

**A MASTER PLAN REPORT  
FOR  
HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP'S  
OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM**

February 5, 2004

**PREPARED BY:**

**KINSEY ASSOCIATES  
PARK AND RECREATION CONSULTANTS  
HASTINGS COMMONS, BUILDING 2A  
486 SCHOOLEY'S MTN. ROAD, SUITE 207  
HACKETTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY 07840-4000**

**(908) 850-6488  
FAX NUMBER (908) 850-6379  
C-873**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | <u>Page Number</u> |
|---|--------------------|
| PREFACE   | 1                  |
| INTRODUCTION  | 2                  |
| GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES                                  | 5                  |
| BUILD OUT CONDITIONS  | 7                  |
| COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS  | 8                  |
| RESOURCE CLASSIFICATION   | 9                  |
| SITE EVALUATIONS  | 15                 |
| MAJOR OPEN SPACE TRACTS   | 23                 |
| DEVELOPED PARK PARCELS  | 27                 |
| TOWNSHIP SCHOOL SITES   | 34                 |
| OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES                                     | 39                 |
| OTHER SIGNIFICANT RECREATION RESOURCES – PUBLIC                 | 43                 |
| NEEDS ASSESSMENT  | 45                 |
| STATISTICAL SPATIAL NEEDS                                       | 47                 |
| EVALUATION OF SYSTEM BY PROGRAM AND FACILITY                    | 48                 |
| A. BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL  | 48                 |
| B. SOCCER   | 50                 |
| C. LACROSSE   | 51                 |
| D. FIELD HOCKEY   | 51                 |
| E. FOOTBALL   | 51                 |
| F. CHEERLEADING   | 52                 |
| G. COURT SPORTS   | 52                 |
| H. OTHER MAINSTREAM RECREATIONS:<br>ROLLER SKATING AND BOARDING | 54                 |
| I. BICYCLING  | 54                 |
| J. PLAYGROUNDS  | 55                 |
| K. ICE SKATING  | 56                 |
| L. CULTURAL FACILITIES  | 56                 |
| M. EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES  | 57                 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (CON'T)

|   | <u>Page Number</u> |
|---|--------------------|
| N. LANDSCAPING, ENTRIES, AMENITIES, GARDENS<br>(AESTHETIC CONDITIONS) | 57                 |
| O. RESTROOMS  | 59                 |
| P. WALKING, HIKING SYSTEMS  | 59                 |
| RECOMMENDED ACTIONS   | 60                 |
| SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS  | 60                 |
| A. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS   | 60                 |
| B. OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS  | 63                 |
| C. PLANNING TASKS   | 69                 |
| D. SYSTEM COMPLIANCE AND FACILITY<br>RENOVATION PROJECTS              | 70                 |
| E. CAPITAL PROJECTS   | 72                 |
| NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATIONS   | 75                 |
| A. BIKEWAY  | 75                 |
| B. RESTROOM CONSTRUCTION  | 75                 |
| C. LABBE PARK/TWIN BROOK EXTENSION                                    | 75                 |
| D. DEPALMA FARM   | 76                 |
| E. BAYONET FARM   | 76                 |
| LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS   | 77                 |
| A. POCKET PARKS   | 77                 |
| B. INDOOR RECREATION CENTER PLANNING                                  | 77                 |
| C. CAPITAL PROJECTS   | 78                 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  | 80                 |

## **PREFACE**

The following recreation plan has been prepared to assist a systematic approach to planning for future improvement and management of recreation sites and facilities within Holmdel Township.

It is based in general upon inventory, observation and assessment of existing sites, constructed features and program delivery systems operating today within the Township as derived from field observations and as reported in a series of interviews with Township citizens and employees.

Objectively, this plan seeks to identify a sequence of practical responses to physical conditions, organizational characteristics, or service deficiencies that exist now or will likely emerge.

This plan represents in part an intention by the Township to adapt, as practically possible, to the current status of Holmdel's recreation infrastructure and delivery systems and to begin to implement a philosophical and statutory framework capable of anticipation of and planned responses to recreation system challenges and opportunities.

A variety of opportunities and several substantial issues will confront the Township, as actions are considered for priority. The Township presents excellent resources and an unusually large array of options for modification of its recreation system. Presuming that a reasonable balance between cost, opportunity and motivation exist, enabling planning and capitalization of future recreation objectives, the Township will be able to achieve conventional goals reasonably.

Traditional and accustomed formats for site utilization and operational circumstances may require deliberate and substantial reorganization to better direct Holmdel's future.

To this end it will be incumbent upon the administration to define from among many possibilities the philosophical model and commitment that shall be directed toward the provision of these services. Recreation is and will remain a uniquely subjective and discretionary option of municipal leaders. No legal mandate exists, defining or enforcing the supply of recreation systems. Scope and character of these are possible based chiefly on the will of administrative agencies according to their personal appreciation of their constituents' needs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Holmdel Township is called home by approximately 17,000 residents sharing 17.9 square miles of variously rolling lands and broad flat expanses at the juncture of New Jersey's Piedmont plateau and Coastal plain.

Holmdel's historic farmland character began to change radically in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century as the completion of the Garden State Parkway created a massive artery direct to the New York metropolitan core and exploded in the 1970's as Bell Laboratories led an increasing procession of high profile business into the region.

Holmdel's population has doubled since 1980 and, though decreasing in pace, is anticipated to reach 21,400 residents by 2020 (Monmouth County Planning Board Projection).

The influence of this dramatic increase has been felt across all sectors of Township life but particularly in the municipal obligation to deliver even more schools, roads, utilities and public service infrastructure.

Predictably and as is uniformly the case in towns with such rapid expansion, local recreation development initiatives lagged well behind the increase of population.

Holmdel's traditional recreation system was organized around existing athletic fields constructed in conjunction with the needs of community schools. These venues sustained the vast bulk of active use programming and were expanded and diversified to the maximum carrying capability of these sites.

As the Township began to grow in population it changed in character and in the preferences and disposition of new residents toward the type, scope and delivery of major sports programs (baseball, football and soccer).

Recreation organized to supply services, facilities, administration and maintenance consistent with the expectations of exurbanites is different from the Township's historic model in three essential characteristics. First and most important is service itself. Recreation facilities and programs are identified as factors that represent the quality of a community and are, like utilities, viewed by some as an entitlement of residency. The second, is variety of services equivalent to previous experience from diverse other municipalities. The third is quality and context. Compared to older, more urbanized communities where recreation has grown and diversified in the past, the experience of adapted makeshift multi-use facilities as occur in Holmdel may be seen as unsatisfactory compared to forms and formats familiar in other communities.

In great measure, the very cumbersome task of wholly shifting the administrative experience and model of enabling recreation has confounded its delivery in recent years.

A reflexive philosophy is possible in a community of 10,000 like-minded citizens when a new ballfield is needed. As communities grow and diversify in experience and preference for a host of "new" activities, a planning mechanism that anticipates expansion and determines a strategy for response options should be in place. Holmdel's current administration is fashioning that capability today, as it has not recently been in place.

In physical open space and opportunities within available land dedicated to recreation, Holmdel is well provisioned. Monmouth County owns several huge land tracts dedicated to recreation at Holmdel and Thompson Parks. Watershed associations, land conservancies, local landowners, and others have collaborated with Township, County, and State agencies to secure yet other land tracts as open space. The Township been developing in recent years numerous recreational fields on a very large tract (Cross Farm). The Township also has several smaller municipal parks with varying types and amounts of recreational fields and related amenities.

However, the bulk of facilities capable of supporting programmed functions occur on three school sites and two park sites (Cross Farm and Phillips Park) within the Township.

Programmed use of these sites has increased dramatically, driven by the ambitions of well organized, determined groups of baseball and soccer enthusiasts. Today, available developed space is saturated with programs and is beginning to degrade under the combination of too much use and too little maintenance.

Expansion of other forms of local recreation to meet passive, outdoor, educational, cultural, social and spontaneous use needs has not grown or been diversified in measure equivalent to the doubling of the resident population.

As the Township has demonstrated its purpose to respond to recreation's future by important acquisitions of the Cross Farm, Chase Tract and Harding Tract, subsequent actions logically include creating access to these sites at least to increase passive opportunities. The stage is set for such additions but is immediately complicated by acute need for active facilities supporting the High School, Middle School and recreation association programming.

In recognition of the fact that the Township administration must proportion funds, employees, and equipment for recreation relative to all other Township needs and that significant work remains simply to remediate important system deficiencies, this report proposes an overall approach prioritized in the following order:

First, balance administrative, operational and particularly maintenance system capabilities to protect, stabilize and maintain existing sports venues.

Second, repair and renovate existing primary venues to enhance and preserve their utility. (This includes temporary closure as an expedient precursor to renovation.)

Thirdly, advance development of new facilities in balance with whole system demand, in-place maintenance capability and with priority for multiple use features.

Finally, plan for sequential addition of new projects and site component systems emphasizing creation of play grounds, restrooms, trails, sitting areas, passive use and cultural features to restore equity for residents other than those demanding sports fields.

Excepting the High School/Middle School site where there are acute spatial deficiencies, the Township does not "need" additional space or land to provide current and future needs of developed recreation. Acquisition of Cross Farm and the pending acquisition of F&F Nurseries with potential for partial recreation uses has technically balanced that deficit. It must however

consider and redefine goals for the aesthetic character, quality and priority of a greater variety of facility types among all other municipal responsibilities.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

The following goals and objectives are intended to guide current planning and future management of recreation lands and facilities in Holmdel Township, and act as a point of reference for subsequent actions. The goals below are proposed as a skeleton to be fleshed out by local decisions:

1. Maintain existing facilities to protect against deterioration caused by current over utilization, by enhancing existing maintenance systems, personnel and organization.
2. Provide a variety of recreation facilities that meet diverse needs of the Township's existing and future residents, by introducing a balanced assessment and definition of Township priorities.
3. Enhance recreation facilities to improve service capabilities in the neighborhoods in which they are located.
4. Provide for adequate access, circulation, and compliance features so that the safety aspect for both residents and recreational participants is considered.
5. Complete the full range of improvements at the High School/Middle School site and restore its potential as the centerpiece of school / park sites.
6. Provide for multi-use facilities wherever possible.
7. Coordinate the most efficient use and scheduling of facilities between the Board of Education and Recreation Department with expanded emphasis on effective communication and joint planning particularly in the funding and sharing of a much more capable maintenance system.
8. Improve coordinated recreation efforts with those of Monmouth County to the extent that local objectives can be facilitated to the mutual benefit of both parties.
9. Persistently retrofit existing recreation sites with restrooms, barrier free access improvements, passive and social use features, landscape plantings, and site furnishings according to the purposes of dramatically improving the aesthetic character and creature comfort of all.

Each of the several goals and objectives described above are contingent upon a prior specific plan which is: based upon a current deficiency; has been thoroughly evaluated; proposed for specific action in combination with other specific impacts (following maintenance and operation) and described according to priority relative to whole system needs. This requires that a comprehensive planning background relative to the entire recreation system be in place to enable successful new initiatives.

Conventionally this background is furnished by the recreation department as an element of its current facilities master plan.

In Holmdel, no such plan exists as the recreation department is inadequately organized and directed to have produced such a plan.

Holmdel's first challenge to achieving a practical, adaptable mechanism for guiding recreation system growth is to create a recreation department capable of organizing a diverse agenda of service issues and physical opportunities into a practical plan.

No such plan exists today, as that very fundamental planning capability is not represented in the current Recreation Department.

This essential pre-requisite must be satisfied first to enable a systematic priority of future actions based on balanced proposals.

## **BUILD OUT CONDITIONS**

Holmdel has recently commissioned a build-out study to project the Township's capability to grow and the probable extent of that growth.

This study identifies a total population of 19,608 maximum residents in the Township according to current land use characteristics by the time all available space remaining is occupied. This figure is significantly lower than the County projection (21,420) anticipated by 2020.

In practical terms, this document predicts that Holmdel will increase to its capacity, by addition of approximately the same number of residents as have moved to the Township over the past four years.

Clearly the rate of growth will slow dramatically in the next decade. If the Township continues to advance its recreation facility and program capability at moderate rates, current short falls can be balanced within the next decade, as well as the bulk of future need.

The impact of increased population, even to the small (12%) statistical increase projected, will be most felt at the High School/Satz School site where use is saturated and incapable of expansion.

Build out figures imply that additional students will require additional classrooms, common spaces and parking, each of which will act to reduce available site space.

A critical issue will become worse here unless immediate action is taken to increase site space at the High School/Satz site.

Otherwise, the build out projection suggests that recreation facility demands will slow quite soon from raw population increase, thereafter remaining subject to local demand for diversity and new program development.

## COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Planning for possible futures within the recreation system is contingent in part upon anticipation of growth of the entire population within the service area (Township). Demographic projections are a traditional but crude evaluation tool as system service requirements are far more contingent upon program quality than gross population.

Holmdel illustrates this rather well as it has disproportionately large registrations in soccer and baseball and very large football participation comparative to whole population, deriving directly from the skill and determination of private citizens organized, according to their own agenda, to deliver these services. Comparatively, trail systems within the Township domain are few and short, though almost all residents are able to walk.

Initiative drives system character, not raw numbers.

The following demographic is excerpted from the County cross acceptance projections which usefully describes the approximate Township population to 2020.

### 1998 Cross Acceptance Projections

| Population Estimate 1997 | Population Projection 2005 | Population Projection 2020 | Average Annual Change 1997-2005 | Average Annual Change 2005-2020 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 14,737                   | 18,668                     | 21,420                     | 491.42                          | 183.45                          |

Current population is approximately 17,300 interpolated from County demographic reporting for the year 2000.

As can be seen, Holmdel is expected to increase by 25% in total population over the coming 17 years.

These statistics suggest that approximately 1200 more youth (5 year – 20 years) will live in Holmdel in 2020 than today. Approximately 1/3 of these will be involved in team sports, which equates to 27 more teams per season forming across the system in that time.

As team sports represent the typical critical demand factor in community recreation planning, this crude determinant suggest only that more fields than now exist and/or better maintenance and utilization of existing fields will be needed.

## **RESOURCE CLASSIFICATION**

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 Holmdel's current inventory sites.

### **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 Holmdel's public recreation system, elements of mini park character occur in association with existing play areas at Indian Hill School and Village 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.

Three neighborhood parks occur within the Holmdel study area. These are Alloco Park, Labbe Park and Phillips Park.

As residential districts of the Township evolve, particularly as large subdivisions are proposed, neighborhood park type opportunities should be explored and exploited as an element of development or minimally as space reservation for that future neighborhood.

Minimum conditions for such prospects should be based on natural character and aesthetic and on fundamental utility for development. However healthy and charming wetlands may be, they are not very useful. High, dry land with trees, slopes and good soil is desirable. Access and visibility are useful for active recreation purposes. Adequate size to enable physical separation from adjacent neighbors is convenient. Every neighborhood park should not be expected to provide every purpose, but they should be expected to provide some purposes particularly well.

### **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 (Township).

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. No developed or planned sites of this description occur in Holmdel. 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.

The Cross Farm Park is one seemingly adaptable for this character of recreation space. Its size is generous beyond active and structured facility needs, allowing preservation of all of the site's best natural features. Its diversity of vegetation and landform is limited but can be capitalized in margins of the site. It is adjacent to Thompson Park and Village School and can be linked to both.

Such a combination of circumstances is optimal for community park development and should likely be the plan advanced for this site.

#### **4. 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 preserves, their purpose is to retain purely natural systems for the refreshment or education of area residents.

Currently, Holmdel abounds in such spaces and contains a remarkable quantity of privately owned lands that may be so utilized.

Existing public lands with Natural Resource characteristics are Cross Farm, DePalma Farm, Thompson Park, Holmdel Park, Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area (formerly the Chase Tract), and Bayonet Farm (also called the Harding Tract). Each of these is a huge land tract and excepting Holmdel Park which is extensively developed, each is composed primarily of limited access or undeveloped land.

The Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area is of particular future significance as it extends to a continuation in Holmdel Park, providing an excellent opportunity to improve bike and pedestrian access and to link the proposed Ramanessin Brook Greenway

Beyond the unusually numerous and large natural resource lands already secured within the Township and available through other jurisdictions' efforts, Holmdel Township presents a number of significant undeveloped land parcels that have been identified as potential additions to open space inventories. These are represented currently as follows:

## OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

|     | <b>Owner</b>                                 | <b>Location</b>                       | <b>Total Acres</b> | <b>Block</b> | <b>Lot</b>  | <b>Cluster (Note 3)</b> | <b>Use (Note 1)</b> |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1.  | Anstalt % Oppenheim                          | Route 34 & Roberts Road               | 39.60              | 16           | 2           | C5                      | F, M, O, P          |
| 2.  | Artelli                                      | Route 35 - near Union                 | 3.46               | 59           | 3           | C1                      | M, O, P, R          |
| 3.  | Atochem (Formerly S.S. White)                | South Holmdel Road                    | 118                | 3.08         | 2           |                         | F, G, O, R          |
| 4.  | Bachstadt                                    | Middle Road                           | 11                 | 52           | 35 - 35.07  | C4                      | G, O, P             |
| 5.  | Ballin                                       | 193 Everett Rd                        | 17.5               | 9            | 5.01        |                         | F, M*, O, P         |
| 6.  | Balmer                                       | Middletown Road                       | 13.38              | 9            | 17.04-17.06 |                         | F, O, P             |
| 7.  | Casola Jr, Carmine                           | Route 34 & Roberts Road               | 13.28              | 13           | 2.02        | C5                      | F, M, O, P          |
| 8.  | Ceres  | McCampbell                            | 15.58              | 9            | 40          |                         | O, P                |
| 9.  | Cerlione & Folchetti                         | Route 35 - near Union                 | 11.38              | 59           | 6 & 7       | C1                      | M, O, P, R          |
| 10. | Cerlione, Marie, Rubano, Flo                 | Laurel Ave & Middle Rd                | 0.77               | 52           | 1           |                         | O, P                |
| 11. | Chen   | Route 35 - near Union                 | 5.34               | 59           | 5 & 6.01    | C1                      | M, O, P, R          |
| 12. | Coptic Orthodox Church                       | South Beers Street                    | 7.84               | 30.09        | 13.05       |                         | O, P                |
| 13. | Emmrich                                      | Line & Van Brackle                    | 11-05              | 28           | 19 & 19.01  | C2                      | O, P                |
| 14. | F & F Nurseries                              | Crawford Corner & Roberts Road        | 97                 | 20           | 4           |                         | F, G, M, O, P, R    |
| 15. | Falco- Liguri Properties                     | Line & Van Brackle                    | 11.2               | 28           | 15          | C2                      | O, P                |
| 16. | Giordano, Lynne, Executrix (Formerly Lucash) | South Holmdel Road                    | 7.87               | 2            | 24          |                         | F, G, O             |
| 17. | Giuliani                                     | Route 34 & Roberts Road               | 11.5               | 13           | 2.01        | C5                      | F, M, O, P          |
| 18. | HMF Assoc. (Formerly GRC)                    | Route 34                              | 206.58             | 13<br>15     | 6 & 11<br>2 |                         | F, G, M, O, P, R    |
| 19. | Holmboro Realty Partners                     | Route 35 & Laurel Ave.                | 7.79               | 51           | 15          |                         | G, O, P             |
| 20. | Hop Brook Farm % E.E. Cruz                   | Holmdel Rd                            | 63.95              | 11           | 29.01       |                         | F, O, P, R          |
| 21. | Jantzen                                      | Laurel Ave.                           | 6.0                | 52           | 7           | C4                      | G, O, P             |
| 22. | JCP&L  | Crawfords Corner Rd. at South Holland | 0.91               | 20           | 2           |                         | G                   |
| 23. | Korean Church of NJ                          | S. Holland Rd                         | 8.82               | 26           | 6           |                         | G                   |

## OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS (con't)

|     | Owner  | Location                              | Total Acres                | Block       | Lot   | Cluster (Note 3) | Use (Note 1) |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| 24. | Mandel (Formerly Mason and Jennings)                                       | Middle Road/Palmer Ave                | 21.85                      | 52          | 34.03                                       | C4               | G (Note 4)   |
| 25. | Manzo Const. Co  | West of Line Road                     | 11.13                      | 18          | 11  | C3               | F, O, P      |
| 26. | Manzo Const. Co  | Holmdel Road                          | 13.38                      | 27          | 8   |                  | M            |
| 27. | Manzo Const. Co  | Line & Van Brackle                    | 19.85                      | 28          | 22  | C2               | O, P         |
| 28. | Manzo Holdings   | West of Line Road                     | 28.16                      | 18          | 20  | C3               | F, O, P      |
| 29. | Manzo, Rose  | West of Line Road                     | 32.0                       | 18          | 12  | C3               | F, O, P      |
| 30. | National Amusement   | Route 35 - near Union                 | 6.40                       | 59          | 4   | C1               | M, O, P, R   |
| 31. | NJ American Water Co.  | Along Swimming River Reservoir        | 88.77                      | 3<br>5<br>7 | 11<br>10.01, 11.01,<br>12.01, & 13<br>4,7,8 |                  | G, O         |
| 32. | NJ American Water Co.  | West of Line Road                     | 8.71                       | 18          | 16, 17, & 18                                | C3               | F, O, P      |
| 33. | NJ Highway Authority; 300 foot buffer along Ramanessin Brook (see Note #2) | Arts Center                           | * estimated to be 13 acres |             |   |                  | G            |
| 34. | Ondrush  | Crawford Corner Road                  | 6.38                       | 19          | 38  |                  | F, O, P      |
| 35. | Shorelands   | Phillips Park                         | 6.45                       | 47          | 2.02  |                  | O            |
| 36. | Tetro  | Middle Road                           | 5.96                       | 56          | 8   | C4               | G, O, P      |
| 37. | Tsai   | Crawfords Corner Rd. at South Holland | 3.097                      | 20          | 1.02  |                  | G, O         |
| 38. | Vanderbilt   | Laurel Ave.                           | 4.34                       | 52          | 9   | C4               | G, O, P      |
| 39. | Venino   | Old Mill Road                         | 2.4                        | 3           | 4   |                  | G, O         |
| 40. | Weber  | Mount Drive                           | 7.37                       | 50.25       | 46, 26.05                                   |                  | O            |
| 41. | Weldon   | Line & Van Brackle                    | 5.04                       | 28          | 7   | C2               | O, P         |
| 42. | West Main Street Assoc.  | Rte 520 near Rte 34                   | 2.0                        | 13          | 16.03                                       |                  | G, O         |
| 43. | Westor Partners (Inverness)  | Route 520                             | 92                         | 2           | 2 & 26                                      |                  | F, G, O, P   |
| 44. | Zellers  | Route 34 & Route 520                  | 8.91                       | 14          | 4   |                  | F, G, O, P   |
| 45. | Zugel  | Middletown Road                       | 20.73                      | 11          | 80.01 & 81                                  |                  | F, G, O, P   |

As opportunity is presented, the Township should seek to increase natural resource areas particularly those occurring along corridors such as stream courses and steeply sloped ridges. Objectively, this proposal seeks to acquire and preserve lands that could be impacted by development and to obtain them as inexpensively as possible through negotiation and grant funding from outside agencies

Apparently this sort of process has been working within the Township for some time by the efforts of private interests, land trusts and conservancies. It is recommended that such tracts ultimately be integrated by pathway, bikeway, and equestrian trail connectors. This enterprise coupled with the Township's recent aggressive stance toward open space preservation, fairly assures that natural resource areas will be preserved well beyond even future recreation needs.

## **SITE EVALUATIONS**

The following site evaluations have been performed by field inspection.

They include general observations relative to the existing condition and character of various Township park and open space sites.

Each site has been considered in the context of its existing developed features and the deficiencies or opportunities each presents.

A description of specific improvements and future potentials is included where appropriate for each site and may include recommendations for planning or construction.

Many of the site specific recommendations are comparatively minor and not discussed in subsequent recommendation sections of this report. Others are very important and are discussed in greater detail in "Recommendations".

### **OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 58.02, LOT 36** **LOCATION - SOUTH OF BAYBERRY LANE** **AREA – 5.92 ACRES**

This triangular land parcel serves a primary function as an area detention basin. It is open, gently sloping mowed lawn space approximately 4 acres in size and is surrounded on the south and east sides by embankments of the detention basin. Adjacent land is occupied by single family residences north of Bayberry Lane and by vacant wetland tracts south and east. Marginal areas along Bayberry Lane are open or lightly wooded land at the top of the basin elevation and the open margin along Bayberry has been mowed and nominally landscaped.

This is an extremely useful site potentially, particularly as the basin bottom is very large, gently sloped and sufficiently dry excepting the lowest region near the basin invert. This element of the site could easily sustain a neighborhood play field consisting of a softball sized infield and a multi-purpose outfield overlay adequate for soccer, football or other conventional rectangular field sport. If the site surface were nominally regraded and sub-drained to remove surface water, the entire basin bottom could be developed and programmed.

The small wooded area nearest Bayberry and adjacent open lawn spaces are nicely situated relative to adjacent residences and are spatially adequate to include a small play area, basketball court, picnic grove, or sitting area as well as a variety of passive use furnishings. The entire site perimeter, if improved with a multi-purpose lane would accommodate a pleasant, quite secluded pedestrian bikeway lane. Such an improvement is so potentially useful that incorporation of such a facility should be considered regardless of other potentials. Adjacent vacant land tracts are wetland impacted. If the extent of these wetlands is such that the parcels value for development is low, the Township should target part of lots 21, 23, 24, and 25 adjacent to this parcel to expand its potential as a nature study passive trail site.

This tract is one entirely capable of sustaining a small neighborhood park (without parking) which would serve neighbors proximal enough to walk or bike.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 58.01, LOT 9**  
**LOCATION – NORTH OF HAWTHORNE AVENUE**  
**AREA – 2.09 ACRES**

This is a detention basin site. It is closely mowed, well screened from adjacent residences and occupying a quiet corner of the subdivision.

Two adjacent residences are quite close to the site, one with lawn areas merging continuously with the basin site.

Though too small, close to the road and neighbors, and inconveniently shaped for much other utility, this site could be improved nominally by a perimeter pathway connecting on both ends to sidewalks along Hawthorne to create a quiet walkway. A small sun shelter or landscaped sitting area here would create a quaint passive space or lawn play space for small children.

This tract is limited in potential and should be considered a comparatively low priority for any part development other than modest furnishing improvements.

**VACANT LAND TRACT – BLOCK 51, LOT 6 AND 7**  
**EAST OF LAUREL AVENUE**  
**AREA – 18.16 ACRES**

This is a predominantly wooded parcel lying low in the landform and is, in the majority, flood plain and wetlands of the Mahoras Brook, apparently at the site of a former Millpond, along the most easterly boundary. The site is separated from adjacent lands by the roadway and embankments along Laurel Avenue. These physical barriers are the chief limitations to future utilization of this tract, as no useful location exists to enable access except for the intersection of Commons Way with Laurel at the most northerly end of the site.

A trail system exists on the site which is capable of sustaining passage for passive use. Although good linkages to adjacent areas do not exist, the network of looping trails could be expanded.

The Tract presents a lowland forest in early maturity in the northern section which diminishes to wetland meadow as one moves southward. A variety of indigenous tree, shrub and ground cover species provide a very interesting study substrate of intact succession forest in the best wooded areas. The site unfortunately has been invaded by phragmites in more open meadows and is far less diverse there.

Recreation utility of this land will remain limited to passive use and nature study, but is not of a size, location or attractive isolation appropriate to production of a popular feature. Access is very poor and Laurel Avenue is high volume, high speed and noisy, further diminishing the open space quality for habitat conditions.

This may become an important parcel in Holmdel's recreation future and is currently being improved by placement of a visible, well controlled pedestrian access.

It is a reasonable potential, contingent upon a sustained interest of residents of the neighboring senior community, that local citizens interested in adopting this site as a passive project, could systematically improve a useful, pedestrian based walking system here.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 50, LOT 55.14**

**LOCATION – INTERSECTION OF LAUREL AVENUE AND BOXWOOD TERRACE**

**AREA – 2.54 ACRES**

This is a detention basin tract surrounded by the side and rear yards of adjacent single family residences. It occupies a location high in the landform created by embankment and is well landscaped. It provides a small attractive overlook of its surroundings and contains sufficient residual space that adaptation as a pocket park is practical.

This site is not well related to the subdivision containing it and so, is not ideal for access from more than a few adjacent neighbors. It is adequate for a pathway loop, small sitting area, gazebo, tot lot or as a shrub garden space.

The Township should not regard this as a priority site although it is a legitimate circumstance for inclusion of minor neighborhood recreation features which do not otherwise exist.

**OPEN LAND TRACTS – BLOCK 50, LOTS 54.15, 54.22 AND 56**

**LOCATION – NORTHEAST OF DEARBORN DRIVE, WOODS END WAY AND EMPRESS DRIVE**

**AREA – 5.74 ACRES**

This group of Open Space Tracts is usefully large and well suited to the purposes of creation of a neighborhood park. It is buffered from adjacent residential parcels by drainage and conservation easements and is accessible from Dearborn and Empress Drives, enabling convenient pedestrian and bicycle access.

This site should be studied for design of a small passive use parklet targeting the adjacent subdivision for day use and passive use opportunities. The central and initial element of such an addition would be a lane, circumscribing the site perimeter and linking to Empress and Dearborn. This lane, modestly furnished with benches, a small shelter and ornamental plantings would provide the skeletal support for subsequent addition of mowed meadow play areas, a small play equipment area, and a small sitting area.

The site functions would include: walking, jogging, and local bicycling, informal playfield (pick up ball for local children) and a separate, sheltered sitting space near play areas to accommodate local parents socially and for supervision.

This site is fairly ideal as an opportunity to provide spontaneous pedestrian scale features within an otherwise unsupported neighborhood.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 50.22, LOT 45**  
**LOCATION – SOUTH OF CONRAIL LINE AT WIND HILL ROAD**  
**AREA – 10.21 ACRES**

This parcel is adjacent to the DePalma Farm and bounded on the north by the Conrail Line. It is flanked by several large tract, single family residences to the south.

It may be described generally as having a center space of overgrown meadow surrounded by variously dense, brushy emergent forests and second growth forest. It has been utilized for construction staging or stockpiling in the recent past and bears residue of this activity.

This is a very utilitarian site, one with special opportunity as it joins the DePalma Farm Site and can be integrated with lands there to create a very diverse recreation opportunity.

This tract can be accessed from cul-de-sac ends of both Redberry and Wind Hill enabling excellent pedestrian access by foot or bicycle to a large group of residents occupying homes in adjacent low density neighborhoods.

Existing conditions here are nicely suited to creation of a multipurpose play field for local pick up play and should be developed to create a single softball/soccer sized turf space.

Adjacent wooded fringes should be linked by a multi-purpose lane capable of providing opportunity for walking, jogging and bicycling use.

A play equipment area, tot lot and sitting area with shelter should be located overlooking the broad expanse of existing farm fields of DePalma Farm with appropriate site furnishings to sustain quiet sitting opportunities near developed portions of the site.

This tract should be linked to a pathway system which continues into and through the DePalma Farm as an opportunity to link neighborhood and community recreation system components.

This is the most capable of the several small, open space tracts available within the Township and one which should be prioritized among significant potentials for meaningful expansion of the current deficient neighborhood park component.

It has a very pleasant natural character but is not unique or fragile. Its connection to the farm is a prominent additional motive as it enables a small element of integration now so little exploited in general.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 50.25, LOT 47.03**  
**LOCATION – WEST OF STONY BROOK ROAD**  
**AREA – 2.55 ACRES**

This is an extraordinary small site. It is a steep sided, forested gorge cut into the area topography. It appears to be a beautifully intact small natural stream valley element, exhibiting some very large trees.

The site is access limited and too steep for occupation without destroying fragile hillsides. Despite its exceptional beauty and interest, this site should not be developed as no public purpose more important than the environmental cost of development exists.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 50.15, LOT 7.01**

**LOCATION – NORTH OF HOLLAND ROAD**

**AREA – 5.71 ACRES**

This is a linear tract, very constrained by topography as it occurs on a steep hillside falling to a drainage corridor. It is very integrated with and quite close to eight surrounding residential lots.

This tract has a limited utility due to its configuration, slope and sensitive lands. It is best used for unimproved open space for passive appreciation alone.

**OPEN LAND TRACT – BLOCK 48, LOTS 17 AND 18**

**LOCATION – EAST OF HOLLAND ROAD, WEST OF ARDSLAY COURT**

**AREA – 3.25 ACRES**

In general this tract may be described as a long narrow utility corridor parallel with Holland Road and a larger single lot node at the intersection of Holland and Telegraph Hill Roads.

The linear tract portion is of little practical utility but the Lot 18 component of this site is very nicely situated, well shaped and accessible from adjacent roadways, in all respects enabling an excellent opportunity for location of a pocket park.

The Township should consider location of a play area, tot lot, small shelter, basketball court and sitting area here for use by local residents.

This facility would be accessible by foot or bike only for provision of day use and spontaneous visitations by residents within ¼ to ½ mile of the site.

This site is one of the best potentials of existing Township small open space tracts as it is not particularly influenced by wetlands or by very steep slopes as characterize most similar spaces.

**OPEN SPACE TRACT GROUP – BLOCK 3.07, LOT 22**

**LOCATION – SOUTH END OF CANDLELIGHT ROAD**

**AREA – 7.35 ACRES**

This is a surprisingly large and open detention basin area surrounded by steep slopes adjacent to stream corridors. While its primary function for storm detention may not be impaired, it presents ample space and excellent access for bicyclists and pedestrians that its conversion to a neighborhood park is recommended.

Such a parklet would include a perimeter walking lane, a full-sized play area and tot lot, a shelter/sitting area, a basketball court and a restroom, all constructed on marginal space outside

the basin. The basin floor itself would be nominally regraded to better present an informal play field for local pick-up games.

This is a good, easy site with little virtue as undifferentiated open space and great utility for recreation.

**OPEN SPACE TRACT GROUP – BLOCK 3.04, LOT 9**  
**LOCATION – LADWOOD DRIVE**  
**AREA – 5.39 ACRES**

This is a very precipitous, deep stream corridor with little development utility. It does present one tiny useful corner in a sudden bend in Ladwood Drive, which consists of a quarter acre of mowed, lightly landscaped flat land.

This is an ideal site for a quiet, pocket park consisting of a tot lot, shelter, garden, benches and a drinking fountain. Its purpose would be simply to provide a pretty, intimate space for neighborhood small children and their parents to visit briefly, read, socialize or play.

The tiny opportunity offered here is exactly the type of facility uniformly absent throughout Holmdel's entire recreation system.

**OPEN SPACE TRACT GROUP – BLOCK 18.01, LOT 3.21, 30.37, AND BLOCK 18.06, LOT 6**  
**LOCATION – CAMBRIDGE ROAD, SHERWOOD COURT, ROUTE 34**  
**AREA – 10.7 ACRES, 6.55 ACRES, 3.57 ACRES**

This group of connected tracts consists generally of steep stream basins and inverts preserved between the rear yards of adjacent subdivisions. While the entire assembly of parcels presents a large area of land, the group presents a difficult to access string of areas very intimately associated with adjacent homes.

This site group has an important local function as a natural play area for the neighborhood and is laced with small trails and evidence of children's utilization.

The Township should consider placement of an improved trail here from the cul-de-sac end of Ardsley Drive to a location near Route 34. This would be a narrow, aggregate surface trail with occasional benches, well marked access points at easements to streets and a play area/sitting area combination located on the fairly large section of land near Tulip Lane and Sherwood Court.

Such low level development can comfortably integrate several small neighborhoods and provide a safe, off-road walking or jogging lane for area residents. Though the topography and wetland influences here are challenging a very pleasant small trail similar in scale to the Ramanessin Brook would facilitate passive use and likely limit to an extent some of the encroachment liberties taken by adjacent neighbors.

## **OTHER SMALL OPEN SPACE TRACTS**

A large number (see attached table) of other small open space tracts occur within the Township. These typically have been preserved within drainage systems or wetlands and are too small, too narrow, steep or wet to be considered for priority recreation purposes.

Many of these, despite size or condition limitations for response to system deficiencies, remain important assets to service populations as small as a few homes. As the Township resolves other of its more prominent challenges, future visitation of all of these tracts should occur to assess and identify unique opportunities that each presents and to propose creative, significant adaptations of these, if only a tiny aesthetic or educational goal is accomplished.

As the Township had foresight to assure that such open space parcels have been preserved in very intimate relation to residential areas, this potential to contribute to the diversity and character of daily life in those neighborhoods should be examined.

None of these tiny islands of preserved space has significant habitat merit as all are surrounded by fully developed and maintained subdivisions. Nonetheless, each has a special, valuable asset characteristic to the whole environment and all have some feature that is useful, beautiful or unusual enough to be shared by the local population.

As the community matures in its relationship to remnant open space “islands” it may be found that even the commonest detention area, if landscaped, furnished and otherwise made inviting can easily provide a quiet sitting spot, a small garden, memorial, social space or play area. The purpose of such a proposal is to modify land already impacted, owned, and maintained by the Township for meaningful contribution to very local opportunities, thus fostering neighborhood participation in public spaces and building a more interactive system as the daily life element of recreation.

**Table 7-3: Properties Listed on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory  
(protected by Green Acres)**

| <u>Name</u>                  | <u>Block</u> | <u>Lot</u>                 | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>Official Description</u>      |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Allocco Park                 | 52           | 36                         | 5.9            | Developed or partially developed |
| Labbe Park                   | 50           | 86-C                       | 2.3            | Developed or partially developed |
| Phillips Park                | 47           | 1.1                        | 8.5            | Developed or partially developed |
| Holmdel Swim & Tennis Center | 46           | 79                         | 25.0           | Developed or partially developed |
| Ackerson Indian Hill Park    | 46           | 64.09                      | 12.4           | Developed or partially developed |
| Cross Farm                   | 3            | 9, 15 (part)               | 40.0           | Developed or partially developed |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 30           | 16.16                      | 1.0            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 30           | 16.15                      | 1.6            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 30.01        | 12                         | 0.5            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 30.06        | 16                         | 0.3            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 29           | 32.10                      | 0.7            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 29           | 32                         | 1.8            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 29           | 32.40                      | 0.9            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 48           | 17                         | 3.3            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 49.06        | 1.03                       | 4.8            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 22           | 20.06                      | 26.5           | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 22.02        | 15                         | 0.6            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 22.02        | 7                          | 1.3            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 21           | 6                          | 0.9            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 15.07        | 13                         | 3.4            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 3.09         | 1                          | 0.3            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 3.04         | 4.09                       | 5.0            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Unnamed <sup>1</sup>         | 3.04         | 2                          | 1.0            | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Cross Farm                   | 3            | 9, 10, 15 (part)           | 83.0           | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Bayonet                      | 5            | 3 (part)                   |                | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Harding Tract                | 11           | 77, 78, 79, 80             | 140.8          | Wholly undeveloped               |
| De Palma Farm                | 50.27        | 48, 49, 51                 | 33.8           | Wholly undeveloped               |
| Chase Tract                  | 11           | Parts of 32, 33,<br>34, 36 | 226.8          | Wholly undeveloped               |

1. Conservation or drainage easement in a residential subdivision.

Source: Holmdel Township, Recreation and Open Space Inventory, September 26, 2001.

## **MAJOR OPEN SPACE TRACTS**

### **THE HARDING TRACT – BLOCK 11, LOTS 77, 78, 79, AND 80**

#### **LOCATION – NORTH OF MIDDLETOWN ROAD**

#### **AREA – 140.8 ACRES**

Known also as Bayonet Farm and the site of a historic farmstead, the Harding Tract is an astounding open space resource which despite the description “wholly undeveloped” ascribed to it in the Township’s inventory, is contrarily, wholly developed but not for recreation. This is a mature, intact farmstead characteristic far more of landed gentry, than of traditional farmers.

Its future is currently being determined by an appointed Advisory Committee and has been characterized prospectively as being preserved for passive uses with a goal of maintaining its “country look and feel”.

Although the Township has no current need and no projected need to elaborate this parcel’s development with traditional active use sports venues, it would be an inequitable determination not to bring this tract to a condition where it can actively receive the public, as a priority matter.

Excepting adequate restroom provisions, the site stands, in all physical respects, ready and capable to host public exploration for a multitude of pedestrian and bicycle, nature study and equestrian activities. It is sufficiently large and interesting to sustain hours of casual use and enjoyment of a serene, isolated experience of a historic land use rarely available to the general population. It is one that illustrates a lifestyle aspect not commonly known and one which except for a very fortunate few, will not be experienced again in our culture.

As the future utilization of this tract is considered in Committee, a variety of prospects and opportunities should be considered. First among these is that preservation of open farmland as open farmland for its traditional virtue alone will neither contribute significantly to the environmental well being of the Township nor to establishment of an equitable balance of public cost to public benefit by use of the site.

As it should be accepted that the aesthetic character of the Bayonet Farm deserves or perhaps, requires preservation fundamentally, it should also be reckoned that unless physical access to the farm can be achieved, its beauty, history and potential do little to contribute to the public well being.

Beyond this, maintenance of such a large complex will require permanent funding at fairly high levels to simply preserve a status quo.

It is recommended that the Township explore techniques of incorporation of cultural, educational, and limited commercial forms of recreation here that are appropriate to the site and can be operated on a revenue producing basis. Activities that reasonably assure that combination will be based on the existing structural components of the farm and may include: equestrian activities (boarding, training, trail riding, county park connections, shows, and polo); special events (seasonal festivals, balloon launches, wagon driving events, dog shows, and related single weekend programs which can reliably generate substantial gates and be conducted by professional vendors; conventional cropping, undertaken on a share basis by local farmers particularly for raising non-depleting, low maintenance crops (hay, alfalfa, sunflower, clover). It

will be appropriate to avoid row and field crops that require annual tilling, fertilization and pest control.

The Harding Tract has important linkage potentials, especially along the Ramanessin Brook Greenway. These trail themes should be elaborated at least around the perimeter of the Bayonet Farm to incorporate a continuation of the nature trails along the entire north and western boundaries of the site. A new loop created as a multipurpose lane adequate for bicycling, jogging and recreational walking would provide a wonderful series of panoramic views of the farm from all quadrants as well as providing high quality exercise and recreation.

Beyond these potentials, the Bayonet Farm is capable of sustaining projects, gardens, historic recreations, nature study and nature interpretive opportunities with few limits. If integrated through the Chase Tract to other County lands, unparalleled opportunities for diverse trails, cross country skiing, running events and innumerable individual activities would accrue.

This site is an enormous opportunity best capitalized by producing recreation day use hours however passively.

**THE CHASE TRACT – BLOCK 11, LOTS 32, 33, 34, AND 36**  
**LOCATION – MID BLOCK BETWEEN ROBERTS AND MIDDLETOWN ROAD**  
**AREA – 227 ACRES**

The Chase Tract is another enormous farm land tract. It is jointly owned by the Township, County, State, and the Monmouth Conservation Foundation. It is reportedly operated by the County and is being programmed in Committee to create a framework for its future utilization.

This group of parcels though not as elegant or as manageable as the Harding Tract, according to subsidiary control by the Township, is large and capable of any amount of active or passive recreation development. Curiously, despite its size and potential, the Chase Tract has less programmatic significance for the Township recreation future than might be expected.

Although its location within the Township is central and access is good, the tract offers little beyond the potential of the Chase structures that does not occur in ample quantity elsewhere within the Township system.

It is recommended that the Township pursue a limited agenda of purpose with respect to the Chase Tract unless the County/Consortium is positively disposed to placement of special constructed features, particularly indoor facilities, here.

Those agenda purposes include:

1. Continuation of walkway, bikeway, greenway corridors to perfect a corridor from Thompson Park to the High School site.
2. Full integration of service access, bikeway and equestrian linkages to the Bayonet Farm to perfect future program options there.
3. Incorporation of large scale cultural, education, event program facilities and infrastructure as County initiatives, particularly those that balance Township deficiencies (performing arts, entertainment, group assembly, winter sports).

4. Management of a nursery stock, joint resource on farm lands as a technique of provisioning future landscaping improvements throughout the Township site system.

**THE DEPALMA FARM – BLOCK 50.27, LOTS 48, 49 AND 51**

**LOCATION – WEST OF CENTERVILLE ROAD**

**AREA – 33.8 ACRES**

The DePalma Farm has potential to the Northern section of the Township (north of G.S.P.) far beyond its current utility.

It is the only existing site of significant size occurring in the most densely developed sector of the Township and that area of the Township least well served with either active or passive future potential. As such it represents the most important recreation opportunity in the whole system of current landholdings.

In its current condition the site provides little utilitarian contribution to the recreation system and is undistinguished as open space because the great majority has been cleared for crops and yields little of its practical or environmental potential. It is a useful substrate offering a pleasantly undulating topography and a significant fall to the north. Borders of trees enclose the site on the north and west sides and small knob of outcrop creates a wooded island adjacent to Wind Hill Way.

Access from Wind Hill Way and a long frontage on Centerville Road enable great development flexibility while the Conrail line and only six adjacent residential tracts create an excellent separation from adjacent uses. The site backs up against the 60 active farmland acres of the remainder of the DePalma Farm and is adjacent on its western flank to ten acres of Township Open Space land.

Presuming that several other open space acquisition candidates existing north of Route 35 may not be available and as none are as large, as open or as useful as this tract, the Township should be very careful to preserve this site for subsequent development of a community park feature.

It is recommended that this site be developed for purposes of spontaneous, individual and small group recreation types. As Allocco, Phillips, Labbe and Indian Hill are all nearby, formal ball fields are not needed and are not situation appropriate in any case.

The Township should look to this site to create a true park of significant aesthetic character, providing some of the activity types distinctly deficient in this section of Holmdel. These include courts (basketball, tennis and volleyball); play equipment areas (tot lot and older children's K-8); a shelter feature; picnic areas; sitting areas; and a multipurpose bikeway, walkway system extending into the southern section the farm and into the adjacent open space tract.

This is an ideal opportunity to create a themed park consistent with the farm preservation model established for the existing tract. Within this facility visitors would be able to plan a substantial family visit incorporating conventional play and game opportunities, picnic opportunities as well as the ability to pass through actively managed, growing croplands. Educational and seasonal (plantings, harvesting) events could be programmed within the context of the park itself.

The DePalma Farm is surrounded by six separate subdivision areas, four of which have secondary roadway terminus points at the lawn perimeter. The Township should create well marked crossings at the intersection of these with Centerville Road and link them all via a perimeter pathway continuous around the farm tract. In such a configuration, the DePalma Farm would become the central feature for open space, farm land preservation and recreation available by foot or bike for a large element of the Township residents.

## **DEVELOPED PARK PARCELS**

Despite the current recreation plan component assertion that Holmdel has a “large and diverse number of parks”, in fact, Holmdel offers an inappropriately short list of three parks. These are Allocco Park, Labbe Park and Phillips Park. Ackerson Indian Hill Park is a misnomer as it is so minimally provisioned in park features that it should be more properly considered an athletic field.

The number of parks is a particular issue and deficiency of Holmdel’s system as it currently exists. Pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks are too few, too small and too poorly distributed with respect to the population across the Township to adequately provide access by means other than automobiles to the vast majority of area residents.

A cursory examination of the Township’s Public Open Space and Recreation Areas map illustrates this fact. No Township park exists south of the Garden State Parkway excepting the newly begun Cross Farm tract which today is an athletic field complex, not a park.

Of the four sites named parks, two are very good facilities, one is small but appropriate and one is not yet a park. They are these:

### **ALLOCCO PARK**

Allocco Park is a very well designed, well built and well maintained small, neighborhood park. It is a fine example of the appropriate components of a park applied in reasonable proportion and diversified to deliver a balance of active and spontaneous passive use opportunities. It is so well done that its format should be considered by future planner/designers at work in the Township to prepare sites subsequently.

Elements that separate this facility from all others in the Township and that exemplify good design are these:

1. Visible, well marked access and entry.
2. Appropriate, easy to see and understand vehicle movement and parking.
3. Entry and orientation point.
4. Well furnished and supported play areas with functional separations, curbs and surfaces.
5. Complete and accurately built court area with adjacent seating and shade.
6. Properly oriented, well supported adequately sized ball field.
7. A walkway. This is remarkably important. It provides casual walking, jogging and barrier free access to each facility (required by law).
8. Excellent landscaping particularly by application of trees of useful size.

Allocco Park has one significant deficiency. That is use of a porta-john where a restroom is appropriate and needed.

This is such a refreshingly good facility that the Township should complete the picture and construct a real restroom here.

Future improvement of Allocco Park may be contingent upon current Open Space Preservation Recommendations to the extent that if adjacent parcel acquisitions can be accomplished, Allocco Park may be expanded to enable a significant walkway and natural/passive use area.

This is how parks can and should be evolved.

### **PHILLIPS PARK – VETERAN’S PARK**

This facility is described as a Community Park as the bulk of its included features have utility to the recreation programs organized and scheduled for residents across the Township. Although it is tiny for a community park, it has some of the best layout, design and construction work accomplished anywhere in the Township.

The park features are well constructed, completely supported lighted little league field and one newly constructed (not complete) fully supported, lighted baseball field; a pair of lighted basketball courts; two horseshoe pitches and a very beautifully sited play area. Facilities are mostly connected by paved walkway but are not in all sections barrier free.

Beyond the very complete and carefully constructed ball field, this site is unusually distinguished by excellent use of landform to separate facility areas and by thoughtful landscaping. Furnishings could use an update but are where they belong.

Visually this site is quite dramatic. It is surrounded by forest and back dropped by huge, white transmission discs that contribute a surreal, sculptural ambiance to the site.

Few deficiencies occur here but these are significant. Phillips is one of the Township’s several anonymous sites. Excepting a small sign hung near the access drive, no identification, no entry sequence or feature, no welcome invites visitors to this site. Though seemingly small as a criticism, this characteristic is eloquent as an indication of the Township’s interest in recreation site character, which is always expressed in the details and appointments.

The most important deficiency is lack of a restroom. This site may have dozens of area youth involved in a single ball game, miles or minutes from a real bathroom, each obliged to utilize the porta-john at need. As every surface of a porta-john is subject to very swift, very thorough contamination and as each visitor can be fairly reliably expected to snack, drink, play with friends or otherwise share their new acquisitions, the prospect of unhygienic conditions is actually a promise.

The Phillips site formerly was occupied by a group of military housing units arrayed around a cul-de-sac drive. These have been removed and the property formerly occupied by homes is now part of the Township land inventory. It is reported that a plan exists to create a new memorial feature at this location. No recommendation is made concerning this space in the interim.

### **LABBE PARK**

Labbe Park is an unexpected little parcel tucked into a far corner of a small neighborhood, isolated very effectively by Conrail and an inconvenient street intersection with Route 35 from

the rest of Holmdel. It is most singular in that the park provides an appropriate offering of well constructed features in nearly adequate balance with the tiny service area it occupies. Whether purposeful or coincidental, Labbe Park is a pocket park of a fashion exemplary of good recreation practice and unfortunately, the sole such instance of that within the Township.

Features of this site include a small ball field, very minimally supported, a basketball court, a small play equipment area and a few benches. It is a very difficult configuration and circulation within is inconvenient. Its greatest liability aesthetically is that it is surrounded with sturdy fencing as a compound might be yielding a significantly caged impression for visitors there.

Some of this site's most debilitating conditions arise from its shape and location. It is accessible only from its westernmost edge from an ungainly street side access. To remedy this and create a more appropriate entry, the Township will need to negotiate for some additional frontage with the adjacent neighbor. Otherwise general renovation of surfaces and furnishings and addition of more buffering plants are the only aesthetic topics and replacement of an inadequate backstop and wing fences are all the needed work on existing facilities.

The Township has acquired a comparatively large open space parcel adjacent to and east of the Labbe parcel which new parcel if improved could dramatically diversify Labbe Park utility by expanding into a walkway system, jogging lane, picnic sites and a much more pleasant location for the play and sitting area features of the park. As a minimum its existence eliminates the need for one end of the cage but obliges placement of a small bridge.

Although impacted in part by two streams and wetland areas, the adjacent parcel provides an abundance of nicely wooded, low land and a great potential for quiet walking and nature study. Some clean up of deposited material will be required prior to occupation of the open space tract and a short entry drive, small parking lot (6-8 cars) should be constructed at the Miller Avenue border. This improvement will enable access by residents from other neighborhoods for passive uses without impacting interior residential streets.

Development of the open space parcel should be a somewhat low priority as the site is useful as is, at low levels. The fence and bridge from Labbe should be dealt with much sooner.

### **ACKERSON/INDIAN HILL PARK**

Properly considered, this site must be linked in evaluation, as it is in fact, with the Indian Hill Elementary School Site.

This is a very new athletic field site consisting of a soccer/multipurpose field, a basketball court and a few trees and site furnishings linked to a new parking area by a perimeter pathway.

Despite its name this is not a park-like space as beyond the court and field there is no feature or space that would attract or sustain any spontaneous use. The path is the best park feature of the facility as despite its limited scope, it is useful for a brief walk or jog.

Primary virtues of this development accrue to active sports alone and constitute a useful, convenient venue for these.

Ackerson is in intimate association with adjacent residential development but offers little to enhance recreation opportunities on a daily basis for these residents. The site is exposed to the elements, offering no variety of experience, no quiet place to sit or socialize, no feature to sustain or engage children, in fact, not much reason to be there.

Significant opportunities to supplement some of the recreation features here occur along the drainage corridor and wetland region of the combined school/park site immediately adjacent to the developed areas. Here varied, steep landform, dense vegetation, moving water and abundant if common wildlife present a ready made substrate for a walkway/bikeway experience, secluded sitting areas, skateboarding routes, sled hills, nature interpretive or project areas and numerous other potentials that require only purpose and imagination. The detention basin itself is huge and a dramatic landform. It is typically fenced and gated and even though mowed and maintained, not accessible even for passive use. As the basin flows rarely and predictably, the enclosure surrounding it should be reconfigured to a condition which enables passive use of the storage space.

This is not a great park and unfortunately it occurs in a situation where a great park would be useful.

## **CROSS FARM**

Cross Farm is a large nearly flat land tract of 120 acres divided by Willow Brook Road into an active use zone and an agricultural use zone. It is bounded on the east by Longbridge Road and lands of the Monmouth County Park System, on the north by Route 520 and Old Mill Road and west by privately owned parcels partitioning the Ramanessin Brook basin. Reportedly, Cross Farm was a sod farm and portions of the site remain in that condition on lease back to the farmer. It is a generally rectangular tract, very flat to gently sloping in topography except where deeply eroded by stream courses. The best arable land is cleared leaving a narrow but important fringe of natural vegetation along the western edge.

This tract has been targeted as the central athletic field complex servicing Holmdel's active recreation future and is in its third of eight proposed phases of construction toward that end. This sequence is following a site development Master Plan prepared for the Township and being evaluated for approval as subsequent stages are proposed by the Committee.

The first construction phases have been or are now placing: 4 baseball fields; 11 soccer fields (not including numerous venues marked out on open lawn parcels); an entrance drive and parking areas; a pair of loop walkways; landscaping and minor furnishings.

Cross Farm is the current focus of a local impetus to create new homes for the major organized sports programs of the Township. It is propelled in large part by the influence of HYAA, Pop Warner football, and the Stallions traveling soccer association.

Though Cross Park occupies a location much further distant than optimal from the bulk of the Township population, its fate as the primary active use feature of the Township is determined and underway. The Master Plan is clear in intent and if followed is capable of meeting all present and projected needs for athletic fields within the Township.

Primary assets of the tract are: ample space; cooperative topography, and workable soils.

Primary liabilities of the site are these: extreme exposure; limited surface drainage; soils of poor texture and permeability.

It appears that the ongoing sequence of field additions here has eclipsed the Township's capability to adequately maintain facilities already constructed. Excepting the most recently occupied field spaces (placed upon existing turf), the condition of soil surfaces, turf stands and marginal areas is fair to moderate. The best conditions occur in baseball outfields. This evidence suggests that: soil fertility is not adequate or is not balanced; soils are too wet or too dry alternatively; compaction of soils from normal use is excessive and not relieved.

Compaction is the most likely cause of the majority of these turf problems and is predictable based on the fine textured soils occurring here.

The Township should focus on this rather quickly or it will wind up with a very large quantity of expensive new fields with very poor surfaces. It is necessary now to evaluate manpower and equipment capabilities relative to maintenance of this site and to retard the pace of expansion until maintenance can be brought into balance.

It is reported that a contract maintenance service has been engaged to manage Cross Farms. Presumably the two small deck mowers witnessed flying in tandem over the fields represent that service. If so, a new solution needs to be found. It is essential that even mowing maintenance be performed with appropriate equipment at appropriate intervals by competent operators. At the level of service necessary to improve already impacted playing surfaces, the Township can not afford to engage marginal vendors. This will result rather quickly in an enormously costly renovation sequence over all of these fields. At the very least, these repetitive sequences must be regularly inspected and evaluated by a Township representative empowered to regulate contractor's operations.

This report presumes that the facilities plan for evaluation of Cross Farm is being revised and reviewed internally as each phase recommendation is furnished to the Township Committee. Consequently observations relative to design shall not be represented here.

The following observations and recommendations address only matters of context, management and maintenance. Cross Farm has already grown beyond a use level where a restroom structure should be constructed. This should be the first priority of new construction regardless of perceived need for new fields.

Cross Farm is physically inhospitable. Too little shade, shelter, enclosure, separation or other techniques of design that moderate wind and sun influences upon players and spectators have been incorporated in previous phases.

Proportioning of future construction budgets should be adjusted to incorporate significantly more landscaping and shelter.

Site furnishings are inappropriate to the number of visitors using the facility. Many more should be incorporated per phase.

Parking lots are the most completely constructed and landscaped components of the site. Much of each phase budget dedicated to these should be re-evaluated to apply funds where the people will be, not where the cars will be. As no winter programs yet occur here, aggregate surface lots will suffice for a long time.

Marginal spaces around fields should be carefully managed to concentrate maintenance operations primarily on play fields and their necessary perimeters, other spaces need not be mowed at the same height or frequency. This will add variety, moderate the environment and conserve water. Exterior perimeters should be considered for management as meadows.

Existing tree plantings exhibit evidence of environment stress (wind, cold, sun, water). Initial species selections should avoid tender types until more substantial buffers can grow.

Water must be available for turf and tree establishment. Every area should be within 150' of a source point.

Fields here are nearing marginal condition in some situations. Baseball outfields should be routinely evaluated and utilized for practice venues for other sports whenever competent.

A comprehensive maintenance plan, schedule and budget should be annualized for Cross Farm based on inventory of field conditions, appropriate renovation sequences, and estimated mowing, fertilizing, aerating cycles.

A large ganged mower capable of cutting these playing fields (not whole site) in a single day with a single operator should be purchased and shared with the Board of Education.

A large **core** aerator of the best current manufacture should be purchased (machine should be matched with existing public works tractor) and shared with the Board of Education. Operators of this machine **must** be trained (one day) or utility is dramatically diminished.

A single individual should be assigned to: monthly inspection of all field surfaces; inspection of all contracted vendors; computation and inventory control of all chemical products and applications; have absolute regulatory authority over field use and closure.

As the Township considers Cross Farm and its development future, it will be useful and instructive to consider the High School site as a corollary.

A significant element of the initiative to create Cross Farm originates in recent past experience with the High School fields. These, pressed into service beyond their capability and beyond the ability of existing maintenance systems to sustain, have degraded to a problematic condition. Cross Farm is liable to that same circumstance despite its substantially greater size.

It is recommended that new features and fields be brought on line conditioned upon prior placement of adequate support systems. There is rarely enough money to do the job once and never enough to do it twice!

Finally, the Township and all others involved in creation of Cross Farm should stand back sufficiently to gain a broader perspective of the opportunity evolving here. A choice remains to consider and appreciate the aesthetic potential of this facility as keenly as its practical potential

has been evaluated. Regardless of its primary role, it can be beautiful, comfortable, inviting, diverse, and sustaining to year round individual pursuits wholly unrelated to organized sports. Where so much public revenue is being dedicated to so few special interest purposes it is equitable to simultaneously maximize the investment potential for all other reasonable accommodations.

### **RAMANESSIN BROOK GREENWAY NATURE TRAIL**

This is a great little natural feature area, the best by far within Township developed lands. It is a small portion of a much larger greenway initiative consisting of a narrow pathway following the landform along the Ramanessin Brook bank. It is marked with elegant little display/information stations and occasional benches are perfectly placed to view targeted features. Each display identifies a significant natural or environmental component clearly, simply and well. The path loops at its end near a huge sycamore immediately at the property intersection of the Chase and Harding tracts where it will extend in the future.

Although this is a particularly good natural system passage, the trail development here illustrates how a tiny open space parcel can be adapted to an important recreation feature. It should be visited as a model for how to accomplish a lot with a little.

It is recommended that formalized parking for 4-6 cars be created along either side of Middletown Road to eliminate uncertainty about which space might be legitimate.

## **TOWNSHIP SCHOOL SITES**

Three public school sites exist in the Township. Two are elementary schools. The third is a joint Middle School/High School campus.

These sites, particularly the High School site, have been the traditional home of the great bulk of Township active recreation programming up to the very recent initiation of Cross Farm development and remain home to all indoor recreation programs as well as all football delivered by Pop Warner programs and a significant element of recreational baseball.

All of the school structures have grown by addition over recent years and with those expansions, parking, fire lanes, and vehicle ways have further invaded formerly useful site space. While it is clear that the Township and School Board should preserve a cooperative relationship it is as evident that the Township's options with respect to facility expansion are far greater than the Board's. It is true as well, that the school sites contain facilities in size, quantity and most significantly infrastructure support that the Township can not soon and likely should not ever duplicate.

Practical considerations of field condition, maintenance cost, aesthetic character and program priority must remain within the school system's administrative domain but beyond that the Township should persist in seeking as much appropriate additional programming of these features as can be tolerated without degrading the system. This relationship is not now in place. Several school facilities are degraded and should be restored or taken out of service for renovation.

It will be absolutely incumbent in the next several years at least, that the school and Township perfect an accord detailing utilization, maintenance and upgrade of many of these features. Such an arrangement will require budgetary contributions from both parties. This presumes that the Township will need to supplement funding beyond conventional Board of Education budgeting or authorize separate capital projects on school properties.

### **THE VILLAGE SCHOOL**

This site is located near the intersection of West Main Street (Route 520) and Middletown Road and is so comprehensively engaged in current building expansion that site characteristics surrounding the building could not be usefully evaluated.

Although the school site was sufficiently large for its traditional purposes it appears that significant site space will be lost to new construction particularly on the Main Street side of the site.

Review of the use program for site fields here instructs that primary occupation of field spaces here is by High School and Middle School teams in addition to HYAA soccer and little league baseball program.

The most easterly field site here includes soccer/multipurpose fields arranged end to end in a slightly too narrow space. These are in fairly good condition and useful given their strange orientation.

Village fields south of the school are not in service due to construction further exacerbating pressure on field stocks elsewhere.

It is currently unknown if a full agenda of baseball, soccer and lacrosse will be replaced here after construction but it is clear that the site will not be as large as formerly. A youth soccer field will certainly disappear and in general the site will be far more compacted than formerly.

Primary influences of this construction apply to a severe reduction in field space for Satz School programs and presumably increased pressure on High School sites.

As the primary fields of Village School are not now available and will emerge from this construction reduced in size and damaged by construction, it is timely now to consider restructuring of use practice.

As the needed fields are exactly coincident with those being placed at Cross Farm a schedule for rotation of the displaced Satz and High School programs to Cross on a permanent basis should be established.

Aesthetically and functionally considered the Village School site has been very degraded and will not function as formerly. The renovation of the site should focus first on general aesthetic of the school and secondarily on athletic fields' utility. As main programs (Satz, High School and HYAA) are not generated here, they should be relocated to the more capable Cross Farm site.

## **INDIAN HILL SCHOOL SITE**

The Indian Hill site is coupled with Ackerson Indian Hill Park to create a forty-five acre school campus. The site incorporates two soccer field areas, a Little League Baseball Field, and two softball fields. In addition, paved play areas and large groups of play equipment occupy significant space at the northeast corner of the school building.

This site is very inefficiently utilized producing far fewer facilities than its potential enables. It is nonetheless wholly cleared and maintained to no utilitarian purpose other than mowing.

As Indian Hill is the largest active use site north of the Parkway, its potential to contribute to system balance should be exploited. Beyond that, as Satz School is currently exporting much of its athletic programming and as Indian Hill is much closer to Satz than to Village School, this is the most sensible destination for these programs. Lastly, Indian Hill School is conveniently situated within its surrounding community and very little developed to provide a variety of common day use and passive use opportunities. Many features (pathways, furnishings, plantings and courts) absent here, if constructed would contribute equally to school and general recreation utility and potentially, significantly improve the aesthetic condition of an otherwise bleak site.

The following major potentials are evident and could be significant in the balancing of athletic field shortfalls – (see Schematic Plans – Addendum 1).

1. Fill and regrade a severely sloped soccer/multi-purpose field area (nearest Ackerson Park) enlarging the space by eliminating existing adjacent drainage ditches and expanding into unused marginal space toward the school. This space is potentially large enough to produce two (2) multi-purpose fields of standard utility where one space of impaired utility now exists.
2. Reorganize and renovate the two (2) most northerly softball fields expanding toward the school and into wasted marginal space east of the field.
3. Campus all of the existing play equipment currently strewn throughout the site into a single, large, beautifully landscaped, resilient surface play area with shelter, sitting areas, sensible pathways and enclosure. This would enable occupation of those margins by field expansion.
4. Campus and consolidate paved play areas into an organized system of court games and free play spaces renovating all goals, resurfacing and color coating all surfaces and introducing plantings and seating to partition the space.
5. Construct a perimeter multi-purpose lane around the entire site linked to the Ackerson path, connected to adjacent streets, linked to each facility area and passing through the detention, drainage area natural space east of the school.
6. Expand parking on the south side of the school, remove parking on the north side.
7. Introduce significant additional plantings and site furnishings.

Indian Hill presents very nicely and represents an opportunity to create a very competent park as well as a far more competent school site.

Here, a few major structural changes and a lot of beautification can reconfigure the haphazard, inefficient large public space into a very beautiful asset.

### **HIGH SCHOOL/SATZ MIDDLE SCHOOL SITE**

This unfortunate complex has the charm of an older suburban shopping mall. It is so comprehensively confused that vehicle priorities have supplanted human priorities and the consequence is a desperate no-man's land of roadways, parking deserts and service corridors separating the athletic fields from the school.

Restoration of ordered function here is a major planning project unto itself and one beyond the scope of this study. It is nonetheless necessary, as this site has achieved a condition so constrained by hardscape that its flexibility for field space improvement is nearly exhausted. Tersely stated, this site is too small to do what it needs to do.

Generally, athletic field components of this site have been fairly cleverly adapted into multiple use potentials and are in better than expected condition given the extraordinary use pressure they sustain. These features consist of the following major elements and are evaluated as follows:

#### **1. Roggie Stadium – Roggie Practice Field**

The stadium occupies the best, most attractive site situation of any facility on this campus. It has been constructed in a deep bowl, nicely separated visually from vast adjacent parking areas.

It consists of a 400 meter running track, enclosed football field, and conventional grandstands. Facilities here are overdue for renovation. The track is older and oxidized such that most of its resiliency is gone. The grandstands need compliance upgrading and access improvements. Fences, gates, and accessory crowd controls should be replaced entirely. The concession stand probably has nostalgic significance but will not meet food service compliance review.

The football field itself is the single most important venue in Holmdel's system as it hosts all major sports contests except baseball. The existing field is capable of sustaining a few High School games per year for football, soccer or field hockey, but is not capable of sustaining the persistent pounding now sustained from Pop Warner utilization.

This is attributable to the combined soil and groundwater conditions of this field. The soil is dense, compacted and wet, grass turf is thin and fragile growing in only the uppermost inch of the soil.

This field could carry its load but requires whole reconstruction to do so. This would include sub-drainage, soil amendment/replacement and regrading/refinishing. Unless reconstructed, this field should not be utilized with the frequency it now sustains.

In this instance, where many events other than those now being played could be added to take advantage of the spectator accommodations and existing field lighting, it is recommended that synthetic turf be considered. Though initially costly, creation of a synthetic field here has the potential to balance much of the High School's spatial problem and add an important dimension to Township recreation while being cost-effective in the long run.

Roggie Practice Field is a useful practice field for Pop Warner programs even if too small and poorly graded. This venue does not merit improvement as a great deal of cost is involved in producing very little product.

Upper tier fields include Varsity and J.V. baseball and Varsity softball fields each with overlay fields for football, soccer and field hockey practice as well as field events practice and competition venues. Despite this diversity of purposes, the fields are usefully arranged and generally have decent turf. There are a variety of problematic circumstances particularly with backstops, wing fences, perimeter fences, barrier free access and proximity of adjacent simultaneous utilization. As all of these are consequences of needing to accomplish much more than available space permits, there is little significant improvement possible here until some of the uses are moved out.

Surface maintenance of this field group can only be a costly, repetitive headache but is rather well accomplished.

The Satz field element of this site is so deteriorated and so inappropriate to the quantity of play performed there that it should be closed and completely renovated. It is dilapidated and a potential liability to the Pop Warner Program and the School.

The High School/Middle School site is so beset with overuse issues that it is impossible to unravel which is most prominent. Certainly every practice and game played here is

impaired in some access, accommodation, safety or quality aspect and the aesthetic character of the whole system is dismal. The following recommendations begin to remediate this situation. It is recommended that:

1. The entire Pop Warner facility be relocated to Cross Farm as soon as possible to enable complete restoration of the Satz Field prior to return of that field to Satz programming. Until a satisfactory substitute field can be developed or synthetic turf is installed at the Roggie Stadium football field, Pop Warner games should remain at Roggie Stadium but should be reduced to the necessary minimum.
2. The Roggie Stadium field should be reconstructed as soon as practically possible. Reconstruction includes soil replacement, drainage and refinishing. Synthetic turf for the football field should be considered to extend its utility.
3. The field space now utilized for football practice, field hockey and Varsity and J.V. baseball should be expanded toward the parking area employing structural retaining systems as necessary to reclaim sloping site surface. The same activities excepting track and field events should be relocated to Roggie practice area which should be regraded to accommodate these.
4. A systematic program of replacement of field structures, backstops, fences, gates and furnishings throughout the site should be budgeted.
5. Maintenance storage and equipment structures should be relocated from their current locations (behind Satz) to a discreet organized compound (e.g., space behind football grandstands).
6. Roadway pavement west of Satz should be reduced to the minimum needed for a fire lane to enable expansion of Satz field.
7. As Cross Farm facilities are placed and operational, move all HYAA baseball and soccer from this site.
8. Temporarily transport High School sports programs to Cross Farm to facilitate and expedite renovation/redevelopment of the High School Fields in three phases: Track and Roggie Stadium area; Baseball/Football practice area and lastly Soccer/Softball and Satz Field.
9. Explore long term lease or preferably purchase of the portion of the Holmdel Park directly across Crawford's Corner Road (currently a large meadow) for conversion to four full size rectangular multi-purpose fields based on soccer dimensions.

The High School/Satz School athletic fields are in a beleaguered condition. They are stressed beyond capability and will require even larger maintenance budgets to keep in service. As lacrosse begins to grow regionally it will exert additional field and time space pressure at the High School level which can not be met here.

Satz School is transporting teams to outlying fields now which is a situation that should be undone. This can be achieved in part by rotating recreation programs off High School venues but can not be completed without acquisition of additional space or introduction of artificial surfaces.

## **OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES**

Holmdel has made uncommonly good past planning decisions by construction of three particularly useful community recreation facilities. These are the Township Senior/Community Center, and the combined Holmdel Swim and Tennis Club. The latter two shall be considered separately as their situations and futures are distinctly different.

Municipal commitment to this type of development (particularly at the time the swim and tennis clubs were created) is evidence of a quality of social awareness and a disposition toward systematic thinking not that frequently realized.

### **SENIOR/COMMUNITY CENTER**

Holmdel's Senior/Community Center building is a very nicely constructed, well located, attractive structure. Its surrounding site work and landscaping are well designed and compose a very complete picture.

The building interior is clean, simple and useful if very Spartan in finish. Restrooms are smaller than optimal but adequate. The kitchen, likewise small would benefit by replacement of domestic with commercial equipment, as existing equipment is not capable of food service for large assemblies. A too small meeting room occurs off the entry corridor where a large room would have been attractive to a multitude of purposes. The main activity room is bright, uncluttered and partitioned by accordion dividers into potentially smaller sections.

This room is the mainstay feature of the recreation departments, arts, crafts, exercise, special event, and indoor programming and is continually in use for the diversity of these programs.

This is also the part time home and only municipal recreation feature deliberately supporting Holmdel's seniors. The regulars of this group are known as the Half Century Club and are a group of approximately 220 resident seniors who meet twice weekly here.

Service of this group is probably the weakest potential of the recreation center as each reserved slot must be preceded and concluded by stowing or hauling out equipment, supplies and A.V. equipment.

An additional unnecessary inconvenience is that the seniors must be let in as they have keys neither for the building or storage areas for their own equipment.

This facility is reported to work to its full potential currently which implies that it is smaller than ultimately necessary.

The Township should consider creation of an addition here for the following particular purposes.

1. Creation of a separate senior lounge/social space which enables full time access to this center (not twice a week) and is permanently furnished with more comfortable furniture groups that can sustain long relaxed social interaction independent of the need for daily set up.
2. Addition of significantly more storage space. As huge, heavy spare tables fill the storage room now, no room is left for activity equipment storage.

3. Integration of some pleasant outdoor space (e.g., garden, sitting area with shelter) directly with the recreation center such that visitors, particularly seniors, can spend time for social or project purposes outdoors for some portion of their visit.

### **HOLMDEL'S POOL COMPLEX**

This facility is without close second the most comprehensively well done public recreation feature in the Township. It is well conceived, well built, very well maintained and features all of the characteristics of entry, access, control and distribution of activities that a public pool should. Beyond its design attributes, the site is very isolated with a forested backdrop and excellent open sky conditions due to the adjacent G.S.P. clearing.

Its primary features include a bathhouse with food service area, a 25 meter main pool, intermediate pool, diving tank and wading pool, each nicely separated from the others. Three tennis courts, a basketball court, horseshoe pitches, play equipment areas, a volleyball court and a large open lawn play space provide a full compliment of activities.

The pool complex is administered by the Pool Advisory Committee, a five member group, charged with general administration and oversight of operations performed by a "Center Manager". It has approximately 900 member families, the bulk of which (60%) are Township residents.

It is reported that the pool system operates at a significant annual profit after subtraction of operation expenses and has in recent years accumulated as much as \$300,000.00 in surplus prior to extraction of those funds by the Township.

The membership status is stable and always full. Surplus income is sufficient to undertake capital projects if allowed to build.

Future objectives of the Pool Advisory Committee include:

1. Replacement of the Bathhouse roof converting an archaic and faulty design with an appropriate roof.
2. Upgrade of food service and restroom features.
3. Creation of indoor activity space.
4. Retirement of many small shelter structures to be replaced by increased landscaping.

The Pool Advisory Committee and Manager have performed their charge here in a most exemplary fashion. This is the sole physical recreation entity in the Township organized and administered to conduct a high quality recreation program, manage, plan and perform timely and appropriate facility maintenance upgrade and have on hand a cogent plan for future capital projects.

It is recommended that this facility and its operation continue according to its current form except that surplus funds generated seasonally be escrowed into a recreation account with amounts necessary to perform future improvements protected.

Outdoor pool facilities are structurally and mechanically elaborate and as they age, can be subject to serious system failures. As the pool complex generates surplus from it own operation

it is equitable and sensible to buffer and preserve a portion of those funds in anticipation of emergency failures and in preparation for needed upgrades.

### **HOLMDEL'S TENNIS CENTER**

This facility constitutes a dramatic counter point to its physical neighbor, the pool. Its fortunes over time have not been nearly as good as the pool's, but for comprehensible reasons. The tennis complex consists of eight lighted "Har-Tru" (clay) courts supported minimally by a tiny office/storage structure.

When constructed (early 1970's) these courts likely seemed state of the art and regionally were much rarer than today. The entire complex has been slowly deteriorating since those days when memberships reached as high as 200. Today membership stands at about 80 with few legitimate prospects to attract growth.

This decline is consequent of a combination of factors. These are among them.

1. Tennis is a cyclic sport waxing and waning in popularity in part according to current media attention to the sport.
2. Regional increase in tennis courts particularly in association with fitness clubs, country clubs and similar commercial enterprises attract and hold a substantial proportion of lifetime players particularly in affluent communities.
3. Consumer sophistication and experience with high quality modern facilities particularly those with enhanced social backdrops create a preference for similar, full service systems.
4. Diversified facilities that offer alternative activities, particularly for young children are much more convenient and attractive to young adult families who prefer to hand off children to temporary supervised distraction while they play unimpeded.

Holmdel's tennis complex offers none of these conditions and simply can not attract visitors or members on a competitive basis.

5. The last and most significant is physical condition and appearance of the facility. This complex was undoubtedly much better than average when built, particularly with lighting and sophisticated courts. In the intervening years nothing has changed, improved or been updated. The complex today excepting the court surfaces themselves have deteriorated to a markedly sub-standard condition.

Fences are corroded, light systems archaic, retaining walls are failing, furnishings are non-existent, and no color, life or beauty remains in the complex excepting its siting.

Of all these impairments the worst situation is comprehensive lack of appropriate ancillary support. Failure to provide a restroom, pleasant shelter, sitting areas, an indoor meeting/social space or even an attractive entry feature are fatal flaws in a freestanding court complex such as this. For members there is no pleasant space here to enable the formation of a social culture essential to a club operation.

As these features were not constructed at the outset, this potential asset has declined to a potential problem.

Notwithstanding current physical conditions here, a real potential exists to resurrect this facility and more importantly, a legitimate recreation resource.

The Township should consider this complex very carefully as it is approaching a physical condition where it must be renovated. Considering its lifespan, this is a normal circumstance, irrespective of the current vitality of the facility. If not renovated, its decline to a point of emergency repair or forced closure will occur within the next several years.

Holmdel is statistically large enough to support these courts. As they are the only public courts in the northern section of the Township, they are worthy of preservation. Considering the status of the High School grounds, even newly constructed courts there can not be expected to provide a high quality public service.

The Township's apparent best options are these:

1. Renovate the courts incorporating appropriate support systems and operate the updated facility as a conventional recreation feature.
2. Renovate the courts (as above) continuing management under the current club status but modifying use opportunity by incorporating a day use fee for the general public.
3. Renovate the courts (as above) and merge the Pool and Tennis Clubs under a single management. This implies a joint membership option for current pool members and a single facility option for others.

The last of these three is recommended as it enables the very necessary condition of generating user fees adequate to maintain a local manager (pro) and full time supervision presuming year round use.

If an on site supervisor can not be built into this program, the clay courts will have to be replaced with conventional hard surfaced courts as skilled daily maintenance is required for clay courts. Beyond this a resident "pro" is capable of providing "added value" services of lessons and networking for serious players. Both of these assets are critical to development of a sufficient revenue stream to attract and maintain a pro.

It remains equitable and important to create an appropriate day use fee for non-member residents accepting that prior reservation will be obliged.

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT RECREATION RESOURCES – PUBLIC**

### **COUNTY PARK SYSTEM**

Holmdel is the primary beneficiary of extraordinary planning and development of public recreation space by Monmouth County. This is expressed in Holmdel and Thompson Parks both of which occur in Holmdel.

1. Holmdel Park is a full mature County Park of 347 acres which provides a great diversity of outdoor recreational, cultural and educational features including: a historic working farm, a fishing pond, activity center (educational), tennis courts, picnic areas (family and group), ice skating, cross country skiing, bicycling (roads only), an arboretum, miles of trails of various characters and a broad array of organized programs.

Holmdel Park occurs entirely within the Township and is accessible by automobile at two locations on Longstreet Road and Holmdel Road (maintenance yard).

2. Thompson Park is a huge 665 acre park land of which approximately half occurs within the Township. Thompson Park is partially developed, the remainder (areas in Holmdel) is generally reserved as agricultural open space, not specifically improved for public visitation, but the farm's roads are used for walking, jogging, bicycling, and cross-country skiing. There is a pond where canoes may be launched.

Thompson Park features are more biased to organized cultural, educational, and environmental programs and uses than Holmdel Park but offer tennis courts, soccer fields, fishing, picnicking and extensive health, fitness, craft and outdoor educational programming. The visitor center here is exquisite and worth a single trip to enjoy.

Thompson Park is conveniently located for most Township residents but certainly is less frequently visited on a spontaneous basis than is Holmdel Park.

In combination these remarkable assets diminish the priority for certain types of similar features within Township parcels. This is particularly true for long trails, group picnic sites, environmental educational and interpretive features and in general for open space. Although they are shared with a large regional population, by proximity, Holmdel's residents are easily best served by Holmdel Park.

### **INDOOR FACILITIES – ATHLETIC**

Each of Holmdel's public schools provides space and access to gymnasium and common rooms (library, cafeteria) for a host of winter sports and group functions related to recreation. A huge basketball element of the HYAA program (107 teams) practices and plays within the five existing gyms and will soon be able to spread into a new High School recreation center facility and a new gymnasium at the Village School.

## **INDOOR FACILITIES – PASSIVE**

The Township Senior/Community Center is the primary current programmable passive use recreation feature. Additional facilities at Bayonet Farm may soon increase this inventory. The Harding House, red barn and gray barn are currently in committee review to determine their best future utilization.

Presumably each will support some cultural, educational or social function or option available to Township residents. A proposal is expected from the Bayonet and Cross Farm Advisory Committee in 2004.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Recreation needs may be usefully identified by comparison of existing system capabilities to existing demand and by forecasting future demand by anticipated population increase.

As the delivery of recreation facilities and programs is purely optional at the discretion of a given community, no imperatives or deficiencies actually exist. Rather, recreation need is expressed by the focus of public sentiment and subsequent responses by the local administration to meet priority demands. This relationship characterizes the current condition of recreation features within the Township. For example, organized youth baseball needed field space and was motivated enough to independently create the HYAA. This organization has grown in influence, capability and success in propelling its purposes even more successfully as citizen participation and involvement is more efficiently directed.

Athletic fields at Board of Education sites were placed to meet educational system requirements imposed by State Agencies as well as by regional conventions for appropriate intramural and interscholastic facilities.

Exterior agency enterprise has furnished a great deal of utilitarian recreation space and well developed facilities in the form of County parklands while the great bulk of local sports fields have been placed at school sites.

Beyond these very coincidentally motivated recreation developments, Holmdel Township has purposefully created very few significant recreation facilities not specifically targeting organized sports, with the notable exception of the pool complex.

A recent study (conducted by the Holmdel YMCA Task Force) to investigate public interest in a YMCA produced some interesting findings which though not directly applicable to Township recreation, strongly suggest theme types dominated within the highest ranked preferences by individual, health or fitness oriented pursuits, swimming and programmed classes, youth services and entertainment.

The product of this study, considered in the context of Holmdel's traditional mechanism of facility supply, suggests that alternative recreation preferences will not soon be met except by private enterprise.

Recreation facility and subsequent system maturation in suburban communities moving rapidly toward build-out is commonly most influenced by local convention and precedent. These typically have failed to produce planning and zoning instruments that could anticipate the influence of rapid development upon recreation systems and have been completely unprepared to anticipate the cultural and social preferences of future residents from dissimilar lifestyles.

The most prominent need in the recreation system in Holmdel today is that for commitment to creation of a locally owned and operated public utility dedicated to the purposes of outdoor recreation, beauty, refreshment, education, and community as well as active sports.

A systematic rather than a reactionary administrative strategy relative to recreation should be adopted. Main tactical elements of that strategy should include:

1. Stabilization of existing infrastructure and facilities (update, repair, renovate existing features and maintenance systems and equipment).
2. Redevelopment of appropriate components of existing recreation sites to meet current demand (e.g. Roggie Stadium).
3. Introduction of new or additional features into existing undeveloped sites to respond to general (not organized) recreation activities.
4. Identification of opportunities within existing recreation lands which may be dedicated to local opportunity for active and passive pursuits in a balanced, comprehensive fashion and with a far greater respect for and emphasis upon natural character and aesthetic quality.

Interests among the general public, as for walking, nature study, environmental education, individual training and cultural activities do not frequently coalesce into potent advocacy organizations representing their purposes in the media or at public forums. These recreational day use types in aggregate far surpass the recreation hours spent individually about a given sport but are rarely represented as deficiencies. Similarly, playgrounds, quiet places, sunny meadows, sled hills, woodland paths and unnamed other small opportunities that have a chance to please one's senses are rarely directly requested.

The Township in direction of its recreation system is the only agency capable of creating or preserving individual opportunities but must first recognize them and order their significance among other needs.

## STATISTICAL SPATIAL NEEDS

These are variously described according to the agency guideline considered and are wildly subjective as land quality relative to a given recreation objective may have no useful reference to size.

According to the New Jersey State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) the following guideline figures are recommended as necessary acreages per 1000 of population, by jurisdiction.

### AREA/POPULATION RATIO

|            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Municipal: | 8 acres/thousand  |
| County:    | 12 acres/thousand |
| State:     | 24 acres/thousand |
| Federal:   | 16 acres/thousand |

These objectives are conditioned as follows:

1. School facilities are excluded.
2. Large natural areas are excluded.
3. Developed areas are included.

So considered, Holmdel Township rated as follows, based on 17,300 population:

| <b>Agency</b> | <b>“Needed” Acres</b> | <b>Acres Furnished</b> |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Municipal     | 8 x 17.3 = 138.4      | 94.1                   |

This table indicates a shortfall of 44.3 acres of developed space at the municipal level.

The New Jersey Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan defines a separate standard called Area Percentage that established comparative values for total developable land dedicated to recreation. It assigns values to be met as follows:

| <b>Area Percentage</b> | <b>Standard</b>     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Agency</b>          |                     |
| Municipality           | 3% developable land |

Holmdel’s status under this method looks like this, based on an area estimated at 15 square miles (after subtraction of County owned recreation lands and Garden State Parkway lands):

| <b>Agency</b> | <b>Standard</b> | <b>Available</b>    |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Municipal     | 3% (288 acres)  | 6.45% (619.5 acres) |

This suggests that a surplus of parkland exists.

Clearly these Agency standards utilized to compare existing facility quantities to guideline recommendations do not present a very useful picture or direction as applied to the historically preferred method of service supply chosen by the Township. This report does not regard either statistic as usefully applicable.

## **EVALUATION OF SYSTEM BY PROGRAM & FACILITY**

A group of conventional, traditional, and accustomed activities, usually organized by citizens, typifies most suburban communities. In Holmdel Township these are baseball/softball, soccer, lacrosse, cheerleading, football and basketball. As these are represented by organizations and conducted according to regular schedules, they are fairly easily understood in terms of program need contrasted to available facilities.

Those elements of community recreation were explored in part during interview sessions with representatives of the several sports at the Township association level and through interviews with Board of Education representatives.

These are described by activity as follows:

### **A. BASEBALL & SOFTBALL**

Baseball and softball activities for boys and girls are well supported municipal programs. They span an enormous age range from kindergarten to adult and involve over 1000 of the Township's youth. Baseball is delivered by the Middle School, High School, HYAA, and American Legion programs.

Facilities supporting these sports occur as follows:

|                | Baseball | Softball |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| High School    | 2        | 1        |
| Satz School    | 0        | 1        |
| Village School | 2**      | 0        |
| Indian Hill    | 1        | 2        |
| Allocco Park   | 1        | 0        |
| Phillips Park  | 1 + 1**  | 0        |
| Labbe Park     | 1        | 0        |
| Cross Farm     | 1        | 2        |
|                | 10       | 6        |

\*\* not in service yet

These facilities support the following programs:

|                                 | <u>Teams Total</u> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| High School                     |                    |
| Varsity, JV, Freshman Baseball  | 3                  |
| Varsity, JV, Freshman Softball, | 3                  |
| Satz Middle School Programs     |                    |
| Satz Baseball                   | 1                  |
| Satz Softball                   | 1                  |
| HYAA                            |                    |
| All Levels                      | 90                 |
| Legion                          | 2                  |
|                                 | =====              |
| Total                           | 100 teams          |

This results in a total of 100 teams sharing 16 fields in the spring.

High school and middle school teams require six field slots per week for a total of 48 slots. As each other team will typically require two practices/week, 184 field slots are typically needed. A total requirement of 232 slots occurs.

Each field may be utilized each weekday and up to six times on Saturday and Sunday yielding a total availability potential of 272 field slots.

This comparison suggests an approximate balance between use and capability but assumes uniform good weather conditions and has little response capability for make-up games.

The fields needed for Satz Middle School programs do not exist on their respective sites. These programs are transported to Indian Hill, Village and Cross Farm.

An important inference, which can be confirmed by examination of field surfaces, is that this quantity of utilization causes greater wear and deterioration than can be restored between seasons. This is particularly true of overlain fields (High School, Middle School, and Indian Hill) where fall season soccer continues to damage turf and compact soil. When adversely influenced by weather (drought, rainfall) these fields will begin to decline in surface condition at once and will require greater quantities of time and materials to restore.

This situation will be least evident at the Cross Farm facility where volunteer time and attention is nearly limitless. Elsewhere, only Board of Education or recreation budgets support field maintenance and this problem has become acute.

NOTE: The HYAA also conducts a fall baseball program. This program is much smaller than the spring program total and can be comfortably conducted within the existing venues.

## B. SOCCER

Soccer programs for boys and girls in the Township have grown enormously in the past decade in a manner consistent with many other regional communities. In Holmdel, the HYAA and Stallion programs have created an enormous, diverse and successful array of teams.

Soccer Fields are available as follows:

| <u>Available Facilities</u> | <u>Fields or Field Spaces</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| High School                 | 3                             |
| Satz Middle School          | 0                             |
| Ackerson/Indian Hill School | 1* + 1                        |
| Village School              | 3 + 2**                       |
| Labbe Park                  | 1*                            |
| Cross Farm                  | 13                            |
|                             | =====                         |
| Total                       | 22 fields                     |

\* indicates a field suitable only for practice

\*\* indicates a field space not in service

These facilities support the following programs.

|                        | <u>Teams Total/Uses/Week</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| High School Programs   |                              |
| Boys Soccer            |                              |
| Varsity, JV, Freshman  | 3 x 6 = 18                   |
| Girls Soccer           |                              |
| Varsity, JV, Freshman  | 3 x 6 = 18                   |
| Middle School Programs |                              |
| Boys Soccer            | 1 x 5 = 5                    |
| Girls Soccer           | 1 x 5 = 5                    |
| HYAA Soccer            |                              |
| All Levels             | 47 x 3 = 141                 |
| Travel Soccer          | 27 x 3 = 81                  |
|                        | =====                        |
| Totals                 | 82 Teams – 268 Uses/Week     |

Contrasting the fields' availability to handle the demand yields 82 teams competing for space on 22 fields on 268 different occasions. Accumulating the whole total of field spaces at a capability each of 5 uses/week and seven uses per weekend produces a total number of slots at 264 per week.

This result is occurring in the best of circumstances and cannot be achieved when fields are impacted by weather.

These statistics indicate an approximate balance of fields and uses, under optimal conditions. This appearance is deceptive as evidence by field degradation.

## **C. LACROSSE**

Lacrosse is an established program at the High School being delivered at freshman and Varsity levels. It is only a fledgling sport in recreation, reportedly just introducing teams now.

The Town should expect lacrosse to expand quickly. In other regional municipalities, it has grown as fast as soccer formerly grew.

At its current size the recreation lacrosse program is capable of functioning smoothly within the existing field system, but as it grows, it will quickly compete with spring soccer programs at the recreation level for same size field and practice space.

## **D. FIELD HOCKEY**

Field hockey is an offering only at the middle school and high school levels. It is represented by five (5) teams totally each competing for space at the middle school and high school sites with the soccer program. This is a conventional interscholastic program but one with relatively particular requirements for its fields. A very regular field's surface with uniform turf is the chief prerequisite. Such a field occurs nowhere within the recreational system. In fact, maintenance of a proper field hockey turf is very nearly impossible on shared fields particularly with sports that erode and damage ground surfaces, as do soccer and lacrosse.

The high school will ultimately need to produce one game field that is appropriately graded and groomed for field hockey and will need to shield that field from excessive other uses.

## **E. FOOTBALL**

Football is a large program in the Township being offered at the High School in three levels and by a Pop Warner program registering 365 children in 15 teams.

Football is the least well serviced of sports venues in the entire system of major sports and, owing to too few fields, practices on some of the most damaged substrates in the system.

The Board of Education reports that its game field (Roggie Stadium) is typically so impacted by over utilization, particularly from Pop Warner games that it can not be adequately managed. (This assertion is confirmed by field examination.)

Only four other venues are available for football practice. These are: Roggie practice field, a substandard small space adjacent to the stadium; the Varsity practice field; the JV soccer field and the Satz field. The last, Satz field is so completely damaged that it should be closed and renovated.

Available fields for football are simply too few and too fragile to sustain the enormous pounding delivered by 18 teams sharing four fields. If the Township or more particularly

the Board of Education intends to keep any of these fields in serviceable conditions, a temporary home for at least four practice fields must soon be found for the Pop Warner program while these school fields are renovated.

Continuation of game play on the Roggie Stadium field at current levels can not be sustained. This surface is very nearly ruined and must be renovated soon regardless of diminished use. Synthetic turf, while initially expensive, should be considered as this would allow the use of this existing lighted venue to be greatly extended, both for games and for practices.

## **F. CHEERLEADING**

Cheerleading accompanies Pop Warner football as an indoor and outdoor program currently finding space where it can. Though the spatial requirements for cheerleading are less than for conventional sports venues, good quality turf surfaces are certainly needed. These should be provided as part of a renovation of fields to support the Pop Warner football program.

## **G. COURT SPORTS**

### **1. Tennis**

Holmdel Township offers a sum total of sixteen (16) tennis courts to the public. These however occur in only two groups. They are, the High School courts and the pool complex courts and are consequently not equitably accessible. Courts at the High School are currently being reconstructed but occur in such an unlovely site, that they are not likely to attract as much use as they otherwise might. Three of the 11 courts at the pool complex are trapped behind the pool enclosure and available only to the membership and during the pool season (Memorial Day to Labor Day). The remaining eight courts at the tennis center are currently shared by 80 members and are not available to the general public. Others occur within the County system, four of which are at Holmdel Park and have minor utility.

Tennis is at the low ebb of its most recent cycle of popularity, which recommends strongly against current new construction. However when its popularity rebounds, as it will, the Township should consider additional of as many as 6 courts in sequential phases (2 per phase) at Cross Farm and/or at one of the more northern Township parks. Growing activity there, as new master plan features are added, will strongly influence community interest in the facility stimulating simultaneously interest in tennis.

Tennis is a cyclic sport currently on the ebb side. In the ideal, Holmdel can place additional of these or light existing courts as the next “flow” occurs, attempting then to balance distribution within the Township.

### **2. Basketball**

Outdoor Basketball is represented by a total of eight (8) courts within the Township. 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 low. This count will improve

significantly by future addition of four new courts planned at Cross Farms, but should be increased further by placement of single court additions within open space tracts throughout the Township.

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.

This is a very important recreation among day workers and if well placed can return a great deal of afternoon and evening play. Otherwise, it sustains children of all ages coincident with enormous media attention, associated stars and promotions.

Court surfaces can be traditional black asphalt or boldly colored to increase their attraction. When possible they should be lighted. Those existing at Phillips, Labbe, and Indian Hill should be color coated and improved with furnishings.

Ultimately, basketball courts should be placed in pocket or neighborhood parks throughout the Township but this must generally await creation of those parks.

Indoor basketball is an enormous program in Holmdel. In addition to a full compliment of High School and Middle School boys and girls basketball delivered by the school system, HYAA organizes a program of 107 recreation and 10 travel teams for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade residents. In aggregate, this accumulates to nearly 2000 games per season spread across five gymnasiums in Township schools and one multi-purpose room (Village School).

As the Township recreation system matures, this level of commitment to winter sports indoors should strongly factor into the Township's deliberations over an indoor recreation center.

### **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 indoor 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 are 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.

Ideally, such a facility would be on a 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 at the pool complex, now exist in the system, which fact is not particularly significant in any respect. All except horseshoes and badminton require an organized group of followers to make creation of such facilities a viable

prospect. Horseshoe pitches and badminton courts can be a useful addendum to a well-appointed picnic grove and either could be incorporated at Phillips, Labbe, Allocco or Ackerson Indian Hill Parks.

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. Volleyball should be considered for addition to Cross Farm Park to broaden the appeal and usefulness of this facility.

## **H. OTHER MAINSTREAM RECREATIONS: ROLLER SKATING AND 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 these forms. The advent of inline skates allowed these urban derived recreations to move to the suburbs.

Holmdel offers nothing deliberately for this group but should as the demand for facilities will increase with the continuing influx of exurbanites.

Roller hockey has become an increasingly engaging activity 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 even outside the context of the game.

Roller-skating and roller blading as exercise remains most easily done on hard surface despite remarkable technological improvements. The very best substrates are paved trails without conflict with automobiles.

The Township has just such an ideal opportunity at Cross Farm. A multi-purpose lane adaptable to this purpose is already in place and being expanded there and with a little additional imagination could be enhanced to incorporate these themes.

Skateboarding can occur on almost any paved or constructed surface and, to the annoyance of many, frequently does. As one learns more of several maneuver types, the prospect of accommodating this recreation is comprehensible and a useful, engaging skate park feature can be created in a fairly small space. Comparatively these remain expensive facilities but have come to be considered, conventional public park features.

## **I. BICYCLING**

Bicycling whether on road bikes or mountain bikes is a premium recreation form. Fortuitously, Holmdel Township is as nearly ideal for these activities as can be hoped for in central New Jersey providing that riders stay away from the few arterial roadways that connect the maze of dead end and cul-de-sac subdivisions.

Road biking is what the world offers and here a bicyclist can travel scores of miles south and west on scenic, low volume roads.

Mountain biking has far more than average potential though little on sanctioned public trails. Legitimate riding is not offered at Holmdel or Thompson Parks but is expected to be a component at the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area (formerly Chase) and Harding Tracts.

The Township should work as quickly as possible in this area in concert with the County, private agencies and NJ Green Acres to connect as many parcels consistent with the Open Space plan as possible. Opportunity remains within the Township to create a spectacular bikeway system that could compliment and, in some areas, may eliminate the need for road riding almost completely.

Consistent with this purpose the Township should examine and evaluate a current trail proposal known as the Ramanessin Greenway to assure that as many access points within the Township, open to as many types of non-motorized vehicles as possible be negotiated for.

Specific objectives of the Township should be increasing access opportunities and extending route main corridors into the Township in at least three practical locations. These are: First, extension of a bikeway leg from Thompson Park into Cross Farm.

The second link and extension would occur through the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area to and through the Harding Tract.

The third extension would occur within the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area through to Holmdel Park and within Holmdel Park to Holmdel Road near Line Road and to the High School site.

Planning for this type of future should continue in concert with the Greenway if possible but should continue in any case.

Dedication of local funds to bikeway development is an attractive notion but should not eclipse more pressing short term Township goals. Unless separate funding (DOT, ISTEA) can be secured solely for bikeway improvements, such networked regional systems should not displace local recreation projects except that linkages from proposed Township improvements including bikeways are involved. This case currently occurs only at Cross Farm.

## **J. PLAYGROUNDS**

Playgrounds occur in a variety of locations within the Township with particularly well-equipped facilities occurring on Board of Education sites. All of these however seem to have neglected some of the fundamental elements of playground design, perhaps owing to the fact that they are all generally utilized by larger supervised class groups.

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.

If these areas work well for recess, they will not for general recreation. For any other person unfortunate enough to accompany children to these facilities there is hope only to stand in the sun and wind or retire to some remote place to sit.

In the future, access paths, perimeter paths, sitting areas, game tables, shelters, landscaping and drinking fountains should be considered as amendments to each such facility.

## **K. ICE SKATING**

Outdoor ice skating is much more popular in concept than in fact. Many remember occasions where splendid recreation was enjoyed somewhere on a frozen pond. Practically however, ice-skating outdoors is perhaps the most unreliable of opportunities in central New Jersey. So many factors and risks combine to confound good skating conditions that it cannot be planned for.

Artificial ice is reliable and extremely costly. It frequently fails even as a commercial enterprise and is not recommended for current consideration within the Township. Rinks are available in Red Bank, Wall, and Woodbridge – short to moderate driving distances from Holmdel.

Available water body resources, particularly in the County parks, provide some of the most interesting conditions possible when ice occurs. The Township should content itself with this potential, unless the opportunity to enter a partnership with a skilled private vendor is presented. In this instance, supply of adequate land space may be appropriate.

## **L. CULTURAL FACILITIES**

These are increasingly rare but unfailingly useful facilities to forge community links and promote social interaction. 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 rain shelter. This obliges appropriate access and parking provisions and is thus best suited to an existing site with such infrastructure.

The Township would benefit by creation of at least a moderate sized shelter at each developed park but secondarily to provision of restrooms. Both a shelter and a restroom/storage building are being constructed at the Phillips and Veterans Memorial Park area.

## **M. EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES**

Equestrian activities and opportunities are well represented and developed in the County Park System and the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area and Harding Open Space Tracts.

Equestrian activities are rarely considered within the purview of Township recreation, being more scale appropriate to regional planning as by the County. For example, the County has recently opened the Sunnyside Recreation Area in nearby Lincroft, which has an equestrian focus. In Holmdel however, trail system elements envisioned by the Township may utilize existing equestrian trails or may offer new equestrian opportunities.

As the Township considers future utilization of the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area and Harding Tracts existing equestrian trails should be integrated to provide access to those sites and hopefully, to facilitate linkage out.

It is also strongly recommended that the Township continues to strengthen its partnerships with the County, conservancies and private land owners to acquire land or development rights, so that connectivity and unrestricted access to County and Township parks for pedestrians, bicyclists and horse riders are maintained and expanded.

## **N. 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 evident in excellent County Park designing.

Some of the characteristics of such potential objectives include:

1. Entry features created to identify the site and welcome visitors within.
2. Walkways. The common connector typically continuing throughout the recreation site, for conduct of visitors to each of the features areas from some place of entry.
3. Furnishings. A coordinated group of benches, tables, trash receptacles, railings, and similar accompaniments that enable comfortable occupation of a site.
4. Gardens. 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 Holmdel Township recreation sites offer no such characteristics or even their pretense. (A notable exception is the recently planted daffodil garden at Bayonet Farm.) The failure to observe or promote aesthetic improvements at the Township's parks may attest to the historical pragmatism of the Township planners but it highlights what may be the greatest challenge for all future considerations.

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 Holmdel's school sites, Cross Farm and Ackerson Indian Hill Parks are open to sun and wind, with few occasions of any mystery because everything can be seen from any place.

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. They are so few and so tediously used in the Township's 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.

6. Pathways/Accessibility. Beyond their utilitarian purposes, pathways have been obliged by statute for some time. Technically, each outdoor constructed feature on public land must be accessible or barrier free, permitting access for handicapped visitors. No site (including the newly constructed Cross Farm) is barrier free. In general, all sites are grossly deficient in this respect.

Pathways, like plantings, have an intrinsic functional virtue for more reward 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. The best examples of this type of feature occur at Allocco Park, Phillips

Park (though discontinuous), Ackerson Indian Hill Park and Ramanessin Brook Greenway Nature Trail.

## **O. RESTROOMS**

Among real deficiencies in the Township recreation system, restrooms or the lack thereof stand alone as the most pointed and problematic. No site in the entire system features an adequate, compliant, hygienic, attractive restroom. The ubiquitous porta-john has been pressed into service in a variety of other applications but such features are not barrier free, not sanitary, not pleasant and most emphatically not appropriate for young children.

The Township is currently addressing this deficiency at Phillips and Veterans Memorial Parks.

In Holmdel, as in all other growing suburban communities, this issue constitutes a genuine dilemma. Temporary restrooms are awful, but cheap and easy. Restrooms are costly to build and maintain, sustain vandalism and require daily maintenance.

A response in part is to assure that one restroom is identified and open on all school/park joint-use sites even if maintenance costs must be increased.

Elsewhere, the Township must work towards provision of efficient safe facilities at least to the extent that visitors may visit the restroom and wash afterwards.

A plain philosophical observation applies to the restroom quandary. It is that when a public facility is created with the purposeful intention 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.

## **P. WALKING, HIKING SYSTEMS**

While there is not a net deficiency in walking and hiking opportunities in the Township, the bulk of available systems require a planned excursion for local residents. There are many more opportunities that may be exploited (Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area, Bayonet Farm, Thompson, DePalma, Cross Farm) that require only access, and identification to occupy. Placement of such modest improvements should be quickly done to present walking and hiking where it can be reached by many more adjacent residents without use of an automobile. This is an essential function of local recreation and park lands not now sufficiently provided.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

The following report section describes recommended actions to be undertaken by the Township as an approach to achieving the goals and site specific objectives set forth previously.

As recreation projects occur in time and priority secondarily to a Township's primary service and infrastructure demands, the time frame that recommendations are grouped under are without precise definition. Those grouped as "short term" are actions to be undertaken as soon as practically possible. Those grouped as "near term" include projects that may require several years to complete and generally address stabilization of existing system components and implementation of measures to resolve deficiencies or initiate new system improvements. Those grouped as "long term" include recommendations that exist as planning objectives alone in current time and that may be realized completely over decades.

Separate recommendations are directed towards administrative actions. While not necessarily time specific, these are presumed to be considered and acted upon as preamble to following capital projects.

## **SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS**

#### **1. Introduce a Framework.**

Holmdel Township should elect to institute a plan for a series of modifications or improvements of existing facilities as well as creation of a few facilities to respond to existing and emerging deficiencies in the recreation system. It is observed that many of the existing system shortcomings are of a subjective nature as contrasted to simple quantitative imbalance. Therefore, a selection of the desired attributes for public recreation lands should be described by the Township as a foundation for subsequent capital improvements.

The Township should consider and nominate a generic model or guideline for development of future improvements.

#### **2. Reinforce Relationship to Board of Education.**

Since historically the bulk of active recreation facilities in Holmdel Township have occurred on Board of Education lands, it is imperative that the Township consolidate accustomed practices into long term shared use/ shared cost arrangements that guarantee the Township access to these facilities. Despite the accepted convention of joint use, these facilities are far more subject to regulations and requirements imposed by the State Board of Education than by the Township. Physical conditions of several school fields are such that they could be reasonably closed according to their degenerated utility and safety.

Maintenance, repair and reconditioning of fields and the cost associated with those operations will increase over the next several years. Agreements, in anticipation of how those costs will be met, should be entered into now.

**3. Establish Working Links with the Monmouth County system.**

Currently, Holmdel's outdoor recreation program relies heavily on land and activity features occurring on County parklands. This has recently increased to include shared ownership/operation and use arrangements particularly for the Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area (formerly the Chase Tract).

In fact, the Monmouth County Park System balances the recreation program in Holmdel Township by furnishing open space, trails, picnic sites, and water access among a host of important natural area opportunities not delivered locally.

Holmdel Township will need to expand increasingly into Monmouth County facilities in the future and will need a cooperative partner to further Township purposes. At the moment, the partnership is very one-sided. Likely, little incentive exists for the County to rush to Holmdel's assistance to help accommodate local deficiencies.

In order to "grease the wheels" of this important relationship, the Township needs to add incentive for the County. This incentive occurs in two important opportunities; access to land and access to money or the product of its expenditure.

As the Township has actively entered a sequence of open space preservation and acquisition, determination of County land hold expansion plans and link development objectives should be coordinated with subject local preservation targets so both agendas can be met.

Elements of County owned land, such as Holmdel Park and Thompson Park, have extraordinary utility to the Township and optimally should be negotiated to establish additional walkways and bikeway linkages through these.

A particularly important need for additional space at the High School/Satz sites for expansion exists. This site is indispensable to Holmdel's recreation program and future. As the County owns an adjacent parcel (on Holmdel Park) well positioned to meet expansion purposes on, it is strongly recommended that the Township open a dialogue with the County to gain a lease or purchase agreement for several acres there.

Alternatively, a "land swap" between the County and the Township could be considered. For example, the Township and County have coincident and adjacent lands and interests in the Complex of Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area, Bayonet Farm and Cross/Thompson. It is recommended that land, linkages or structures, not essential to Township recreation (stables, historic homes) be bargained, in exchange for land near the High School.

**4. Recognize, protect, and preserve existing relationships with citizen associations.**

Holmdel Township's organized sports of all descriptions have been and are being delivered by the efforts of private citizens. It is not uncommon elsewhere for

team assembly, scheduling, and conduct of practices and games to be managed by private citizens. It is rare to find sports associations conducting or performing primary maintenance responsibility and infrastructure development.

The Township should make every effort to sustain this efficient and inexpensive technique of field management and should regard each association formed in support of a particular sport as an effective resource bringing planning, administration, maintenance, and operational services to the delivery of their particular interest. If the Township is able and willing to sustain these organizations by provision of space resources and funding for maintenance operations, involved citizens will find manpower to support their own programs.

The alternative obliges the Township to fund, construct, and manage these facilities under conventional municipal budgets and with municipal employees. Consequently, the expense will be enormously greater.

In specific, the Township should accept that their field stocks are marginal in many physical respects and are under use pressure far greater than optimal. Consequently, until a better balance of available fields can be achieved, all of the existing venues will require at least partial repair, re-seeding, fertilizing, turf management, and aeration at comparatively high levels on an annual basis. In anticipation of this a budget allocation, renewed annually, for purchase and storage of grass seed, chemicals, fertilizer, and application equipment should be maintained to facilitate access to these on an as needed basis by local associations.

**5. Consider and establish administrative guidelines for new capital projects.**

Minimum requirements should be created for all new constructed features of the recreation system. These should qualify (not quantify) conditions that must be met prior to Township approval of commitment of capital resources necessary to accomplish that purposes.

For example, Holmdel will possibly be increasing sports fields over the next several years, generally in response to requests from HYAA or Pop Warner. Design programs guiding these are specific to the narrow recreation purposes of organized sports, not to an internal (Recreation Department) initiative balanced among other priorities of the whole recreation system. The Township should evaluate these requests not solely in terms of need, even if it is real and immediate.

The Township should expect and require a variety of balanced proposal elements that must be met prior to approval of capital commitment. These should be tested against Township standards and accepted or conditioned prior to reaching the Township Committee for approval. For recreation projects a minimum of such tests should be these:

- a. From the Recreation Department
  - 1) a statement that proposed features are appropriate in size, character, quantity to meet their proposed purpose and in balance or not with other system needs.

- b. From Public Works
  - 1) a statement that adequate man power, equipment and operations budget is in place.
  - 2) if not in place, itemize exactly what will be needed to support.
    - a) personnel or overtime
    - b) appropriate equipment
    - c) routine maintenance
    - d) annual budgetary increase required
      - in an itemized form
    - e) contingency plan

As physical components of parks and sports features, once built, last for a very long time, it is absolutely essential that the response to their continuing operational demands are adequate to keep them in excellent condition without draining other system resources.

Construction of new facilities quickly, in response to acute, popular, supported demands is a common pitfall in maturing suburban communities. Frequently, these are placed in advance of and without useful planning for the needed and ongoing maintenance support.

It is typically assumed that new fields will be intrinsically less consumptive of maintenance than existing older facilities. While they may be more efficient to maintain if well designed, until established, they are actually more costly to manage as they should be maintained according to the condition of new construction.

If they are not managed to match newly finished conditions or if finishing is being attempted while in service, natural surface systems “settle in” to whatever condition the natural substrate (soil, moisture, and compaction) will sustain. In a large part this has happened at Cross Farm, where many of the recently constructed or renovated fields now look like old fields in terms of turf conditions.

It is now incumbent upon the Township to fund once again restoration of new fields instead of maintenance alone.

## **B. OPERATIONAL SYSTEM**

Physical characteristics of recreation systems and specific issues of service delivery emerge in the background of a universe of competing, more important public services (roads, schools, sewers, subdivision) in rural communities. These slowly move into the foreground as communities suburbanize until they finally pop to the surface as a symptom of maturity in that municipality. Typically, this occurs much later than useful to preserve options in areas which have been densely occupied.

As recreation has always been the “last child” in the community service family, it is typically least attended in planning terms, growing according to its independent

opportunities, propelled by individual or group interests rather than by Administrative design.

This sequence typically yields a few large, well organized, purposeful and politically capable citizen associations driving organized recreation agendas within each suburban community.

This is illustrated by HYAA and Pop Warner in Holmdel.

Individual and small group preferences for recreation rarely coalesce into similarly capable organizations and even more rarely accomplish significant constructed features.

As a whole consequence, a mature suburban community is frequently dealing with issues of athletic field size, quality, elaboration, support and maintenance as the primary component of their local system, while periodically looking around for odd corners to mollify a persistent minor cause for passive, natural or local recreation.

The final challenge to suburban communities prior to build out is to scramble for a share of remaining open space in an environment of even higher cost and even more capable competing development interests.

Curiously, the planning purpose to restrict remaining land development tends to provide opportunities for a number of individual, spontaneous, nature oriented or passive use purposes not previously attended. Acquisition of open space, corridors, greenways, historic landmarks and fragile environments to protect or enhance the character of communities emerges as the best evidence of maturity. It actually places issues of recreation (community health, local access, individual opportunity, preservation of beauty) at the forefront of Administrative topics enabling the restoration of balance and the creation of parks rather than athletic fields.

Holmdel has entered the final phase of community shaping which will, for better or worse, be completed in the next quarter century.

In order to represent final community options for recreation in that time frame, Holmdel will need to organize an influential Recreation Department.

Holmdel does not currently have an influential Recreation Department.

### **1. The Recreation Department**

A recreation department is a small component of most municipalities. Its underlying purposes are two. The first, to represent the recreation interests of every citizen which conventionally translates into creating, designing and managing programs across the entire municipality. The second is management of every physical service element occurring within the system. While not specifically including the physical processes of maintenance and renovation, (which may be performed by the Public Works Department), this function should be absolute with respect to inventorying, evaluating and recording every service element and every site, to enable periodic itemized reporting of the exact status of each feature and appropriate and timely maintenance.

Its extended purposes may be planning, advocacy, education, periodic introduction of new programs and public relations.

The Recreation Department must be able to accurately identify and correspond in an itemized, detailed report: chronic issues; emergent problems; response resources; and contingencies; and must be able to present these in a credible, substantial form.

Because a Recreation Department is only responsible for recreation, and the single municipal agency with that charge, it must undertake and fully shoulder the responsibility of understanding the entire system, anticipating change and identifying future need.

The work product of a Recreation Department also includes periodic issue-based and system-based position statements that proactively assert recreation “best practice” options for Administrative action.

In an organizational form where maintenance and renovation operations are performed through the Public Works Department, the Recreation Department must provide an annually prepared task agenda for every service element in the system including contextual and appropriate diversification descriptions to enable preparation of budgets and anticipated man hours.

These must be sufficiently categorized that they stand as a sub-component of the Public Works budget to assure that stipulated budgeted funds and hours are delivered in the subsequent year.

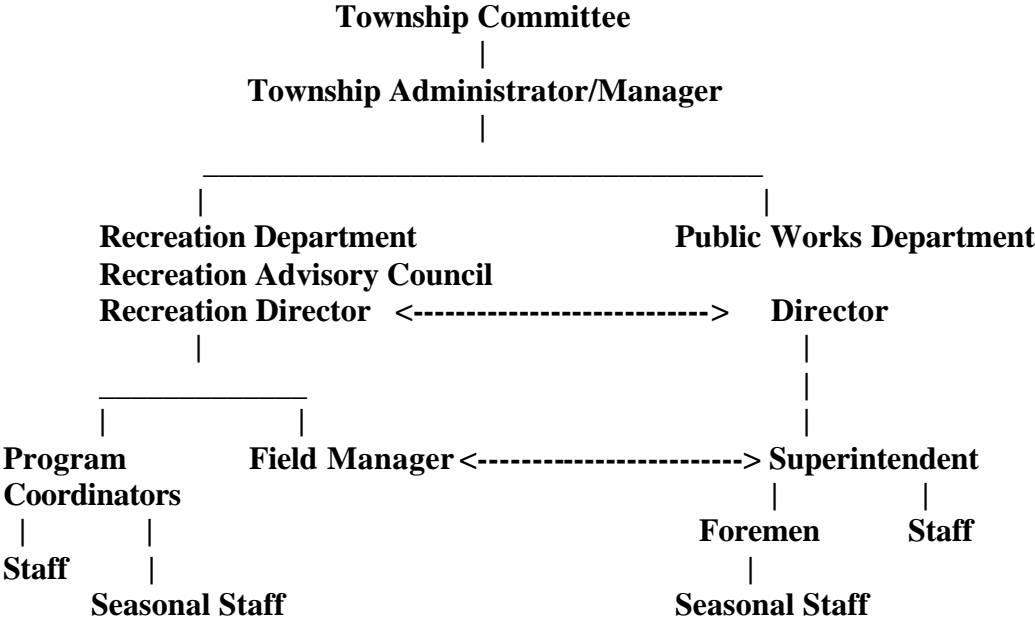
Even if Public Works is generally responsible for maintenance and up keep, the Recreation Department must nonetheless prepare and submit periodic reports evaluating the efficacy of current practices.

The Recreation Department should be the administrator and coordinator of all recreation programs whether conventionally delivered by the Township or by citizen associations. While it is possible and preferable for independent associations to manage their own programs and schedules without outside intervention, it is imperative that the Recreation Department stand and act in an intermediary position between association and Administration for any activity occurring on any public site or facility.

In Holmdel, with the notable exception of the pool facility and indoor programs delivered at the Senior/Community Center, the integrated practice of planning, development and maintenance critical to balance growth to this recreation system is not being delivered or prepared.

Therefore, it is very strongly recommended that Holmdel reconfigure its recreation department.

It is recommended that the reconfiguration follow this approximate form:



**2. The Recreation Director**

It is recommended that the Township employ an out-of system Recreation Director and extensively redefine the criteria for that job description, empowering the position far more than currently.

Recommended functions of this office should be tailored in a fashion most adaptable to current administrative form and preference but should be characterized by the following capabilities.

- a. Primary administrative/organizational skills necessary to:
  - 1) Transition from existing relationship between Recreation, Public Works and HYAA to primary administration of recreation operations.
  - 2) Preserve intact, excellent performance of successful standing operations (pool committee, HYAA, Pop Warner).
  - 3) Establish and perfect working relationships with Board of Education.
  - 4) Become networked with County Park System, Open Space Advisory Council, and Standing Committees (Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area, Chase, Bayonet Farm, pool and tennis).
  
- b. Fluency with physical plant operations for all sites and facilities to enable:
  - 1) Understanding of current physical status and issues of existing system.
  - 2) Appreciation of operational form and management system of Public Works and Board of Education maintenance operations.

- 3) Tactical and strategic reorganization of material, manpower and equipment need/sharing between the Township and Board of Education.
- c. Familiarity with terms and techniques of recreation site management:
    - 1) Turf
    - 2) Soils
    - 3) Drainage
    - 4) Compliance codes
  - d. Strong planning and assessment skills to enable:
    - 1) Definition and restructuring of whole goals and priority set for recreation system future.
    - 2) Creation of an Action Plan for priority of most immediate maintenance issues and capital projects.
    - 3) Mainstreaming on served and underserved recreation interests in the Township.
  - e. Extremely strong communication skills and interpersonal skills to facilitate:
    - 1) Establishment of legitimacy of the office.
    - 2) Credibility in reporting and recommendations.
    - 3) Repair of damaged relationships between Township and Board of Education.
    - 4) Cooperative sharing of power with Public Works, HYAA, and Board of Education.
    - 5) Development of a responsive and responsible interaction between Township Committee based on accuracy and thorough reporting.

### **3. Field Manager**

It is recommended that the Township hire or train (quickly) an employee to occupy a position within Public Works or Recreation (depending on how the maintenance program is modified).

This would be a hands-on position with the added responsibility of continually assessing the physical status of turf substrates.

Required skills of this position should include:

- a. A broad working familiarity with turf management.
- b. A solid understanding of soil mechanics and drainage.
- c. A basic understanding of irrigation.
- d. The ability to write a clear report.
- e. Ability to direct the efforts of/supervise field maintenance staff.

As the vast majority of Holmdel's current recreation issues concern field surfaces and their management and as new construction (Cross Farm) will increase these rapidly, the Township needs a single individual competent to identify where and why problems are emerging and how to quantify "best practice" responses quickly.

The County Agricultural Extension Service can stand very temporarily as an information resource available to the Township (as through the Recreation Director) but is not available daily. With hundreds of thousands of public dollars invested in these surfaces, the risk of not understanding how to properly care for them is unreasonable.

#### **4. Maintenance Personnel/Equipment – Public Works**

Field and site maintenance in Holmdel is performed by municipal employees shared with Recreation by Public Works. In general, the routine maintenance of recreation parcels is quite good if quite superficial. Renovation tasks are not being performed at an adequate rate.

It is reported that three Public Works employees are seasonally diverted primarily to Recreation but remain "on-call" to a limited extent to respond to public works demands. It is also reported that scheduled operations of this group can be modified or reassigned daily at the impetus of HYAA, Township Committee or Township Administrator, frequently pushing scheduled processes back to respond to "emergencies". These circumstances are symptomatic of inappropriate capability.

Based on observations of physical conditions and anecdotal information reported by field users, field operators, and maintenance personnel, it is clear and evident that Holmdel will need to increase full-time man-power if the decline of surface condition is to be stopped.

The quantity of increase will be conditioned in a very large part by available equipment.

Fields are now mowed by several small mowing units owned by the Board of Education or Township. Cross Farms is being maintained (poorly) by a contract service using ridiculously inappropriate equipment and without local supervision.

The Township should purchase the following new equipment for field management alone:

- a. A large ganged mower, tractor pulled or self propelled to perform all main field cutting at all parks and school sites. Such an investment will cover its cost in recovered man hours in less than 5 years and will meanwhile free up man power for other more fundamental problems.
- b. An aerator (see description Cross Farm) to begin the important process of in-situ renovation of turf stands.

- c. Large scale mobile or portable irrigation equipment including:
  - 1) Water cannons
  - 2) Hose
  - 3) High pressure/high volume pump and siphon equipment (drafting open water)

As many system fields will need restoration and are not irrigated, access to adequate temporary water for establishment is essential.

## C. PLANNING TASKS

The northern section of Holmdel (north of Parkway) has few opportunities left to provide local recreation (pocket parks, neighborhood parks).

As open space objectives are pursued here and as remaining subdivision or site plan applications pass before the Planning and Zoning Boards, two objectives should be sought. They are:

1. As possible, acquire dry upland parcels capable of sustaining development for limited local purposes including:
  - a. A playfield space  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of open ground for informal play
  - b. Tot lots and play grounds
  - c. Sitting areas
  - d. Walking/jogging perimeter trails
  - e. Basketball courts
  - f. Roller skating/roller hockey multi-purpose pavements
2. Seek connectivity by pathway dedications or easements within subdivisions adjacent to existing or new park and open space lands.

The northwestern quadrant of the Township contains a number of land tracts which will likely come before the Planning Board for subdivision approval. It is recommended that within each such opportunity, the Township seek to set aside a small but well favored (wooded, high in elevation, secluded by landform) parcel of  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to 2 acres that is reserved and advertised as recreation space. These set asides will enable subsequent placement of pocket parks.

In larger or clustered applications, the Township should seek to have skeletal features constructed by the developer including:

1. Walkway links to adjacent streets
2. Water and electric service
3. Perimeter walkway
4. Buffer plantings
5. A tot lot
6. A sitting area with shelter

In the southwestern section of the Township where several, much larger tracts exist, the Township should pursue the pocket park reservation proposal (above) but should seek reservation of larger opportunities 2-4 acres.

These may, by coincidence, occur in association with storm drainage detention systems but if so, should include at least one acre of high dry interesting land in addition to the basin reservation.

It remains essential that these have pedestrian/bicycle linkages to adjacent streets.

## **D. SYSTEM COMPLIANCE AND FACILITY RENOVATION PROJECTS**

### **1. Short Term Compliance**

First among the possible improvements Holmdel Township should undertake at its existing school and recreation sites is resolution of compliance issues and standing liabilities. These are needed to accommodate residents as required by law and to avoid injury.

Compliance issues occur primarily in the form of barrier free access provisions. An accessible route of travel should occur between every public entry location or parking area to every recreation facility or spectator area. Slope rates for such routes must be 5% or less for simple paths, and if steeper, constructed with rails, 8.33% slope is the maximum allowable slope excepting special wilderness circumstances.

Each parking area should have reserved paved spaces that connect directly to these pathways. All access doorways to common spaces must be adequately wide, open easily, and be without sills greater than 1/4". All restrooms must contain at least one (1) barrier free water closet and lavatory.

Meeting a compliant condition throughout the recreation system will not be a glorious task, but it is necessary and should be started immediately.

Liability issues occur in a variety of innocuous seeming circumstances. As such, liabilities are coincident with every recreation site in every town. Many cannot reasonably be inventoried or eliminated.

This recommendation nominates those that are recently emerged or should be resolved directly. The most difficult of these is to restore the vehicle/pedestrian interface at the High School/Satz School site, where numerous crossing situations require a separate study to identify.

Slope conditions constitute another form of injury risk and liability exposure that the Township should correct. Where fields have been deliberately constructed on plateaus with steep side slopes (as at Indian Hill School) the likelihood of someone playing ball there falling to injury in the normal course of play is foreseeable. It is then, an unreasonable risk and irrefutable liability. Wherever

steep or sudden grade changes occur at or near athletic fields, a barrier, warning track or fence should be in place. It is recommended that the Township modify at least those cited.

## 2. Short Term Renovations

The second group of short-term projects is recommended to improve existing facilities currently in the inventory of mainstream programming. These include the following which are nominated for their particular utility to the issue of athletic field inventory.

### A) Labbe Park.

- 1) Softball field. This field can be much more utilitarian and much safer if the infield is renovated including a new backstop (25' off set from home plate), wing fences and team bench enclosures.
- 2) Replacement of eastern fence and construct new fence with an opening to a footbridge crossing into adjacent open space land.

### B) Indian Hill School

- 1) Softball fields. The two most northerly softball fields will yield safer, better service if renovated/reconstructed to correct drainage deficiencies and reconfigured to increase distance between baselines and fences.

### C) High School Site/Satz Site/Cross Farm/Indian Hill Site

These sites interrelate very strongly as they jointly host the vast bulk of athletic fields in the Township and are shared by Board of Education and HYAA programs. This combination of sites will need to be considered together to enable restoration of all.

It is recommended that the Township undertake a program of surface renovations beginning as soon as practically possible, with the ambition to reverse the decline of turf stands.

The following actions are recommended:

- 1) Sample soils from all football, soccer, baseball and overlay fields from all sites. Submit these for testing to establish mechanical analysis, nutrient analysis, pH and organic content.
- 2) Based on the test results and included recommendations, purchase and apply fertilizers, micro-nutrients and pH modifiers as recommended.
- 3) Rent or purchase a core aerator as large as reasonably possible and deeply, thoroughly (multiple passes) aerate all of these fields. NOTE: operator must be trained to operate an aerator or proper penetration depth will not be achieved.
- 4) Slit seed at very low rates 20-40 lb/acre with extension service recommended rye or fescue grasses for thin grass stands.
- 5) Mulch with tack hay (over very damaged areas only/increase seed rate in these areas to 5 lbs/1000 s.f.

- 6) Repeat aeration at regular (weather dependent) intervals not more than 2 months apart until substantial turf stand density is seen.
- 7) Mow fields as little as possible to maintain blade length between 2-2 ½, (2 ½-3” in summer). Never cut grass short!

It is presumed that conventional play will continue over all but the worst of fields (Satz) during this process.

To produce the best chances for success, find a way to deliver adequate water for application in dry periods while seed is germinating and for one (1) month minimum after germination is complete. Apply water at ¼” minimum per application, and repeat only when fields are beginning to dry out. If rain has been “normal” in cool season (September to June) do not water except very poor areas.

## **E. CAPITAL PROJECTS**

### **1. Minor Projects**

This recommendation group targets response to provision of passive uses, nature walks, and unstructured individual pursuits on Township land tracts.

The Chase and Harding tracts are the subject sites and proposed work is directed at introducing these to the public and creating access. Specific recommendations for both sites are identical. They include:

- A) Prepare identification signs for each site placed in visible locations including a welcome and description of the sites’ future purposes.
- B) Create a recognizable vehicle entry and a small aggregate paved parking area at a location satisfactory as a starting point for pedestrian access.
- C) Place an orientation kiosk with a site map and brief description of the sites’ probable purpose.
- D) Designate walking trails throughout each site along the existing courses of farm roads. These exist extensively throughout both sites.

The objective of these endeavors is twofold and simple. First, the lands can be identified as Township owned public recreation spaces. Secondly, they can be walked through and explored. Both sites, even in a raw state, are far more diverse and interesting than any other developed Township site.

### **2. Major Projects**

These are recommended to be undertaken as soon as practically possible and completed in a continuous, if phased sequence.

Major short term capital projects discussed here are recommended for consideration within the context of ongoing phased projects at Cross Farm.

These are prioritized according to their prominent current service significance within the existing Township organized sports system.

A) Roggie Stadium.

Roggie Stadium is the single wholly supported venue in the Township capable of sustaining “big” events in sports. It is used to show case the final achievement of school and recreation athletes and hosts the pinnacle events and best hopes of weeks of practice and planning.

This type of event is the potential reward for long, hard work, particularly for parents and coaches supporting sports programs.

They are the “payoff” occasions; the biggest social events; the best rivalries and the context within which the community residents, not involved with sports, learn about their home programs, and many times, judge whether they are good or not.

Roggie Stadium’s importance as an event space is many times more important than any other system field. It should be used for all High School, Middle School “big games” and as many recreation system games as it can sustain. The problem is that it can not sustain many, due to its very low intrinsic capability.

These fields need good turf to work well, look good and be durable. It needs good soil conditions to grow good turf. It does not have good soil conditions for turf growth.

Soils are fine textured, compacted, and saturated. Existing turf is: growing only in the uppermost small fraction of the soil surface; is not resilient; and is easily damaged.

This field surface can not be maintained in good condition without constant monitoring and maintenance. It can not do the job needed and possible.

It is recommended that the Township follow this course of action:

- 1) Consider the cost implications of installation of artificial turf to replace existing turf (\$600,000.00-\$800,000.00) with the Board of Education and all involved sports associations. Decide if this first course of action is possible economically.

If so, move to construction as soon as possible. If not, move to whole system reconstruction for the field as soon as possible (\$240,000.00-\$280,000.00).

In either case, the objective is to create a field that will support a lot more utilization without irreversible damage.

- 2) It is recommended that the entire Pop Warner operation be moved from the High School/Satz Site to Cross Farm as a priority above all other objectives for Cross Farms. This preserves the Pop Warner program and enables redevelopment of demolished space at Satz Field and Roggie Complex for High School and Middle School programs now being exported to Village and Indian Hill sites.
- 3) It is recommended that a master plan be initiated for Indian Hill to fully explore and quantify future options for occupation of underutilized space there.
- 4) It is recommended that the prospect of acquisition of County land adjacent to the High School on Holmdel Park be explored, proposed and if possible, negotiated.

This is essential to long term mitigation of athletic field issues at the High School/Satz sites which can not be wholly resolved there without drastic measures (construction of several artificial turf fields).

The practice of exporting sports practices and games to other sites is unacceptably costly in both time and money and impairs the potential of all conventional intramural and interscholastic outdoor programs.

## **NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

This group of recommendations is intended to focus on existing minor site resources with the primary objective of improving the aesthetic character of existing facilities while incorporating facility groups that increase neighborhood park functions. Planning for all of these should begin in the second planning year. Several of these include proposals and presumptions relative to the use of Board of Education lands and infrastructure. This expectation underscores the assertion that the Township and Board must be closely partnered.

As possible, hopefully within a three (3) to five (5) year period the Township should begin to modify or improve several existing sites and to institute several systemic programs. Site work improvements are finite and systemic programs continuous.

### **A. BIKEWAY**

Presuming that an acceptable plan for ultimate development of the Bayonet Farm and Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area is created, it is recommended that the Township immediately enter the grant sequence for Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) bikeway funding with the aim of constructing linked or partially linked loops connecting Harding through Chase to the High School site. If application is successful, these bikeway elements should be constructed immediately.

### **B. RESTROOM CONSTRUCTION**

Create a design for competent small restroom facilities and construct these in a sequence at Major Recreation sites to provide adequate support for activities in those.

This should occur first at Allocco Park (being done in 2004) to respond to immediate need and at Labbe Park, Bayonet Farm and DePalma Farm in coordination with facility expansion at those sites.

### **C. LABBE PARK/TWIN BROOK EXTENSION**

Create a new entrance to Twin Brook extension from Miller Avenue at the north end of the tract, construct an entrance drive and small parking area (10-15 cars) within the northern end of the site to enable access.

Construct neighborhood park facilities within the tract as well as a comprehensive walking, jogging lane loop through the entire site and linked to the east side of Labbe Park.

Construct facilities to balance area deficiencies including:

1. A diverse play equipment area.
2. An open play field (not athletic field).
3. A shelter and sitting area.
4. A basketball court pair.
5. Family picnic sites.
6. A restroom.

## **D. DEPALMA FARM**

Create a plan for creation of neighborhood park features to be constructed in areas of the northern section of the Farm incorporating the following:

1. An entrance from Wind Hill Way with parking (20-25 cars).
2. A small pavilion structure capable of hosting small group activities (40-60) and equipped to be utilized on a reservation basis for group picnics (potable water, built-in bar-b-que).
3. A play area and tot lot supported by an adjacent sitting area with small shelter.
4. A basketball court pair.
5. A multipurpose paved space large enough for roller hockey.
6. An open field play space (on adjacent open space lands) large enough to play softball or soccer.
7. An extensive walkway, jogging lane perimeter loop system passing through both sections of the Farm and adjacent open space parcels.
8. Family picnic sites.
9. A restroom.

## **E. BAYONET FARM**

Expand the opportunity for day use of the Farm outside the context of activities based on adapted reuse of the existing farm house and farm structures. As the standing Farm Advisory Committee determines the best purposes for the farm structures, these may be integrated into general recreation programming.

Recommended constructed components include:

1. Creation of an entry feature and entry drive at the existing stable structure (near Swanson House), following the existing drive to a parking area north of the red barn.
2. Construction of an aggregate parking area (40-50 cars).
3. Construction of a large pavilion (80-100) at the margin of the existing large forested “island” in the tract center, equipped to support group activities (potable water, permanent grill structure, electric service).
4. Creation of a moderately sized play area and tot lot.
5. Creation of a complete perimeter loop bikeway, walkway on existing farm roads, along the wooded perimeter fringe. This should be elaborated by: linkage to the Ramanessin Brook Greenway and Conservation Area (formerly the Chase Tract); identification of the entire system by clear mapping at an information kiosk.

## **LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

This group of recommendations is made to guide priorities of activity types to be considered in a very distant future as far as recreation planning is concerned. Clearly, all of what may occur in that timeframe will be conditioned by the sum of improvements made previously. It is assumed that within five or six years the bulk of prominent system imbalances will be improved. If so, the whole Township recreation picture will be described as follows:

1. Developed park land area will be in excess of statistical recommendations.
2. Open space will be enormously in excess of statistical recommendations.
3. Reported facility shortfalls in athletic fields will be currently balanced.
4. Piecemeal additions of infrastructure improvement, compliance upgrades, landscape additions and site furnishings will be in sequence.

The Township will be approaching a facility/opportunity condition equivalent to current need and will begin to look toward sequential addition of buildings, bikeway linkages, future athletic field and event spaces, and special facility planning (indoor centers).

### **A. POCKET PARKS**

The Township should assess (see site evaluation) all minor open space parcels and create pocket parks within those found appropriate. Most Township neighborhoods occur within very discontinuous roadway systems enclosing and defining neighborhoods according to the extent of the subdivision they were constructed in. Very few of these have any accessible public land or developed features in walking distance.

It is recommended that each of these pocket parks be developed with roadside access, a perimeter pathway, a tot lot, and older children's play equipment area, a sitting area with game tables, and benches with generous landscaping. If possible, these should be located between residential streets and connected by pedestrian paths. Whenever possible by any means each should provide a simple restroom with men's and women's rooms. If necessary, a unisex facility will suffice.

### **B. INDOOR RECREATION CENTER PLANNING**

It is recommended that the Township begin planning for creation of a recreation center building to be located at the Cross Farm. This is envisioned as a two part, two-phase development. The first development should provide the following:

1. Administrative offices.
  - a) Recreation department.
  - b) Facility manager.
2. Meeting rooms.
  - a) Large 40' X 60' room for day camp, arts and crafts, special events.
  - b) Meeting rooms (2) 20' X 30' for regularly scheduled meetings of sports associations, classes and workshops.

3. Lounge area.
4. Game room (electronic games, table games).
5. Computer room / internet center.
6. Reading room / meeting room.
7. Restrooms, storage, lobby.

The second development should be a fitness center predicated on sufficient local membership interest to balance construction cost over 15 years. This would incorporate the following:

1. Central Office.
2. Gymnasium – full sized with seating.
3. Indoor pool – 25 meter X 25 meter “L” shaped pool with zero entry end, separate tot pool and spa.
4. Locker rooms and changing rooms.
5. Free weight room.
6. Exercise equipment room/s.
7. Trainer’s room.
8. Storage, lobby, restrooms

This type of facility provides services for a broad spectrum of the adult population as well as rounding out winter activities programming.

## **C. CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Increase of the Township’s active recreation features will be focused upon the Cross Farm, High School and Middle School campus, Indian Hill, and possibly Village Elementary and associated lands. These are large, costly, time consuming tasks that will take a decade to complete. It is recommended that the Township attempt to undertake one major improvement phase per year, switching from site to site until facility needs are just exceeded, and then concentrating on renovations of older, smaller sites that furnish neighborhood needs.

Increase of diverse passive, family, walking, educational, and spontaneous recreation will occur primarily at the Bayonet Farm and Ramanessin Brook Conservation Area (formerly the Chase Tract). As these are opportunities comparatively more deficient within Holmdel’s system than are active uses, advancement of entry, access, pathway, play area, and support feature projects should be prioritized over field projects presuming the needed active field additions/renovations at the school sites and at Cross Farm have been accomplished.

It will be of vital importance in all new development proposals to plan, design and fund for complete, beautiful, landscaped, and furnished spaces crafted to interest, entertain and engage future visitors. It is emphatically recommended that the Township set a much more sensitive course for creation of park-like spaces and mandate comfort and beauty in equal measure with function.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

During this assembly of information utilized as a basis for this study, many individuals contributed their time to the process in addition to their experiences and perspectives. These personal information resources have provided context and enable insight to the dynamic processes of Holmdel's recreation system and are recognized and appreciated for that contribution.

Representatives of the following groups have contributed importantly to this effort.

HOLMDEL BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS  
HOLMDEL RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
HOLMDEL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HOLMDEL ROAD DEPARTMENT  
HYAA  
HOLMDEL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION – POP WARNER  
HOLMDEL CHEERLEADERS  
STALLIONS SOCCER  
THE HALF CENTURY CLUB  
THE CROSS FARM COMMITTEE  
THE HOLMDEL POOL COMMITTEE  
THE HOLMDEL TENNIS COMMITTEE  
MONMOUTH COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT

The author wishes to extend thanks and special recognition to Denise Fritz for diligent, prompt research and assembly of documents, files, plans and contacts essential to create a historic basis for this report.