

SITE EVALUATIONS: MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PARKS

A. MEADOWWOOD PARK

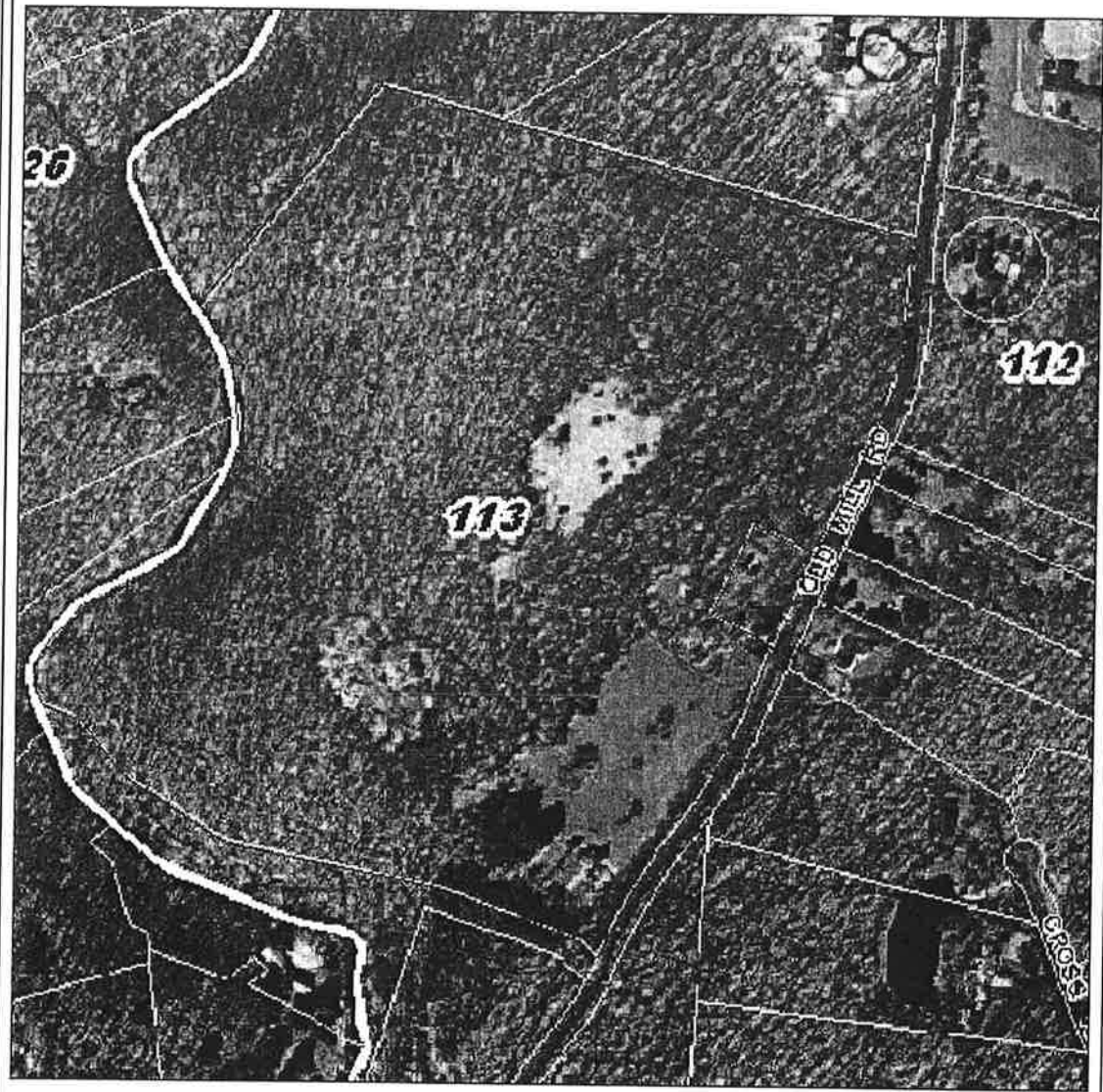
Meadowwood Park exhibits vestiges of previous occupation and has good prospects for creation of small courts, a family or group picnic site or for outdoor training and dedicated activity space for scouts or similar youth organizations. Otherwise its probable best use is for hiking or as an element of pathway extension toward the Chester Township trail system.

Some interest has been reported of consideration of this space as a potential for creation of active use field spaces. Such notions should be strongly discouraged as beyond its natural system quality this site is topographically unsuited to preparation of large field spaces. Development here would be a comparatively poor commitment of resources as many spaces much better suited to active use development exist elsewhere.

A plan somewhat recently prepared for this site is reported to have proposed development of a variety of site improvements including a youth baseball field at the location of an existing public works tree and leaf processing site existing within the forested area of the site. This proposal would likely produce a charming and isolated ballfield but like so many of the Borough sites occurs upon an extraordinarily challenging landform, requiring very high site preparation and earthwork expense to create a facility which could far more inexpensively place at St. Johns or elsewhere in the Four Towns system. This opportunity should be very carefully considered prior to commitment of construction resources.

MEADOWWOOD PARK MAP

Mendham Township Municipal Facilities
-Meadowood Park-



Mendham Township

Block:	113
Lot:	4
Area:	48.7ac

B. RALSTON FIELD

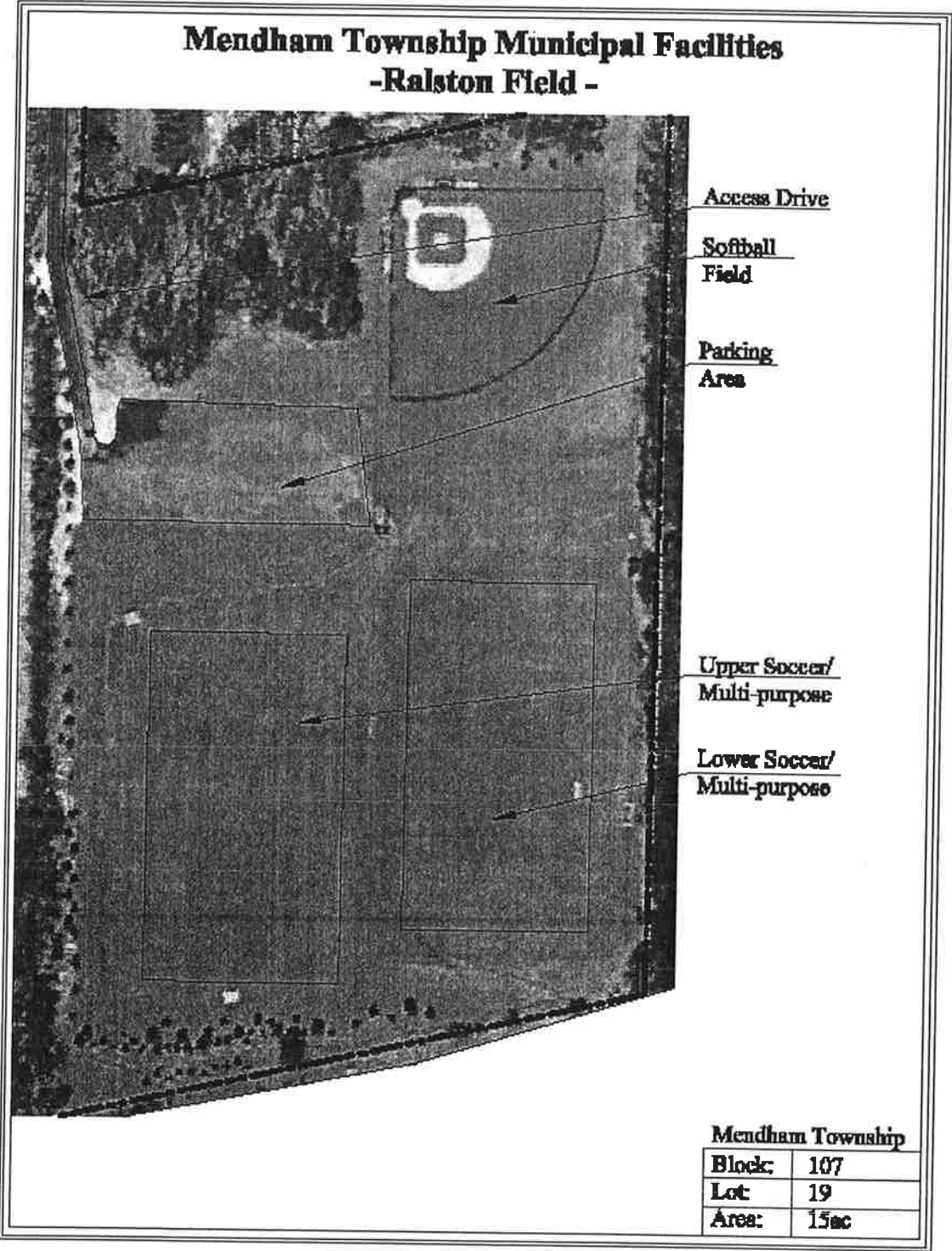
Ralston Field as its name suggests is a pure active use space. It was created in response to a need for soccer fields and elaborated by inclusion of a well constructed youth baseball field. Subsequently, a pathway and buffer plantings have been added to the site and the aggregate parking area has recently been lined to better organize a chronic parking problem. Comparative to the majority of system fields in the Four Towns this facility is well and uniformly graded. Its fields are arranged on usefully large terraces and deep drainage swales or precipitous descending hillsides near the touchlines have been avoided. The decisions applied to preparation of substrate conditions of these fields and the consequent utility of each to support its intended activity set a useful example for future development within the system. The important goal of recreation facility design is to support the target activity well, these accomplish this purpose. As a result, they are cited as among the best fields in the Four towns system by the user groups responding to interview within this study.

A variety of improvements could be applied here to improve the aesthetic and comfort level of a relatively stark site. Prominent ones include linkage to Wysong, by an attractive pathway with benches, picnic sites and viewpoints toward the fields that can better support somewhat bleak spectator prospects. As true of most of the system sites, placement of a restroom facility here particularly one combined with a sitting area, shelter or concession stand will dramatically improve the experience of those not fond of standing in the sun and wind as games proceed. Such an addition will likely be particularly useful to support the operation of a running track enclosing the upper field which addition is now pending. If adequately elaborated this site can fill prominent voids in the Township's spectrum of adult and family opportunities while enhancing the sports motif that caused the development initially.

The Ralston Field is vitally important to current programming of West Morris Soccer Club and is the sole venue available to the girls division of lacrosse. The level of utilization here is very heavy through the spring and fall seasons, which will result in increasingly damaging compaction. Site soils are not competent to resist compaction and in combination with saturation can be fairly quickly damaged. Persistent aeration of this field should be assured.

Preparation of a running track surrounding the upper field will complicate some of the joint use characteristics of the site but will be enormously important to the track program. In the event that such a facility can be created, the prospect of joining the Chester and Mendham spring track programs and increasing monetary and manpower resources may become a reality.

RALSTON FIELD MAP



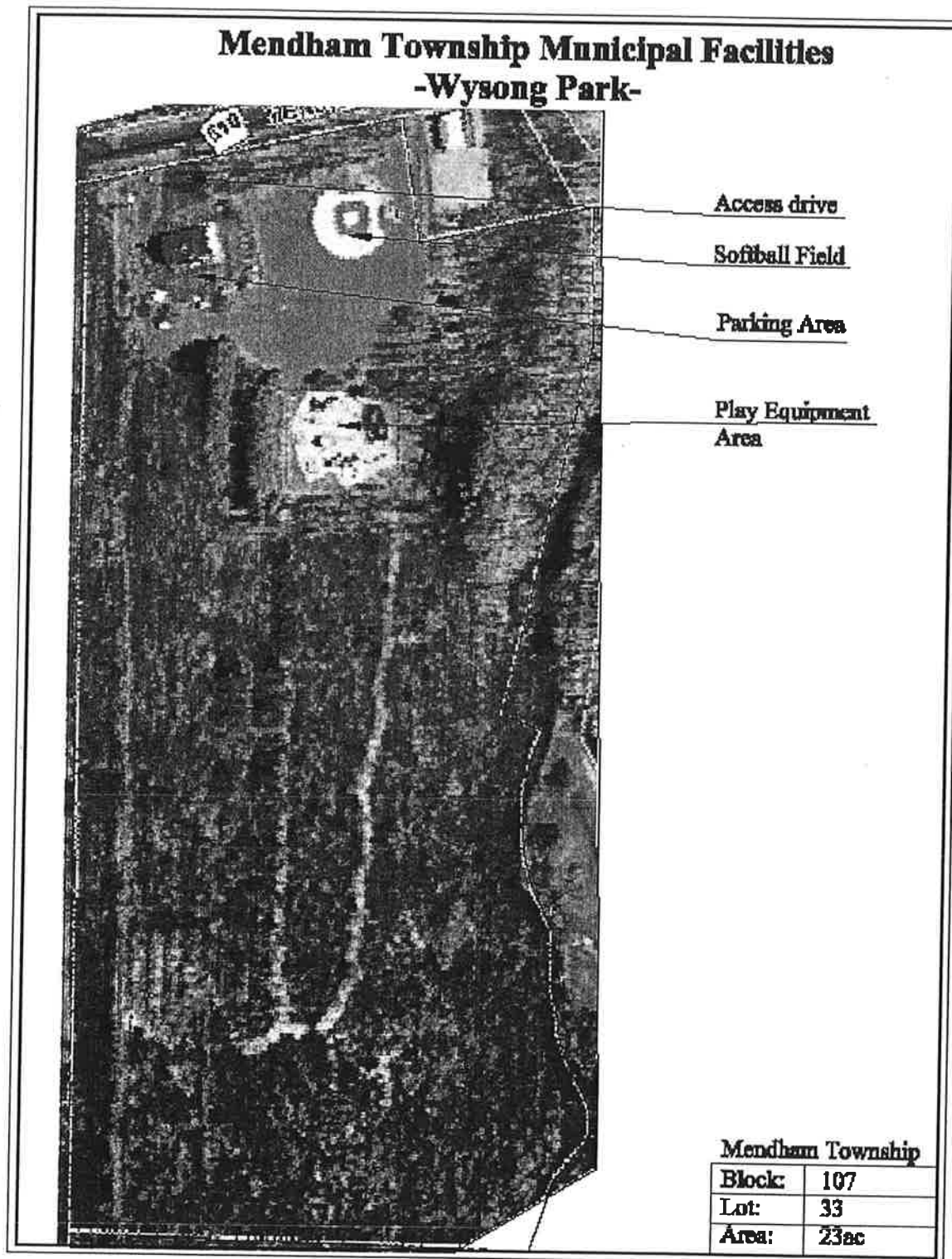
C. WYSONG PARK

Wysong Park is a nicely conceived small community park with the potential to become a versatile and diverse medium size community park if it is linked with its adjacent athletic neighbor, Ralston Field. It consists of a youth baseball field and an elaborate large play equipment area immediately supported by parking. The nice field area is large enough to support soccer or lacrosse practice or a small field arrangement for short sided 4 x 4 or 8 x 8 soccer games. The playground is well constructed with a variety of equipment options and is ideally located to support the ball field use. The remainder of Wysong Park is a large lowland expanse of over grown fields. These are variously brushy or forested in early succession vegetation and may be accessed to a limited extent by vestiges of access driveway and by trails. Lands of Wysong Park are bordered by India Brook and present an opportunity for creation of a varied walking experience or an excellent nature interpretive development based on an entire cross section of forest succession and wetland ecology. This portion of the site is very influenced by wetlands and will reasonably sustain only passive improvement.

Wysong Park is bounded along the majority of its western edge by developed athletic fields of Ralston Field. Oddly, a fully developed barrier free lane purposefully linking the two sites has not been developed, despite chronic parking issues at Ralston.

Wysong cannot be expected to accommodate a great deal of active use opportunity beyond its current development however incorporation of courts (basketball, racquetball, tennis), a large group activity shelter, a multi-purpose perimeter lane and most particularly a restroom should be considered. Such increase will require expansion into the forested spaces behind the firehouse (beyond the limits of wetlands transitions) but should be examined, to enable the potential of this site to be exploited.

WYSONG PARK MAP



EVALUATION SHEET – WYSONG PARK

EVALUATION SHEET - WYSONG PARK - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP																
DESCRIPTION																
	SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT
WYSONG PARK																
BASEBALL FIELD	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	46
PLAYGROUND	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	48

D. BROOKSIDE BEACH

Brookside Beach is a quaint reminder of the character of community commitment to local recreation as expressed decades ago. Today it remains pleasant, familiar and perhaps the best value in natural water body swimming to be found anywhere. Here an entire resident family can enjoy the water, beach, water slide or relax in the shade through the afternoon and early evening for \$210.00. For a few bucks more per season join the swim team and register your 3-5 year old children to two afternoons of day care. Despite clean water and the ambiance of a family vacation, Brookside Beach is rapidly declining in registration and is below the level needed to sustain its operation. Curiously, a recent Township sponsored preference survey cites a desire for swimming lessons for several age subdivisions of primary school aged children and a top preference for outdoor swimming as most desired new facilities.

This paradox may be explained as a normal fluctuation in popularity or a function of limited advertising but is likely symptomatic of commonly observed preference trends for "blue water", interactive play equipment, fully developed day care and swim instruction programs and hard surfaced substrate conditions. Variable water quality conditions (color and clarity) and non-uniform bottom conditions produce negative perceptions and anxiety about the cleanliness or safety of natural water bodies in many. For the majority of young exurbanites, public swimming conjures expectations of broad concrete decks and clean, chlorine smelling water in rectangular tanks. Few remain with rural experience of the local swimming hole.

Brookside Beach is an anachronism in most important respects and its reliable water quality, clean beach, well constructed swimming lanes and supporting accommodations will not reverse this character.

BROOKSIDE BEACH MAP

Mendham Township School Facilities -Elementary School Site- Mendham Township Municipal Facilities -Brookside Beach-

Swimming
Beach

Access Drive
and Dropoff
Area

Multipurpose
Field



Soccer Field

School
Building

Softball
Field

Mendham Township

Block:	137
Lot:	48(school), 49(beach)
Area:	14.6ac, 4.4ac

E. BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER

The Brookside Community Center is among the oldest recreation and community service location in the Four Towns area. It was originally established by area residents as a social service with a grove, picnicking and small ballfield area and a community club building. Today, the club building hosts regular meetings of the Garden and Women's Clubs and is available by reservation for events. The surrounding site remains in service as ballfields, which are favorites of the youth and women's programs.

These fields are maintained by the Township though they remain privately held by the Community Club. An upper field here provides adequate space for all levels of youth baseball and women's softball but has a poor orientation as it opens towards the west. The other (lower field) is very complete and situated very comfortably into a pretty corner of the site. Both field's present technical issues of compliance and access but these do not diminish the utilization of the fields.

The Brookside Fields are distinctive comparative to all other system ballfields, except Mt. Pleasant as they are comfortably integrated into a quiet, shaded, secure space in the middle of the hamlet of Brookside. Games here can be followed from lawn or shady bank slopes surrounding the fields, creating a pleasant surround not characteristic of typical system fields.

Parking at the site varies from sensibly arrayed at the Community Center building to random along the narrow East Main Street shoulders. Adequate space is likely problematic when all facilities here are occupied but additional space occurs at the adjacent municipal office site (across the street).

A small shelter and play equipment area would be useful additions to support of these fields, as would establishment of a foot trail into adjacent natural lands.

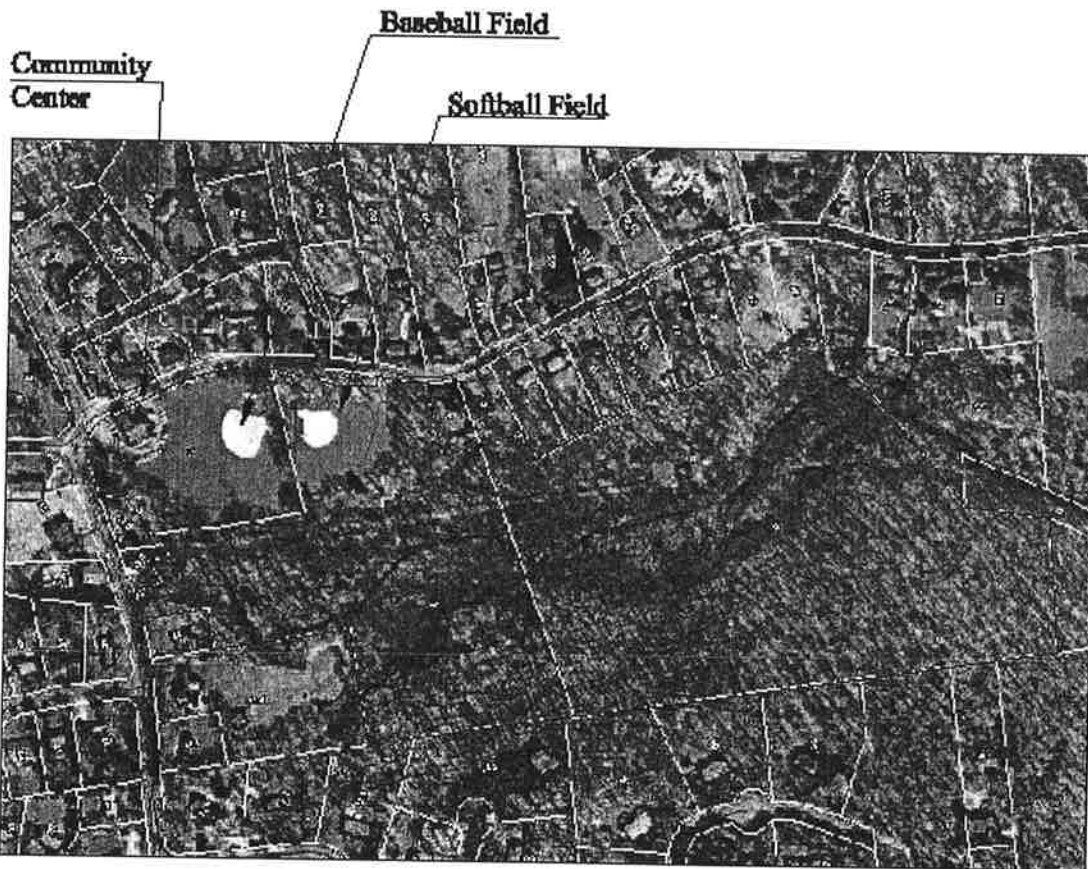
Though not apparent, the lands of the Community Center extend eastward forming a long corridor, which connects finally to lands of Lewis Morris Park. These are primarily low, water influenced woodlands with wetlands restrictions. As natural areas they are diverse in habitat type, age and topography, creating an excellent opportunity for boardwalks, foot trails, and neighborhood linkages to the park and Patriots Path (Which passes to the south).

The Brookside Community center site has little unexploited potential beyond explorations of its natural lands.

During the fall season the upper field outfield space is utilized by West Morris Soccer Club for games in its lower divisions. This use though currently necessary to supplement soccer's main fields in accommodation of its huge program, is one that should be eliminated in the event that alternative space can be established (St. Johns, Black River, Highlands Ridge). The space used here can be comfortably used and managed as a baseball oriented Neighborhood Park but will not tolerate excessive loading well. It is very low in the landform in its outfield extremities and cannot be regraded to avoid soft wet soils.

BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER MAP

**Mendham Township Municipal Facilities
-Brookside Community Club-**



Mendham Township

Block:	139
Lot:	1, 3, 9
Area:	4.1ac, 13.7ac, 22.8ac

EVALUATION SHEET – BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER

EVALUATION SHEET - BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP																	
DESCRIPTION																	
	SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL
BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER																	
UPPER FIELD	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	38
LOWER FIELD	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	43

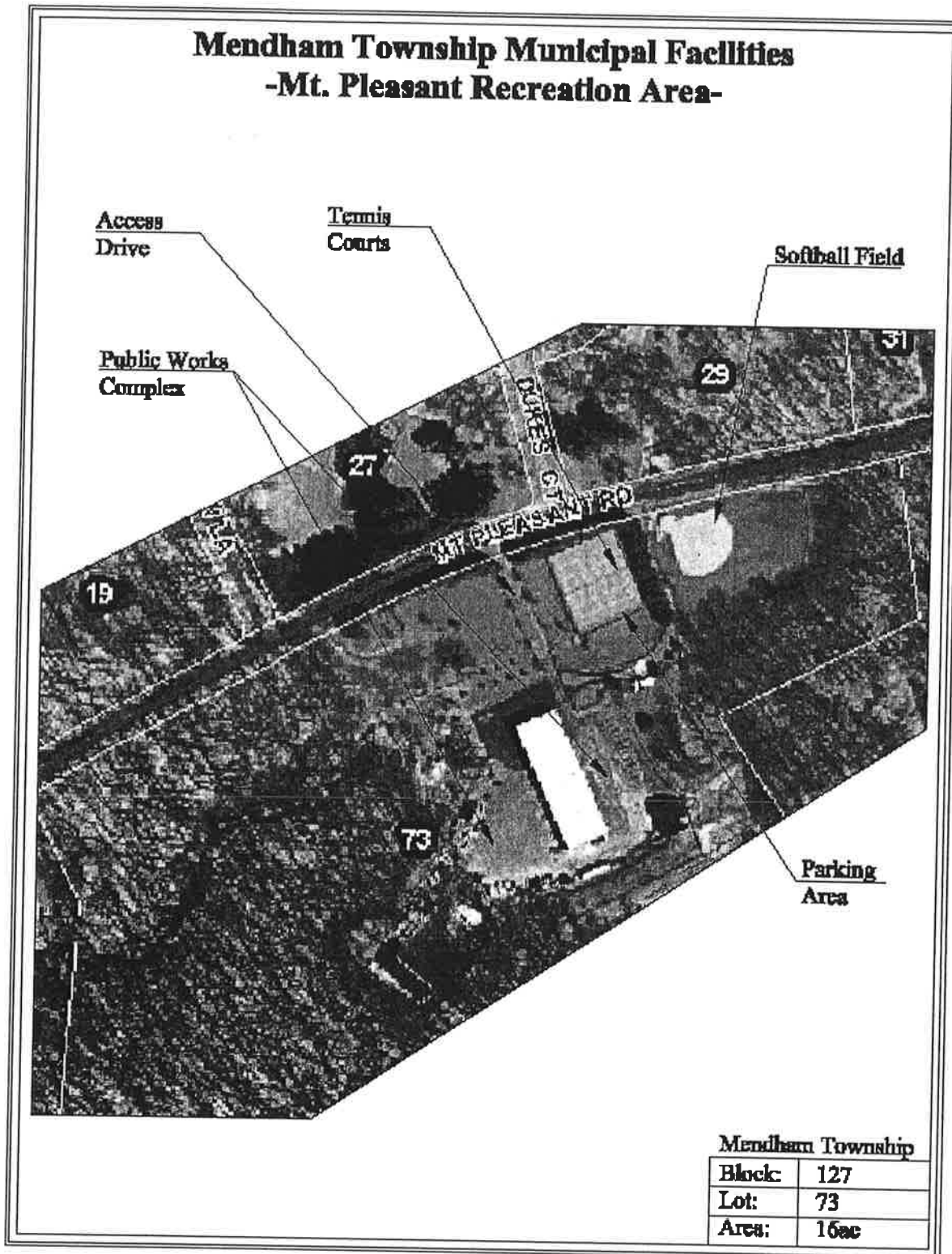
F. MT. PLEASANT ROAD – ACTIVITY CENTER

The facilities at Mt. Pleasant Road - tennis courts and a small baseball field present the skeletal structure of a neighborhood park. Apparently, this facility was created to introduce some facility balance to the northern side of the Township. The work completed to date has surely been responsive to that ambition but should be elaborated by addition of a shelter, sitting area, play ground and restroom to transform a special purpose active recreation stop over into a genuinely useful community park. This site extends as forested, pleasantly sloping hillsides and valleys that link with lands of the Dismal Harmony Reservation and Clyde Potts Reservoir. Creation of a lane (vehicle capable) between the park site and linkage points to Barbara Hill, Shores and Reservoir Ridge Road would produce an attractive and useful way to link local residential areas to the park and to support bicycle access.

Mt. Pleasant can be viewed as a very useful gateway location for all area residents to enter the generous and largely hidden natural areas of these secluded public lands and to enable linkage to Patriots Path.

The ballfield here remains important to girl's softball, T-ball, and for occasional use by Chester Little League programming. Its remoteness relative to other system fields is reported to be inconvenient but comparatively low levels of utilization and competent original construction preserve good conditions here.

MT. PLEASANT ROAD – ACTIVITY CENTER MAP



EVALUATION SHEET – MT. PLEASANT ROAD

EVALUATION SHEET - MT. PLEASANT ROAD - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP		DESCRIPTION															
		SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT
MT. PLEASANT ROAD																	
BALLFIELD	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	35
TENNIS COURTS	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	42

G. MENDHAM TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This school was initial constructed on an unreasonably difficult site and has been expanded wherever expansion was possible to produce a uniquely haphazard situation. There are two field spaces here, which children here are obliged to use but neither is spacious, flexible, well constructed or maintained. The small rectangular field vestige on the west of the site is dwarfed by encroaching asphalt, which appears to be consuming the site, and is so impacted by ground and surface water influences that a very inadequate interceptor at the toe of the rail bed is becoming hydric (wetland)

A baseball infield occupies a corner of the more southerly play area. This should be entirely reconstructed or more appropriately, eliminated. Its two steep slope and steep adjacent banks present a very costly renovation prospect with little to gain.

The School Board should closely evaluate this site with an eye toward overall renovation, elimination of slope hazards, and resolution of drainage impacts and creation of much more attractive play spaces.

The fields here should have little utility to recreation futures in the Township as they are uniformly poor and too small to provide adequately safe perimeters. West Morris Soccer continues to program this field as game space in the fall season but that use should be re-evaluated as surficial conditions are not adequate to be safely utilized.

H. MENDHAM TOWNSHIP MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Mendham Township Middle School offers the best prospect for significant future expansion of active recreation of the Four Town's system schools. The plateau space occurring at the rear of the school is large, compact, barren, inhospitable and rectangular in shape. It is configured in three parts, two are comparatively flat terraces, and the third is a sloping extension of the upper terrace. A baseball field, softball field and two lawn areas are utilized as venues supporting school baseball, soccer and field hockey programming. These facilities are so minimally supported by grading or constructed equipment that additional, better equipped and more flexible substrates could replace existing development at comparatively low cost.

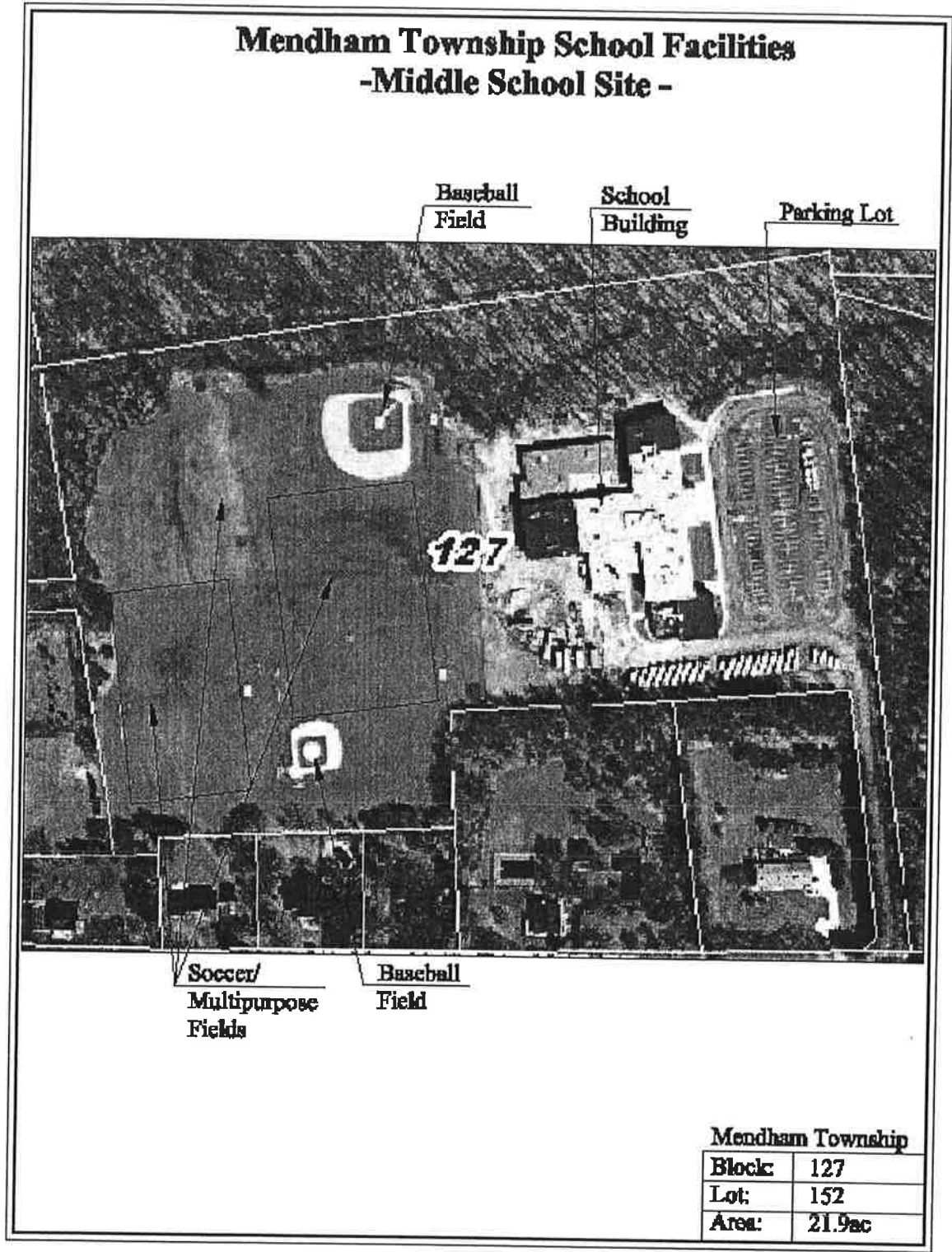
Current development leaves enormous unutilized margins and apparently unutilized turf spaces that with nominal regrading, could increase the program potential of the site significantly. Other support opportunities and infrastructure (parking, electric and water service and restrooms are immediately adjacent to the fields, potentially enabling a variety of site amenities to be considered.

A huge compliance deficiency diminishes use potential of fields here. Grade change between the school and the terraces supporting the fields is resolved, by a steep slope with no pretense of a barrier free access. A paved drive traversing the slope to the fields is rough, irregular and incomplete. Its surface characteristics are not safe for physically capable users and flatly impossible for wheel chair or ambulatory handicaps. Diversions are utilized on these slopes to redirect powerful stormwater flow. Unfortunately, they constitute a genuine injury risk and are a grossly inappropriate design choice. Regardless of the sites relationship to recreation, appropriate resolution of these issues should be a shared priority of the Township and School Board.

As this site has so much unexploited potential and is also in acute need of fundamental access modifications, it is an opportunity for the Township and School Board to consider the utility of preparing a comprehensive site plan. Such a plan would improve the likelihood of creating a number of new spaces, responsive to the needs of both agencies and at the very least guide, future sitework projects to avoid irreversible piecemeal "improvements".

It is reported that the upper field plateau space of the Middle School will be reconfigured by grading in a plan sponsored by West Morris Soccer. This sequence may significantly expand the utility of the upper field area by simple modification of excessive slope and by refinishing. Presuming that no additional surface obstructions (berms, drainage ditches, embankments) are produced this sequence will be a sensible recovery of the sites potential.

MENDHAM TOWNSHIP MIDDLE SCHOOL MAP



EVALUATION SHEET - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP MIDDLE SCHOOL - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP																	
DESCRIPTION	MENDHAM TOWNSHIP MIDDLE SCHOOL																
	SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL
BASEBALL FIELD	3	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	28
SOFTBALL FIELD	3	3	3	0	3	0	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	30	
LOWER MULTI-PURPOSE	3	3	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	28	
UPPER MULTI-PURPOSE	2	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	2	21	

I. INDIA BROOK PARK – SEEING EYE PARCEL

This recent acquisition is a unique and dramatic parcel with an enormous potential for creation of many of the recreation forms not well represented in the Township or in the Four Towns service area. Its structures are competent and in good condition, its vehicle entry is intriguing and it presents a sequence of spaces each of a distinctive character and each in its own forested enclosure.

The only use the site is not well suited for is creation of active recreation spaces dependent on large, nearly level areas.

This site presents a quandary as a great deal of structure has been placed here that is in good condition and is useful enough to require continuing maintenance, but is not yet adapted to a particular service function.

The Township should undertake every practical expedient to secure the structures here by selecting occupants capable of diligent stewardship of them. In the absence of a well defined plan for the future of these spaces, search for service or conservation agencies interested in establishing a home or satellite base might be considered. Relocation of the Municipal offices might be considered. Leasing to a local or commercial day care concession is also a reasonable prospect.

The number of potentials for future utilization of this site is practically unlimited and while many may be prohibitive to contemplate without partnering with exterior agencies or private interests, in the context of unmet recreation opportunities within the Four Towns, these potentials may yield important achievements.

A cultural arts center offering fine arts, dance, music, theater and other traditional forms of creative expression supported by indoor classrooms and outdoor performance and exhibit spaces could comfortably be adapted to the building and site. Health and wellness pursuits such as yoga, pilates, jazzercise, martial arts and numerous others of the current individual training practices that require only modest studio space could easily be offered here.

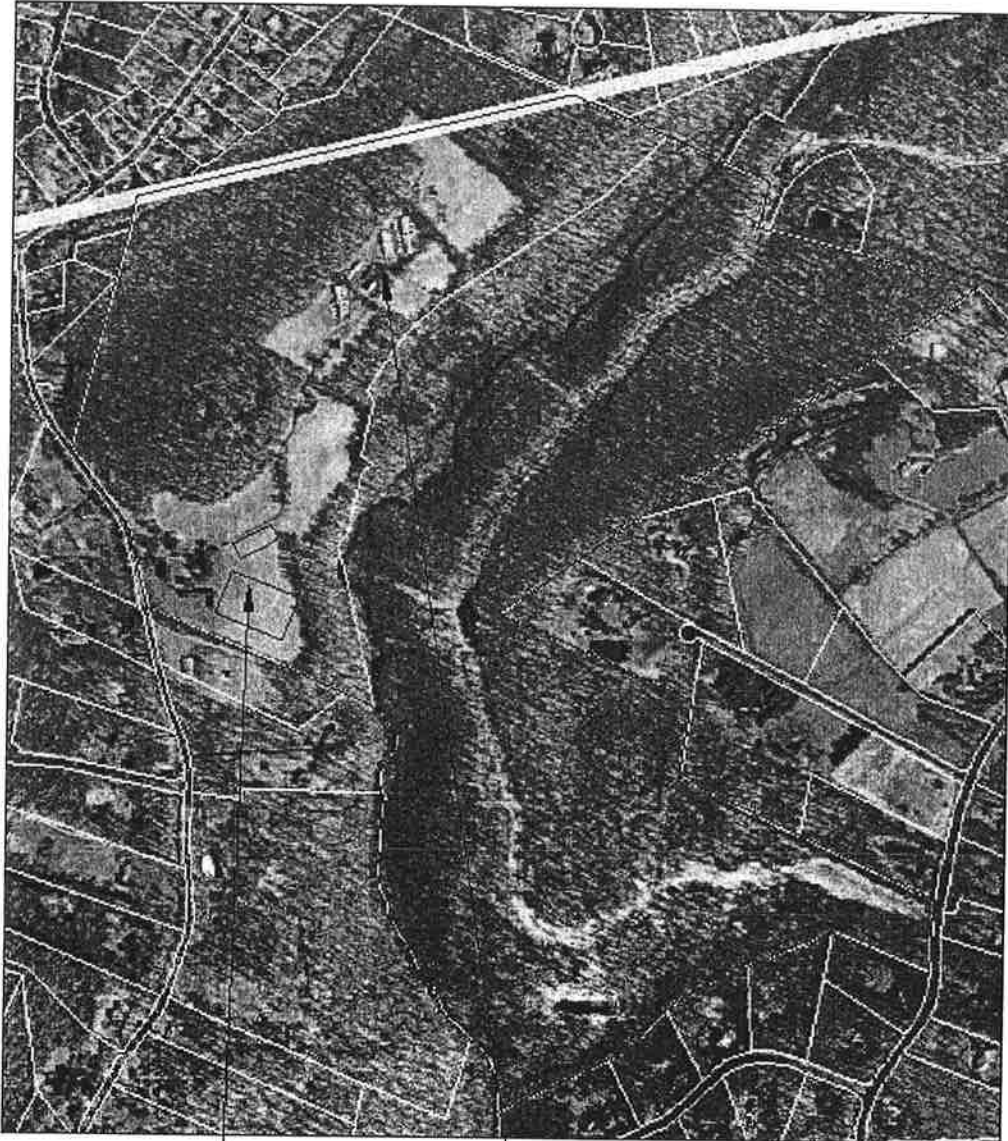
The kennel structures are adaptable to support an enormous diversity of arts, crafts, industrial arts, group project spaces, weight rooms and fitness equipment or converted to somewhat exotic uses like archery or small bore rifle ranges.

Residential structures could remain as constructed and be utilized to support educational, cultural or foreign exchange camps.

The entire site could be evolved as an event center themed as gardens and available by reservation for parties, celebrations, weddings or similar formalized group events. Generally, potentials for the developed portions of India Brook Park should seek first to respond to cultural, educational or personal improvement themes that can reasonably utilize site structures. Regardless of alternative purposes this site must provide access to and support of the trail ways, natural study and exploration opportunities and linkages through the extraordinary sequence of natural lands connected to this site at Buttermilk Falls and the continuation of India Brook.

INDIA BROOK PARK MAP

Mendham Township Municipal Facilities -India Brook Park-



Soccer Field and
new parking area

Kennels and
Residences

Mendham Township

Block:	116
Lot:	6, 7
Area:	85ac, 163ac

J. ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY

This site is the most recent acquisition completed by Mendham Township and one unusually prepared to readily accept programming consistent with the requirements of soccer, lacrosse, football or other of the rectangular field sports. It will present some access challenges as the current primary site entry occurs at the end of a circuitous drive through residential areas of the neighboring Town of Peapack. An alternative driveway prospect from Carriage Hill road exists as a traversable eastern vehicle way, which emerges at an existing garage at the periphery of the lawn playfields. It is an entry route, which can be very efficiently converted to an aggregate or paved driveway.

The tract presents an unexpected contrast of landforms and development characteristics varying from the steep irregular wooded knoll supporting the several large school structures, to a very gently sloping six acre athletic field development. Remaining lands extending north from the athletic field location are second growth meadows with an unusual series of pathways and a cemetery plot.

Presumably, the enormous structures will not be preserved for municipal purposes and the land tract will be subdivided at some location north of the loop drive encircling the campus area. The remaining field spaces of the site will require demolition of two frame dormitories and some small retaining structures to yield a very adaptable, clear open space which can easily be restructured into two or three fully supported (parking, utilities) full sized multi-purpose fields or a combination of baseball and multi-purpose fields.

Two existing soccer fields occur on the site now. These can be programmed immediately and as both are larger fields with better perimeters than many of the existing system fields, their addition to the Township's inventory will enable much greater flexibility than currently exists.

Availability of these field areas enables consideration of a number of reassignments of field space and significant departure from the accustomed allocations within the recreation system. This space alone could conceivably accommodate the entire recreation football training programs in the fall and the entire girl's lacrosse program in the spring, relieving pressure on the High School, West Field, Black River and Ralston facilities. Alternatively, by addition of two youth/softball fields here, Mendham's stressed baseball system could meet all its needs while preserving two full sized fields for spring lacrosse and fall use.

Hopefully, an expedient method of providing access to the fields here can be established as they are immediately useful and require minimal expenditure to prepare.

ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY MAP

**Mendham Township Municipal Facilities
-Saint Johns Tract-**



Mendham Twp.

Block:	100
Lot:	17
Area:	91.7ac

EVALUATION SHEET – ST. JOHN’S ACADEMY

EVALUATION SHEET - ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP		DESCRIPTION															
		SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT
ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY																	
UPPER SOCCER		3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	40
LOWER SOCCER		2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	33
BASEBALL REMANANT		INCOMPLETE - NOT USEFUL AS IS															
																	0

EVALUATIONS: CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

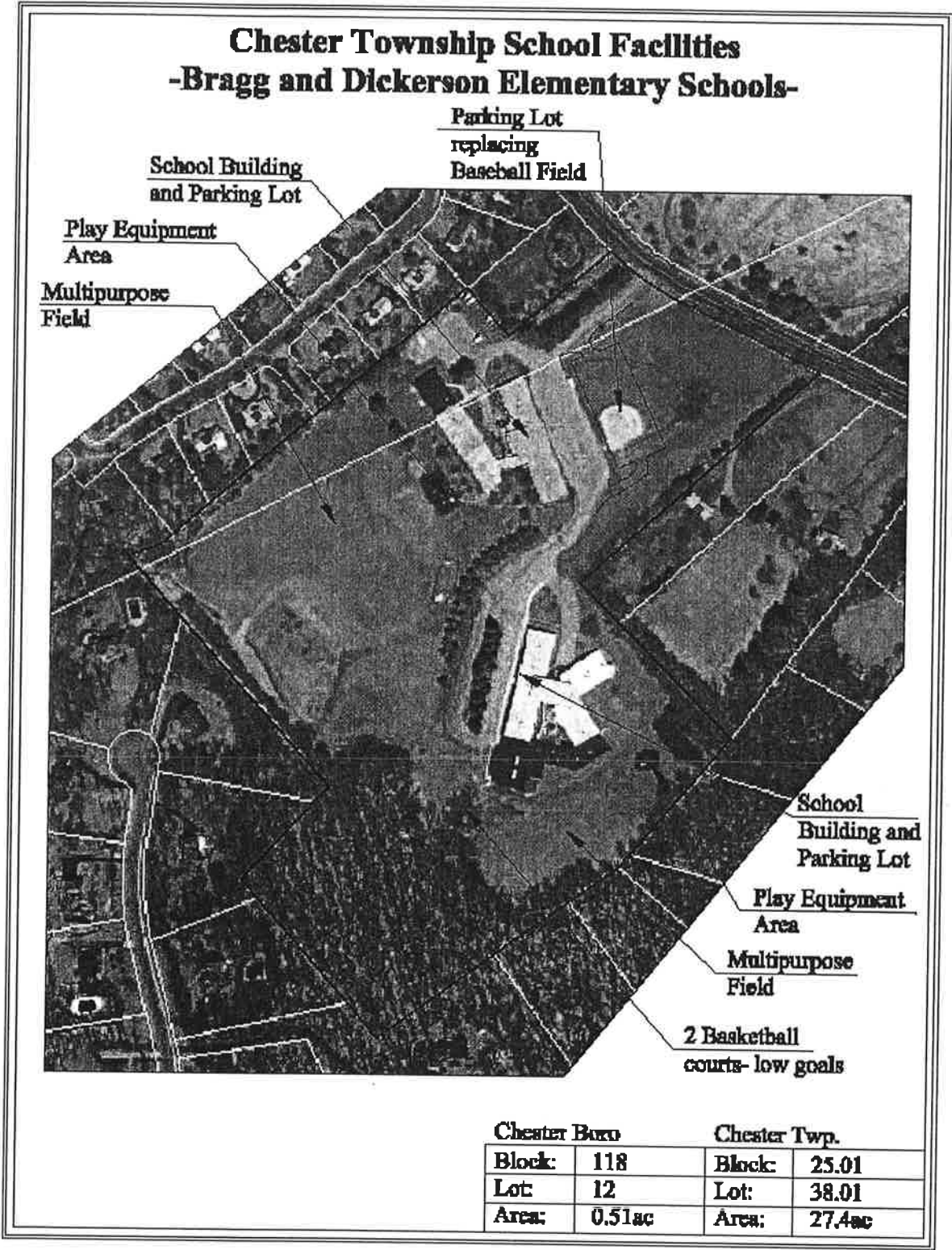
A. BRAGG/DICKERSON SCHOOL COMPLEX

The Bragg/Dickerson School Complex is a site developed to an extent beyond its reasonable carrying capability. Initial site selection was adequate to accommodate a single school building but the choice to expand the complex to construct a second school building was short-sighted. The campus as it exists is a series of terraces occupied by structures and pavements connected by sloping serpentine driveways. In addition to a great deal of pavement, the site features two extensive and fairly modern resilient surfaced play equipment areas, two small basketball courts, one tiny turf playfield, and a usefully large lawn space. This area, behind the Dickerson School, has been utilized for practice by training divisions of little league despite its inutility for that purpose.

Recent parking expansion at this site eliminated a useful baseball/multi-purpose lawn space in front of the school. Consequently the recreation system lost one programmable field here as well as any significant purpose to utilize the site.

Development capability remains at the rear of Dickerson, as space to create a small multi-purpose field exists. Existing stormwater features and sanitary sewer elements complicate this potential at least as much as do earthwork costs. Consideration of development here, of features other than those to support school or neighborhood park activities, would reasonably be a very low priority.

BRAGG/DICKERSON SCHOOL COMPLEX MAP



B. BLACK RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Black River Middle School site is a very challenging site for its selected purpose and one that will remain difficult to expand to alternative purposes of any large scale nature. The school building perches on top of a knoll while the landform slopes quickly away to the south and west nearly thirty feet. Most of the readily useful site space is occupied by the school driveways and parking areas. Remaining open site space falls away in lawn space most useful for mowing practice. The school sites best constructed features for recreation service are two basketball courts developed on the large pavement behind the school and a baseball field, which has become squashed into an inaccessible spot behind the embankment of the Chester Pool. This field is relatively good substrate of graded land but the developed infield is cramped into a too small space and is only modestly equipped.

The School Board is collaborating with the Township to create new, more appropriate fields on the opposite side of Dover/Chester Road to satisfy its program needs.

Despite the inherent difficulty of creating new opportunities on this site, it has some appropriate potential that should be considered in detail, by both school and area recreation planners. The Middle School provides a large parking area, a modern gymnasium, restrooms, outdoor courts and full utility support. It has the capability of supporting after school and summer season activities programmed on its site and on the adjacent Black River Fields, Highlands Ridge Park and Chester Pool sites. The complex of public facilities here is already an important hub location for area recreation and future improvements at Highlands Ridge may reasonably be expected to dramatically expand that role.

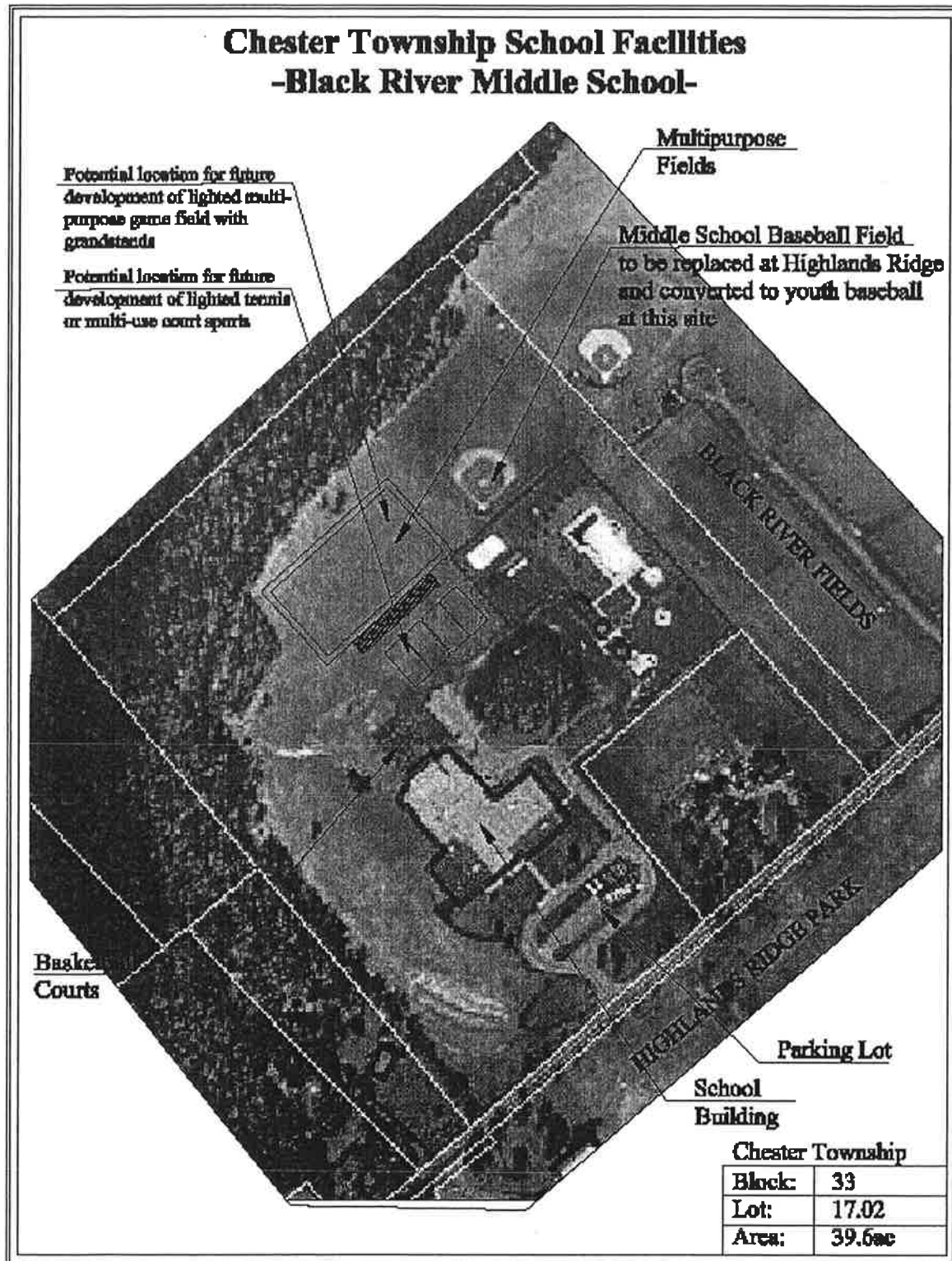
Athletic field and sports facility lighting is a significant interest and a matter of regular contention between sports supporters and public policy makers. An assertion that lighting is not wanted in anyone's neighborhood is typically represented as an insurmountable obstacle to achievement of this goal, despite the fact that lighting could simply be approved and funded by any of the Four Towns.

Mature programs, particularly, those supporting fall sports have experienced the potentials created by field lighting in other communities and reasonably observe that their program could be similarly supported. No important reason exists that is sufficiently valid to eliminate consideration of appropriate sites in the Four Towns.

The Middle School presents a circumstance at its rear field where unutilized public site space, adequately supported by infrastructure, not in anyone's back yard, actually exists. This is one of the proposed target sites in the Four Towns where creation of a lighted multi-purpose field is possible practical and with negligible chances of impacting anyone.

In the event that producing a lighted multi-purpose field is actually a politically insurmountable hurdle, the same space could comfortably a modern court complex consisting of tennis courts, basketball courts, hardball, volley ball or other conventional court. Incorporation of these forms of activity here would be exactly consistent with adjacent uses and would lend to the creation of a genuinely broad based community park.

BLACK RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL MAP



C. WEST MORRIS MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

The West Morris Mendham High School and its site represent one half of the physical plant of the West Morris Regional Board of Education. It services the purposes of High School intramural, gym and interscholastic sports training and game functions primarily, but is also utilized by the Twin Boro Bears football program and by Mendham Baseball (girl's softball fields).

The High School fields are so frequently and heavily utilized and so readily impacted by rainfall that they are chronically in need of repair and periodically not playable (rain). Common access to the athletic fields is from parking areas located on the north side of the school building at an average distance of one quarter mile from the primary access point to the football stadium. Grade transitions between parking and the field areas provide a cardio vascular experience for players and spectators alike and present real challenges for any with ambulatory problems.

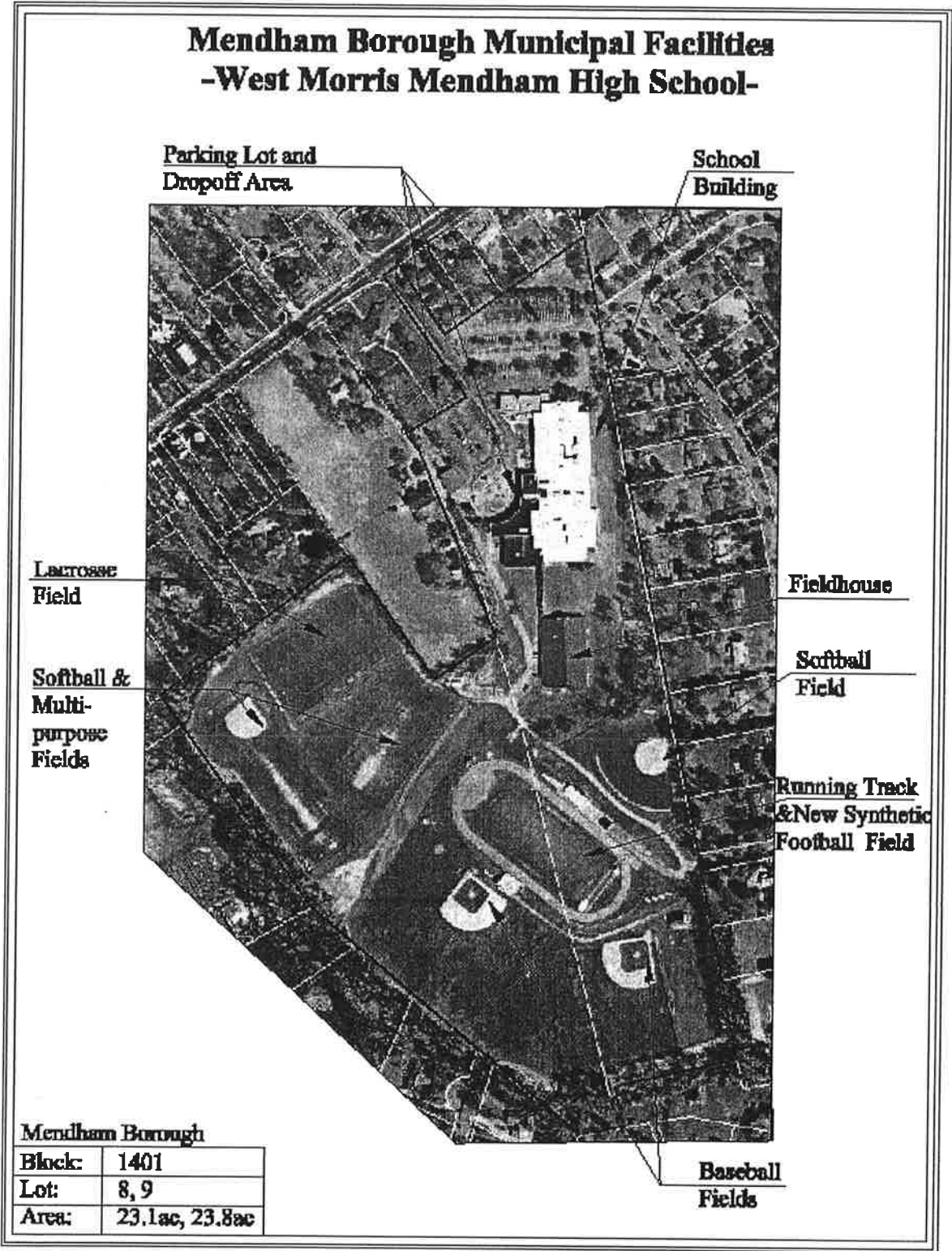
Recent building expansion and tennis court construction have filled some of the few remaining undeveloped spaces on the site and have created some dramatic obstacles to movement, as fences and retaining walls now constrain the entire narrow center of the site.

Athletic fields here occur along a series of constructed terraces that descend from north to south across a vertical fall of sixty feet. Consequently, all forms of access occur along a steeply sloping pavement drive and transversing lanes terminating near sport venues. Fields here include: one soccer field, one lacrosse field, two football/multipurpose fields, four practice field spaces (overlaid on baseball outfields), two softball fields, two baseball fields, a synthetic running track and a newly constructed synthetic turf field enclosed by the track. The athletic field margins fall away to adjacent wetlands areas on the south and west of the site and variously steep slopes separate fields. The athletic field site is not blemished by a single tree or landscape feature and is wholly exposed to wind and weather.

The new synthetic field here will significantly reduce utilization of other fields as it will be programmed for football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and when available, their practice sessions. A consequence of this new capability is that the field will be available for use by recreation groups primarily on weekends when no High School game are scheduled or evenings after High School practice ends. This excludes virtually all but late spring weekday practice opportunity for area recreation programs. The chief resident recreation program (Twin Boro Bears) will be able to occupy the field for Sunday games if High School programs do not require field time, but report a strong sense of disappointment at anticipate field lighting has been eliminated, as this would have secure their damaged practicing opportunities.

Future prospects for significant increase in opportunity for field access by recreation program here are slim. Despite the new field addition, remaining turf areas will not be notably different in quality unless other system fields can be utilized to further reduce the load on these too fragile surfaces.

WEST MORRIS MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL MAP



EVALUATION SHEET – MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

EVALUATION SHEET - MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL - MENDHAM TOWNSHIP																
DESCRIPTION	SIZE	SPACE	PERIMETER	ACCESS	SAFETY	COMPLIANCE	SURFACES	ACCESSORIES	EQUIPMENT	SUPPORT	CONTEXT	AESTHETIC	MAINTENANCE	UTILITIES	SITE SELECTION	SITE DEVELOPMENT
MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL																
VARSITY BASEBALL	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	36
IV BASEBALL	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	36
VARSITY SOFTBALL	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	38
IV SOFTBALL	2	3	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	36
LACROSSE	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	37
SOCCER	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	34
FOOTBALL PRACTICE	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	34
PRACTICE AREAS	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	35
TRACK	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	43
STADIUM FIELD	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	52

OPEN SPACE RESOURCES IN THE FOUR TOWNS

Among all the resource potentials available to residents of the Four Towns, open spaces, undeveloped park lands and preserved lands are the greatest physical asset by any measure. Each of the municipalities have established open space tax structures and have applied these resources in combination with County, State and agency resources to purchase lands in an impressive array of sizes and types.

The Boroughs by their extensively developed character have secured fewer, smaller parcels than the Townships but each has significantly added to its inventory over the most recent two decades. Chester and Mendham Township have acquired public open space, preserved farmlands and established reservations adjoining previously owned public lands. Among the most significant of readily accessible land tracts are Tiger Brook Park, the Evans Preserved, the MacGregor Preserve, the Luce Tract and the Allen and Knight tracts in Chester Township and the Dismal Harmony Reservation, Clyde Potts reservoir, Buck Hill Preserve, India Brook and Buttermilk Falls natural area in Mendham.

These municipal sites considered in combination with Federal lands; (Jockey Hollow Park), State lands; (Hackelbarney Park, Black River Wildlife Management Area, and County Lands); (Lewis Morris Park, Cooper Mill and Black River Park, Willow wood Arboretum, Bamboo Brook Park, Mt. Paul reservation); and privately administrator parcels at Schiff reservation, Burnet Brook Natural Area and the Upper Raritan Watershed represent a vast and varied palette of natural system explorations.

Utility of these lands vary extremely as a function of the quality of visible entries, trailheads, trails and developed support features that facilitate their use. Almost all of these have some point of public entry from adjacent roadways but next are large enough that orienting within the sites is unsure for visitors other than those familiar with the lands limits. These sites supported by the State, County, Chester Township and Private interests (Schiff) have prepared mapping resources available in print form or reproducible from the internet. Some of these are well done and useful to first time visitors, others are insufficiently detailed or not usefully keyed to enable new visitors to conveniently locate the site.

Potential experienced of the reservation type sites may vary from comfortable strolling groups along avenues through the forest as found at Hacklebarney, Jockey hollow and Lewis Morris to carefully hiking along narrow , irregular sometimes treacherous rocky, wet or slippery trails at Cooper Mill, Black River Park, India Brook, Dismal Harmony, Clyde Potts and others. Less satisfying experience can also be found along these trails. As they are so various in character, even, along the same trail than a novice visitor, poorly equipped, limited in physical capability or simply too venturesome can easily fall, become exhausted, disoriented, thirsty or in need of a restroom. Except where there are reliably large quantities of visitors to lend assistance, such mishaps can easily occur. Pathways and trails are the most commonly represented features of the many undeveloped parklands and open space sites. Extension of existing systems to linkage with other trails, recreation lands and significant natural features of interests have been important recent themes of the County Park System through its Park Commission, Trails Partnership, and a variety of local community partnerships. These projects supported by NJDOT grants, local open space resources and municipal funding have improved networks throughout western Morris County frequently in combination with the Patriots Path system. Mendham Township and Chester Township have been enthusiastic participants in support of trail ways and

have plans to create closed loop systems throughout their communities. Despite more complicated ownership issues, Mendham Borough has created a "loop trail" largely through the efforts of private citizens. While not technically complete as open ownership issues remain to be resolved, this is a remarkable achievement. The loop trail shares elements of Patriots path, passes through Borough parklands, follows pathway easements and short roadway sections to produce a dedicated course that can be followed to experienced a fairly comprehensive sequence of the lands and neighborhoods of the Borough.

In consideration of the extent and variety of available trail ways within or adjacent to the Four Towns service area this aspect of public recreation opportunity is as well or better served than the organized sports interests. Interestingly, strong similarities between the two recreation types occur. Both have substantial essential substrates, both are, useful and available for their conventional purposes and both systems are notably deficient in the quantity and character of support features that enhance their utilization for proactive purposes or for users limited in any physical, characteristic including the very young or very aged. Similarly, trail ways are largely created as their own purpose, rarely leading to an activity or accommodation other than some scenic or historic view. The majority have been created for passage through otherwise unknowable parcels of public open space. While along those passages, too few opportunities have been created to stop, rest, explore, picnic, site, sunbathe, read, sleep, use a restroom or gain access to a place where those opportunities are possible. Visible, comprehensible, inviting, secure, seeming trailheads are too few and constructed linkages to adjacent neighborhood streets are rare.

Generally, the Four Towns trail system has developed recently and rapidly as the concept of alternative transportation means and improve linkage between developed and natural areas has been popularized. Benefits of the system are numerous for nature walkers and skilled hikers and significant bicycle routes along rail beds enable a few long off road excursions. Dirt and more advanced trail bikers are much more liberally provided for as many foot rails double as challenging trail rides.

Almost all of the trail systems excepting these sections occurring within older County Parklands or along rail beds are located along long abandoned woods roads or other remnants of forgotten land utilization. Few have been cleared to produce uniform conditions underfoot and few are wide enough to allow side by side walking.

These rustic trails are a result of a traditional view of the character appropriate for hiking trails. If they impart a sense of adventure and promote an experience of intimacy with the natural world, they also discourage a great detail of potential utilization. Natural trails within the Four Townships system particularly those on more topographically varied sites, are typically not reliably accessible to small children, the elderly, those with strollers or anyone with ambulatory impairment. As there are few useful posted or printed character descriptions available for most trails, occasion to enter a given trail may be cautioned by some anxiety about potential risks ahead.

Many residents of the Four Towns have arrived from other, more urbanized settings with a wholly different experience of public park lands. Of these, many are not comfortable with bugs, snakes, wetlands and physically challenging passages. Opportunities for those disinclined to enter the woods on trail ways are poorly supported in the system. The best suburban park type trail developed to date within the Four Towns occurs at Chubb Park. This is a paved, flat, color

coated lane constructed around the ice skating pond. Though short and narrow, this pathway is constructed in a fashion and for an environment much more attractive to an important group of area interests than are the miles of trails, winding over hill and dale.

Joggers interested in easy, regular running surfaces, exercise walkers, visitors with small children or children in strollers and small social groups or pairs interested in talking while lightly exercising, frequent this facility. Their very presence and visibility lend to the social attractiveness of this small feature, producing a recreation that over the course of a year, will service a greater quantity of more diverse users, than any field on the site.

This is a viable type of pathway which should be added to all of the larger Four Towns parks as it is an inexpensive means to add many dimensions of use to athletic field sites and is a magnet for exercise related activities as well as a reliable, safe situation for children on their bicycles, razors, skateboards, or other of the many forms of wheeled amusements.

Creation of a recreation system that sustains popular interests, delivers diverse and appropriate features and is accessible for spontaneous, individual purposes is dependent upon development of these types of features. Selecting priorities for development of future path system elements will best serve local populations by first establishing which activity types are most useful and most sought.

RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

Recreation sites and facilities can be classified by size and purpose into several categories. Though no specific parameter defines these absolutely, a sites service scope is a conventional determinant of its category.

The following classifications are applied to describe the several types of sites dedicated to recreation within the Four Towns service area. Discussion of each, in the context of overall system significance is presented in following text. In the majority of these discussions, observations relative to the character of each according to their sufficiency, appropriateness or prospective application to future address by the Four Towns process are also presented.

1. Mini-Parks/Pocket Parks

These typically small sites are ones that furnish a locally useful function or capitalize a unique aesthetic. They may include passive features (path, garden, unique natural or historic feature) a small play area or a quiet sitting area.

The purpose of such sites is to provide adjacent residents with a "safe" playground, a pleasant stroll, a familiar, convenient social space or an accessible place to walk the dog. Though potentially variable, such a space would incorporate play activity areas for pre-school and grade school children, competent seating, shelter and visibility.

A mini-park may be incorporated as an element of a larger community service site, be it school, athletic field, church, historic site or park, as a wholly integrated element. Its character and function target spontaneous purposes of immediate neighbors.

While no such site has been specifically created within the Four Towns recreation system, elements of mini park character occur in association with existing school sites at Bragg Dickerson schools and at the Mendham Township elementary school.

2. Neighborhood Parks

This somewhat inappropriate name describes the keystone element of a well-balanced municipal recreation system. Though not usefully quantifiable in size, these sites typically embrace a "few" acres. In function, neighborhood parks represent diverse opportunities and facilities capable of addressing the commonplace pursuits of area residents. As neighborhood parks are typified in contemporary suburban terms, they contain first, play equipment areas, small or few athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts and other of those most recognizable popular games or sports. A more successful assembly incorporates, pedestrian or bike links, unutilized natural space or passive use areas, sitting areas, viewpoints, utility support and some isolation, while minimizing focus upon open, organized sport spaces.

The opportunity to be capitalized for neighborhood parks may be best visualized as a very attractive, aesthetically prominent space where one or one's family can conveniently visit on foot or by a short journey from their home, and where upon arrival, each member can participate in a separate appropriate activity.

An "ideal" neighborhood park functions optimally within fairly densely populated suburban or urban contexts and begins to diminish in practical utility as its distance from a given residence increases. This separation is conventionally expressed as within one half mile. Clearly the concept of neighborhood parks within rural circumstances begins to fail as a practical prospect.

Regardless of the type or quality of other features within a neighborhood park, two elements are necessary and should be required. These are a good potable water feature and on site restroom facilities of some description. Failure to provide these relegates any public recreation site to a substandard status.

Two neighborhood parks occur within the Four Towns study area, these are: Grove Street Park in Chester Borough and Borough Park in Mendham Borough. As the Four Towns system elaborates in finish and detail over time, continuing enhancement of some of the smaller, less sports oriented park sites should be pursued. The purpose of this is to achieve a much better balance of family day use opportunities within dispersed locations of the service area where adjacent residential density is comparatively high and where pedestrian or bicycle access to the park sites is a meaningful potential. In some cases, as system athletic field demands are resolved, some of the smaller or less capable of the older field spaces should probably be retired from service of organized sports or reorganized as space for neighborhood parks. Among the best candidate sites for gradual conversion are: the upper field at West Field; Brookside Community Park; Mt. Pleasant Park and Wysong Park.

3. **Community Parks**

A Community Park has been described according to a variety of criteria but at its essence is a large space (50 acres or greater) developed in a fashion that seeks to provide a large quantity and diverse selection of active and passive facility types. The operative objective of such parks is to satisfy mainstream demands of the entire community.

In a mature state of development, a community park might offer, athletic fields, grandstands, a swimming pool, group picnic areas, play areas, gardens, bike and hiking trails, courts, game areas, special event spaces, historic features, day camping facilities, nature/interpretive systems and a host of support features.

In the ideal, such a park occupies capable, beautiful land that facilitates intensive development and conserves high quality natural areas. Creation of a community park is a project type that evolves incrementally, perhaps over decades. It typically emerges in a time frame subsequent to a community's reflexive placement of athletic fields.

Chubb Park is the single example of a Community Park in the Four Towns and while it is deficient in a number of service and utility support characteristics, it is a site with great untapped potential and could with time be elaborated into an ideal character. Other system sites have a similar potential and in each case the potential is of a significance that should be thoroughly examined in planning as a priority consideration before additional permanent features are incorporated at those locations. System sites, which should be projected forward as community parks, are these. The combined Wysong and Ralston sites in Mendham Township present the basis of a fairly complete community park site if joined. Pathways and vehicle access ways which enable continuous circulation between the two athletic field developments on the sites and a central control feature and restroom between the two will create a unified function and necessary support facilities to sustain the high utilization levels at the fields. Future inclusion of courts and sitting areas under shelter can create a much more significant day use capability than now possible. Completion of a perimeter lane and extension of pathways along the India Brook border will establish a balance of constructed and natural area activities. So diversified, this site could sustain far more of the lesser served recreation interests in the immediate vicinity as well as completing service and support features needed to allow athletic field activities to function more comfortably. A second opportunity occurs at the recreation lands complex consisting of the adjacent parcels of the Black River Middle School, Black River Fields, Black River Practice fields and Highlands Ridge Park. These sites, if considered in combination, present an opportunity for creation of a complete regional park with active, passive and cultural use potentials in quantity and scale appropriate to balance system athletic field deficiencies as well as supplementing a host of court sports, family day use activities, large scale special events and potentially indoor activities as well. This is a unique potential comparative to all other system sites as a great deal of constructed infrastructure exists here in the form of parking lots, access drives, utility system support and enormous unexploited open space. The complex occurs near the intersection of primary roadway routes linking the Four Towns and is centrally located with respect to residential districts of each. In the event that the planning purposes of the Four Towns can be unified into a shared vision for resolving future development proposals, this site is the logical first choice location for expansion of joint programming.

In a future that can be directed to join lands of the former Lucent site (recently acquired by Chester Borough) to the Highlands Ridge Park, even greater potentials for recreation system expansion along new, more ambitious avenues may be possible. Creation of large scale indoor facilities (YMCA) or enclosed athletic fields supported by public/ private partnerships become obvious potentials with realistic prospects for securing exterior support.

4. Athletic Fields

Athletic Fields constitute the bulk of system sites within the Four Towns service area. These are purpose built facilities created to accommodate one or more venues of any organized sports function. Typically they consist of the few features needed to conduct the intended competition and little else. Athletic Fields may be very rudimentary or elaborated by lighting, grandstands, food service features or field houses.

Sites within the Four Towns service area that are best described as athletic fields are: Black River Fields, Memorial Park, Collis Ave. Park, West Field, Ralston Field, Franklin Field, Brookside Community Center, MT Middle School, and WMM High School.

Future creation of Athletic Field sites within the Four Towns should be considered as a very low priority in contrast to other system needs.

5. Natural Resource Areas

These are lands preserved from conventional forms of residential and commercial development purposefully to protect fragile, distinctive, historic or scenic landscapes. Unlike sanctuaries, their purpose is to retain purely natural systems for the refreshment or education of area residents.

Currently, both Townships abound in such spaces and contain a remarkable quantity of privately owned lands that lend their undeveloped character and environmental continuity to the typically rural aesthetic of much of the southern and western regions of the Four Towns.

Existing public lands with Natural Resource Area characteristics are: Cooper Mill Park, Lewis Morris Park, Tiger Brook Park, The Evans and MacGregor Preserves, India Brook Park, Cold Hill Reservation, Clyde Potts Reservoir and the enormous combination of parcels assembled as the Black River WMA.

As open space acquisition targets have been largely met for the Townships, future additions will likely accrue through significant opportunities bargained as part of land development proposals. Consequently, the Four Towns service area will remain unusually well provided for in terms of Natural Resource areas. Excepting unique geologic or historic site acquisition opportunities that may arise, pursuit of additional land for these purposes should be considered a low priority.

As may be seen by review of the developed park types available within the Four Towns service area, only athletic fields and natural resource area categories of conventional recreation site subdivision are well represented. In addition, natural resource areas are

available to residents of the two Boroughs only as a consequence of their abundance in adjacent Township lands. Conversely, neighborhood parks or minor recreation features capable of utilitarian pedestrian based day use activities are more appropriately provided for residents of the two Boroughs and far less so, for Township residents. Practical aspects of improving availability of varied, sustaining day use, and individual and family oriented public recreation activities constitute some of the most important planning considerations for successful implementation of an equitable Four Towns Plan. Incorporation of facilities that enable or sustain significantly greater opportunity for adjacent residents should be a fundamental condition to be met by all future improvement projects within the system parks and athletic field sites. Typically, design to accommodate more diverse opportunities can be somewhat simply accomplished by resisting the inclination to respond to single purpose needs regardless of their popular support or seemingly imperative nature. If the municipalities continue to respond to substantial deficiencies of sports organizations (as for fields), without consideration of: context, overall service needs or potential utility for multiple purposes, few of the current imbalances will be corrected. If instead, commonly established criteria for each facility type including provisions for simultaneous development of features that meaningfully improve general recreation were required, the prospect of creating much more serviceable, more attractive features would be advanced, even for piecemeal projects. This criterion will likely seem confounding to purposes of the several sports associations, as they have been accustomed to a system of somewhat exclusive partitioning of public land for their unique objectives. Despite the enormous quantity of effort and commitment they have dedicated to upholding their share of responsibility within the Four Towns recreation system, the associations represent special interests. Their operations fall within the context of land sites owned by the general public and should, as a matter of strategic advantage, advocate as forcefully for inclusion of greater themes.

FACILITY AND ACTIVITY RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

Outdoor recreation sites in the Four Towns service area incorporate a variety of types of conventional recreation facilities created to accommodate segments of the population in a variety of activities.

These are discussed according to generic facility activity or characteristic type in following text.

COURT SPORTS

1. Tennis

The Four Towns service area offers a sum total of ten tennis courts to the public. These are widely dispersed across the recreation system, occurring in well supported locations only at Grove Street Park, Chubb Park and at Borough Park. Courts at the High School are recently reconstructed but have little utility to area residents while school is in session or when practice is occurring. Those at Mt. Pleasant are well situated for the neighborhood but too remote and unsupported to be an important alternative destination for the bulk of Township or Four Towns residents. The best in all respects are those at Borough Park as they are lighted, supported by a restroom and immediately adjacent to parking and play areas. These enable utilization by area adults after working hours as well as creating a situation where groups of adults or families with young children in tow

are able to play tennis while supervising the activities of their children on nearby equipment.

Tennis has not been reported to be a particularly underserved activity within the Four Towns service area as a likely consequence of the sports distinctly cyclic popularity. It flourishes according to the prominence of media reporting of national celebrities in the sport and as a response to well developed, well directed programs at the level of local recreation. Many area adults belong to area fitness and tennis clubs that provide reliable year round access to quality courts in a preferred social environment. These are frequently "life sport" tennis players and not those particularly dependent upon available public resources.

Tennis courts are in supply approximately balanced with need within the Four Towns service area but could more usefully distributed to enable more equitable access to those residents located in the southern and western areas of the service area. More importantly, those currently available could be made more utilitarian by addition of lighting systems to increase their availability in spring and fall. Similarly, where courts occur in remote locations (Chubb and Mt. Pleasant) addition of complimentary supporting features will promote higher levels of utilization and improve the sense of security during weekdays.

As Plans for improvement of the largest community park sites begin to emerge, design programs for those sites (Black River/Highlands Ridge and Ralston/Wysong) should include space reservation and utility infrastructure to enable future placement of lighted tennis court groups in immediate proximity of play equipment areas, picnic sites, sitting areas and other complimentary day use facilities that build upon a concept of higher density of use with opportunities for multiples of tennis enthusiasts to share a comfortable social experience as well as participating in the game.

2. Basketball

Outdoor Basketball is represented by a total of five public courts within the Four Towns service area. Three of these occur in the Boroughs and only two courts occur in developed Township recreation sites. As basketball is one of the most useful and popular small group sports and as it can be reliably played almost year round, this sum is far too small. Basketball courts, particularly lighted courts, provide one of the very most familiar and accessible of individual spontaneous outdoor recreations. It is an activity that has maintained enormous popularity in the sports media and its influence is pervasive in popular culture as evidenced by foot ware and apparel commonly worn by young and not so young, alike. It is uniformly popular in urban culture and for those transplanted to more rural communities, remains a familiar mode of competition, easily arranged, in a variety of impromptu formats.

Among the most significant utilities of outdoor basketball courts is their capability to attract and sustain the interest of teens and adults in a demanding form of competitive exercise. The game by its character and traditions allows rough play and very intimate exchange of remarks between competitors that are otherwise discouraged. Many find this sort of challenge engaging and will routinely meet for a little one-on-one where a few spare minutes are available, or form pick up teams including any available body.

Unlike many other types of court activity, basketball is very effective as a stand-alone facility. It requires only access, parking, a drinking fountain and some sheltered seating.

Duration of play may be satisfactory even if brief, for most adult players. The social character of pick-up basketball derives from close proximity, physical contact and individual skills display. It is a magnet for teens and boys establishing their position in the social structure of their peers and trains a durable, commonly understood form of engagement regardless of age.

Basketball courts throughout the system present the most common of appearances. They are conventional black asphalt surfaces with minimal line striping and occur without accompanying benches shelters perimeter enclosures or other features that accommodate other players resting or waiting their turn to play. Alternatively, basketball courts can be color coated, furnished with benches, complimented with a drinking fountain and enclosed with fences at both ends to prevent balls from rolling away. The unmet objective of area courts is preparation of venues that are attractive and comfortable rather than simply being functional. In the circumstance of the Chester's Summer Basketball League portable lights and makeshift accommodations are utilized to adapt common courts for use by dozens of teams. In this instance, an exciting basketball forum with permanent lights, spectator seating and restroom support would serve to transform the experience of the players into a memorable event. An additional consideration relative to safety of the few area courts that should be addressed as a matter of good practice is the addition of padded goal post supports. This protection is a simple concession to safety that should be employed except where goal offsets are greater than 8'.

Ultimately, lighted basketball courts should be considered for placement in all of the developed neighborhood and community park sites within the Four Towns system. The objective of this is to extend use availability to accommodate working adults and generally to support evening play. Future court development initiatives should be directed at construction of court pairs to produce multi-purpose pavements that can be adapted to a variety of alternative uses such as support of day camping, street hockey, skateboarding or line games.

3. Handball, Squash, Racquetball

These court games do not exist in the public system currently. The latter two may well never be constructed as they require specialized facilities; these are most successfully placed following the request of an organized group of enthusiasts. Both squash and racquetball have had brief popular periods but neither of these sports is currently played as much as they once were. Handball contrarily is a sport that can be offered coincident with construction of a tennis practice wall and if interest waxes and wanes, the facility remains functional and available to tennis players as a practicing feature. Ideally, such a feature would be incorporated into court campus with tennis in a community park setting.

4. Minor Court Facilities

These frequently include volleyball, bocce, horseshoes, croquet, shuffleboard, badminton and rarely lawn bowling.

None of these, except volleyball, now exist in the system as groups of complimentary activities have not been recognized as a theme of previous planning. All except horseshoes and badminton require an organized group of followers to make creation of such facilities a viable prospect. Horseshoe pitches, sand volleyball and badminton courts can be a useful addendum to a well-appointed picnic grove and should supplement existing development at Chubb, Black River, Wysong and West Field to expand the alternative opportunities at these sites.

Constructions of minor court spaces require little in terms of capital outlay and are likewise, uncomplicated to construct. The technical requirements for construction of any of these are fully within the capabilities of system public works departments and may be undertaken as a minor annual component of budgeting to elaborate existing facility diversity.

Volleyball has exhibited a persistent but limited popularity particularly in association with waterfront activities. It has shown similar popularity in general recreation facilities where a fairly diverse offering of activities exists. It is not typically a stand-alone feature and like basketball, is most attractive when prepared in a unique setting supported by seating, shade and furnishings, not plunked in the middle of an open lawn space.

OTHER MAINSTREAM RECREATIONS:

SWIMMING

Swimming and swim related activities are among the most popular activities offered within the context of public recreation systems. These are invariably cited as desirable life sports and fitness activities as they are typically in short supply and sparsely distributed within the region and within the Four Towns service area. *(A recently conducted survey of Mendham Township residents identifies swimming, swim training and water safety as the most desired activity group among conventional recreation forms.)* Swimming activities are available regionally indoors at Somerset Hills Swim Club, Flanders Swim Club and at two YMCA pools in Randolph and Morris Plains. Outdoor facilities occur at two locations within the service area at the Chester Community Pool and at the Brookside Beach and in nearby locations in Morris Township (Streeter and Ginty) and at Bernardsville Pool.

The local pools are significantly different in character as The Brookside Beach is a natural water body facility and the Chester pool, a conventional 50 x 25 meter L shaped tank. Recent registration of the Brookside Beach has fallen perilously in recent years despite its remarkably high value to cost characteristic. This is almost certainly symptomatic of evolving popular expectations for the character of public swimming facilities and is complicated by concern about water quality and swimming in water that is not "blue".

Pools conventionally achieve their popularity as the summer season typically offers fewer supervised activities for area children than when school is in session. The importance of reliable day camping, camping and other managed situations for the children of working parents becomes a prominent concern as well as a logistical complication. Traditionally, area swimming facilities have provided a viable activity option that presents broad interest among youth of every age as well as a closely supervised, highly social context.

Recent elaborations of conventional outdoor swimming pool formats have followed the very successful themes introduced at commercial water parks. Prominent among these are zero entry features, large areas of shallow water, water slides and interactive spray/ play features. Existing area pools offer little such diversity, reflecting traditional perspectives for public swimming as opposed to water play. Where the common experience of area youth includes visits to exciting, dynamic, sometimes scary water park activities, wallowing in static water, segmented by ropes into various skill related use zones, likely seems less than memorable. Similarly, the quality of experience sought by parents, babysitters and adults is rarely characterized by swimming endless laps or fretting over children shorter than the shallowest water.

Contemporary public swimming pools are increasingly based on the recognition that opportunities for social interaction and personal comfort are far more important to long term success of a pool facility than are competition or swim training lanes. Emphasis on stratified use areas from spray toys on resilient surfaces for non swimmers to traditional deep water lanes for swim exercise as well as towering slides, underwater seat ledges, spa tanks and spray curtains now characterize the community pool. Food service features, coupled with clean, sheltered sitting spaces and ample shade are essential components that protract the length of family visits and reinforce situations for pleasant social interaction. Distinct and separate spaces created to enable adolescents and teens to achieve maximum separation from authority as well as those to achieve maximum exposure to the sun sustain interest and enhance a sense of individual choice within a close, personally revealed context.

Interest in creation of new swimming opportunities within the Four Towns has persisted and increased to a point that the Pool facility will be subject to its first major expansion since its original development. It is reported that this expansion will incorporate interactive water features and increased provision of deck equipment to better segregate users by age and to provide an increase in appropriate activities for the non-swimmers and teens. These improvements are anticipated to be completed and available for the 2009 season.

These compliments will certainly improve some of the shortcomings of the previous facility and will attract a more diverse membership based upon a more diverse capability. In the long term, for planning purposes, this type of facility expansion will not be able to satisfy whole area demand for summer swimming and water based recreation programming. The fundamental area constraints and uses of adjacent space available for expansion of pool and deck features and for additional parking is not adequate for significant additional increase, except by conversion of some adjacent school or park features.

Planning for future inclusion of a new pool facility within the Four Towns service area is observed to be a prudent anticipation of a probable circumstance. The absolute necessity for wastewater management systems of a scale likely beyond the useful capability of conventional subsurface disposal systems suggests that a pragmatic pre-plan for this type of large scale improvement be predicated on prior evaluation of accessible sewage plant options. As has been often seen in public initiatives directed at pool development, detailed planning and critical analysis of ways and means, as a precursor to solicitation of official support, is essential to negotiating the mine fields of public anxiety and consequent political conservatism.

In this regard, a Four Towns Planning approach is the most likely to have previously identified the many potentially contentious aspects of such a proposal and will have the capability to marshal support across a broader base than a single community might. Without a reach greater than that available to any single Four Towns partner, a major pool facility will not happen soon.

BICYCLING

Bicycling, whether on road bikes or mountain bikes, is a premium recreation form. Its significance as an unsatisfied recreation demand is expressed in the Mendham survey, where bicycling was cited as a priority for increased opportunities. Considering the quantity of available pathways and roadways within the Township and generally within the region, this response certainly derives from a popular sense that existing opportunities are inappropriate to the character of bikeway experience preferred by area bicyclists or that existing trail ways are not widely known.

Road biking is based on what the world offers and within the Four Towns service area a bicyclist can travel throughout the region on scenic, low volume roads with very few intersections of major arterial routes. Despite this potential, road biking remains a recreation primarily for those inclined to rigorous exercise and management of comparatively fragile equipment. It is not a pursuit of enormous popularity as in Europe and enthusiasts typically align into clubs engaged in touring events rather than local sightseeing.

Off road bicycling including trail, mountain, bicycle moto cross and cross country biking has far more applicability to residents of the Four Towns and for those sufficiently knowledgeable of area trails, is an opportunity with remarkable variety. Area improvements particularly at Tiger Brook Park, the Macgregor Preserve and Highlands Ridge Park have expanded local opportunities for mountain biking within the Chester Township system. These are part of a long term trail system plan intended to one day complete linkage of bikeways throughout the Mendham open space and park system.

The potential of most of the area trail system will remain only partially met until a far greater connectivity of uncompleted trail linkages is accomplished and until a unified, comprehensible system of trailheads, route mapping and clear signage are posted and visible from the street. In addition, useful mapping resources should be more available by internet, to assure riders that their way is known prior to arriving at an unknown trail. A second factor impacts potential for area bikeways to become more widely used. This relates to discontinuity as well, but in area specific particulars. The bulk of area trails dead end at some point, obliging bicyclists to turn around and retrace their route. After a visit or two to this sort of trail, the experience becomes boring. Creation of loops that return cyclists to a point of beginning is the solution to this affect but one difficult to establish.

An ideal long term objective of Four Towns activity should include planning to resolve these very difficult circuit closure issues. The amount of time necessary to explore alternatives, solicit private cooperation, secure easements and assemble financing is quite beyond the scope and focus of small, local administrations and will be set aside long before completion. Bartering resources across four municipalities to perfect complex closures is far more likely to advance this process than independent local efforts.

To usefully appreciate which types of bicycling recreation will be most utilized by area residents; critical evaluation of the nature of typical desire is required. It is probable that every garage in the Four Towns service area has several bicycles of various sizes and types lining its walls. This does not translate, as might be expected, into most of those bicycles being seen on streets and trails during the evenings and week- ends. Factors that limit such routine use are these: Road

biking is not safe without specific adaptation of shoulders and intersections. Thus, few parents will allow their children to ride outside their immediate subdivision; Except for a few nearby residents, trailheads are not accessible except by roadway or by car transport of bikes; Woodland trails are perceived to be dangerous and frequently present real risks. Thus, few parents will allow their young children to ride on such trails except in groups or with adult supervision; The vast majority of adults are neither fit or accomplished enough to participate in long road trips or even moderate off road excursions and few enjoy the prospect of loading bikes, kids and equipment onto the car to access local destinations; Finally, for those who would regularly bicycle as an alternative means of transportation, the constructed world around them is not particularly bicycle friendly. We are an automobile oriented society and have designed our infrastructure to requirements of that transportation form.

Recent interest and funding support from the public sector has increased somewhat dramatically over recent years, but many more years will pass before unified, connected bikeways and a culture attentive to the opportunities bicycling presents is operative. For dedicated bicyclists, the objectives are real and the timetable is current. For the bulk of other citizens, bikeways are a far more interesting concept than a significant need. Nonetheless, planners and bureaucrats have seized upon this notion as a worthy goal and happily, have generated funding to support its increase.

The Four Towns process is an ideal vehicle to facilitate meaningful expansion of bicycling activities. Combined planning and municipal support presents a more favorable basis in applications for funding assistance than do individual community proposals.

Two significant objectives of Four Towns planning occur coincident with bikeway system expansion. The first of these is preparation of an overall plan for linkage of existing bikeway components to significant destinations within the service area, from areas of concentrated residential development within any of the partner towns. Significant destinations are those that will be accessed daily, year-round by numerous residents (schools, village centers, libraries). Perfection of such linkages presumes that challenges of safety, compliance, support and public acceptance have been met and has begun to familiarize the public awareness with bicycling as a viable transportation resource.

A second objective is easier and more related to outdoor recreation experience. In particular, it is recommended that perimeter lanes (bikeways) be constructed around the perimeter of several of the larger system parks. The objective of this in part, is to create a fundable proposal, which is sufficiently wide and long to provide bicycling opportunities for family groups and young children, simultaneously with introducing a pathway system capable of accommodating strolling and strollers, joggers, exercise walkers, dog walkers, and roller bladers as well as service and emergency vehicles. Similarly to the multi-purpose lane recently placed at Chubb Park, this type of feature invites individual and small group uses for a variety of common purposes, in a secure setting. It enables spontaneous, short visits, allows many paces and preferences and increases the presence of visitors within the parks during work and school hours, lending a sense of security to those anxious about entering a nearly vacant park alone or with small children. Conceptually, these lanes would be: paved in sheet or compacted aggregate materials (sufficient to sustain vehicle passage); very flat and smooth in surface character, to enable obstacle free, barrier free movement; sufficiently wide (eight feet) to allow passage of bicycles and pedestrians and supported periodically by benches game tables, bike racks and drinking fountains. Each such

closed loop lane constitutes a destination but in addition each would link to nature trails, neighborhood access pathways, bikeways or to adjacent public use spaces.

The primary initial target sites for this type of feature are: The Highlands Ridge/Black River Fields site where a lane in excess of two miles long could be created (largely on existing roadbeds) ; Wysong/Ralston where interconnection is needed and linkage to the India Brook pathway and Schiff Reservation as well as residential subdivisions north and south of the park site can be directly accessed; Chubb Park where a very long circuit around open field areas and linkage to the Cooper Mill site, library and the Patriots Path along the rail bed can be directly joined.

Dedication of local funds to bikeway development is an attractive notion but should not eclipse more pressing short term Four Towns goals. Unless separate funding can be secured solely for bikeway improvements, such networked regional systems should not displace local recreation objectives excepting where linkages to existing recreation or public features are involved.

ROLLER SKATING/BLADING AND SKATE BOARDING

This group of wheeled activities has grown persistently over the past decades to a point where a very significant percentage of both youth and young adults routinely practice one of the several related forms. The related forms have increased in variety to include many types of wheeled devices from the very popular Razors (scooters) to articulated boards and the now conventional skateboards and roller blades. Generally, in line skaters (outside city contexts) have adapted ice hockey to a similar pavement based form but many also seek the more acrobatic freestyle skating popularized by skateboarders and snowboarders. Media attention directed toward the youth audience for these pursuits has increased, further popularizing both forms, but particularly, extreme and freestyle versions of this genre. Even though both skateboarding and rollerblading have arisen from roots in roller skating, a formidable generation gap has emerged to frustrate many public initiatives to accommodate unfamiliar motives of this group of distinctive seeming enthusiasts. Common adult perceptions of skateboarders are skeptical at best, citing certainty of injury and immodest social proclivities as prominent disincentives. Most of those critics, already past the flexibility needed to perform these activities, have demonstrated a similar intellectual inflexibility by failing to recognize that these are legitimate interests of a small social segment, intent to achieve their own preferences.

The Four Towns offer no purposefully developed opportunity for this group of enthusiasts. Other than those portions of hardscape existing at commercial and institutional developments where curbs and pavements can be commandeered briefly by the skaters, no rink, course or bowl has been created. Substantial impromptu utilization of roadway curbs has been reported to be sufficiently attractive that the activity is a nuisance and had damaged curbs at the High School and Kings shopping center.

Roller hockey has become an increasingly popular substitute activity for ice hockey and like basketball has a nearly endless season. A space as large as two tennis courts can occupy dozens of kids simultaneously for long periods of time and doubles conveniently for street hockey (wheelless version of roller hockey).

Skateboarding and the several freestyle skate activities require ramps, rails, inclined surfaces, half pipes and a variety of sloped, pavements to generate speed for launching various maneuvers.

These facilities in a permanent form, are costly to build but have become commercially available as pre-fabricated, portable units that can be placed on any paved surface.

Roller-skating and roller blading as exercise remains most easily done on linear, paved surfaces despite remarkable technological improvements in the wheels and carriages. The very best substrates for this activity type are paved trails without conflict with automobiles.

Skateboarding and skating sports are unrepresented by accommodation in the Four Towns. This is a significant defect as an interest in creation of such facilities is reported as a repeated request from area residents. In subsequent Four Towns planning, specifics of this interest should be identified and the options for adaptation of existing space at Highlands Ridge Park or Black River Middle School to this purpose be examined.

ICE SKATING

Outdoor ice skating is an important winter recreation that may be enjoyed when few other outdoor family activities are possible. Many older residents remember occasions where splendid recreation was enjoyed somewhere on a frozen pond. Unfortunately, this opportunity has diminished regionally as ever greater precautions against liability have limited access to natural water bodies that cannot be accurately evaluated for uniform thickness. Practically, ice-skating outdoors is perhaps the least reliable of public recreations as long periods of very cold, clear weather that produce strong, smooth ice are rare. So many factors and risks combine to confound good skating conditions that it cannot be planned for. Ice skating remains a popular and somewhat special, in part because of its rarity.

Within the Four Towns service area, sanctioned public ice skating outdoors exists only at Chubb Park, at Brookside Beach, the Mud Hole in Mendham Borough and at a detention basin near Coventry Road in Mendham Township. The Chubb skating pond is the best of these and likely the best regularly available skating area in the County. Other existing potentials chronically await the rare protracted cold weather needed to produce reliable skating ice.

As a planning consideration, increase of outdoor ice skating facilities should be a very low priority except in the instance where a floodable lawn panel is considered in support of some other warm season recreation. Floodable pavements have been attempted on many occasions as potential skating areas, but typically are so difficult to freeze and manage that they have been soon abandoned.

Creation of a reliable temporary pond for skating can be well done at reasonable cost by installation of impervious liners and water level controls in a lawn finished space, provided that a substantial purpose for utilization of such a flat lawn exists for use in other seasons. Otherwise, skating ice should be left as a possibility contingent on emergence of a very determined supporting group of residents or a committed donor.

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds occur in a variety of locations within the Four Towns. Particularly well-equipped facilities occur on elementary school sites, and at; Borough Park, Wysong Park, Grove Street Park, Collis Park and Chubb Park. Of these, the Borough Park and Wysong and Grove Street playgrounds are fully supported in a fashion that can reasonably be expected to sustain

comfortable occupation for long time periods. Playgrounds for the spontaneous use of the general public benefit greatly by the incorporation of additional features that facilitate access, comfortable seating, shade, shelter and the hope of some social interaction for parents, grandparents or other caretakers that may accompany children to these sites.

They should be placed where the opportunity to serve adjacent neighbors by pedestrian access is greatest and they should be highly visible from some regularly occupied place.

Ideally, playgrounds and play equipment areas are integrated into the context of as many other surrounding, complimentary features as possible. Children habitually hope to visit a playground, drawn by the prospect of social interaction as much as for the equipment. It is productive to recognize that those older siblings, babysitters or others in a supervisory role hope for a tolerable experience as well. Anticipating the common need for comfort and engagement in some greater experience and supplementing features at play areas to facilitate everyone's enjoyment is essential to creation of attractive playgrounds.

Two objectives for future playground development should be advocated in Four Towns planning. These are: Introduce play areas into every site that is programmed for organized sports and support play areas in every location by providing shelter, shade, seating and potable water as minimum criteria for new development.

Even the smallest play area, offering a swing or a single climbing form, if supported by a bench or picnic table and a couple of trees, creates a magnet for small children and relief for the parent hoping to watch one kid play soccer while trying to restrain a sibling.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

These are rare but unfailingly useful facilities constructed in support of outdoor recreation. Their potential to support group activities, special events and generally, to forge community links and promote social interaction is typically unappreciated relative to other recreation utilities. Traditionally they might include a band shell, amphitheatre, large pavilion or other structured assembly space where performances, celebrations, demonstrations or ceremonies might occur.

In a practical way, a large pavilion is probably the most convenient of these to consider. A large pavilion with paved base, utility service and a generous lawn surround can be adapted to a variety of occasional purposes as well as used routinely for programmed activities such as day camp, arts and crafts, or simply, a rain shelter. This purpose requires appropriate access, service support and parking provisions and is thus, best suited to an existing site with such infrastructure.

Two Gazebos represent the entire area commitment to outdoor assembly structures in the Four Towns service area. Addition of shelter structures of sizes appropriate to the quantity of spectators routinely attending sports events at the major athletic fields in the service area would enable a variety of routine service and special event opportunities that could begin to develop the broader utility these mainstay recreation sites warrant.

LANDSCAPING, ENTRIES, AMENITIES, GARDENS

(AESTHETIC CONDITIONS)

Public recreation spaces and parks in particular, have historically been prepared with some deference to a notion that they are special places presented to the citizenry for their refreshment and enjoyment. In past times, parks were frequently planned and developed with a preference for charm, grace, comfort and beauty and intended to be enjoyed for their appearance and accommodation alone. This characteristic is little evident in public recreation spaces within the Four Towns.

While the potential forms of elaboration that may be considered to enhance the sense of a recreation site as an important public resource are limitless, a few are uniformly important and should be attended as a matter of course, regardless of other imperatives. Some such features are these:

1. Entry features created to identify the site and welcome visitors. Like the front door to one's home, a recreation site deserves an entry, which, even if modest, signifies entry to a valued public space where the visitor's enjoyment and accommodation are intended. Warning signs and imprecations relative to acceptable forms of conduct do not quite convey that message and should be eliminated from the entrance to a more appropriate internal location.
2. Walkways and pathways are the common and expected connectors typically continuing throughout a recreation site for conduct of visitors to each of the feature areas from some place of entry. More importantly, negotiable, barrier free travel ways linking facilities are required by Federal, State, and local statutes and where not developed or not compliant, should be made so.

Pathways, like plantings, have an intrinsic functional virtue far more rewarding than simple access to some ball field. Pathways invite and enable the most important of recreations – walking. Walking, strolling, jogging, running – singly, in pairs or groups, is a universal recreation and circumstance for individual recreation or social interaction. Its importance, in terms of year round utility, cannot be overstated.

Each of the sites within the Township, if surrounded by a continuous loop of firm surfaced pathways, would demonstrate a remarkable phenomenon. Residents would show up to walk there. While a few require long strolls in pristine environments or relentlessly pound along for exercise, people in the main appreciate and seek out well developed pathways where they can escape for an hour, exercise moderately, or just converse with a friend.

Necessary conditions of such a feature are few. They include: a loop that begins and ends in the same place, a surface regular in grade, firm and dry under foot, and an occasional place to rest, preferably with an interesting view and some shade.

3. Furnishings may be a coordinated selection of benches, tables, trash receptacles, railings, signage, light standards fences, gates, flagpoles and similar accessory elements that enable comfortable occupation and convey a sense that accommodation of visitors about any purpose is anticipated and welcomed.

4. Gardens may be extraordinarily various landscape compositions featuring lawn, flowers, shrubs, trees, edgings, hedges, structures, statuary, landforms, water features, and limitless other elements. Such facilities are intended to present beautiful, historic, educational or symbolic themes and frame spaces to be used for active or passive interaction.

Most Four Towns recreation sites offer no such characteristics or even their pretense. The failure to observe or promote aesthetic improvements at the Township's parks may attest to the historical pragmatism of traditional municipal planners, but it highlights what may be the greatest challenge for all Four Towns future considerations. That challenge is recognizing the potential of public recreation spaces to represent a public purpose beyond the minimum necessities coincident with provisioning sports interests.

5. Plantings. The most important contribution to creating an attractive site, whether for active, passive, or cultural purposes, is creating a series of spaces that are connected such that an experience of movement from one place to another is achieved. All of Four Towns school sites and developed portions of park sites except Borough Park are similar in that everything constructed there can be seen from any other place. Very little mystery or anticipation of discovery confronts visitors and little contrast between sunny and shady or sheltered and exposed spaces exists. Trees, shrubs, and plant masses are the three dimensional structures used to create such spaces. They provide shade, cool the summer air, add movement and sound, present flowers and fall color, and provide shelter for birds and animals. People are and will remain attracted to plantings and the forms and effects they produce. Plantings are so few and so tediously used in the Four Towns recreation and school sites, that none of a host of possible benefits is realized. Plantings frame spaces, walkways, paths and trails, link them within sites to adjacent places and with great planning, to other places of interest.

RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT POTENTIALS

FACILITY LIGHTING

The Four Towns recreation system has been developed primarily for daylight hour utilization; apparently as a policy preference within three of four communities (Mendham Borough has lighted tennis and basketball courts). Lighting is not specifically excluded by policy in any of the Four but seems to have been ignored as a useful compliment to the constructed recreation facilities. Athletic field and court lighting has been applied to municipal recreation facilities regionally, as new construction and as retrofit systems placed at existing facilities, since the potential to significantly improve recreation opportunities was recognized as a practical response to use stress and scheduling issues.

Service benefits coincident with facility lighting are numerous but rarely accounted convincingly by advocates for installation of new systems. Clearly, the opportunity to extend conventional youth programming time in the short spring and fall evenings is the chief impetus for lighting systems, but additional gains benefiting adult interests are as important.

The Four Towns recreation system is run by resident volunteers. The bulk of these volunteers are parents and are working adults. The majority of those working adults commute to their

businesses. Each of these has elected to support area youth by dedicating their time to coaching, training or managing and at the least, to transporting them from place to place. In the spring and fall; when days are short, competition for practice space, intense; and everyone is hungry and tired; the volunteers have the additional burden of attenuating their work day, racing home, skipping meals and ruining their shoes just to be available to their kids for too short practice sessions. If these behaviors are selfless, they are also stressful.

Recreation as a concept is based on the premise that people benefit by occasional suspension of life's stress. Yet this large segment of citizenry endures even more to support the notion.

Lighting important facilities enables utilization of them equivalently to the more convenient schedule that naturally occurs as days lengthen in the late spring and early fall. It helps the people who run the system.

Other benefits accrue to the older teen and adult population segments as available, lighted facilities produce opportunities to practice or compete in their preferred activity during the week, rather than compressing every personal recreation ambition into weekend hours.

The most important potential benefit and a fundamental purpose of recreation planning is this. Where games can be scheduled later than typically on week days, the chance for parents to return home, change clothing, eat something and still attend their child's game is more regularly possible. Potential to improve recreation qualitatively as well as quantitatively is the chief virtue of lighting systems and a purpose that deserves much more emphasis within the Four Towns.

A recent example of commitment to very special new facility development has occurred at West Morris Mendham High School. Here, local supporters of high school interscholastic sports joined forces with alumni, recreation associations, and service organizations and by focused outreach, to the community at large to raise funds for construction of synthetic fields at the High School. The published information soliciting support of this project includes some extraordinarily optimistic prognostications relative to the capability of these fields. To date, this ongoing campaign has raised nearly sufficient funding to construct the first of two anticipated fields. Unfortunately, the coincident original purpose to light the new fields failed to be approved by the Borough.

The resulting circumstance is that every recreation group with a legitimate interest, now competes for any available scheduling opportunity not already filled by High School programming. Failure to recognize that realizing the full potential of this costly new field is largely dependent on the inclusion of a lighting system enabling a subsequent evening use of the field daily, will frustrate the expectations of many who supported the project. Without this capability, many of the supporting interests will find that their hoped for access will be factored by the priorities of high school programs and that even if a second field is constructed here, that additional space may never be accessible.

In future Four Towns planning the request for facility lighting will be a repetitive topic. As it is capable of enabling opportunities for recreation more consistent with the realities of contemporary suburban life than those fond remembrances of more bucolic times when everyone gathered on Saturday at homey park to watch the boys play ball, lighting should be a prominent objective. Ignorance of the technical capabilities of modern lighting contributes to the seeming validity of anecdotal protestations of "concerned" neighbors and administrative unwillingness to

assert the priority of well conceived public improvements over minority objections will assuredly continue to confound lighting initiatives. As the majority of area communities have long since demonstrated, these obstacles can be overmatched by deliberate pre-planning and development of broad based support.

SYNTHETIC SURFACES VS NATURAL TURF

Synthetic turf surfaces have increased dramatically in recognition and application to former natural turf substrates in both urban and suburban settings over the past three decades. Propelled by expansive hype as a panacea capable of resolving the bulk of recreation system problems, these surfaces have been applied in both appropriate and in not so appropriate locales and applications. They are commonly reputed to be low maintenance, trouble free, long lived systems, capable of endless utilization, reduction of injuries and complete elimination of the need for those nasty mowers. In fact, only the last of those virtues is actually true.

There is no reasonable argument that synthetic turf will not support practically unlimited utilization or that natural turf will. This contrast is accurate but predicated on the condition that synthetic turf is properly designed, installed, supported and managed.

Though it is practically indestructible from intended use, synthetic turf requires regular maintenance by trained personnel operating specialized equipment. Mowers are exchanged for blowers, power rakes, vacuums, granulate spreaders and spray applicators. Though synthetic surfaces don't need mowing, they do, on a regular basis require: debris removal, granulate recovery and respreading, pile raking, disinfection, static control (when new), supplemental granulate application and cooling in hot, sunny weather. Though represented to reduce injury potential, synthetic surfaces have been shown to substitute injury types rather than reducing injury. Heat accumulation is the most prominent health risk associated with synthetic turf surfaces as they are very efficient heat sinks and insulators. Surface temperatures can exceed one hundred thirty degrees on sunny summer days, well beyond the ambient maximum of approximately eighty degrees for natural turf. Consequently, irrigation may be required prior to summer use. Synthetic fields are designed to be sufficiently resilient to pass head form drop tests of a maximum of 200 "Gmax. impact", consequently, they are uniformly softer (more resilient) than natural turf substrates would ever be. This results in leg fatigue from much greater effort to achieve the same running speed. Affects of this have not been studied objectively.

Synthetic turf surfaces are designed or field "tuned" to a designated sport purpose by allowing more or less of the synthetic pile to protrude beyond the granulate fill. Consequently, a turf designed for football or soccer would be too slow for lacrosse or field hockey and vice versa.

In multi-purpose applications, the pile height is averaged making it equally good/bad for whichever user and like the long pile carpets that they are, periodic pile raking to stand up filaments.

Synthetic fields are commonly represented to be capable of a 10 -12 year service life or longer for the newest synthetic products. Unfortunately, each new generation of synthetic turf has been introduced well before older systems have achieved this age range and typically, both the original manufacturer and installer are long gone in ten years. Few actual circumstances of

resilient fields reaching their full service life occur to enable evaluation of the utility of those claims.

Synthetic fields may present other unanticipated influences due to their unusual composition. Some concerns, (lead contamination and out-gassing) have emerged recently as potential risks of synthetic systems. The prospect of granulate substrates becoming contaminated by bacterial or fungal infestations as they load with dust debris and human waste is a speculative potential not yet studied or understood.

Presuming that synthetic systems can be managed successfully for a full twelve years, their replacement cycle can be considered on an annualized cost as a basis for comparison with natural turf systems. As a typical new soccer sized field costs approximately \$800,000.00, its' simple cost per year exclusive of maintenance and repair is approximately \$67,000. By contrast, a similar sized natural turf field can be resodded completely every year for approximately \$60,000.00. This very simple example illustrates that synthetic turf is not less costly than natural turf and so, cost saving is not a reason to consider its installation. The reason, distilled to its simplest expression, remains that synthetic turf can be abused, neglected and improperly managed even repeatedly, without ruining it. Natural turf cannot.

An important qualifier that must be considered when synthetic field surfaces are evaluated is lighting. Lighting increases the opportunity to utilize a field by one game/practice per day (doubling the weekday field use in spring and fall). Coupling the potential for such increase with a field that can sustain the additional load, is the only sensible method to maximize the return for investment in the much more costly synthetic systems.

This has significance to the Four Towns planning process as it illustrates an option that can be used to measure long term efficiencies and impacts applicable to future natural/synthetic turf considerations.

Synthetic turf almost certainly has utilitarian application to support of organized sports within the Four Towns service area. Its popularity and reputation as a failsafe surface will continue to promote its support as a final solution to longstanding problems of natural turf management. As further installations are considered, it will be an essential pre-condition to assure that access is distributed across the entire spectrum of appropriate users. Likewise, it will be essential to maximize the number of applications that may be programmed by coincident inclusion of lighting. Unfortunately, the best existing potential for this application (Mendham High School) has been removed from immediate consideration.

INDOOR RECREATION FEATURES

Indoor recreation opportunities are offered in a variety of forms and at numerous locations within the Four Towns. Excepting recreation basketball, which is well supported in area schools in the winter season, the bulk of indoor activities are social, cultural or service association related activities occurring at area churches, community centers and social clubs. Of these, the Garabrandt Center in Chester Borough is the sole public facility in the service area available for general public indoor programming. Presumably, the new park center in Chester Borough will be similarly available.

Indoor recreation available to the general public has increased importantly in recent years for a variety of activity types. Generally, these are characterized as child care related programs, personal health and fitness training, martial arts and bodybuilding, swimming and swim training and court sports. Full field sports venues, gymnasias and indoor tracks; facilities that support off season training and competition are grossly deficient in the region and are increasingly sought by various types of competitive sports.

These recreation centers are costly to produce in a comprehensive, well conceived and durable fashion and absolutely require high quality, business oriented management to remain current, attractive and to cover operational expense. Consequently, they persist at colleges, as exclusive clubs, as commercial facilities or in most populated regions, as YMCA/YWCA facilities.

Each of the Four Towns communities are too small to reasonably consider development of a significant indoor recreation facility and even in combination do not constitute a support base adequate to undertake such an enormous project. The region of western Morris County, and southern Warren County however represents a very large, underserved and sufficiently affluent population to constitute adequate incentive to interest the YMCA. During the process of preparation for this report, representatives of the West Morris (Randolph) and Morris Center (Hanover) YMCA were interviewed to examine the prospect of future creation of a facility in western Morris County. Although the designated service area of the Mendham's and Chester's falls within the service area of the Morris Central YMCA and the Washington Twp. and Roxbury within the West Morris YMCA service area, both agencies have an influence in the region and have represented an intention to collaborate with prospective partners to extend their services to support those communities. The YMCA interest is purely mission driven, according to the charter of the national organization. Their purpose to provide cultural, community service and recreational opportunities exists irrespective of the motives of local communities but can be enabled by opportunities created by those interests. Both YMCA organizations have conducted inquiries and site specific evaluation of potential locations for development within or adjacent to the Four Towns service area without yet finding adequate opportunity to commit further planning resources. The Morris Center research specifically identified the Lucent site in Chester Borough as one well located and appropriate to their preliminary requirements and maintain an interest in that site should future opportunity be presented.

It is strongly recommended that thorough examination of the purposes of the YMCA and their preferences for project sites be undertaken as a specific single purpose of The Four Towns planning process. The YMCA presents a positively inclined vehicle to access the most modern, well organized and administered indoor services. Engaging the most experienced public service enterprise as a partner capable of providing services beyond the current management capabilities or realistic financial prospects of the combined Towns is very sound planning.

It will be necessary to provide appropriate space, enabling zoning, utility infrastructure access and a taxation structure satisfactory to optimize the prospect of long term viability of a substantial commitment to new development by the YMCA. Potential to conveniently access high quality, reliable, independently administered indoor recreation for the entire service area is an opportunity in the balance for those concessions. In contrast to the small likelihood of achieving such objectives in any foreseeable future without exterior partnership, this exploration has a tangible chance for important contribution to recreation system diversity and has a realistic chance of success.

Private partnership or direct consumer relationships with area commercial recreation enterprises may be an additional option to expand general service for indoor activities. These are available in conventional membership formats for a variety of indoor court and exercise activities but are not available cheaply or in large supply. As these facilities evolve or as new start-up facilities are considered, it may be a practical opportunity to negotiate with those interests to examine the prospect of incorporating membership or time "blocks" at group rates to be set aside for residents interested in securing fee for service accommodations.

INDOOR FACILITIES - RESTROOMS

Among real deficiencies in the Four Towns recreation system, restrooms or the lack thereof stand alone as the most pointed and disagreeable. Chester Borough is the only municipality that has managed to incorporate restrooms in both of its outdoor recreation facilities and has accomplished that important distinction only recently. The rest of the developed system offers only two additional restrooms, one at Borough Park and another at Black River Fields. The apparent determination to restrict access to competent restrooms seems to be shared by area school systems as well, as even those actively sharing their playfield resources with local recreation groups have not assured that restrooms within their walls were available to area residents.

Clearly, municipal agencies from all four towns recognize the likelihood that at least someone will attend a recreation activity long enough to require access to a restroom and three in response, have placed a porta-john or two at each such site regardless of its size or the disposition of facilities on that site. The ubiquitous porta-john has been pressed into service ostensibly because the initial expense, continuing maintenance cost and prospect of vandalism associated with construction of real restrooms cannot be managed. This disposition presents some substance for further consideration. As the use of these is: not consistent with any building or site development code; would not be approved for any other place of public accommodation or office or agency; does not occur in our homes and are not utilized except in desperation, their appropriateness to recreation sites should be reevaluated. . Factors that relate to their likely inappropriateness are these: they smell bad, are frequently soiled by human waste, are extremely subject to vandalism, are not barrier free, are not kid friendly and are profoundly unhygienic, particularly in any circumstance where a visit is at any time followed by food contact.

If in the Four Towns process, an irresistible impetus to build restrooms in all of the system recreation sites can be determined, the entire exercise will be an unequivocal success.

A plain philosophical observation applies to the restroom quandary. It is that when a public facility is created with the deliberate purpose of inviting citizens to play there, that the duration or quality of that experience should not be limited or degraded by the failure to incorporate the commonest personal conveniences. No such circumstances would be tolerated in a school, office, store, or other public space and should not be in a park site.

THE FOUR TOWNS SPORT ASSOCIATIONS

By any reckoning, the associations of citizens of the Four Towns that have undertaken the organization of the various sports are the most valuable resources representing recreation

interests and promoting service to area youth. These groups deliver programs in football, soccer, track, cross country, lacrosse, baseball, basketball and cheerleading for all age interests across the entire service area. They have contributed their time and energy for management of all aspects of area sports programming from registration to scheduling to field maintenance in addition to the coaching, training and equipment management tasks typically expected to volunteers. Lesser known aspects of the commitment shown by these parents include coaching certification and clinics, umpire and referee training, fundraising, purchase of equipment, insurances and uniforms, event planning and endless hours of phone calling, transporting players, shuffling schedules and responding to emergency field conditions resulting from adverse weather. Members of the soccer, lacrosse and baseball associations routinely contribute labor and funding to routine tasks of mowing, field grooming and emergency repair.

Ostensibly, each of the Four Towns have committed to provision of field space and maintenance support in exchange for comprehensive management of the several programs. Integration of municipal maintenance, renovation, capital planning and system expansion initiatives with program operations growth and diversification varies from sporadic to non-existent. Currently, capital improvements projects have been authorized by Chester Township and Mendham Township that directly influence the prospects of area soccer and baseball programming, but system infrastructure, utility support and response to compliance issues lags far behind current need for upgrades.

As all four of the subject towns are maturing a characteristic where land resources for residential development have diminished, rapid population increase as experienced during the past several decades will slow. As typical for such communities, the imperative for expansion of school systems and related infrastructure will slow as well. Subsequently, general utility services and circulation system improvement will advance in priority, until acute issues are resolved, at which time the comparative significance of recreation facilities may become a more prominent interest of local governments and more likely to receive capital support based on prior planning. Presumably, as that condition is reached, the Four Towns will begin to replace the tradition of reactive planning and crisis management relative to recreation services with a more centrally directed, objective oriented system. Until such a capability is established, the prospect of delivery of high quality programs, despite the fact that they are special interest programs, should remain vested in these organizations.

In recognition of the fact that none of the Four Towns have established the resources, manpower or experience base necessary to deliver the services that private citizens are annually producing, a much more supportive disposition of municipal policy seems warranted. If for example the municipal responsibility in exchange for program management is provision of the necessary field substrates, those substrates should, as a minimum expectation be appropriately large, spacious, supported and particularly, in conformance with codes for access and safety. In contrast to that proposition, the current circumstance may be described as modern, well organized programs coping by endless adaptation to a system modeled on home grown facilities, designed according to traditional parameters, which should have been upgraded decades ago.

Each of the Four Towns has established a recreation or Parks Commission or committee. Presumably each such organization has a mission, which includes some measure of influence over the quality of facilities; their compliance with technical characteristics consistent with best practice standards; the requirements of each type for maintenance and repair and the current conditions of facilities comparative to some baseline requirement. In addition, each would

maintain and update some form of status inventory for each facility, which characterizes the condition of surfaces and equipment to forecast annual replacement or renovation needs.

Examination of the subject fields, playgrounds, courts and component structures of the Four Towns developed recreation sites suggests that regular, well informed assessments of physical circumstances is not occurring or is not usefully translated into improvement sequences. Evidence of this may be seen and most easily recognized at the system baseball fields. Though newer fields tend to be much better than older ones, all exhibit design choices, surface conditions or structures that are non-compliant or unnecessarily dangerous. Some of these characteristics occur across the system, including: backstops and fence structures constructed too close to base paths, deteriorated fence fabric and connections, inadequate field separation, grade change at infield edges and uniformly poor barrier free access accommodations. Local sports associations are so accustomed to this sort of minor defect that they little hinder typical operations. Notwithstanding the accustomed circumstances of system condition and utilization, standards of practice in public facilities exist as well as codified requirements for safety and access. Beyond the simple ambition of eliminating unsafe conditions to protect residents against injury, the liability exposure undertaken by the coaches, trainers and other volunteers while dedicating their services is unreasonable and unnecessary. Each of the Four Towns is remiss in resolving fundamental adequacy issues respective to many of its facilities and should identify and correct them as a priority matter.

Respondents to written questions and those posed in interviews have cited instances of seasonal (particularly spring) weather related impacts upon existing fields. Most prominent are complaints relative to drainage and protracted wetness of fields. The bulk of these represent chronic conditions that indicate inappropriate initial siting or construction as well as inability to correct deficient conditions. Where such circumstances occur, season starts, practices on games may be eliminated or require rescheduling, potentially creating conditions where meeting full schedules may become difficult. Very simple alterations in system capabilities (loss of Bragg Dickerson Field, closure of West Field for repair) can ripple through the entire sports season, displacing, eliminating and complicating the conventional tasks of programming. These examples typify systems, which are operating at participation levels greater than available capacity and at maintenance levels less than appropriate.

Each of the respondent sports associations has the responsibility to register, distribute, schedule, equip, insure and find coaches for the many levels of participation assigned to area children. Consequently, each has a very useful accounting of their currently facility requirements and a reliable forecasting basis for at least the subsequent seasons needs. These statistics actually define the demand for facilities in a clear form. Regularly assembling this information and comparing it to availability of space/time to accomplish the stipulated number of practices and games per sport reliably yields a useful quantity of needed resources. This simple reporting and accounting procedure is not performed in any of the Four Towns.

In a situation where all venues are of an equivalent quality, character, durability, availability and are at least adequate to sustain the needed level of play, the correlation between participants and venues can be established with accuracy. Conversely, where venues are dissimilar in quality, performance and durability or available only under optimal circumstances, capability to balance need and opportunity becomes less direct and likely, dependent upon the ability to quickly shuffle schedules and field assignments and to adapt available resources as necessary. Clearly

the first circumstance is the one most appropriate to the sports associations but the second is the situation that exists.

In overview, it must be accepted that the several citizen's sports associations are conducting the delivery of sports programs at a level of competence far greater than the typical venue delivered by the municipalities for their use. Creation of a more equitable balance of commitment should be a primary goal of the Four Towns Plan.

BASEBALL ASSOCIATIONS – CHESTER LITTLE LEAGUE

Chester Little League began serving youth of the Chester's and Mendham's in 1953 and though the participants in the League have changed over the years, Chester Little League remains in service. It is an affiliated league conducting its operations according to the rules of Little League Baseball.

This program offers training and competition at inter-town levels through the regular season and continues into tournament play post season with all star squads. Operating within the constraints of Little League rules it is necessary for each team to have completed twelve games within the regular season to qualify for tournament play. This condition places special emphasis on the ability to occupy fields as early as possible in April to assure adequate time for rescheduling of rained out games.

STATISTICS

	2008 Baseball Program	2008 Softball Program
Registered	425	225
Number Teams	39	17
Number Divisions	6	5

Fields

Black River Little League
Black River school baseball
Chubb Upper
Chubb Fireman
Chubb senior baseball (Babe Ruth)
Chubb #1
Chubb #2
Chubb #3
Municipal Little League
Municipal Babe Ruth

Spaces

Chubb T-ball
Bragg (grass)

Interview and response sequences with Chester Little League produced a number of significant issues relative to their operation as well as insights regarding their relationship to the municipalities.

Generally, Chester Little League is an active and still growing program with interest in expanding softball to include high school girls and co-ed programs. Of the ten fields in service, those at Municipal Park and Collis Park are regarded as the best in their inventory and the Little League fields at Chubb as the least good. Field drainage and infield condition are cited as the most important deficiencies, although the addition of a new grooming machine in 2008 seems to have resolved the "condition" problem.

Chester Little League has committed \$19,000.00 annually to hire contract landscape services for grooming and occasional mowing, but will be able to dedicate part of that sum to their own operations budget as a result of the Township undertaking maintenance in 2008.

Chester Little League stipulates that additional field space is needed to accommodate practice, particularly for baseball as well as access to one large field for Babe Ruth. They are currently raising funds to contribute to this effort and hope to reach an accord with the Township for construction in 2009 (at Parker Road).

In addition to two fields Chester Little League represents a need for a dedicated storage shed and the ability to install batting cages at Chubb, which are expected to enable increasing simultaneous practicing. Only permanent sleeves and authorization are requested to place these cages as Chester Little League is prepared to purchase them. Reportedly, the Township has not been cooperative in this effort, requiring permanent 8' fences to enable its approval.

Chester Little League is well organized at every level, very flexible with respect to adapting to existing conditions and forward looking with respect to program expansion and facility improvement. Recent increase in maintenance operations by Chester Township have materially improved the options of Chester Little League, which opportunity will be expressed in new support features. The relationship of Chester Little League to the municipalities is represented to be historically autonomous but recently improving. Some citations illustrate inappropriate response to specific requests and a sense of disassociation particularly with Chester Borough was reported. A working dialogue between Chester Little League and the Towns has improved in recent years. Whether deliberate or happenstance, previous failure to communicate issues with a reasonable expectation of timely response seems to have produced a frustration of objectives for Chester Little League. Accordingly, they have and plan to continue to advance their purposes regardless of exterior support. Given the scope and history of this program within the Chester's in the context of public service and youth programming, it is difficult to understand why the few and simple needs of Chester Little League not more enthusiastically met or at least shared at the municipal level.

Some of the responses to questions posed to Chester Little League are illustrative of the issues considered significant in context of their relationship to the municipalities. They are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

COMPARISON OF FACILITIES TO PROGRAMS

CHESTER LITTLE LEAGUE

Chester Little League is programming practices and games for 56 teams in 11 divisions on ten fields and two spaces. For purposes of credibility the spaces (1 at Chubb and 1 at Bragg) are not counted in this comparison as doing so is not reasonable.

Five of the six baseball divisions schedule two games and one practice per week after season start up. In the available time prior to season start, two practices are attempted per week. All of the softball divisions schedule two games and one practice per week. In addition to the teams participating in conventional divisions of the Chester L.L. program, a select team program known as the Cerbo League has recently been introduced to Chester players. This program is available to those players in each division interested to compete against similar select teams from other communities. Ultimately targeting formation of one team in each division, these teams scheduling is superimposed over the requirements of conventional programming. Cerbo League teams conventionally practice and play one game per week on system fields wherever they are available. Half of games scheduled within this league are played "away".

USES PER DIVISION/WEEK

	Baseball-Practice/Games	Softball-Practice/Games
T-Ball	1/1	----
Instructional	1/2	1/2
Juniors	1/2	1/2
Minors	1/2	1/2
Majors	1/2	1/2
Seniors	1/2	1/2
Cerbo League	1/2	

The balance in Chester Little League Baseball

The baseball program fields 44 teams, four of which are T-ball teams. Total uses per week is equivalent to (4 t-ball teams at 2 uses/week) = 8 uses and (40 other teams at 3 uses per week) = 120 or total need to 128 uses per week. Three of the divisions play "away" games. Assuming one half of their 12 game season is away and 6 teams represent this group 6 uses per week must be subtracted ($128 - 6 = 122$) resulting in a total of 122 uses per week.

This quantity is described as need.

Field supply supporting the baseball program consists of 7 fields, which at a maximum may be utilized twice per weekday and typically four sessions on Saturday. This yields a total of 70 weekday and 28 weekend uses or 98 weekly uses. This quantity is described as supply.

Comparison of the two totals illustrates that demand currently outstrips supply by nearly two fields per week (24 uses). This comparison represents optimal circumstances occurring uniformly throughout the season. In every instance where a field is not playable or when a weekend rainout occurs, near balance quickly becomes unbalanced. If a weekend rainout occurs late in the season following typically minor spring closures, all teams contending for playoffs are obliged to scramble to complete the requisite 12 games threshold for qualification.

Real need, justified by the findings of this study exists for the Chester Little League. It is characterized as follows. Two additional youth baseball fields are needed to balance current

program demand. (Specifically, one additional Little League field (Highlands Ridge) and one additional well prepared 60' x 90' field is needed to enable response to repair closures or renovations.) Additional or improved substrates for T-ball are needed to eliminate use of the impromptu conditions now pressed into service and to more reasonably integrate young players into the program. One such field should be prepared in a fashion (complete, fully supported infield) that enables its periodic availability as a "backup" field to improve response to major scheduling disruptions.

Some additional qualifying conditions influence this comparison. One significant factor is the change in daylight savings time, which in 2009 will occur one month earlier than previously. This will yield sufficient daylight in the evening to schedule a second practice. To date approximately 35 fewer time spaces have been available between March and April.

BALANCE IN CHESTER LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL

Chester Little League programs practices and games for 22 softball teams in 5 divisions. The total maximum for field space to support these teams at 3 uses per week per team is 66 total uses. The Chester Little League system utilizes three fields at Chubb Park to accommodate the softball program. At a capability of 14 games per week per field the total of 42 uses opportunities per week results.

Comparison of these totals suggests a net deficit of approximately two fields (each with a maximum of 14 games/week) but reporting from Chester Little League indicates that the number of practices held is optional to the team manager and the fields are able to accommodate their scheduling. Even though this system element is represented as being in balance, and can be shown to be approximately that, characterizing all three of these as "fields" is a less than equitable proposition. Current conditions occurring here inadvertently discriminate between the level of opportunity prepared for the softball programs comparative to those available for the more traditional little league baseball interests.

Other factors influence the availability of these fields and may be disruptive in the early season. These fields occur at the lowest position in the land form at Chubb and are subject to runoff influences from adjacent fields and roadway as well as seasonal saturation from high groundwater tables. In particularly wet springs this combination can produce soggy conditions that resolve slowly. The three Chubb softball fields are the poorest of the ten system ballfields. They are minimal in respects, spatially inadequate, too close to adjacent fields and roadways, deficient in perimeter space, backstop and fence condition and too steeply sloping, particularly at the lower field. Overall, a great deal of work is warranted here including elimination of the low field. This factor is more important immediately than the total quantity of available spaces for play and should be approached as a priority to the extent that one new, properly oriented and properly equipped field is added to the system.

MENDHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

The Mendham Little League provides baseball programming for the youth of the Borough and Township. Like its counterpart in Chester, Mendham Little League is well established, competent and comprehensively organized association of residents responsible for all aspects of registration, coaching, training, scheduling, and umpiring for 600 players distributed over eight

divisions and for an additional seven "Cerbo League" teams (select traveling teams). Unlike the Chester program, Mendham Little League offers boys and girls divisions separately (Chester uses open registration) and administers its coaching and scheduling with two internal organizations. The Mendham Little League system is solely involved with program delivery and not typically involved with infield management, repair, maintenance or supplementation. These tasks are shared by public works departments of the Borough and Township.

Conduct of training, coaching and play follows the regulation of Little League Baseball and includes training and instruction levels of play as well as competition with adjacent towns and tournament play post season for qualifying teams. The requirement for completion of 12 regular season games is the threshold for tournament play which places special emphasis upon the ability to start game scheduling as early as possible.

STATISTICS

	2008 Boys	2008 Girls
Registered	282	318
Number of Teams	45	27
Number of Divisions	4	4
Number of Volunteers	350	

FIELDS

Borough Park	3
Hilltop School	1
Wysong Park	1
Ralston Field	1
Mt. Pleasant	1
Brookside	2
*High School	2
*Middle School	2

*Limited according to availability after school use.

Fields at Wysong and Ralston are reported to be the best in the system although those at Borough Park are the most heavily utilized for boys programming. Drainage and saturation issues are cited as significant impediments at Borough upper and lower and fencing/safety concerns at Borough lower are long standing and legitimate problems.

School system fields are available to Mendham Little League after occupation by school softball and lacrosse use is completed. This situation will likely improve as daylight savings time is advanced.

Fields at Hilltop and Mt. Pleasant are important and useful for the girl's program where quality expectations are lower, but neither is particularly useful to the boys program due to location and condition limitations.

The Mendham Little League clearly represents separate and contrasting agendas for its boys and girls subdivisions. The boys program is comparatively more competitively oriented and directed

toward training their children to performance yielding tournament qualifications and continuation into higher levels of play. In addition to typical Little League formats Mendham Little League has introduced a "Cerbo League" consisting of registrants inclined to travel and play at higher levels. To date seven teams have been added to Mendham Little League rosters to accommodate these teams. Their responses relative to this study directly assert dissatisfaction with the quality and quantity of available resources and a growing frustration with their repeated efforts to improve both conditions.

The girl's element of Mendham Little League represents a different inclination toward delivery of their softball training and competition. The training, exercise and experiential characteristics of playing the game are stressed and "fun" is cited as the overall goal of this system. Few complaints of any description were cited even in response to conditions that are irrefutably substandard (Hilltop). Though the number of participants here is large, a relaxed attitude relative to scheduling issues prevails and a make-do relationship to field conditions was expressed.

COMPARISON OF FACILITIES TO PROGRAMS – MENDHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Mendham Little League is responsible for scheduling practices and games for a total of 72 teams, six of which are T-ball teams. In addition 7 Cerbo league teams are superimposed over the 8 conventional levels of Little League. Ideally each team requires 2 uses per week per team, yielding a total of 153 weekly uses needed.

Additional demand is placed on the field resources as the Women's Softball program fields three teams and utilizes two of the system fields (Hilltop and Brookside) for their games and practices which require an additional 30 use opportunities during the season or three uses per week.

Three Babe Ruth teams require field space on the systems full sized fields (Borough, Pastime) for practice and approximately half of their game schedule, requiring an additional 3 uses per week.

The total system demand for space/time is approximately 164 uses per week aggregating all team needs.

The system considered in these idealized circumstances yield a deficit of 15 uses opportunities per week or approximately one full field's service capability. A realistic assessment of the system potential, factoring actual use characteristics into consideration produces a greater discrepancy than a simple mathematical model.

Mendham Little League reporting indicates that: Mt. Pleasant and Hilltop fields are rarely used; size and location limit Mt. Pleasant's utility and Hilltop (should not be in service) but is dry and well liked; High School fields are available to a limited extent based on the program needs of the school intramural and interscholastic requirements; Mendham Middle School fields are similarly available but are influenced by school lacrosse program use as well as baseball; Borough Park fields are operating at completely filled use levels and are subject to damage when utilized in water influenced conditions. This factor may be a significant impediment to maintenance of April and May scheduling.

Considering these factors in the context of the observed condition of system surfaces and equipment, sustains Mendham Little Leagues contentions that baseball field capacity is beyond saturation under current programming. A conservative assessment of the circumstances here

indicates a minimum of two well developed fields (equivalent to Ralston) are required to balance service demand with system capability.

Review of the field scheduling for system fields confirm that there are continuously compacted by use from mid-April to mid-June (the entire cool weather seasons). Although the same fields remain in service in summer and fall season for traveling programs and football, utilization is at much lower levels. As is evidenced by observed surface conditions, this quantity of stress during the first of two annual growing seasons for cool season turf grasses results in physical conditions that impair field surface condition and that will worsen over time. Persistent use of system fields at these levels will continue to degrade soil conditions and gradually increase the severity of damage from storm runoff and will result in protract periods of field closure.

In overview, the future of spring baseball programming in the Mendham's system will probably be little influenced in terms of overall player accommodation. Mendham Little League, Babe Ruth and adult women's softball associations have a demonstrated capability to adapt to physical circumstances and provide very high service levels. The same cannot be said for the system fields. These will continue to experience stress damage on the play surfaces and deterioration of equipment. This affect will be most pronounced at the Borough Fields as comparatively, they exhibit more fundamental issues than the new Township Fields. Nonetheless, the need for renovations in existing venues is likely as important as expansion, simply to sustain current program levels.

The relationship between Mendham Little League and the municipalities is also in need of some correction. The needs expressed by the league represent the status of the recreation program in baseball whether they are subjective or observable. Likely, a much more in depth communication of impediments facing the ball players and administrations, reinforced by a mutually practical plan to address them would create a more appreciative relationship.

In order to achieve a productive level of understanding of system issues impacting baseball, an annual inventory and accounting of the whole system characteristics is needed. Such an inventory would include a total of all teams and their spatial and time requirements and a description of all fields with their spatial characteristics and chronic physical issues. Physical /spatial issues need to be described point by point in terms of specific non-conformities and specific impacts upon programming. For instance citing fence improvements as an issue is informative only in a general sense, which will not influence decision making. Citing particulars, (fencing is too short (4') to protect players and spectators; selvages are frayed posing an injury risk; fences are 10' from baselines, this is not compliant with Little League Regulations and produces a physical injury risk to players and on an indefensible liability to our coaches and association should injury occur) is informative and where the consequences of each is also related to the physical condition, the association is able to request specific improvements and the municipality is able to evaluate the need and make specific determinations relative to cost.

MENDHAM WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

This is an overlay program sharing space with Mendham Little League on Borough and Township Fields (Hilltop and Brookside). It is a comparatively informally organized league of five area teams (3 Mendham Teams) each consisting of 15-20 players (not strictly limited by residency).

This is a league intent on fun and social interaction reportedly well satisfied with the character and availability of fields at their disposal. Their season is the same approximate duration of sprig recreation baseball. This is a very flexible group of participants, practicing as convenient and targeting a ten game schedule.

Their relationship to the municipalities currently requires little other than playing opportunity. No specific issues were cited other than a minor scheduling skirmish with Mendham Little League which was resolved by Borough recreation.

In response to questioning about their needs, only two possible considerations were reported. The first was better advertising of their league to increase participation. The second was direct assistance in securing umpiring services.

Unless some unanticipated factor causes their program to increase rapidly, only one significant issue is identified that influences its continuation. That issue is Hilltop Field. Play at any level for any group on Hilltop field assumes the risk potential of an inadequately supported field (backstop, team bench enclosures, perimeter fences, access). Adult play should not occur here. This group despite their willing acceptance should be scheduled elsewhere.

WEST MORRIS SOCCER CLUB

The West Morris Soccer Club was formed by combination of the programs formerly serving the Chester's and Mendham separately. Currently, it is the largest recreation program in the four towns, delivering programming for 1350 registrants in 2008. It various levels of training include resident children from 5 to 18 years old. West Morris Soccer Club organizes a full fall intramural soccer program as well as a spring and fall traveling team programs and extends its support of select teams through the summer. It is in all respects highly organized and proficient in structuring operations in every significant aspect of player training, safety and support. West Morris Soccer Club manages registration, scheduling, referees, trainers, coaches, field management, insurance, equipment and field maintenance, mowing, repair and coordination with the public works departments. Its practices and games are accompanied by trainers, equipped and competent to evaluate player's injuries and physical conditions as they occur during play. The club reports being supported by 750 volunteer sharing tasks of coaching, transportation, field preparation, event planning and conduct of tournaments. The West Morris Soccer Club website is modern, comprehensive, and regularly updated to reflect current status of schedules, game results, registration and clinic programs, coach and referee training and events schedules.

STATISTICS

Registrants 2008

Fall	1350
Spring	500

Teams

Spring	35
Fall	86

System Fields include:

West	2
Chubb	3
Ralston	1
Black River	3
Wysong	1
MT Middle	2
Brookside	1
MT Elementary	1
Franklin	1
BR Meadow	2

As can be observed from the quantity of players, teams and facilities being organized and programmed, West Morris Soccer Club is conducting a massive logistical operation in the fall and a very large one in the spring. Its success at this operation is directly reflected in the prowess of the High school soccer program, particularly as seen in the girl's perennial strength.

This reflects its level of competence and purpose to maximize the quality of its training through consistent skill improvement in its coaches and diligent management of facilities at its disposal.

West Morris Soccer Club is similarly competent and persistent regarding their community outreach and solicitation for sponsorship by area businesses. They have developed enduring relationships with many of their sponsors and constantly solicit additional support of all membership families by requesting optional contribution of cash in lieu of man hour contribution to support the overall efforts of hundreds of involved volunteers. Resources are applied to equipment supply and replacement, field maintenance; including contract mowing services and contributions to field improvements and new construction in all three supporting towns.

West Morris Soccer Club has adopted a pragmatic approach to field access described as "using anything we can get". Following this approach, their practice is to secure access to a field space and dedicate as much available manpower and resources to improvements as they can afford and to reinforce their cooperation with the municipal public works departments by maintenance sharing to achieve a most favorable status with their directors. They report being able to respond to emergencies and accommodate additional scheduling needs (lacrosse, men's, women's soccer) by understanding their resources and maintaining a cooperative, flexible relationship to the towns and other field users. This stance is best demonstrated by the large meadow area adjacent to the Black River Fields. This space has been available to West Morris Soccer Club for use under leasing agreements with the West Morris Regional High School Board of Education but has never been regraded or refinished to produce regular field spaces. Over years of use as a practice space and through persistent management, mowing, fertilizing and surficial repair, West Morris Soccer Club has converted this space to the best general purpose practice substrate in the system. It is now shared by the soccer and lacrosse recreation program and by the West Morris Mendham High School lacrosse program.

BALANCE OF FACILITIES TO PROGRAM – WEST MORRIS SOCCER

The fall season for soccer predicates evaluation of system capability as it is so much larger than the spring program that field access is restricted only in the fall season. West Morris Soccer Club schedules one practice and one game per week for intramural teams during the fall season.

The 86 system teams require space as follows: 56 intramural teams conduct one practice and one game per week = 112 uses total. 30 traveling teams conduct two practices and one or two games per week – 90 min. uses total. The total minimum use need for the system is 202 uses per week.

The entire system consists of 18 total fields available for soccer play. Two of these (MT elementary and MB Middle) are grossly deficient but counted. Two other fields (one at Black River and one at Ralston) are reserved for lacrosse use for boys and girls programming and men's and women's soccer is superimposed over those programs during the fall season.

Approximate field capability based on the sixteen available spaces, computed at one use maximum per weekday and five uses maximum on Saturday yields a total potential of 160 uses per week. Unmet deficits are balanced by combining practices and by utilizing half field practice formats for larger fields (Ralston, West, BR, MTM).

The spatial deficit for this program is approximately equal to two additional full size fields if the fields at MB Middle School and MT elementary remain in service. As neither of these is adequate or supported well enough to sustain this utilization, they should be eliminated, effectively setting the balance target at three fields.

Recent developments in the Township's have the potential to resolve current spatial deficits relative to West Morris Soccer Club program needs. These include a new soccer/multi-purpose field recently completed at Highlands Ridge Park, a new soccer/multi-purpose field completed at India Brook Park and two developed soccer fields at the recently acquired ST. John's property.

The Highlands Ridge field and the two at St. Johns, if available for West Morris Soccer Club programming will provide the preferred conditions for West Morris Soccer Club as they will best enable the trainer/referee support needed for their operations. As all three of these are full format fields, their utility as half field practice spaces will significantly improve practicing prospects for the younger level of play.

An objective for future facility planning to support West Morris Soccer Club should include elimination of marginal and ultimately single field locations (MB middle, MT elementary, Wysong and Brookside), concentrating their operations at Chubb, Black River/Highlands, Ralston and West all of which can operate uninfluenced by school programming and can benefit by supplemental care and resources West Morris Soccer Club is able to deliver.

West Morris Soccer Club regards itself as capable, to continue expanding its programs and improving its services related to soccer. The organization expresses a specific interest in growth within the service area and in planning to influence municipal level support to achieve a variety of goals. Among their targets are synthetic fields and field lighting systems to extend practice opportunities in the short fall day and to produce a versatile damage proof game field. Other practical planning objectives reported are field complexes supported by restrooms, play areas and large shelters. They hope to better support the many parents and siblings of their players and create much more capable facilities for hosting tournaments, team events and to provide shelter for spectators in inclement weather. Other initiatives they are prepared to support are field improvements like those at Mendham Middle School and utility service improvements as at Chubb to facilitate their maintenance and repair sequences.

The West Morris Soccer Club is performing every reasonable and many optional tasks on behalf of the Four Towns. In addition, they are building bridges to and making every possible effort to coexist peacefully with other fall and spring sports. As opportunity occurs to improve their field stock, it should be considered as a priority, to deliver as much raw material as this organization can use.

CHESTER/MENDHAM LACROSSE

Mendham/Chester Lacrosse is the most recent of the major sports clubs established to service the Four Towns youth. Boys and girls divisions are providing programs for area youth between 6 and 14 for boys and 8 to 14 for girls. These teams function separately and conduct different quantities of practices and games. Both clubs focus on skills training, rules of game and nurturing an understanding and love for the game.

Both programs utilize field spaces also shared by the spring traveling program in soccer and the boy's division shares space with High School teams at the Black River site.

Mendham/Chester Lacrosse has established an equitable arrangement with West Morris Soccer Club to enable each needed access to field time and commonly adjust scheduling in season to respond to unusual circumstances. They have collaborated with an area contractor for mowing at the Black River practice fields each paying for this service in their respective primary season. The relationship between the two organizations is reported to be mutually supportive and cooperative.

The boys program trains and practices at the Black River practice fields and utilizes one of the park fields for play. The girls program is based at Ralston for practice and games.

Both programs undertake comprehensive organization of all aspects of management including: registration, scheduling, equipment, insurance, coaching, referees and certification of coaching. The boys program is directly linked to West Morris Mendham High School through an advisor to unify training. The boys program represents a larger organization structure and is directed by a board of officers, trustees and committee chairs. The girls program is directed by a president and committee chairs that coordinate registration, referees, field management and scheduling.

STATISTICS

	Boys	Girls
Number Registered	240	140
Number of Teams	13	5

Fields - Boys

Black River Practice
Black River Game

Fields - Girls

Ralston lower
Ralston upper (shared)

The girls program purchases indoor practice time and a Randolph facility to establish training and orient new players prior to opening on the fields in mid-April. They report that the "late" availability of fields restricts the ability to train basic skills and game conduct adequately prior to competing. As the boys are responsible for management of their own practice fields, they occupy them for practice as soon as they are capable to sustain use.

The boys system schedules 2 or 3 practices and one game per week according to level and the girls schedule 2 practices and one game per week.

SYSTEM NEED AND CAPABILITY

The combined lacrosse programs schedule practices and games as follows:

Boys – 15 teams at 3 uses per week and 8 teams at 4 uses per week = total 47 uses per week.

Girls – 2 teams at 2 uses per week and 6 teams at 3 uses per week = total 22 uses per week.

The boys system utilizes two practice fields at Black River and two game fields at Balk River primarily on Sunday and as available on Saturday. Additional practices are accomplished by utilizing available practice field space at Black River.

The girls practice on whole fields (Ralston lower) and practice fields at Ralston and share space with soccer on Ralston upper. Games are played on Ralston Lower.

The practice area at Black River can be set up in a variety of configurations and has large quantities of marginal practicing space, which facilitates the boys practice. As they are obliged to wait for the completion of High School practice, they are typically only able to access the second practice time slot. This is not manageable in early spring due to short day length.

The girls program has access only to lower Ralston for their games and practices and must use marginal spaces to accommodate practices and younger levels of play.

Whole field spaces for games constitute the greatest challenges to both divisions as girls have one field and need to schedule as many as six games there per week. This is balanced by away game scheduling reducing their need to four or by addition games at Upper Ralston when it is not in use by soccer.

The boys program with thirteen teams and only one designated game field has difficulty scheduling their six to ten weekend games and balances away games against available Saturday openings at Black River to play games that cannot be scheduled Sundays (game day).

The boys program reports being generally well satisfied with their circumstances owing to the great flexibility of the practice fields at Black River and a real restroom but would benefit by access to additional game field space. They have developed a sense of home at the Black River site as so much of their volunteer time and money has been dedicated to improving field surfaces there and would commit to more substantial projects (rock removal, clearing of north end, minor grading) if some assurance of control of their site could be established. This ambition is shared

with West Morris Soccer Club and is the only impediment to commitment of greater quantities of physical improvement.

The Mendham/Chester Lacrosse program has cited concern relative to their future facility access. They report anticipating an increase in membership in the boys program to 200 registrants over the next 2-3 years, as children grow through the levels of play and incoming groups increase in size. Their field resources and scheduling capabilities are currently as large as reasonable possible and expansion potentials have not been identified.

Mendham/Chester Lacrosse is planning for future permanence and believes they will be as significant as baseball or soccer in the future. Ambitions discussed with their representatives include several specific features. They are these: regrading field surfaces at Black River and removing rocks to produce more complete fields; increasing parking at Black River to facilitate the quantity of players, coaches and spectators when soccer and lacrosse play and practice at the same time; development of a structure and utility support to provide some shelter, storage and to enable hosting of tournaments and extension of water services to support field maintenance.

The girls program has fewer immediate plans but more immediate need. A single field is not sufficient to carry their program. One additional full field is reported to be necessary to achieve current balance. Other matters reported to be important are availability of field space earlier in the season to avoid the cost of renting indoor space and desire for a small storage shed at lower Ralston.

Like the boys, the girls program anticipates growth as their organization becomes better known and their volunteer base grows but their immediate focus is on high quality training of the game and playing skills and maintaining a rewarding, fun experience for the children.

In order for this program pair to continue to deliver their services it will be necessary to establish one new field for each in the near future. If these organizations continue to increase as intended, improvements at the Black River practice facility or an alternative venue that can sustain large numbers of practicing teams will also be needed. As paired fields are much more useful for coaching both programs and for consolidating referees, availability of complexes rather than single venues will be more efficient solutions to lacrosse futures. Like soccer, lacrosse is willing and increasingly capable of providing significant field and equipment management, larger sites that conserving their efforts will be preferable.

In the long term Mendham/Chester Lacrosse is eager to obtain access to lighted field spaces which will allow the older divisions to function later during the short spring days and to enable evening games where greater parent attendance can be facilitated. Depending on the experience of the new synthetic field at West Morris Mendham High School, a lighted, synthetic system game field may also be a planning target.

TWIN BORO BEARS

The Twin Boro Bears football has been providing recreation football programs for area youth for twenty three years. This program is the continuation of programs previously sponsored and run in the Mendham's by the Pastime Club and in the Chester's by PAA. It has grown significantly in that time registering approximately 340 area youth in its eight divisions. Twin Boro Bears has

two flag programs for the 5-8 year old players and tackle programs for 8-14 year old players. The program is administered by area volunteers and supported by fundraising and support of area service organizations. While the club has grown over the years its fortunes respective of available facilities has not fared similarly. Today the somewhat uncomfortable home of the club is at West Morris Mendham High School. Circumstances of their accommodation there are reported to be difficult and deteriorating. The following situations reported in interviews with Twin Boro Bears illustrate this representation. For example, "Our football program plays on the worst facility in the Morris County League", "Lower level kids prefer to play away because, at least they play on grass", "We are the only program in the Four Towns that doesn't have a facility to call our home."

Observation of the practicing facilities available for their purposes confirms at least part of these assertions. The fields at the High School excepting those areas reserved for field hockey are among the most damaged in the system. Those used for football practicing are particularly damaged exhibiting fragile, bare earth surfaces. The best of fields used here is the varsity practice field, which is available after High School practice has ended. The least good is the small, narrow practice turf located near the Franklin site entrance. This site is most frequently available because no other program wants it.

In the recently completed 2008 season the clubs fortunes took a turn for the worse as construction of the new synthetic field first occupied and consequently damaged the High School football practice field. The bears were then obliged to find another space or use the small auxiliary field for all programming. In response, the team was able to beg an accommodation at the barn a church owned small field in the borough, and the flag program played its games on a ballfield at the rear of the Mendham shopping center. Though the Bears organization strongly supported the recent campaign to build synthetic fields at their High School, hoping to share in their utilization, their prospects were effectively eliminated as the lighting system initially proposed to support this facility was disallowed, leaving the Bears time only after High School use. This field is now so competitively sought for scheduling for all recreation programs after High School programs are concluded, that future opportunities to access the new turf will be few and sporadic. Facing the 2009 season in nine months, the Twin Boro Bears have no prospect of suitable field resources to support their program.

STATISTICS

Number Registered	320
Number of Teams	8

FIELDS

High school football practice
High School auxiliary (Franklin Entrance)
Borough Park football overlay

The Bears two programs have different requirements for practice. The two youngest divisions (flag football) are scheduled for two or three practices and one game per week, while the six older divisions practice four times and play one per week, half of those games being played away. Totally 38 uses slots are need each week to conduct play and training for more than 300 children.

Currently, available local practicing resources include one substandard practice field at the High School and two adopted spaces in the Borough. The best facilities found for home play have been furnished at Black River practice field by arrangement with West Morris Soccer for a share in maintenance cost.

In consideration of the Twin Boro Bears program and conditions of their facilities it is observed that this program is the least well served and supported of all the field sports programs operating in service of Four Town's youth. If the Bears program was once well provided for at the High School, it is not now. The program entire should be extracted from the High School site and relocated. Prospects of improvement of their circumstances at the most overused and impacted complex in the system are deteriorating and will not soon improve.

The circumstances yielding current conditions at the high School have been examined during interviews with the Twin Boro Bears. It is reported that the opportunities needed to support their recreation program here are the least of the Board of Education concerns, in the context of too few overused and damaged fields available to schedule the activities of the High School intramural and interscholastic programs. The High School fields are inconveniently sited, difficult to access, deficient in utility support and beyond the capability of available maintenance resources to renovate and repair. As significantly, the policy conditions imposed the Board render the prospect of satisfactory support for Twin Boro Bears as remote at best. This assertion is based in part upon these citations. The Bears have requested access to use of restrooms at the palatial MHS field house and have been denied, even after proposing to pay for janitorial services. Subsequently, the Bears requested approval to bring a rented portable toilet to the site. This was also denied. The prospect of three hundred children practicing without access to a restroom at the system High School is incomprehensible and demonstrates an attitude, unwarranted by any standard. In consideration of the dismal prospects offered at the High School, in terms of field space and the uniquely uncooperative attitude of the Regional Board, the Twin Bears program should receive all possible assistance in finding a new base for operations.

Football is significantly different from all other conventional forms of recreation play offered to primary school aged participants. It is a contact sport, fundamentally violent, and is culturally celebrated for those virtues by nearly year round media attention. In an attempt to mitigate the potential for injury to participants, equipment of increasing sophistication and cost, in the form of helmets, pads, uniforms and foot wear is required at every level. Similarly rules of conduct and engagement are classified and regulated in practice and competition and each sanctioned event must be closely controlled by referees, umpires, judges and coaches. Risk of injury attendant to the game of football is a universal caveat for all public programs and consistent with those exposures, the venues prepared and programmed for the use of young players should reasonably be uniform, intrinsically hazard free and adaptable to conventions of the game. These conditions are not even approximated in the venues available to the Twin Boro Bears and alternatives will likely remain few.

Football play is typically more damaging to turf surfaces than all other forms of youth play and consequently, other area sports programs are not eager to share their fields with football. Rather than establishing separate durably constructed venues with opportunity in spring for turf repair and regeneration, recreation football has been superimposed over high school football. The result is exactly as may be anticipated.

As the Four Towns consider recreation football in the future of their service area, criteria unlike those applicable to other sports are necessary to establish facility characteristics.

Multipurpose fields are less likely to function well over long time periods for football. Frequent repair and renovation is required annually and is most successful with water for turf establishment available as irrigations system. Electric service extension or lighting systems enable extension of short fall evening practice corridors. Restrooms, potable water supply and on site equipment storage are fundamental to support of players and costly field gear. If replacement venues are proposed for the Bears program, a much more rigorous attention to appropriate design should be considered. The alternative is being experienced by the systems young footballers today.

CHEERLEADING

Cheerleading accompanies The Twin Boro Bears program in support of the teams playing in the several divisions of flag and tackle football. The cheerleaders are represented by eight squads of approximately twenty members each, currently finding space wherever possible within available indoor and outdoor facilities of the system. Though the spatial requirements for cheerleading are less than for conventional sports venues, good quality turf surfaces are certainly needed. Cheerleading occurs at the same time and location as the Bears football games and consequently is as impacted by damaged, muddy field conditions as are the football players themselves. The experience for young cheerleaders attempting to perform their skills on slippery, wet surfaces is likely memorable, but not positively so.

These squads of young athletes deserve recognition of their difficult circumstances as well as appropriate conditions to demonstrate the skills they have trained in as rigorously and competitively as any other of the youth teams. It appears that their opportunities are identical to those of the Bears teams as they are constrained by the same venues. Unlike the football players however, their issues are not as well known or as apparent to the majority of football supporters whose focus rests primarily upon the game.

Resolution of the cheerleader's challenges is coincident with those of the football players. It will remain so until competent youth football fields can be found or until existing fields are renovated.

CHESTER TRACK AND CROSS COUNTRY

This organization offers spring and fall programs for area youth of primary school age. Track is organized within the Lakeland League and conducts home meets on the West Morris Center facility typically and practices at the same location twice per week. The season includes six individual meets and four group meets for qualifying athletes or relay teams. This program has been steadily increasing in registration, reaching 140 boys and girls in the 2008 season.

A variety of deliberating issues confront the track program, which in 2008 severely restricts their ability to train. This resulted from construction related closure of the West Morris Central track eliminating the opportunity to practice or host home meets. No scheduling space was available at West Morris Mendham track and consequently, the entire track training program was conducted on the roadways and parking areas of Bragg Dickerson School.

Track is absolutely dependent on availability of a 400 meter lined running surface and appropriate event venues for shot put and long jump. It involves timed events based on prescribed distances within the confines of regulated lanes and requires carefully prepared and constructed field event venues. Track meets are typically much longer than baseball, football or soccer and require more support (restrooms, team areas, water) than other sports. They require a large quantity of timers, or timing equipment and numerous supporting coaches and assistants to stage subsequent events and record sometimes numerous heats in running events.

None of the conventional facility requirements needed to provides regular practice where available in 2008 but is anticipated to be available again in 2009.

Under the best conditions, recreation level practice must await completion of high school practices or meets frequently resulting in start times after 5:00 p.m. In the early spring, this is not adequate daylight to complete practice.

Spring track is run by volunteers responsible for all aspects of program delivery. Registration, equipment, uniforms, scheduling, trainers, times, judges, record keepers and separate coaches for field and track events are all provided by club members. The logistic demands of assembling all team members, coaches, and gear at West Morris Center or at disparate county communities is a major element of the time requirement obliged of these residents.

Conduct of relay and tournament meets can easily require seven or eight hours from start to finish effectively consuming an entire weekend day for volunteers.

Future operation of the Chester Track program is entirely dependent on continuing access to the West Morris Center facility at least three times per week. This availability will continue to be influenced by timely vacation of the track after high school use and at time when the Long Valley recreation program is not already scheduled there. Otherwise there appears to be few convenient options to assure support of this program.

In discussions of this dilemma with Chester Track, the possibility of alternative accommodations to avoid repetition of the 2008 season was discussed. A potential for creation of backup capability is reported to be a regular, level lane section sufficiently wide (12') and approximately 120 meters long to enable stripping of 3 or 4 lanes for spring training and timed trails. Such a feature could readily be created as part of a larger multipurpose exercise loop as exists at Chubb Park.

The prospect of merging programs with Mendham' Cross Country and Track was also discussed. League rules specifically restrict the joining of towns in a single team but in no sense limit the possibility of simultaneous training of separate teams. If the Chester and Mendham programs could be joined at West Morris Central or West Morris Mendham High Schools both interests could be supported. Unfortunately, the obstacles facing Chester at West Morris Central are identically shared by the Mendham recreation track program. In the long term, the four towns should look to creation of a practice facility that includes running lanes, a shot put venue and long jump runway and pit. This accommodation would eliminate the most difficult weekday practice restrictions and as meets on weekends are much easier to secure, those could continue on area tracks.

Chester Cross Country is offered in the fall under the same organizational structure as spring track. It is wholly volunteer supported and has access to satisfactory training space at Chubb Park. The cross country athletes practice locally twice per week and meet on weekends at Brandage Park in Randolph.

The cross country program is reported to function reasonably well on the open turf spaces and trails associated with Chubb Park.

Chester cross country program registered 45 athletics in 2008. These children complete in four age subdivision at distances increasing with age from 1700 to 4000 meters.

Cross country is relatively free of issues owing to the nature of the sport and can meet its needs within its current conditions for the foreseeable future.

MENDHAM TRACK AND CROSS COUNTRY

The track and cross country program operating in Mendham is fundamentally, a duplicate program as the Chester organization. Mendham Magic as the organization is named is sponsored and supported by member parents for all aspects of training and competition. Current registration includes 250 children from the Mendham's in track and approximately 70 registered in the fall cross country program.

The track program has encountered very significant impediments relative to accessing the WMM track facility where their program has traditionally trained subsequent to the end of High School utilization. The recent construction of the synthetic field surface at the stadium field has resulted in an unprecedented utilization of that field, creating a circumstance that displaces the recreation track athletes. The infield area use is now dedicated to whichever high school sport can extend their spring practicing there, eliminating the space needed to stage and train 250 athletes simultaneously.

This problem is an extreme disability as no alternative facility exists that is convenient and available to the track program. Coaches are exploring opportunities in neighboring communities including rental prospects to respond to the sudden loss of their "home" facility. The specialized nature of track events requires training in lane running, starts from blocks, baton passing, long and high jumping and shot putting all of which are facility dependent and in competition, will be scrupulously regulated according to technique and technical infractions. This yields a circumstance where track athletes will be unreasonably handicapped by failure of opportunity to practice the essential elements of these events.

The cross country program is able to function without elaborate facilities, requiring a reasonably well maintained training course of approximately three miles. This has been found at Brundage Park, which location is utilized as a training facility although it is reported that Randolph will soon modify their traditional relationship to accommodation of adjacent programs that have significantly grown. Competition occurs in regular league events held at Brundage Park in Randolph throughout the season. Utilization of the Brundage facility is seen as a tolerable circumstance despite the regular commute necessary to reach the site, but is apparently continued primarily because no similarly useful venue is available locally. The Four Towns process has the

potential to quickly and easily resolve the cross country training course defect by the identical expedient described for the Chester program in the preceding section.

Response to the spring track issue is far more difficult and potentially, costly. It is reported that Mendham Township is currently planning creation of a track practicing facility at Ralston Fields. If completed, this will rescue a well established recreation program from the very specious planning evolved with respect to the new synthetic field.

In the long term, maintaining the two strong track programs (Chester and Mendham) will certainly be facilitated by access to a track practicing facility. Such a feature can be constructed at reasonable cost if not finished in a synthetic resilient surface. Previously, tracks were constructed of cinder and aggregate materials and if maintenance intensive, these are very good running surfaces. Creation of this type of facility at Chubb, Black River or Ralston will produce a very attractive general purpose recreation feature popular among previously trained track and exercise runners. Its management could be more than capably be performed by the two clubs and the existence of a uniquely programmable local track would enable a variety of activities not now possible. In view of this potential, it is recommended that if Black River practice fields can be secured and planned for redevelopment, that one field space be graded in anticipation of future running track construction and left to the initiative of the two clubs to raise resources for future paving.

CHESTER OUTDOOR BASKETBALL LEAGUE

This uniquely conceived outdoor recreation program was originated by a group of Chester area parents who, following a format adopted in other communities, established a league of resident youth interested in playing basketball in a comparatively unstructured format. The program functions similarly to other sports except that games are conducted without coaches or referees in an organized street ball fashion. The program has been very well received and attended. It now registers approximately 263 participants representing fifth and sixth grade and seventh and eighth grade teams in boys and girls divisions. The program is entirely conducted, organized and supervised (observed by) volunteer parents. Games are played primarily at the two courts located at the Black River Middle School and as necessary at the Grove Street court.

The league has rented portable lighting to enable play beyond dusk but is otherwise unsupported at either site except by available porta-johns. In response to interview questions representatives of the league cited a need for additional courts, seating, drinking fountains and access to the restrooms within the school. They believe that this format offers a rare amateur type of activity relatively free of adult administered rules and forms. Their experience has shown that the players are able to conduct themselves properly and have formed a spirit of friendly, unstressed competition between teams.

This program shows real innovation and an interest in producing recreation and competition for fun primarily in a format that relies on the conduct of the players themselves to regulate their behavior and establish their own dimensions of experience.

This is an activity type that deserves much more focused attention by municipal administrations as it presents an example of how innovative approaches to perceived deficiencies in the typically

available activities offered within the Four Towns can be delivered cheaply and well by resident initiative.

This particular activity may serve as a reasonable stimulus needed to direct attention to the underserved, minimally provisioned inventory of existing service area courts and may suggest as well, additional supporting features that serve to maximize the potential for wholly rewarding experiences for area youth and the parents supporting them.

The persistent and unreasonable policy of closing school restrooms even in circumstances where their extended availability would be easy and sensible is also highlighted by the league experience at the Middle School. Where restrooms exist in the building, only feet distant from the courts, the failure to figure out a way to make them available demonstrates a significant failure of commitment to community support.

EVALUATION OF THE ENTIRE FOUR TOWNS SYSTEM

The Four Towns recreation system considered in terms of its sum of facilities and services is much more competent than it would likely be if viewed as individual municipal components. In fact, shared use of facilities and their programming is so integrated within the historic pairs of Boroughs and Townships, that they could not be conveniently separated for assessment.

Each pair shares identical historic precedents up to the point of their partitioning and subsequent traditions of public recreation service and particularly, facility utilization has changed little until late in the twentieth century. Salient history of Chester and Mendham with respect to origins of their local recreation is that it was at first supported by service organizations (Chester PAA and The Pastime Club) and has been delivered by derivative citizens organizations ever since. This foundation is shared by many other small communities as they evolved in post war years, but unlike larger municipalities or those arisen from areas without viable town centers (Randolph, Washington, and Roxbury) where recreation program support emerged from within diverse neighborhoods or sections of the township and was later merged into municipal recreation departments, primary responsibility for management of local recreation remained the province of its founding organizations in the Four Towns. This tradition is the predominant factor that has shaped the current physical characteristics of developed facilities and that underlie the bulk of system programming in all four municipalities.

Such a model, by its very nature, promotes a biased priority preference for development of increased or improved facilities supporting majority interests, as contrasted to balanced increase in a broad spectrum of possible recreations. As success and competence is demonstrated, organized sports associations grow in popular regard as well as political influence and typically, are rewarded with greater vestments of public support for their initiatives. Such a dynamic sustains itself well and can be a powerful vehicle to assure continuity, as has occurred in the Four Towns.

Today, athletic facilities provided by the Municipalities and managed for sports by citizens associations are the predominate characteristic of the Four Towns' developed recreation sites. Predictably, this circumstance is and will likely remain the primary future focus of local administrations' priority, unless a significant alteration of the traditional paradigm occurs.

The Four Towns administer their respective outdoor recreation programs by delegation of the bulk of operational responsibility to citizens associations. Little direct influence of the manner in which recreation programs function derives from municipal organizational policies or according to plan sequences established by municipal agencies. A preference for accommodation of evolving interests of citizens associations as they grow to represent a politically influential community voice is the accustomed technique motivating creation of new outdoor features. As commitment to increase or improve features is approved, construction of those features follows. The net result of this sequence is today seen as a group of recreation sites developed to satisfy a current demand where most convenient, irrespective of future context. Systematic planning directing where facilities should be located to achieve maximum utility and how facilities should be developed to assure economy of future management and compliance with appropriate standards for safety and access have not been created to precondition these development sequences adequately. Many defects in spatial and marginal characteristics of fields exist throughout the system. Fundamental design choices derived from similar previous facilities, rather than from the most current industry standards have produced significant non-compliant safety and accessibility conditions, which seem to be ignored rather than corrected. Reversal of these circumstances, as well establishment of more competent future development will require an informed relationship to the minimum requirements for facility development and an administrative requirement for technical review of proposals prior to their authorization for construction. A mechanism responsible to regularly assess the condition of existing features with the single purpose of identifying defects is necessary in all public facilities where codified conditions for safety and compliance apply. Failure to correct these exposes the associations and municipalities to liability, regardless of responsibility for the physical condition. This failure of appropriate oversight is a very important deficiency of all four existing management systems.

Available sites and developed features are quite imbalanced within the Four Towns outdoor system excepting Mendham Borough, where a comparative diversity of feature types and reasonable balance of facilities to population exists. Both Townships are now generously provisioned with available, developable recreation lands, adequate to meet all futures, but are deficient in system diversity and in completion of existing mainstream park sites. Chester Borough has one recreation site (Grove Street) approaching a perfect completion but is currently capable of contributing only to baseball with its recreation partners as existing facilities do not include fields adequate in size for football, soccer or other similar sports. (Ultimate disposition of the recently acquired lands from Lucent may improve this capability dramatically.)

Utility support of developed outdoor recreation sites in the Four Towns is an important limitation to current maintenance operations, to energizing lighting systems and accessory equipment and to provision of drinking fountains. Older parks in the two Boroughs are those most well serviced but complete irrigation systems are available only in Borough Park, Black River Fields and Ralston field. This circumstance contributes importantly to difficulty performing turf management tasks satisfactorily and is frequently cited as an impediment to the association efforts to renovate field turf or to perform timely repair of damaged surfaces. The lack of wells, hydro pneumatic distribution systems, electric main supply systems and particularly sanitary waste disposal capabilities at the majority of system sites, presents a significant prerequisite cost factor attendant to future consideration of upgrading facilities by incorporating restrooms, indoor facilities and food service capabilities. This situation presents a continuing challenge to any impetus that may exist for improvement of convenience and management characteristics of recreation sites. It is a significant obstacle and one actually complicated by addition of new unsupported facilities.

Support of youth recreation is an enormously important theme among Four Town's residents generally, as evidenced by numerous indoor and outdoor programs available in all seasons. These customarily operate with minimal influence from the municipalities, relying upon volunteers for most aspects of registration, organization, scheduling transportation and refereeing. The municipal agencies are most closely linked to these activities (outdoor) by the various Public Works Departments whose operations are coordinated with seasonal requirements for mowing primarily and for grooming, repair and general maintenance, though the level of municipal service varies from town to town and is typically supplemented by volunteer work.

Area volunteers interviewed during this study had relatively few complaints directed at the character or quality of support provided by the municipalities. Typically, they reported that their interaction with the municipalities was minimal excepting matters concerning field condition and availability and that their operations were and should remain their province. Frustration with response time to requests for service, and irritation that field access (spring) was unreasonably delegated by the municipalities was expressed.

A sense of resentment, that they were obliged to justify representations of need for additional facilities, was the most emphatically stated response to relationship questions posed in this study.

The sports associations have a very important sense that each has worked long and diligently to create and sustain high quality recreation by dedication of their time, labor and commitment to area youth. In response, their expectation is clearly that requests for support are not frivolous and that their municipal representatives should have a more informed appreciation of their challenges.

Respondents had few very detailed observations relative to matters of technical aspects of system fields. Criticism was typically directed at surficial characteristics of play fields, particularly concerning chronic wetness, slow drainage and management of turf and at the inadequacy of water utility support and equipment storage facilities. Issues related to spatial characteristics, proximity issues and condition of accessory equipment were rare. Where associations are heavily involved in the processes of field management, (soccer, Mendham Baseball and lacrosse) several practical observations relative to the difficulty involved in efforts to restore and renovate turf without adequate irrigation water sources were reported.

The most frequently cited needs relative to all sports included: Equipment containers for storage of sports related gear and maintenance equipment; restroom facilities; additional parking (for weekend and event related occasions; field lighting (for at least one game field); some form of shelter to offer protection from rainy weather and to support events and repair of older or damaged fence system components. Specific needs related to baseball included batting cages and utility support to power pitching machines.

Responses to context questions of existing conditions were few. Other features of recreation sites and the interrelationship of those to any particular sports activity were not significant. Observations relative to the "appearance" or "quality" of system fields were frequently cited as a deficient characteristic. The Twin Boro Bears represented the most negative view of system fields (WMMHS) as the "worst in the league" No respondent cited their facilities as the best in any comparison, although soccer and lacrosse are very well satisfied with the Black River Fields.

Courts (paved) in the system are represented by basketball and tennis alone. These are concentrated within or adjacent to the Boroughs and are well related to other facilities only at Grove St. Park and Borough Park. One set of these is lighted (Borough Park).

Other day use facilities consist of play equipment areas which, like the courts, occur within or adjacent to the Boroughs. In combination, these few facilities are the significant sum of developed features available to residents of the service area for spontaneous use, without an automobile ride. Consequently, excepting those few neighborhoods near enough to walk to neighborhood sites, short visits or the prospect of children independently using public facilities is available to a small percentage of the population.

Generally, the developed recreation sites in the Four Towns are designed as utilitarian spaces, particularly in the Townships. Each Borough includes a "legacy" park (Borough and Memorial) created initially, as the towns evolved but neither, in its current state, includes a memorial, historical references, a garden or other identity feature with sitting areas, landscaped walkways, decorative fences, lighting, gateways or a purposefully created space intended to celebrate cultural continuity, historic remembrance or civic recognition. Gazebo structures in both parks are the token visual reference suggesting that the sites are important community elements.

Minimal elaboration by furnishing, landscaping and decorative features within system recreation areas reflects a tradition of municipal philosophy oriented to the pragmatic utility of public spaces rather than to purposes of their experiential quality. That expectation, if representative of the administrative preference for future development within Four Towns parks and playfields will, simplify planning priorities by eliminating the bulk of the most subjective aspects of development proposals. Distilling facility provision to consideration of the necessary defining characteristics of any particular feature is a direct process, uncomplicated by context. By thorough inventory of existing physical characteristics of any site and similarly thorough evaluation of the appropriate spatial and technical elements of a given facility, future additions to the system can be developed most economically and with the fewest complications relative to ancillary uses or refinement.

Continuation of this practice will however, reinforce a popular perception that organized recreation forms are the administrative "favorites", when in fact, the administrative intent is to provision the needs of any legitimate, popular interest, without directive influence over characteristics other than those essential to that purpose.

Some adaptation of that fundamental relationship will likely be necessary to facilitate creation of facilities desired by minority interests. Unlike conventional team sports, where participants assemble and organize to represent identical needs, those residents who prefer spontaneous individual or social opportunities within attractive public recreation facilities rarely organize to request such accommodation. Similarly, those residents who do not participate in sports will likely not organize to request more convenience or nicer furnishings in sites they never visit. Neither will their inclination to support general recreation improvements be likely.

The Four Towns are so similar in practically all observable physical aspects of the recreation infrastructure existing today, that they may be considered a unity for planning purposes. This uniformity suggests that a systematized approach to resolution of identifiable issues can be reliably applied to Four Towns initiatives without risk of inappropriate application. Similarly, none of the prospective municipal partners has formalized definitive criteria for context,

technical attributes, form, aesthetic or balance for features within the outdoor recreation system. Such a vacuum possibly enables creation of a unified philosophical framework as underpinning for joint planning objectives.

The goal of creating a master vision for the Four Towns as well as practical proposals for shared enterprise to achieve those ambitions appears to be a reasonable potential. A model describing opportunities for accommodation, engagement of the senses, refreshment, cultural pursuits, social interaction, family activities and individual preferences in specific terms and contexts, is an unexplored concept in current Four Towns planning. It may be one that inspires the interest of those selected as community representatives, to examine opportunities not yet exploited.

Chester Borough, Chester Township, Mendham Borough and Mendham Township acting as single entities will be confronted by identical influences as they administratively approach the future of recreation in their communities. Factors that have shaped recent improvements in those towns will continue in force, as a matter of expedient political reaction to organized sports demands. As constraints on existing space now require expansion into newly acquired sites, cost for creation of infrastructure improvements appropriate to support new facilities will further impact development initiatives.

Both Boroughs will have difficulty finding adequate space to create new facilities and will have even greater difficulty marshalling adequate popular support for new projects in the context of growing necessity for renovation and repair of ageing infrastructure in the existing system. The prospect of meeting needs by sharing the use of existing facilities and avoiding duplication of efforts to satisfy identical local demands by transferring programming to available space in neighboring towns, can materially improve each towns response options.

Both Townships face significant challenges posed by limited diversity of activity types, minimal utility support of existing sites, and additional burdens presented by recent large acquisitions of recreation lands which require management and maintenance whether or not they are developed to meet new facility goals. Any new improvement will require additional manpower and material budget support, in addition to initial capital cost for development. If these costs must be provided locally, political support for any new proposal will be more difficult and much slower to achieve. If initial cost and management expense can be shared over the Four Towns in exchange for access and programming, the impact to any single community can be buffered.

All of the Four Towns will be confronted with periodic renovation projects that require closure of their recreation sites during the process of construction. The prospect of being able to transfer service load to other system facilities will enable programming to continue and will reduce time pressure to complete projects, reducing cost.

The most significant prospect enabled by a combined approach to recreation in the Four Towns is capability to reasonably undertake projects of larger scale than could be sustained by local effort. Chester Township is the most populous of the Four Towns, but with a population of 7,000 is still a small town. If joined, the Four Towns represent 20,000 residents constituting a planning basis where consideration of more costly indoor facilities and development of regional recreation complexes are a realistic prospect. So aligned, potentials for funding support from exterior agencies is significantly increased as is the capability to influence County agencies to undertake development projects supportive of local recreation in the several land tracts occurring within the Four Towns.

A variety of subjects were discussed during the process of interviewing in preparation for this report. Among those, characterization of the subject group's sense of relationship to the municipal administration was uniformly posed as a topic. Very few substantive responses, positive or negative, were offered. Generally, the linkage between the citizen volunteers and the municipalities was of little consequence as an enabling resource with respect to the sports association's objectives. No respondent discussed or described a well developed routine correspondence with the recreation committees or commissions and few were aware of the existence of the initiation of a Four Towns process prior to being contacted. Though never directly stated as a complaint, many respondents shared the sentiment that their efforts were too little appreciated and too seldom recognized by municipal representatives. Each asserted a primary purpose; to prepare the best possible experience for area youth and each was justifiably proud of past accomplishments and intent on future improvements. Each was aware of limitations within the system and concerned with contingency planning in anticipation of unpredictable challenges to normal operations. Each was appreciative of support that had been given by the municipalities. None reflected on the sense of gratitude experienced as their efforts were applauded by the Towns they represent. It appears that where "attaboys" are the single best recognition that the body politic can bestow, too few have been bestowed.

Communication between the municipal recreation agencies, public works departments and resident organizations is discontinuous at best. The purposes, plans and capabilities of any group respective of the others are little known or influential in current decision making. This circumstance is undoubtedly the greatest impediment to advancing any interest's agenda. Establishing, much more reliable mechanisms of information sharing will be required before any joining of purposes proceeds very far. The Four Towns face a variety of decisions relative to their separate and potentially, merged interests. None will be well made without much more informed, mutual understanding of municipal potential and popular purpose. Success at this process is contingent upon engagement of support of the numerous volunteer enterprises that for all practical purposes are the recreation system.

ELEMENTS OF A FOUR TOWNS PROCESS

Presuming that agreement to enable a Four Towns planning process to proceed can be reached by approval of the four separate municipalities, a variety of tasks must first be completed before substantive proposals can be placed before the several councils for consideration.

These are characterized as tasks of prioritization and are necessary to identify those actions that will be responsive to the most uniformly influential needs of the communities considered together.

First among these elements, is identifying in specific terms, which characteristics of future recreation satisfy the purposes of the current administrations. Generalities, as expressed in current master planning documents, speak to intention but offer little directive guidance in terms of: specific problems that require remedy; specific facility goals to be achieved; and specific plans to serve as patterns for partitioning future improvements into achievable sequences culminating in completion of previously defined functional features. As the Four Towns concept is based on combining disparate resource capabilities of four communities to achieve common purposes, it is first necessary to understand what ambitions, if any, are endorsed by each partner to establish where cooperation is likely to be supported. Each partner must first assert that issues

of some particular character exist in the opinion of elected representatives. These must then be defined according the essential nature of each and agreement confirmed that if a response by joint enterprise can be identified, that each is prepared to support a shared initiative to resolve that issue. Agreement to enable a Four Towns alternative solution to system deficiencies stands as the essential prerequisite to enable this process to advance.

The second element is organizing specific objectives into priorities for resolution based on the probability of completing them sequentially. Demonstration of the Four Towns process as a viable alternative to traditional planning methods is essential to further acceptance of its application by the residents and administrative bodies. This portends that initial proposals will address matters of delivery of organized sports interests, as these are reliably supported by sufficient popular involvement that bolsters political confidence sufficiently to safely warrant endorsement.

If mainstream interests can be satisfied by a Four Towns process, the likelihood of subsequent success, in response to issues of balance and diversity may increase as well. Organization of priorities is similarly important to overall comprehension of system detail, as the process will require comparison of a variety of contextual topics and necessitate discussion of the systemic objectives influencing ordering of them. This process will begin to inform elected representatives of challenges and potentials, as well as beginning to stimulate public awareness of an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, by representing their preferences or contentions.

The third element is assembling citizen support for priority proposals. Four Towns residents are the significant beneficiary of the recreation system and have not been enabled to represent their interests except within the context of joining together to move various special interest agendas. Unlike individual municipal government structures, a Four Towns process has the potential to endorse particular actions, irrespective of personal or political motives, based upon a balanced overview of the entire system. It also has the capability to assemble the thousands of residents involved directly or indirectly in the support of various sports and to exhort support for a particular agenda by demonstrating a plan and sequence under which some character of each separate special interest can be met. Circumstances of utility support, surface conditions, overuse and management are concerns of each of these groups. Bargaining that support for each other has tangible benefits for all, is objectively understood and speaks to issue areas that are historical concerns of every group. This task is the keystone to enabling a Four Towns process to work. Marshalling public support and active engagement to achieve a purpose will require planning, meeting, and discussion and will build only as fast as thorough, credible representation of underlying need, technical requirements and cost parameters of a given project are broadly accepted. This demands an opportunity to present proposals in a contextual manner directed at support building, as well as providing an absolute test of viability prior to submission of a proposal for municipal approval, based on successfully gaining broad, popular agreement. If it is possible to achieve active outreach, endorsement and cooperation between the several large associations as a prerequisite for forwarding a proposal as a product of Four Towns planning, the most difficult tests of viability will have been passed prior to request for approval.

Public empowerment and building an informed sense of connectedness are vital elements necessary to motivate proactive support for services that are discretionary among the fiscal realities of municipal representatives. These elements can be reinforced and coalesced by careful planning and by detailed exploration of proposals with the vested interests. The novelty

of inclusion within such collaboration may succeed beyond expectation as it has not been requested in conventional planning strategies, despite the historic reality that sports associations actually are the system.

The first element, identifying common purposes of the four standing administrative bodies, is likely the most challenging of the three elements. It requires a considered response by four elected agencies, which response may be seen as a form of commitment to subsequent actions or an intention to advance recreation initiatives more beneficial or impactful to one community than another. As the Four Towns plan is presented it must be made clear that authorization to proceed is given without obligation to ultimately support any particular proposal and without limitation to review, revise or condition proposals as seen necessary to protect local options. Proposals must be tailored to cleanly partition shared objectives from local prerogatives and to be specific in terms of purpose, strategy and indirect impacts anticipated to result coincident with primary purposes.

Composition of a commonly supported philosophical reference defining the relationship of local administrative policy to regional recreation system development is a founding basis necessary to selection of appropriate joint planning tasks. It is a characteristic new to the planning policies of all Four Towns and may present concerns relative to the proprietary inclinations of the several administrations. Seeking a general accord among the four administrations to evaluate recommendations for shared support as introduced by the Four Towns Steering Committee may present an acceptable initiation of this novel process.

The Four Towns Committee will be obliged to identify proposals that may be advanced along separate, parallel courses to a status where they are fully formed and may be considered as an adoptable entity. Where these proposals are intended to influence local administrative policy, conventional municipal review sequences must follow in their normal course, prerequisite to adoption.

The second element, prioritizing specific objectives, is comparatively much more straightforward initially, than any other preparatory task. Selection, guided by evaluation of current system circumstances as identified in this report must prioritize activities that are: important in current time; can be accomplished with reasonable assurance; are not contingent upon substantial design sequences; can occur without additional funding support; and that demonstrate the potential for shared commitment. Generally, these are: planning and data assembly tasks; coordinating meetings between the four recreation agencies and public works departments; and preparation of descriptions of future proposals, based on those meetings.

Subsequent Four Towns proposals will likely be predicated on demonstration that the process is viable and that genuinely practical methods for sharing responsibility to mutual benefit can be created. Success in subsequent proposals will be more demanding as those will ultimately represent activities including physical construction, whether in the form of renovation, repair or new development. Generation of capital resources to enable Four Towns projects will likely be difficult to accomplish in stressed economic conditions, which appear to be emerging. Consequently, a funding element accompanying each proposal, carefully balanced between projected cost factors for initial construction as well as subsequent management, will be an absolute requirement to secure approval. This will almost certainly require direct support of the subject beneficiaries of each proposal and may be contingent upon securing specific

commitments of support to accelerate a particular initiative more quickly than municipal funding capabilities may enable.

An operative presumption of this process is that citizens of the Four Towns will be asked to actively participate in generation of new initiatives, both as associations and individually. The measure of that cooperation, in all aspects of planning and fundraising is the most reliable indicator of the probability of endorsement by the four governing bodies. Where an initiative arises as a consequence of public purpose and is carefully fashioned to be responsive to the broader objectives of regional planning and is represented by active involvement, the probability of a supportive reception by representative bodies increases dramatically.

The third element is the process of assembling popular support. The majority of constructed features and programs available to residents of the Four Towns today are the direct consequence of the capability and willingness of citizens to organize into politically influential associations to promote their interests. This sequence has been a traditional necessity, prerequisite to securing municipal commitment of resources and, is a system well understood by representatives of the sports associations, as they regularly leverage their influence to accomplish new objectives.

The best prospect for Four Towns process to advance will be based upon broad popular support. Combining capabilities of the numerous recreation associations into a unified "Organization" dedicated to service of recreation generally, is the objective of this concept and actively supporting each other in exchange for like promotion of their particular interests is the motive. Agreement to mutual endorsement offers a promise of influence many times greater than can be mobilized by any single interest. Each of these groups has demonstrated capable management of large programs as well as creative adaptation to challenging facility conditions. Their leadership appears to be well organized and structured by delegation of tasks within their organizations. All have conducted fund raising campaigns and are aware of their capabilities to network successfully within the social context of their constituent communities. Interestingly, they have not joined their purposes, even when complimentary, to present a larger united front.

The Four Towns concept is, by its nature, inclusive of the purposes of the thousands of adult residents already directly or indirectly sustaining recreation programming throughout the Four Towns. Creation of an Organization that enables representation of each groups separate objectives in a forum that promotes in depth appreciation of common goals and actively solicits sharing of experiences, issues and opportunities, is indispensable to creation of proposals that; based on accurate assessment of specific characteristics of demand, enable tailoring of specifically responsive actions.

If building a powerful support base is seen as the motive for creation of such an Organization, education may be seen as an essential coincident benefit of its purpose. Many of the facilities created in the Four Towns are the product of a tradition of home-made enterprise. If this satisfies the preference for the most economical development possible, it has failed to recognize and incorporate many of the technical characteristics that enable safe, durable, low maintenance facilities. A mechanism to evaluate existing constructed features with the purpose of inventorying chronic deficiencies, hazardous elements and non compliant conditions does not currently exist in the Four Towns. As the sports associations are the defacto agent responsible for these facilities, it behooves each to have an informed appreciation of the real and legal liabilities of pursuing their accustomed activities, regardless of circumstances, which may impact

them disagreeably. This may be achieved by purposeful, relevant education in a few aspects of physical design.

An opportunity to employ the forum, created by an Organization of the many resident sports associations, as a vehicle for educating members in the significant aspects of facility design and management can: improve the substance and technique of future facility requests; facilitate critical evaluation of existing facilities to guide correction of those with defects; and generally can improve understanding of the fundamentals of field stewardship. As these associations continue dedicating their labor and revenue to improvement of their facilities, maximizing the effect of that work will benefit their purposes directly and the municipalities infrastructure simultaneously.

Direct contribution to planning and design input in the initial sequences of preparation for new development, as a coordinated effort of all member groups of the sports Organization is the best means to inform understanding of interrelatedness of association objectives. This type of collaboration enables an opportunity to consider initiatives jointly and to elaborate basic proposal elements with complimentary elements more supportive of varying needs. It also informs the membership base of upcoming proposals, allowing timely organization of support.

The Four Towns planning process may be capable of establishing much more effective partnerships for sharing resources, initiative and manpower but even that accomplishment will not of itself generate sufficient capital to enable large new projects to proceed independently of municipal revenue sources. Two potentials reside within the capability of an Organization of sports associations that may be managed to influence municipal representatives to more readily support both individual site improvements and line item budget increases for ongoing renovation and maintenance requirements.

The first of these is broad experience in fundraising. Each association represents a network of businessmen and businesswomen skilled in management and comfortable with the logistics of organized campaigning to generate revenue. Moreover, the Mendham's and Chester's both have resident service clubs with perennial missions in support of local recreation. The Pastime Club and Chester PAA are notable representatives of this purpose and if integrated as planning partners in The Organization can provide proven networking techniques as well as specific guidance in local potentials.

The second and most important potential is the intrinsic influence represented by large, closely aligned organizations of citizens. Numerical significance alone is sufficient to attract political attention and if common cause can be developed by inclusion of diverse interests in initiatives for municipal consideration, the prospect of meaningful change will be magnified. Frequently, elected representatives succeed to office on the strength of unified purpose and broad support. Priorities for public services evolve similarly. Successful integration of Four Towns planning will rely absolutely on building common cause. If recreation issues may be commonly regarded as accessible to change by directed influence, that cause will persist.

CONSTITUTION AND PROCESS OF A FOUR TOWNS PLAN

In concept a Four Towns Plan is visualized as one, which shares strengths to respond to weaknesses. In this application those strengths or weakness are those that can be identified in the provision of recreation services.

Each of the four subject towns is an independent political entity with responsibilities to its constituents as determined by its elected officials. Each of the subject towns shares a tradition of cooperation with its neighbors for provision of recreation services and each has empowered citizens associations to organize and manage a variety of forms of activity. Those associations have expanded in participation and extend their influence by inclusion of participants across municipal boundaries. These programs have evolved generally in accord with forms and preferences identified by the citizens associations and are directed by volunteers from their membership. Traditionally, the municipal governments have created or provided space and maintenance services in approximate balance with the needs of resident associations according to their perception of need and coincident with opportunity to prudently commit municipal resources.

This technique has been variably useful because the sports associations extend their influence across municipal boundaries and as they have increased in size, the capability and willingness of adjacent municipalities to supplement facilities has not been uniformly or equitably met. The Chester's and Mendham's have been frequently paired in program delivery but the Four Towns have been joined only by the WMSC program with respect to facility provision. Future system expansion will occur more efficiently and with more political support in the Townships than in the Boroughs as both boroughs are near build out conditions and thus, likely to produce little additional service demand from population increase. The constraints upon elected borough officials to reasonably promote support of recreation initiatives in adjacent municipalities, except under the most novel conditions, will certainly limit flexibility.

An incrementally increasing reliance upon playfields occurring in the Townships has accustomed popular expectation to a sense that future improvements will advance similarly. This is neither fair nor sustainable and will present ever more formidable barriers to individual municipal ambitions where shared programming occurs. By contrast, the sports associations are simply motivated by their special interests, regardless of political realities and have been uniquely successful in advancing those. Their capability is based on well developed linkage to the general public and a hard earned recognition that they can get things done. Capability to direct influence across municipal boundaries is a singular franchise of the associations, one not readily available to municipal Committees or Commissions.

The four towns' administrations are confronted with a variety of recreation issues that will evolve to demand attention in addition to the current retinue of management tasks that require full commitment of available resources. Where administrative options are so constrained by fundamental impediments of available space, discretionary budget and reactive planning, the prospect of advancing new initiatives without broad popular support and without increased options will surely protract time frames to achieve meaningful results. A joint enterprise of the Four Towns, dedicated to the limited purposes of improving recreation services, will direct a potential to access a broader scope of options as well as empowering an enormous talent resource represented by area residents.

Given consent to undertake development of complete, justified and balanced proposals responsive to shared priorities, a Four Towns planning group must create initiatives integrated

with the commitment of broad popular support and ones diversified to satisfy system needs for more inclusive facilities. Precaution by prior recognition that proposals so created will be obliged to satisfy evaluation by four separate municipal reviews will require: organization of adequate citizen support to propel initiatives politically; demonstrable service equity across four communities; acceptable, rational methods for funding and assurance of popular commitment to shared responsibility for management. Creation of proposals that are not sufficiently comprehensive to warrant approval across four separate municipal reviews, will likely result in failure of such initiatives. This likelihood will be evident in advance of decision to forward proposals, as each of the Four Towns partners will have been aware of irresolvable issues in their respective community and presumably, these obstacles will have been eliminated by alternative strategy. Assuring that this sequence is successful will depend primarily on generating unified support of sports associations regardless of separate agendas and commitment of these groups to sponsor advocacy for each other, in turn.

A Four Towns Process committed to advocacy for service improvement can unite and engage the large citizens association's influence far better than municipal governments are willing or able to. It is proposed to create a Four Towns Planning Partnership as the mechanism to undertake the Four Towns planning tasks. This partnership is envisioned as a group of citizens representing the municipalities, athletic and service associations and the general public, working independently of political influence, to identify and evaluate recreation system issues and to prepare proposals for submission to the four municipal administrations for approval and enabling. This Partnership will be a volunteer body, without statutory authority, organized and dedicated to advocacy for improvement of the recreation system by consolidation of human resources and creation of practical proposals for achievement of mutual recreation ambitions. The Partnership will be responsible to prepare its unique philosophy relative to Four Towns system planning objectives focusing on service issues and facility characteristics independent of local municipal initiatives and without infringing purposes of local recreation agencies.

Primary objectives of this Partnership will include: identification of system issues; preparation of practical responses to those issues; consolidating community support for those responses; presenting complete proposals to local administrations for authorization to proceed with the proposal or adoption of the proposal.

Constitution of the Four Towns Planning Partnership will be a task requiring deliberate and critical evaluation of citizens selected for initial membership. Each candidate will be responsible to inform themselves with a large body of knowledge relative to the context of public recreation in the Four Towns including administrative policies, programming characteristics, organizational structure, management and maintenance of facility infrastructure and philosophical relationship of government to its constituents. Each member will need a working knowledge of system issues and deficiencies as they relate to existing programs and each must be capable of prioritizing need irrespective of special interest influence. Each will be obliged to evaluate specific needs of existing programs in the context of whole system capability and to identify coincident potentials of proposed new features to contribute to satisfying unmet system objectives. Each will be specifically obliged to cooperate in informing their community's needs and possible contributions to planning without representing political purposes. Each must be capable of clearly communicating initiatives to their home town interests in a manner that persuades cooperation rather than priority. Each must be committed to a shared vision for the Four Towns and must be determined to advocacy for holistic solutions without parochial bias. Each must be willing and able to recruit volunteer support and to solicit contribution of time and work from