical manner possible.

The board will pursue this mission in the following ways:

- By studying, planning, acquiring, improving, and managing lands of county significance for parks, recreation, conservation, and open-space preservation
- By protecting and interpreting natural, historic, and cultural resources of county significance
- By providing recreational facilities, programs, and services to meet the county-wide needs of the citizens of Monmouth County for the recreation and well-being of body, mind, and spirit

- By implementing this mission in accordance with the Board's adopted County Park and Recreation Policy and other adopted policies.

Regional Parks

Combine the functions of recreation and conservation, while preserving at least 80% of the park in a natural undeveloped site.

The combined total acreage in the regional park and recreation area categories should equal or exceed a standard of 10 acres per 1,000 county residents. All residents should be within 10 miles of a Regional park.

- Size

At a minimum, the park should have a land area of 100 acres; 300 acres or more is preferred.
- Accessibility

Each park should be safely accessible from an existing road system.
- Development capability

The site should include significant natural areas for passive recreation and visual enjoyment. Although 80% of the site is to remain undeveloped, a minimum of 40 acres or 20% of the site, whichever is greater, should be suitable for the possible development of facilities for a number of activities

Recreation Areas

Intended primarily to provide outdoor active recreation facilities. A significant portion of the site may be retained as a natural area, although a recreation area generally does not contain a large environmentally sensitive area. At the maximum, no more than eighty percent of the total site area may be developed.

The combined total acreage in the recreation area and regional park categories should equal or exceed a standard of 10 acres per 1000 county residents. All residents should be within 8 miles of a recreation area. However, in areas of population concentration, a service area smaller than this 8-mile radius may be appropriate.

- Size

At a minimum, the site should have a land area of 75 acres of which at least 60 acres are suitable for recreational development: a site area of 200 acres or more is preferred. Potential for possible future expansion should be considered.
- Accessibility

Each area should be located so as to serve large numbers of county residents and should be safely accessible from existing highway systems. Access via public transportation is highly desirable.

- Development capability

The site should have topography, soils, and a configuration that will support practical development and efficient program use. The site should be capable of withstanding intensive public use and capable of being developed for recreational uses compatible with any significant environmental features including land use contained within or adjacent to the site. Ready access to public water, sewers, and other utilities is highly desirable. The site should have resources for providing multiple recreation opportunities.

Special Use Areas

Serve a special purpose or meet a specific need. Often they are devoted to single purpose recreational, horticultural, historic or cultural activities.

Because special use areas encompass a wide range of uses and activities, there is no quantitative standard for special use areas as a general category. Often acquisition is undertaken to preserve or take advantage of a specific existing or potential resource of a County significance rather than as a response to a calculated recreation need.

There are no specific site selection criteria for the category as a whole. Their location and size should be determined in accordance with their intended function and the facilities or area necessary to accommodate the program of activities planned. A special use area may be located within or adjacent to another County park.

Conservation area

Primary function is the preservation and enhancement of valuable natural resources and they are generally actively managed for that purpose. Any development should be non-intensive and should be limited to the support and enhancement of nature-oriented outdoor recreation including such activities as nature interpretation, hiking, fishing, trail uses, and limited picnicking.

There is no quantitative standard for acquisition of conservation areas. The need for conservation areas is a function of the desire to permanently protect some feature of the landscape that is of County significance.

Conservation areas should be acquired where there are natural features worthy of public protection. The size and location of the conservation areas will depend on the natural characteristics of the site. A conservation area may be located within or adjacent to other County park lands.

Greenways

Elongated and usually continuous strips of land or water under public control through ownership, easement, or other agreement. Greenways may serve both conservation needs and recreation needs, and whenever possible should be planned to connect other park sites and centers of activity and to expose users to interesting views and unique natural features.

No quantitative standard for the acquisition of Greenways

- Size

1. Should be of sufficient width to protect the host resource and to accommodate any intended public access and/or trail use type. Wider areas along the corridor may be necessary or desirable to accommodate ancillary facilities such as parking areas, picnic areas, interpretive facilities and restrooms or to encompass nearby areas of scenic, environmental, or historic interest.

- Accessibility

1. Where appropriate to the intended purpose, greenways should have connections to and have frequent access points from other parks, centers of activity, and public roads. The potential for serving a circulation function as well as a recreation function should be considered.

- Development capability

1. The topography should be suitable for any intended trail use. Land within the park should be able to support any ancillary facilities such as parking areas interpretive facilities or restrooms that are to be provided.

Open Lands

Intended primarily to advance regional objectives for watershed protection and growth development patterns and to enhance regional quality of life by preserving certain lands of county significance in an essentially unimproved condition. Open lands may serve to protect areas of scenic beauty or natural habitat. Open lands may serve to enhance public health and safety by preventing development of areas prone to flooding or erosion or which contribute to water quality protection. Park land classified as Open Lands is not intended for formal recreation use or park facilities, but may be made available for agriculture or land dependent outdoor recreation uses such as fishing, hiking, and horseback riding. Open lands may be considered for reclassification for more formal or active use as park and recreation needs within the county change. Open Lands generally receive only minimal maintenance and patrolling. Preservation of Open Lands may be in fee or by easement.

There is no quantitative standard for acquisition of open Lands. The need for Open Lands is a function of desire to permanently preserve land as open space.

Open Lands should be acquired where there are large or contiguous undeveloped properties worthy of permanent preservation by the County but which either are not suitable for, or not currently needed for other public open space purposes. The size and location of Open Lands will depend on the characteristics of the site and patterns of development and ownership. The existence of significant drainage structures or other substantial permanent improvements that serve no park function and represent a long-term management should be considered as a liability in site selection.

Recreation Services Plan

Prepared by the Monmouth County Park System

June 18, 2001

3 Principal purposes of the plan:

1. Establish internal direction and priorities for staff

The formal planning process provides a structure within which existing conditions can be evaluated and changes internal and external to the Park System can be reviewed for their potential impact on the delivery of recreation services. This enables informed decisions to be made regarding the future vision of the Park System as a recreation service provider.

2. Establish the role of the Park System relative to other recreation service providers

The Park System does not function in a vacuum. Boards of Education, municipal governments, non-profit agencies and groups, and private entities also function as recreation service providers. The Park System needs to define its role so as to maximize the benefit to county residents and visitors, complementing and supporting these other providers wherever possible.

3. Maintain conformance with the standards of the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies

The standard for a Recreation Programming Plan states "A long range recreation program plan (3 to 5 years or more) should be developed and periodically reviewed as well as a current year plan, which includes implementation procedures and priority listings of recreation programs"

Mission:

1. Goals

- a. Provide a range of quality regional recreational services, programs, and places that enhance and enrich the lives of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.
- b. Promote resource-based leisure activities and an appreciation of the open space and natural, historic and cultural resources that both support these activities and contribute to the quality of life of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.

2. Objectives

- a. Provide year-round opportunities for persons of all ages, interests, abilities, and skills from throughout Monmouth County to engage in a variety of recreation activities.

- b. Promote and support the development and maintenance of lifetime recreation skills and prepare individuals for independent, self-directed participation in the recreational activities of their choice,
- c. Promote and support healthy lifestyles and wellness of body, mind, and soul through creative and recreative pursuits.
- d. Promote and support a strong sense of community through quality park sites and positive recreation experiences
- e. Preserve and provide opportunities for recreation activities which are dependent on scarce and/or special land, natural, historic, or cultural resources
- f. Embrace a resource conservation ethic within MCPS and encourage the same ethic among Monmouth County residents and visitors.
- g. Provide opportunities for persons with physical and mental disabilities to participate in a variety of recreation activities that offer therapeutic benefits.
- h. Make reasonable accommodations to ensure that financial, transportation or physical barriers do not preclude County residents from opportunities to participate in MCPS programs and services.
- i. Inform the public about the availability of MCS recreation services and opportunities and serve as a source of known information about other services and opportunities and serve as a source of known information about other services and opportunities available including those of other public, private, and non-profit providers.
- j. Work with other recreation providers to expand and promote the opportunities for recreation activities available to Monmouth County residents and visitors.
- k. Retain qualified individuals to deliver MCPS recreation services to the public and support their professional growth through training and participation in professional development opportunities.
- l. Generate sufficient revenue to support a full range of programming and services including a variety of free programs and special events open to the general public and subsidized programs
- m. Assess program service delivery and continually make refinements to achieve high quality, efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and consumer satisfaction.

Recreation Trends:

1. Social trends
2. Demographic trends
3. Environmental trends
4. Economic trends
5. Technological trends

Community Needs:

The Park System currently uses four means of assessing the community needs. The means are program evaluations, park visit reports, theater surveys, and outreach.

1. Program evaluations

Evaluation forms are mailed to a sampling of program participants for a selection of advertised programs, for programs that are new or had a new instructor, for programs that yielded a compliment or complaints, and at the request of the programmer. The forms include questions related to program content/trip itinerary, personnel, scheduling the strengths and weaknesses of the program and potential interest in other offerings. The Superintendent of Recreation an Assistant Superintendent who supervises the programmer for the particular program.

2. Park Visit Reports

Report forms are available to park visitors at those park areas with general brochure racks. The burden is on the visitor to seek a form, complete it, and return it to a staff by person or by mail. The form includes questions regarding activities, group size and origination, time and season of visit, source of information regarding the park, and satisfaction with park information, maintenance, personnel, and facilities. There are also open-ended questions regarding likes, dislikes, and other services/facilities the visitor would like to have provided. The completed forms are returned to the Public Information Office where they are reviewed and forwarded to the Superintendent of Parks. Less than 30 report forms are received each year.

3. Theater Surveys

Surveys are distributed to audience members at each of the summer theater performances. While the content of the survey varies from year to year, generally the survey seeks comments regarding the production and suggestions for future show titles. The Pay Director and the marketing staff review the responses. No written summary of the responses is maintained.

4. Outreach

The staff maintains contacts with other recreation professionals and providers through clubs, groups, associations, and committees. These contacts are valuable in keeping staff aware of the needs and services available in the larger community.

Action Plan:

The actions are intended to achieve consistency between the agency, philosophy/mission for recreation services set forth in this Plan and the daily work of agency departments, divisions, and individual staff. Actions will be initiated in phases over the five-year horizon of the Recreation Services Plan. Action Plan progress reports will be prepared on an annual basis. A comprehensive formal review to determine if an amendment to the Recreation Services Plan or preparation of a new plan is warranted will occur within five years from the date of Plan adoption.

1. Develop new mission statements for each program area that reflect the philosophy/mission of the Recreation Services Plan
2. Develop mission-related objectives for all program offerings
3. Determine and assign an annual number or percentage of programs from each program area that will be committed to the Urban and Community Recreation Program.
4. Establish targets for each program area for distribution of programs by season to achieve objectives for year-round recreation
5. Establish targets for each program area for distribution of programs by age group to reflect population shifts and expand offerings for mixed age and family size audiences
6. Develop a policy statement and guidelines for mainstream program participation by the therapeutic population
7. Identify opportunities for mainstream participation and determine and assign an annual number or percentage of programs within each program area that can be adapted for and made available as an offering specifically for a therapeutic population
8. Identify community facilities and underutilized MCPS facilities to support an increase in program offerings in Regions 2 and 3.
9. Develop and implement a plan to adjust the number and location of programs to achieve a regional distribution of program offerings that is consistent with the regional population distribution.

10. Increase supply/availability of larger multi-purpose indoor spaces to support program needs
11. Review existing programs and create new program and volunteer opportunities for the growing population of active older adults
12. Expand program offerings on topical environmental issues and sound environmental practices and habits.
13. Review existing and create new programs related to wellness
14. Increase history-related programs at designated historic sites and other parks within the Park System
15. Increase gardening-related programming and gardening volunteer opportunities
16. Increase golf programming and related volunteer opportunities
17. Develop mission-related objectives for all major events
18. Identify additional opportunities to offer facilitated and self-directed activities to park visitors to help promote programs and enhance the visitor experience
19. Seek assistance from other County agencies to expand public transportation service to key programming sites
20. Enable public access to program, event and facility information and registration system via computer
21. Develop systems to continually assess satisfaction of program registrants and park visitors and if recreation series plan mission and objectives are being met
22. Conduct formal scientifically valid surveys of program registrants and park visitors on a five year cycle to assess satisfaction and needs
23. Conduct formal scientifically valid surveys of the general public on a five-year cycle to assess awareness, satisfaction and needs
24. Monitor offerings and pricing of other area recreation service providers
25. Develop an in-service training program to enhance staff performance in the delivery of recreation services to the public.
26. Continue to explore the potential for funding a year-round indoor recreation center and to monitor any changes in the supply of such services by others in the County.

**Monmouth County Park System
Recreation Center Feasibility Study**

Ballard*King and Associates with Hammer, Siler, George Associates and Hughes Group
Architects
March, 1998

Goals:

1. To promote good health and serve a broad range of county residents by providing a venue to year round recreation
2. To generate sufficient revenues to cover more than 100% of the direct cost of operating the facility.

Recreation Participation Statistics and Trends

Annual participation in active recreation activities from residents within a primary service area can be expected to be somewhere in the range of 15% to 20% of the population, based on the participation rates in traditional indoor activities. Most private health clubs hope to capture 3% to 5% of the general population within a 3-mile radius of their facility as members.

- Considering the overall population in the county, there is a strong base for support for the operation of a full scale recreation facility.
- It is important to remember, due to competition with existing providers in the area and a substantial impact from other forms of recreation and entertainment, the rate of participation at any center may vary.

Project Funding

An option for funding is to partner with another organization that can bring capital dollars to the table and reduce the capital responsibility for the park system.

Alternative funding sources should be explored to broaden the base of support for this project. This involves investigation of foundation and grant opportunities, the development of "gift catalogs" and the solicitation of private donations.

Benefit Analysis

- Quality of life: Project will positively impact the quality of life for people living in the service area of the center. It places a positive value on leisure activities in the region. There is a positive relationship between quality of life in an area and the amount of recreation programming provided.
- Civic Pride: This type of facility provides a focal point for the area and the location with other outdoor amenities will make it an identifiable multi-faced recreation facility. For a suburban area with scattered pockets of development, this facility can provide a point of identification and help bring a diverse community together. It develops a sense of community. The facility will be a source of a county pride and provide a positive image with broad based public appeal.

- **Universal Use:** Facility will be intergenerational with strong family orientation. It will provide something for everyone, from tiny tots to seniors. It will be a true multi-use facility and the center for recreational activities in the area
- **Wellness:** Such facilities and programs in conjunction with schools and businesses can influence and provide fitness and stress related programs and prevent people from becoming tomorrow's high cost medical patients. These programs and facilities will produce savings in the cost of insurance, health care, and tax expenditures on medical care. This results in people who are healthier and more satisfied with life.
- **Crime Reduction Benefits:** Basic recreation facilities and services can be viewed as a creative form of law enforcement. The public, through taxes, is paying recreation agencies to provide activities which provide an alternative to potential juvenile offenders.
- **Economic Development:** Property values are positively affected by the quality of recreation facilities and negatively affected by the distance from them. Residential growth is also positively impacted by the immediate availability of public recreation amenities. It is estimated that residential real estate values can be increased by as much as 10% based on the close proximity values from residents located immediately next to certain recreation amenities, but for this project with each site being nearly 100 acres in size, this impact should be negligible.

**Municipal Stormwater Management Plan - Master Plan Element
Township of Middletown Monmouth County, New Jersey**

March 18th, 2005

Prepared by William P. Farrell, Jr. P.E., P.P. Acting Middletown Township Engineer ;
Anthony P. Mercantante, P.P., A.I.C.P. Director of Planning and Community
Development

Goals and Objectives

1. Reduce flood damage, including damage to life and property
2. Minimize, to the extent practical, any increase in stormwater runoff from any new development
3. Reduce soil erosion from any development or construction project
4. Encourage the adequacy of existing and proposed culverts and bridges, and other instream structures
5. Maintain groundwater recharge
6. Prevent to the greatest extent feasible, an increase in non-point source pollution
7. Maintain the integrity of stream channels for their biological function, as well as for drainage
8. Minimize pollutants in stormwater runoff from new and existing development to restore, enhance, and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the water if the state to protect health, to safeguard fish and aquatic life and scenic and ecological values and to enhance the domestic, municipal, recreational, industrial, commercial and other uses of water
9. Protect public safety through the proper design and operation of stormwater basins

In addition to the State mandated goals described above, this MSWMP complements the Township of Middletown Master Plan, dated October 2004, and encourages the goals noted below. This MSWMP also includes broad goals from the McClees Creek Planning Area Study included in the 2004 Master Plan.

10. Encourage efficient management of stormwater to prevent future drainage problems and promote environmentally sound land use planning
11. Promote conservation of open space through the protection of wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes and valuable natural resources and prevent the degradation of the environment through improper use of land
12. Enhance various neighborhoods by providing appropriate redevelopment, reinvestment, revitalization, and capital improvements designed to strengthen and improve the fabric of the area,
13. Protect the shellfish habitat of the Navesink River
14. Protect the Swimming River Reservoir

Landuse

The Township has very diverse land use, and has encouraged its historical pattern of the development of villages and neighborhoods. The majority of the land use in the Township is single family residential, followed by public parks and open spaces.

Open Space and Natural Resources

The Open Space Preservation Plan (developed by an Open Space committee), is geared towards the preservation of natural areas, wetlands, steep slopes and woodlands, water access, farmland, and historic areas. The committee has actively been working towards the identification and acquisition of various open space projects. The Township's preservation strategy includes selected acquisition of critically important sites and control of new development within those areas.

Recommendations

- The Planning Board and Township Committee shall review. Discuss, update and amend the Township's existing development ordinances to be in compliance with the design, performance, and safety standards outlined in this MSWMP and in the NJDEP's stormwater regulations. Additionally, to require the adoption of a Stormwater Management Control ordinance.
- Educate residents on the impacts of the overuse of fertilizers and good fertilizer maintenance practices.
- Evaluate the need to adopt a Stream Corridor Buffer Ordinance
- Seek to ensure the inspection, monitoring, and maintenance of all storm water management facilities and develop strategies for all existing and future maintenance and improvements
- Evaluate redefining the thresholds for "Major Development" within environmentally sensitive or fully developed areas.
- Evaluate the NJDEP recommended BMPs for use within the Township.
- Evaluate the need to make stormwater mitigation measures a consideration for all application reviews
- Map all existing and future Conservation Easements
- Revise the Build-Out Analysis to combine all conservation easements with constrained lands layer.