Dear Residents,

The New Castle Recreation and Parks Department is pleased to present to you the 2023 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. During my tenure in New Castle, it has never been more obvious that you, the residents, place a high value on your parks and recreation facilities and programs. You recognize the importance of these services as a major contributor to property values, mental and physical health, and to the quality of life of the community.

Planning is vital to the success of providing recreational and parks opportunities. Our priority throughout this process has been to engage the community to help ensure that the right actions are taken for the right reasons at the right time. Resident participation has been a fundamental part of this effort. The data we have collected will strengthen the results of this planning effort and will help prioritize our needs and the actions we should pursue.

This plan will set a roadmap for the successful growth, staffing, funding and operation of our Recreation and Parks Department for the next 10 years. It outlines goals and objectives for performance while fostering equity, inclusion and balance in all aspects of our function. It guides us in filling gaps for services and amenities and directs us to reinvest in areas of need. The conclusions were developed via assessments, benchmarking, community input and customer satisfaction surveys.

I would like to thank the residents of New Castle, our Elected Officials, the Recreation Commission and Town Staff for their support and hard work throughout this entire process. With your continued support and with guidance from this plan, the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department is poised to continue providing high quality services to our residents.

Sincerely,

Alfred “Ike” Kuzio

Superintendent of Recreation and Parks
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Victoria Tipp, Deputy Town Supervisor
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Holly A.F. McCall, Member
Jeremy Saland, Member

Town Administrator
Jill Simon Shapiro

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Adam Glick, Member
Jessica Laumanns, Member
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Jenn Tucker Salon, Member
Erin Spira, Member

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Town of New Castle Recreation and Parks Master Plan
1.1 Why do we Plan

For over 85 years\(^1\) the Town of New Castle has actively promoted the community’s access to nature, health and wellness through parks, open space and recreation. The mission of the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department is to enhance the quality of life in New Castle through sports, leisure and other recreational experiences, and to provide individuals and families with a safe environment that emphasizes the fun and joy of personal development through participation and discovery at all ages. The Town’s parks and recreation system reflects both this mission and the community driven mindset of preservation through support for parkland, green space, fitness and wellness. Similar to the previous 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan, this Plan serves as a source of applicable decision-making information and establishes clear goals and actionable objectives to guide the Town Board, the Recreation and Parks Commission, and Recreation and Parks Department staff, in their work to maintain and enhance New Castle’s system of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities over the next ten years or more.

The purpose of this Recreation and Parks Master Plan is to identify the recreation needs of today’s residents, to anticipate those of tomorrow, and to assure they will be met through proper planning. The master planning process is one of transparency, community engagement and data-driven recommendations. From the initial inventory and analysis through the implementation plan, the project team engaged the community, stakeholders, the Recreation and Parks Commission and Recreation and Parks Department staff in order to develop a comprehensive approach to the Plan. While researching recreation trends and understanding the Town’s demographics, the project team, Master Plan Sub-Committee and the Recreation and Parks Commission used existing conditions to evaluate the use and operational standards of the Town’s parks and facilities. The Recreation and Parks Department, Master Plan Sub-Committee and the Recreation and Parks Commission, in conjunction with and using public input, developed and prioritized recommendations to improve the recreational programming to be provided over a ten-year planning horizon.

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan is a foundational document that addresses the existing and future recreational needs of the community. The long-range goal of this Recreation and Parks Master Plan is to prioritize future projects, support grant funding applications and budget allocations for capital improvement projects. The Plan does not stand alone and is one of many

\(^1\) Recreation Commission budget from Town Board Minutes in 1934 was $300, No mention of formation in TB minutes prior to this year.
critical reference documents that the Town relies on for guidance. This plan will align with several other overarching policy documents that frame the Town’s goals. These documents include among others:

- The Town of New Castle Planning Base Studies by Westchester County (2014);
- The New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (2016);
- The New Castle Comprehensive Plan (2017);

This Plan will directly align with the adopted 2017 New Castle Comprehensive Plan and address specific actions, as well as actions that are not listed but relate to goals 18, 32, 33, 34 and 35, which are listed as follows:

- Goal 18: Protect and manage open spaces and undeveloped lands.
  - Action 1: Update the Town’s Open Space Management Plan;

- Goal 32: Increase availability of recreational programming and facilities.
  - Action 1: Conduct a parkland and facilities demand analysis;
  - Action 2: Update the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan;

- Goal 33: Expand, enhance, and maintain parkland and recreational space.
  - Action 2: Maintain existing parks and nature preserves;

- Goal 34: Plan for equitable access to recreational services, schools, arts and cultural facilities.
  - Action 1: Examine enrollment demographics to identify areas of improvement;
  - Action 2: ADA compliance and accessibility for all Town owned recreational facilities;

- Goal 35: Improve trail and unimproved linkages between open space parcels and prominent destinations in the Town.
  - Action 1: Update the Town’s Trail Development Master Plan;
  - Action 2: Improve signage, guidance and maintenance of hiking trails.
1.2 Planning Process

To accomplish the aforementioned goals and actions, Town staff, the Plan Sub-Committee and the Recreation and Parks Commission followed a multi-faceted process to gather and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on issues impacting the provision of municipal parks and recreation amenities and programs throughout the Town. Collaborating with the community allowed the Recreation and Parks Commission’s local knowledge and forethought, along with the Town staff’s expertise, to be leveraged in the creation of a thoughtful and actionable Master Plan. The Master Plan is especially sensitive to the large amount of stakeholder input from residents who utilize the parks, walk the trails and attend events and programs every single day.

Community participation was a cornerstone in the development of the Master Plan. As such, a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process was conducted to understand the needs and priorities of the Town’s Residents and Parks users. Staff gathered, reviewed, synthesized and analyzed the qualitative, quantitative and anecdotal information to better understand what people want and need in regards to recreation and the parks that serve our residents and visitors. Multiple engagement techniques were utilized to encourage participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, visitors and various Town boards and commissions. Throughout the process, over 1,200 members of the community expressed their voices, values, ideas and needs regarding parks and recreation through an online survey, at community events, and during the community workshops and stakeholders’ meetings. The input received illuminated common themes that will serve as a basis to help guide the future for the New Castle Parks & Recreation system.

Members of the community, stakeholders, and municipal staff provided valuable input and feedback regarding their use, satisfaction with, and overall perception of existing Town parks and recreation resources. Outreach was conducted utilizing both active and passive methods. Passive community engagement was conducted through trail counting of non-programmed trail usage, which has never been measured before. Opportunities for engagement and outreach included a series of four Parks Master Plan Sub-Committee Meetings, interactive Community Day outreach by staff, ongoing passive trail counting, and survey(s) which were placed in every Town Park and made available online. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected to help identify and corroborate perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for enhancing New Castle’s parks, open spaces, and public recreation.

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan goals are a direct result of the community outreach that was performed over the past two years. The goals are broad and encompass every aspect of the recreation and parks system, its uses and its users. The Recreation and Parks Master Plan Goals are as follows:

- Goal 1: Plan for the future;
- Goal 2: Protect, manage and maintain existing parks, open spaces and facilities;
- Goal 3: Provide quality programming and events;
- Goal 4: Engage and inform the public;
- Goal 5: Utilize and improve parks, open spaces, facilities and connections to maximize resident and visitor benefit.
1.3 Resource Inventory

The inventory of existing public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces in New Castle was last officially updated in the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. In order to accomplish a more complete picture of the New Castle Parks and Recreation system, this Plan also includes aspects of open space management and trail management, which were previously studied at the staff level, but not studied as part of the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. The updated inventory in this Plan identifies current Town-owned parks; Town-owned open space lands; Town-owned and operated recreation facilities; Town-owned general municipal lands maintained and under the purview of the Recreation and Parks Department; State of New York Parks; Westchester County Parks and other quasi-public recreation areas and preserves open to the public. Identifying and quantifying open space owned by the Town, which falls under the responsibility of the Recreation and Parks Department, was a main goal of this Plan, and addresses Goal 18, Action 1 of the 2017 New Castle Comprehensive Plan. There is also a component of trail map updates which will directly address the need for a Trail Master Plan update, Goal 35, Action 1 of the 2017 New Castle Comprehensive Plan.

Existing parks, outdoor recreational amenities and facilities throughout New Castle’s Recreation and Parks system were evaluated in regard to their condition, functionality, and ambiance. The distribution of these resources throughout the community was evaluated and gaps in service were identified. Gaps in service represent physical/geographic or programmatic areas in New Castle where parks and recreation facilities are not present or are not distributed in a manner that provides close-to-home, walkable access for residents living in such areas of the community. The existing organizational structure, staffing, and budget that support the Town’s provision of parks, open spaces, and recreational services was evaluated to determine how well these resources are functioning as intended. A programming needs assessment was performed and ideas were collected through various stakeholder outreach which served to identify key program, facility, and service needs targeted for improvement and enhancements that would be most beneficial to residents.

New Castle is home to many local, county and state parks that serve the Town and the region. Parks and open spaces are located throughout the Town with the majority of the larger parks being located on the eastern and western portions of Town where there is less development and the lots
are larger in size. The Town is home to approximately $760^2$ Acres of Town Recreation and Park lands, approximately $330^3$ Acres of County Park land and approximately $310^4$ Acres are designated as State Park land. Over 50 percent of park land in the Town is owned, maintained, and operated by the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department. Open space lands, not including parks, within the Town account for approximately 470 Acres, which also fall under the purview of the Recreation and Parks Department for maintenance. Other open space lands that are protected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Lands in New Castle*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Castle Parks, Recreation and Open Space Lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westchester County Parks and Parkway Land</td>
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<td>NYS Parks and Parkway Land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Nature Preserve</td>
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<td>Private Recreation</td>
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<td>Agricultural</td>
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<td>Utility Lines and Aqueducts</td>
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<tr>
<td>HomeOwners Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Parks, Recreation and Open Space Lands</strong></td>
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*Data Source: Town of New Castle GIS, Westchester County GIS **All categories based on Westchester County’s definitions

through private nature preserves and conservation organizations total approximately 240 Acres, of which the majority of these lands are owned by the Saw Mill River Audubon and Teatown Lake Reservation. Private recreation lands within the Town total approximately 390 Acres and include

\[2 \text{ PAS Town Tax Records February 14, 2020} \]
\[3 \text{ Ibid} \]
\[4 \text{ Ibid} \]
ownership by the Campfire Club, Mt. Kisco Country Club and the Whippoorwill Country Club. Altogether, parks, preserves and open space lands within the Town total approximately 4,200 Acres, which accounts for over a quarter of the total land area within the Town. This is significant given the many subdivisions of the Town’s original farms and estates. It is clear that past and present residents of the Town care a great deal about land conservation and recreational opportunities for all ages. Parks in the Town range in size from .08 Acres, the Chappaqua Pocket Park in the Chappaqua Hamlet, to the 215 Acres that make up the expansive Whippoorwill Park. Uses range from passive, and no human activity (Turner Swamp Sanctuary), to multi-use parks that are programmed for three season use, such as Gedney Park.

1.4 About the Town

Established in 1791, the Town of New Castle is a suburb of New York City located in northern Westchester County. New Castle is bordered by the municipalities of Somers, Yorktown and Cortlandt to the north; the Village of Croton on Hudson and the Town of Ossining to the west; the Town of Mount Pleasant, the Village of Pleasantville and the Town of North Castle to the south; and to the east by the Village of Mount Kisco and the Town of Bedford. The Town is

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5 Not an exhaustive list
approximately 15,000 acres, almost 24 square miles, in area. The vast majority of the built environment consists of single-family homes, which account for over 90 percent of the building lots in the Town. There are three economic centers, two of which are known as Census Designated Places and include the Chappaqua Hamlet and the Millwood Hamlet. The third area is a re-developed corporate campus known as Chappaqua Crossing. The Town is divided by two major transportation corridors consisting of the Taconic State Parkway in the western part of the Town and the Saw Mill River parkway in the central part of the Town. The Metro North train line follows the same general north-south direction of the Saw Mill River Parkway, and is located just east of the parkway. The Town is host to winding roads, valleys, parkways and the railroad, combined with the fact that most major roadways travel in a north/south direction causing east/west travel to be difficult.

The natural environment of the Town is varied across multiple ecosystems with changing topography, fauna and hydrography that are unique to the northeast. Across the Town, land elevation varies from approximately 40 feet above sea level in the Croton River Valley in the western corner of town, to approximately 775 feet in the eastern corner, near Byram Lake. The Town contains geological rock outcroppings that add unique challenges to construction processes in Town. Much of the undeveloped land is wooded, with the eastern end and western ends of Town being more densely wooded by several large, untouched forested areas. Several large water bodies are located partially or completely within the Town, including the Croton Reservoir, Still Lake and Wampus Pond. The Town is also home to several important secondary river systems, including the headwaters of the Saw Mill River, which begins at the Bicentennial Park (Duck Pond Park) dam near the Chappaqua Hamlet. National, State and Local wetlands exist throughout the Town, with many of the large wetland systems located on protected park or open space lands. The Town lies within several major watersheds including: the Croton, Pocantico, Saw Mill River and the Bronx River watersheds. It should also be noted that a little more than half of the Town is located in the East of Hudson Watershed which is part of the land area contributing to New York City’s drinking water supply.
New Castle residents highly value recreation and are regularly engaged in sports, leisure, and fitness activities year-round. Understanding and documenting the characteristics of the resident population was a key component in the preparation of this Plan. The demographic data directly influences which programs are offered, or should be considered, by the Recreation and Parks Department. The most recent U.S. Census data available, the 2020 American Community Survey (5-Year), was utilized to create a profile of residents residing within the Town.

Demographically speaking, the Town has not changed a great deal since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan was compiled. The current New Castle population of 18,311 is similar to that of the 2007 plan at 17,467, which was based on the 2000 Census. In general, this figure portrays that the Town population has not increased a great deal (less than 1,000 people) since the last Plan. The median household income for the Town is $244,635. The Town poverty rate is under 3 percent, which is almost three times lower than that of Westchester County which is over 8 percent. This makes the Town a more affluent suburb as compared to many other towns, villages and cities within Westchester County.

The racial and ethnic composition of Town residents is mostly homogeneous with the vast majority of residents self-identifying as white, 77 percent. The next largest racial group living in the Town is Asian, at almost 12 percent. Other races represented in the Town, totaling approximately 11 percent, are Hispanic/ Latino, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander as well as those who self-identify as two or more races. School age children and teens are one of main drivers that influence the types of programs and services offered by the Recreation and Parks Department for that age group. New Castle is home to a large percentage, approximately 25 percent of the Town’s population, of school age children under 18, as compared to 22 percent in Westchester County and 21 percent in New York State.

Of the approximately 6,000 housing units in the Town over 91 percent are owner-occupied. This is an indication that residents are invested in the Town in more ways than one. Approximately 87

[6 U.S. Census Bureau 2020 American Community Survey (5-Year)
7 IBID
8 IBID
9 IBID
10 IBID]
percent of the total housing in New Castle is single family. Approximately eight percent of housing is renter occupied in the Town, as compared to nearly 40 percent within Westchester County as a whole.

The Town is truly a suburb with automobiles being the main mode of transportation. In 2020 more than half of the age eligible residents in the community, 57 percent\textsuperscript{11}, drove to work. Approximately 23 percent utilized public transportation, the majority most likely using the Metro North Railroad, with approximately 13 percent working from home and under 2 percent walking to work. It is important to mention that the percentage of people working from home may have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The numbers validating this change will be available upon publication of the 2025 American Community Survey.

Community health is a key indicator and can be utilized to the advantage of the Recreation and Parks Department. Westchester County recently released a Community Health Improvement Plan 2019-2021 that assesses and recommends ways to improve health outcomes of residents. The 2020 Health Rankings Report released by the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation\textsuperscript{12} lists Westchester County among the healthiest counties in New York State. Westchester County health behaviors that make it one of the healthiest in the State include:

- Lower than State average obesity rate
- 100 percent of people living in Westchester County have access to exercise opportunities
- Highly educated
- Longer life expectancy

According to this report, health related improvements Westchester County should work towards reducing include:

- Excessive drinking
- Adult smoking
- Long commutes to work while driving alone
- Air pollution

The Recreation and Parks Department directly contributes to health-related improvements and is a big part of why the Town, as part of Westchester County, is one of the healthiest in the State.

\textsuperscript{11} \text{IBID}
\textsuperscript{12} \text{https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/new-york/2021/rankings/westchester/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot}
CHAPTER 2

PARKS MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
2.1 History of the Department

The New Castle Recreation and Parks Department as an office within Town Government can be traced back to the mid 1930’s, when the Recreation Commission was given a budget line of $300 in 1934\textsuperscript{13}. The official establishment of the Recreation and Parks Commission occurred in 1939 under Article 13 of the General Municipal Law. The Department finally appointed its’ first part-time Recreation Director, Richard B. Lawrence, in September of 1946\textsuperscript{14}. Nearly 15 years later, in 1960, the Recreation Commission hired the first full time Recreation Director, and in 1963 the first full time Recreation supervisor was appointed. The Town officially established the Recreation and Parks Commission in the New Castle Town Code on November 14, 1972 via Chapter 27. Since the codification of the Recreation and Parks Commission the Department has increased the size of the staff, programs offered and the its resources. Currently, the Superintendent of Recreation oversees approximately 12 full time staff members, not including approximately 150 seasonal, part-time and camp staff. The Department implements and co-sponsors an average of 25 programs per season, seven (13) special events and eight (8) sports annually.

2.2 Recreation Commission and Recreation and Parks Department Mission

The Recreation and Parks Department is guided by the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Superintendent of Recreation & Parks, who carries out the primary objectives of the Commission. The Commission was established through General Municipal Law of New York and by adoption in the Town Code of New Castle. The Commission is composed of seven town residents who are appointed by the Town Board. Each serves a seven-year term. Its activities are described in the Town Code, Chapter 27, Recreation and Parks Commission. The Recreation and Parks Commission’s Powers and Duties include, but are not limited to:

- The equipping, operating and maintaining of such facilities, sites, premises or buildings as shall be designated by the Town Board.
- The planning for future recreation and parks needs of the Town.
- The establishment and collection of fees for the use of any such facilities or programs and/or the acceptance of moneys by way of gift, devise or bequest from any source to be used for recreational or other purposes.

\textsuperscript{13} Town Board Minutes 1934
\textsuperscript{14} Town Board Minutes September 1946
● The acceptance and use, subject to the approval of the Town Board, of any grant or devise of real estate solely for playground, park or recreational use.
● The recommendation, to the Town Board, of joint recreational programs with neighboring municipalities and/or any of the school districts lying wholly or in part within the Town.
● Job descriptions defining the scope of the powers and duties of the positions and wage or salary ranges or compensation.
● The contracting to or licensing of individuals, within such budgetary limits as the Town Board shall prescribe, who are or are not to be employees of the Town.
● The purchase, lease, rental, or borrowing of equipment or other material or property from others for recreational and park use.
● The authorizing of expenditures of money within the Commission's budgetary and other limitations, on certification by the Superintendent or other authorized representative.

The Commission is governed by several purposes and objectives that guide the Recreation and Parks Department and ultimately influence what programming, special events, and sports are offered. As you will notice the objectives below are also closely tied with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

● To plan and provide opportunities for the residents of the Town for recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment through participation in a wide variety of programs of a recreational nature.
● To study the recreational and parks needs and resources of the Town.
● To achieve maximum return from funding expended for such programs by encouraging broad use of such programs, by good management and prudent selection of such programs, and by establishing an appropriate division between tax-supported, partially tax-supported, and self-sustaining programs.
● To encourage recreational programs and activity, whether directly sponsored by the Commission or otherwise.
● To encourage broad community participation in its programs and coordinate its policies and activities with those of the Town Board (and other Town bodies or agencies charged with the administration of the Town park system), the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Conservation Board, Beautification Advisory Board and with the various school districts lying wholly or partly within the boundaries of the Town.

Closely aligned with the Commission’s purpose and objectives is the mission of the Recreation and Parks Department which states:

The mission of the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department is to enhance the quality of life in New Castle through sports, leisure and other recreational experiences and to provide a safe environment that emphasizes fun and the joy of personal development through participation and discovery at all ages.

Both the Commission's purposes and objectives and the Department’s mission focus on maximizing the enjoyment and availability of recreational programs and spaces in Town.
2.3 Department Structure

The New Castle Recreation and Parks Department organization and management has not changed significantly since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. The 12 Recreation and Parks Department staff oversee the implementation of over 100 programs and events annually as well as the operation and maintenance of more than 700 acres of parkland. The primary responsibilities of the Department range from capital project planning to year-round recreation programming, and include:

● Administration of year-round recreation programs for residents of all ages.
● Payroll administration
● Public inquiries, in-person, by telephone, or by email
● Maintain and update Recreation & Parks page on Town website
● Alerting public via email regarding program changes and field updates
● Fiscal administration and development of the annual budget
● Commission administration and policy enforcement
● Production and distribution of:
  ○ Seasonal course offerings calendar
  ○ RecNews emails with program information and other departmental news
  ○ Day Camp Brochure and registration
● Development and administration of capital projects
● Development and coordination of bid specifications for products and services

The Recreation and Parks Department consists of three divisions: Administrative, Recreation Programming and Parks Maintenance, that work together to bring valuable programming, sports, and continuous maintenance to the Town Parks, open spaces and facilities. The Administrative Division provides the overall management and technical support necessary to administer a comprehensive town-wide recreation and parks program. The Recreational Division consists of five (5) full time Recreation staff (programming) and 10-12 part time Recreation and office staff. The Park Maintenance Division consists of seven (7) full-time (maintenance) staff that are supplemented by approximately four (4) seasonal (maintenance) employees.

2.4 Recreation Programming Division

The Recreation Programming Division programs the Town’s two recreation facilities, the New Castle Community Center and the New Castle Art Center, which provide a dedicated home for many activities, programs, and events. Special Events span three seasons, take place in all parts of Town, and include the very popular Ragamuffin Parade and Carnival. A variety of athletic/fitness
programs for the youth and adults of the community utilize both Town and school facilities to provide a safe athletic environment. A wide selection of Youth Programs serve pre-school and school-aged children 3 years of age through 10th grade and include an extensive dance program (ballet, tap, jazz, and hip hop) for children. Summer Camp programs typically account for roughly 50% of the overall projected revenue for the Recreation and Parks Department. There is a lot of diversity in the summer programs which include day camps, travel camps, weekly sports camps, Summer at the Art Center and a counselors-in-training program. Teen Programming is a new effort that has been undertaken as since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan was written. This program aims to provide quality alternative activities for teens in the community. The Senior Program in New Castle connects older adults with a wide array of services and activities essential to maintaining health, independence, and well-being. These program areas include recreation opportunities, transportation services, meal delivery, arts, and intergenerational programming.

2.5 Parks Maintenance Division

One of the highest priorities for the Recreation and Parks Department, lies within the Parks Maintenance Division who is responsible for maintaining and preserving the recreational and park facilities. This division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of approximately 549 acres of parkland, consisting of seven separate parks and two preserves that provide five (5) baseball and softball fields, three (3) soccer fields, a sledding area, six playgrounds, two all-weather tennis courts, two basketball courts, 38 hiking/nature trails, numerous picnic areas, and two (2) restroom facilities located at Gedney Park, as well as one (1) restroom facility each at Amsterdam Park and Millwood Park. This division is also responsible for all mowing and landscaping of approximately 214,000 square feet of Town properties (whether or not they pertain to recreation) including, but not limited to; Town Hall, Art Center, Community Center, the Chappaqua Train Station, Water Department properties and six historic cemeteries throughout the Town. In addition to these maintenance responsibilities, all Spring and Fall cleanup of Town property and facilities falls under the purview of this division. Aside from maintaining and landscaping several hundred acres of Town properties, this division also provides services for all Department-sponsored special events such as the Egg Hunt, Scarecrow Festival, Fishing Derby, Ragamuffin Parade, the Summer Concert Series, and the New Castle Road Race.
Currently, the Parks Division equipment consists of six (6) trucks, three (3) mowers, two (2) trailers, one (1) tractor, and a variety of hand tools, including three (3) electric leaf blowers. Routine service and maintenance of the equipment is completed by the Recreation and Parks Department. The maintenance facility is located near the Town Department of Public Works (DPW) garage and adjacent to the Recycling Center on Joan Corwin Way. The four (4) active parks with sports fields in Town are maintained throughout the three sports seasons along with any proactive tree and shrub maintenance. Active parks are maintained throughout the year because they are highly utilized and offer playgrounds and/or large open spaces for people to gather. General maintenance for active Parks includes the following:

- Refuse removal daily;
- Comfort stations monitored daily;
- Litter removed daily;
- Mowing and landscaping of all open space and fields 1-2 times a week during the spring, summer, and fall;
- Parking lots and roadways swept on an as needed basis;
- Athletic fields fertilized two (2) times each year in the spring and fall;
- Trails inspected 2-3 times each year;
- Snow removal including plowing and salting parking lots, as needed;
- Tree and shrub pruning.

15 Amsterdam Park, Gedney Park, Millwood Park, and Recreation Field
The 11\textsuperscript{16} passive parks, preserves, and open spaces require less intensive maintenance, but have maintenance needs associated with tree removal, area mowing activities, and plantings. Plantings at the Chappaqua Pocket Park are maintained by the Chappaqua Garden Club, and the Turner Swamp Sanctuary is a passive park with absolutely no human activity. General maintenance for passive parks and preserves includes the following:

- Maintenance of gravel parking lots as needed;
- Refuse and litter removed twice each week;
- Trail inspection 2-3 times each year;
- Trail maintenance and repairs are completed as needed;
- Snow removed only in parking lots by plowing.

The properties listed above add approximately seven (7) acres to the total land maintained by the Recreation and Parks Department. In the spring and summer months the majority of staff time in the Parks Division (Maintenance) is dedicated to grass cutting, which was previously outsourced to a third-party. It should be noted that the Town is actively pursuing the transition from gas powered lawn equipment to electric and hybrid lawn equipment, in order to fulfill and surpass the Town and State goals of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

2.6 Budget

The budget for the Recreation and Parks Department is published each year in the adopted Town budget, compiled by the Town Comptroller’s Office, which is available on the Town’s website. The year 2023 budget for the Recreation and Parks Department totals $2,441,940.00.

Income is mainly generated from three areas of the Recreation and Parks Department: programs, recreation, and camps. Camps generate the majority of the revenue. It should be noted that camp revenue helps to offset the cost of several of the other programs that do not bring in the revenue needed to support them, including discounted senior and children’s programming. The largest expenses for the Recreation and Parks Department, outside of staff salaries, include camps and

\footnotesize{16 Bicentennial Park, Burden Preserve, Chappaqua Pocket Park, Depot Plaza Park, Glazier Preserve, Millwood Garden, Smith Park, Sunny Ridge Preserve, Turner Swamp Sanctuary, Warburg Park, and Whippoorwill Park}
associated programming. Some programs and athletics lose money for the Town, but are very popular among the residents. Those program revenue losses are made up from the camp revenue.

Wages and salaries of the staff are established by the Recreation and Parks Commission, who also develops the job descriptions defining the scope of powers and duties for each position within the Recreation and Park. The Town Board then has the authority to approve the wages, salaries, and duties, ensuring conformance with applicable Civil Service requirements. There are 12 full-time staff and approximately 150 part-time, instructional, and seasonal staff which include staff in the following areas:

- *Program instructors for art and dance;*
- *Youth athletics (e.g., referees, scorekeepers);*
- *Seasonal camp staff;*
- *Art Center instructors;*
- *Senior Center staff;*
- *Community Center staff;*
- *Youth Athletics staff;*
- *Fitness instructors.*
CHAPTER 3

PARK, OPEN SPACE AND FACILITY PROFILES

“In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
3.1 RESOURCES

The Town of New Castle is rich with open space lands. Of the Town’s roughly 15,000 acres of land, approximately 4,240 acres, over a quarter of the total land in New Castle, can be categorized as open space\(^\text{17}\) which consists of county parks and parkway lands, local parks and open space, nature preserves, private recreation, state park and parkway lands and water supply lands. The Town is home to several County Parks, which total approximately 330 acres and State Parks, which total approximately 310 acres. In addition to public parks and recreational resources the Town has approximately 630 acres of privately-owned nature preserves and private recreation lands. Out of the over 4,000 acres of open space, which are owned by a combination of government and private entities, the Town of New Castle owns, operates and manages approximately 725 acres of both active and passive parks.

The Town’s 725 acres of designated parks and open spaces can be found in 20 locally controlled parks, facilities, and open space lands for residents and visitors of the community. The 20 resources range from over 100 acres individually to as small as .08 acres. Of these resources, there are nine (9) active\(^\text{18}\) parks and facilities and eleven (11) passive parks and open space lands. An active park is defined in this plan as a Town designated park that regularly hosts programs, activities, or sports. All together local active parks and recreation lands account for approximately 155 acres. In general, active parks are either located in or very near the hamlets of Chappaqua and Millwood. Passive parks are defined as Parks or open spaces that do not offer organized programming or activities and generally consist of walking trails or passive recreational areas. Passive parks and recreation lands account for approximately 565 acres. Passive park resources are mostly concentrated on the eastern and western ends of New Castle, where there are larger tracts of wooded and undisturbed lands.

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\(^{17}\) According to the NYS DEC: Open space is simply land or water that is undeveloped (free from residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional use). Open space can be either private or publicly owned and includes areas such as forests, agricultural field, public parks and preserves, and coastal lands.

\(^{18}\) Gedney Park is both active and passive
3.2 Park Uses

The diverse array of parks (park lands, open space lands and facilities) in the Town can be categorized as either active or passive in use. Active Parks offer programming, indoors and/or outdoors, by the Recreation and Parks Department during at least one season of the year. This includes the two facilities operated by the Parks Department, the Art Center and the Community Center. Passive parks and preserves are not programmed in any way, but may offer walking trails or playgrounds and are maintained by the Recreation and Parks Department. Out of the 20 parks, open spaces and facilities operated and maintained by the Parks Department the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center (Chapp PAC) and the Millwood Community Garden are the only two parks not solely operated or maintained by the Town. Millwood Garden is a cooperative relationship between the community and the Town. The Recreation and Parks Department maintains the outer areas of the property while residents maintain the inner garden areas. Turner Swamp is also a unique property that is under the purview of the Recreation and Parks Department, but it is a completely passive property with both National and State-designated wetlands with no trailways or public use allowed.

3.3 Park and Open Space Amenities

At the beginning of each recreational resource profile there is an amenity icon describing the available amenities at each of the parks. This graphic provides a visual interpretation of the park. Below is the guide to all graphics that are utilized including a brief description. Below the amenity graphic is a chart of what amenities are available at each recreational resource. This chart is accurate as of April 2022 and will be updated as new amenities are implemented as part of this Plan.
### Amenity Descriptions

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Amenity Graphic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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*Last Updated 1.11.2025*
## NEW CASTLE RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT

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</tbody>
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*Has field/court Lighting
**ADA Accessible

For further information regarding Park, Open Space and Facility amenities please call the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department at 914-238-3909
3.4 Park, Open Space and Facility Profiles

This chapter includes a profile of every park, open space, and facility operated and maintained by the Recreation and Parks Department. Each profile follows a general structure that depicts where the resource is located in the Town, any applicable historical information, amenities offered (if any) and a brief description of the natural environment. If a park, open space, or facility offers amenities, this will be noted via a graphic symbol next to the name of the Park, see the above graphic table for the definitions of each graphic symbol. Parks offering sports fields will also have the sport noted on a map of the park within their profile. Parks offering trails will have a trail map accompanying their profile along with any environmental features on that property. Each trail map has been updated and delineated via mobile technology as of the summer of 2020.

3.4.1 Active Parks

Amsterdam Park

Amsterdam Park is perched on a ridge in the western end of Town. The Park is located in a quiet residential neighborhood on Hoags Cross Road and consists of a total of 13.5 Acres of active recreational area. In 1998, the Town purchased the land for the park from a private estate so as to expand the recreational amenities offered to Town residents and visitors alike. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan was written, the Park has notably been updated with two soccer fields and a playground. In total the multi-use park offers the following uses and amenities including: two (2) soccer fields, a playground, 59 designated parking spaces (3 handicapped), an electric vehicle charger and a restroom.

The natural environment of the Park has been significantly altered to accommodate the active recreation areas, leaving the undisturbed flora at the boundary of the Park. At the highest point the Park sits 626 FT above sea level, where on a clear day, miles of rolling hills can be seen to the southwest. The recreation areas of the Park are dominated by manicured athletic fields with the remainder of the Park consisting of mowed lawn and trees. Trees within the park represent a variety of relatively young species that include: red maple, white pine, river birch, white spruce, Norway spruce, Canadian serviceberry, eastern red cedar and an ornamental cherry species. On the southwestern end of the Park there is a regrowth of shrub land.
and it should be noted that this section of the Park has at least 50% of the land covered with shrubs and non-native species that include Multiflora rose, Japanese barberry and Japanese honeysuckle.

Amsterdam Park offers the following programmed sports:

- Youth soccer.

Amsterdam Park hosts the following yearly events:

- Youth day camp.

**Chappaqua Performing Arts Center**

The Chappaqua Performing Arts Center (Chapp PAC), formerly the Wallace Auditorium, is an approximately 1.5 Acre property containing a theater style auditorium. It was originally part of the redevelopment of Chappaqua Crossing (the former headquarters property of Reader’s Digest) and is currently being renovated by the Town. The property is located within the Chappaqua Crossing mixed use development approximately one mile north of the Chappaqua Hamlet. Historically this structure was constructed as a lecture hall, consisting of a stage with auditorium seating, conference rooms, and a dressing area. As of 2022, the Town has been handling space rental. Throughout the year Chapp PAC offers a multitude of programs and events such as film screenings and community and civic events. Chapp PAC officially falls under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Parks Department, which uses the space for special events.

**Gedney Park**

Gedney Park is located on Millwood Road (NYS Routes 120 and 133) approximately a half mile east of the Millwood Hamlet. This large active park covers over 126-Acres with varied topography. It hosts several active sports fields and is home to the New Castle 9/11 Memorial, which was dedicated in 2011. The Park was acquired through two land purchases in the 1960s. The first purchase was in 1965 utilizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund (New York State contributed 50%) and a smaller second purchase occurred later that decade, which established the current size of the Park. It is the most utilized Park in Town. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan, the most significant update to the Park was the addition of the upper Gedney playground, which was completed in spring of 2016. In late summer 2020, the New Castle Conservation Board was awarded a Trees for Tribs Grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Protection.
Conservation to reduce erosion through planting trees and shrubs along the brook that runs from Gedney Pond south into the lower half of the Park. Currently Gedney Park offers the following amenities: multiple parking lots (paved and gravel), an electric vehicle charger, four (4) athletic fields, two (2) playgrounds, a rest room facility, a picnic shelter, a sledding hill, nine (9) passive trails, a gazebo and a fishing dock.

Gedney Park represents a combination of both actively maintained lands and matured natural communities for passive use. The active lands include the 9/11 memorial and the Manheimer Memorial flower/herb garden along with the athletic fields and picnic area. The matured natural communities are represented through Gedney pond, several streams, a shallow marshland, and an Oak-Tulip Forest. The majority of Park area is characterized by moderately to steeply-sloping mature woodlands. The oval-shaped pond is fed by a perennial stream originating north of the Park and discharging into a perennial outlet stream through a boulder-lined spillway to the south. Around the pond, shoreline species of note include lady’s-thumb, jewelweed,
barnyard grass, arrow-head, and winterberry.

Gedney Park offers the following programmed sports:

- Youth baseball;
- Youth softball;
- Youth soccer;
- Adult softball

Gedney Park offers nine (9) trails:

- Blue Trail = 0.7 mi;
- Blue/Red Trail = 0.2 mi.;
- Nature Trail (Green) = 0.1 mi.;
- Purple Trail = 0.08 mi.;
- Red Trail = 1.2 mi;
- Red/Orange Trail = 0.3 mi.;
- Wetland Trail = 0.2 mi.;
- Yellow Trail = 0.5 mi;
- 9/11 Memorial trail = 0.1

New Castle Art Center

The New Castle Art Center is located at 939 Hardscrabble Road approximately one mile from the Chappaqua Hamlet. The Art Center is nestled on the edge of Turner Swamp, also owned by the Town, at the end of a long, paved driveway. The site and building, formerly the Kipp School, were acquired by the Town in 1973. Affixed on a 0.9 Acre lot, the 1,825 square foot Art Center building offers four separate rooms dedicated to different modes of art. Currently, the Center is programmed year-round by the Recreation and Parks Department and hosts the annual summer Arts Camp targeted to younger children (3-7 years old). Renovations have occurred since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan and include a new handicapped access ramp built in 2020 and window replacement in early 2021. Amenities for the Art Center include a paved parking lot that can accommodate up to eight (8) cars and an informal play area in the rear of the building.

The New Castle Art Center hosts the following programs and events\(^{19}\):

\(^{19}\) Not an exhaustive list
Youth

- ceramics;
- painting;
- woodworking.

Adult

- ceramics;
- painting.

**New Castle Community Center**

The New Castle Community Center is located at 10 Senter Street just off of King Street (NYS RT-120) in the Chappaqua Hamlet. The Center is located adjacent to the New Castle Historical Society on a 0.3-acre lot with the building totaling 4,757 square feet. The Center building was originally built in 1930 and used as the Town library until the late 1970s. In 1979 the Town acquired the lot and building from the School District for $127,500 with the intention of creating a space for the community to gather. The Community Center was officially dedicated on Community Day in September of 1979. Updates to the building since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan include renovation of the senior area (downstairs) and in late 2020 a new roof was installed for the entire Center. Amenities for the Center include on-street parking, handicapped accessibility, and on-site social service support.

The Center offers a wide range of programming for every age group from toddlers to seniors. Most notably, in 2019 the Parks Department began several teen outreach programs at the Center that include games, pizza nights, and field trips (skiing & go-kart racing). The New Castle Community Center hosts the following programs and events\(^\text{20}\) (not an extensive list):

- St. Patrick’s Day luncheon
- Senior Programs
  - music class;
  - writing group;

\(^\text{20}\) Not an exhaustive list
- arts and crafts;
- current events group;
- physical fitness classes.

- Youth Programs
  - dance;
  - cooking;
  - coding.

Millwood Park

Millwood Park is located on Saw Mill River Road in the Hamlet of Millwood. The Park totals approximately seven (7) acres of active recreation area, which includes a ball field and tennis courts. The Town acquired the land in the 1950’s and subsequently converted the property into a park in the 1960s for the growing Millwood community. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan the most significant update is field lighting that was installed in the summer of 2021. Amenities for the Park include: two tennis courts, a playground, paved parking that can accommodate up to 31 cars (2 handicapped spaces), one dual port electric vehicle charger, one baseball/softball field, restroom and a picnic shelter. As of the writing of this Plan the public sidewalk from the Millwood Central Business District to Millwood Park is being widened and extended in order to encourage and invite more people to walk or bike to the Park.

The natural environment of the Park has been altered by the placement of the mowed athletic field and tennis courts. Natural communities of Floodplain Forest, Successional Southern hardwoods, and wetlands still exist adjacent to the recreational areas and in the rear of the Park. The forested areas comprise a wetland system that is consistent with the classification of Floodplain Forest\(^{21}\). Vegetation in wetland areas are dominated by herbaceous and shrub species, with red maple also present. Herbaceous species included marsh fern, skunk cabbage, clearweed, jewelweed, and jack-in-the-pulpit. Winterberry, spicebush and speckled alder comprised the shrub layer. The forested community represents an ecological classification consistent with Successional Southern Hardwoods\(^{22(1)}\). These hardwood or mixed forests occur on sites that have been cleared or otherwise disturbed. Sugar maple represented the dominant tree species, with shagbark hickory, black oak, Norway maple, and declining specimens of white ash.


\(^{22}\) IBID
Millwood Park offers the following programmed sports:

- Youth baseball;
- Youth softball;
- Adult softball.

**Recreation Field**

Recreation Field is located in the Chappaqua Hamlet adjacent to the Chappaqua Metro North Railroad Station and Town Hall. Recreation Field, also known as Rec Field, is an active park that totals approximately 3.2 acres and includes a multi-use ball field. The Rec Field property was acquired by the Town in the mid-1950s during the re-alignment of Tertia Brook, which feeds into the Saw Mill River. Along with the multi-use ball field, a gazebo on the northeast edge of the Park hosts concerts and events during the warmer months. Near the gazebo there are several benches, a walkway and a Holocaust memorial, all adjacent to Tertia Brook.

The natural environment of Recreation Field is characterized by the athletic field and the adjacent turf areas that are maintained by mowing and classified as Mowed Lawn\textsuperscript{23}. There is a gazebo which includes adjacent areas that are characterized as a Flower/Herb Garden\textsuperscript{24}. Such areas represent residential, commercial, or horticultural land cultivated to produce ornamental herbs (including culinary herbs) and shrubs. The planted vegetation includes rose shrubs, hydrangeas, and catmint. Tercia Brook is adjacent to Recreation Field to the west and ultimately discharges into the Saw Mill River. The relatively gently sloped lands adjacent to the stream segment are regularly mowed as close as practicable to the stream edge between its entrance underneath the roadway, until reaching an overlying footbridge. Trees growing within mowed areas include weeping willow and American elm as well as herbaceous species of mugwort, primrose, horse nettle, small white aster, and isolated pockets of iris.

Recreation Field offers the following sports:

- Youth baseball;

\textsuperscript{23} IBID
\textsuperscript{24} IBID
● Youth softball;
● Youth soccer;
● Flag football;
● Adult softball.

Annual Events held at Recreation Field include:

● Summer Concert Series;
● 10k and 5k Road Race;

**Town Hall Recreation Resources**

In 2020, a lighted regulation-sized outdoor basketball court was installed on the northeastern edge of the Town Hall property adjacent to Recreation Field. The Recreation and Parks Department programs the court and provides time for residents to utilize the court for open play. In 2020, the Town Hall playground was renovated to establish an all-inclusive play area. The playground is now ADA compliant with access-to-play equipment atop a rubberized ground covering to ensure optimal safety. Financing, in part, for the upgraded playground and basketball court came from both state and local grant funding totaling $350,000.

**3.4.2 Passive Parks**

**Bicentennial Park**

Bicentennial Park (AKA Duck Pond Park), named for the Country’s 200th birthday in 1975, is located at the confluence of Quaker Street (NYS RT-120), Douglas Road and Mill River Road approximately a quarter of a mile west of the Chappaqua Hamlet. The 1.9-acre passive park features a beautiful stone dam originally constructed in the early 1900s and reconstructed in the early 2000s due to damage from Hurricane Floyd. The pond is considered to be the headwaters of the Saw Mill River, a tributary to the Hudson River and covers nearly half of the Park. Amenities offered at the Park include several benches that focus on views of the pond and a little free library located adjacent to the sidewalk on the southeastern end of the Park. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan major improvements have been made to the sidewalk/bridge along the southeastern end of the Park because of erosion and safety concerns.

The Park is landscaped and maintained by the New Castle Recreation and Parks Department year-round. The physical makeup of the Park was altered in 1975 to create the existing lawn area when the main body of the pond was dredged. Inflow to the pond and outflow from the spillway both represent narrow, channelized stream segments designated as part of the Saw Mill River. The lawn area is maintained as turf cover which also includes a nearby gravel parking area leading to
a concrete pathway at the southern end of the pond after crossing over a foot bridge above the dam and spillway. A small wetland fringe area represents the transition from maintained turf cover to the pond edge and includes a mix of vegetation such as iris, forget-me-not, and pondweed. The edge of the stream flora represents a variety of tree, shrub, and plant species both native and non-native which include jewelweed, American elm, Silver maple, sycamore, shagbark hickory, multiflora rose, smooth sumac, and smooth alder.

Burden Preserve

Burden Preserve is located on the eastern end of Town, neatly tucked in among large estates and dense woodlands. Located on Sheather Road and bordered by Armonk Road (NYS RT- 128) to the west and Harriman Road to the east. The Preserve lands were once part of an estate owned by William A.M. Burden, for whom the Preserve is named, is a notable resident who was the United States Ambassador to Belgium from 1959-1961. The Preserve offers 123 acres of passive park that allow hikers to meander through a variety of ecosystems via the approximately 2.5 miles of trails. The majority of the Preserve lands, 112 Acres consisting of two parcels of land, were acquired by the Town in 2003 for $2.5 million. The remaining 12 Acres were acquired by the Town in 2008 so that a connection between the two parcels of land could be made and which represents the current configuration of the Preserve today. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan the Town expanded the Park (from 112 acres to 123 acres) and installed additional trails. Amenities are limited to a gravel parking lot located on Sheather Road that accommodates approximately 12 cars.

The natural environment of Burden Preserve is largely untouched and represents a network of perennial and intermittent watercourses and wetlands flowing into and through the Preserve. The Preserve is home to several classifications of swamps and forests. The predominant wetland classification within Burden is red maple-hardwood swamp25. These swamps occur in poorly drained depressions, typically on inorganic soils. Red maple dominates the Preserve along with American elm which is also present in vegetated wetland/swamp areas. With respect to open water, black birch, cottonwood, and black locust were rooted adjacent to the pond. Burden Preserve’s shrub layer in the swamp does not quite rise to the definition of a well-developed dense shrub layer, but assemblages of winterberry, bayberry, and non-native multiflora rose are noticeable when viewing the landscape. The herbaceous layer is dominated by tussock sedge and sensitive fern, and includes cattail and goldenrod species. The other vegetated wetland type in the Preserve represents an area of Reed grass/Purple Loosestrife Swamp26 mainly located off of the

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26 Ibid
White/Yellow Trail juncture. The plant species are limited to common reed, horsetail, and cottonwood trees.

Upland forests within the southwestern quadrant of the Preserve (Orange and Blue Trails), include a mix of native and non-native species indicative of areas that have been disturbed (black locust and Norway maple), a planted evergreen pocket adjacent to Harriman Road (white pine and Norway spruce), as well as those with characteristic species more closely consistent with both Oak-Tulip Tree (Red oak, Black birch, White oak) and Beech-Maple Mesic (American beech, Sugar maple, White ash).

Moving up in elevation above the wetland area (northern white and southern red

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27 Ibid
28 Ibid
trails), an open meadow pocket of predominantly herb species includes some bluestem grass and goldenrod species. Low creeping growth patterns of thorny shrub species were also encountered and represented by wine berry and blackberry. Tree species potentially planted include white pine, American holly, Scots pine, crab apple, and pin oak. The remaining forest within these colored trail areas in the north of the Preserve resemble oak-tulip forest. The noted exception included the appearance of eastern red cedars rooted in exposed rock outcrop areas. Burden Preserve offers six (6) trails:

- Blue Trail= 0.7 mi;
- Orange Trail= 0.2 mi;
- Purple Trail= 0.4 mi;
- Red Trail= 0.6 mi;
- Yellow Trail= 0.2 mi;
- White Trail= 0.4 mi.

**Chappaqua Pocket Park**

Chappaqua Pocket Park is situated in the heart of the Chappaqua Hamlet and Chappaqua Business District on North Greeley Avenue. At 0.08 acres the Park is the smallest in Town and offers the most diverse plantings per square foot of any other place in the Hamlet. During development of the previous Recreation and Parks Master Plan in 2007 the Park was undergoing renovations which resulted in it becoming the small oasis it is today for residents and visitors. The 40-foot by 60-foot lot is jointly maintained by the Recreation and Parks Department and the Chappaqua Garden Club.

The Park flora receives routine maintenance and care to promote the growth of native plantings, as well as inhibit the natural recruitment of undesirable species due to active control and removal methods. It is home to dense plantings that include Daylilies, Lambs ear, and Geranium, numerous types of shrubs, Hydrangea, Juniper, spruce, and holly, as well as Crab apple and Eastern redbud trees. The Park offers paved walkways that lead to several seating areas that are shaded in the spring and summer. Artwork composed of a mosaic of tiles created by residents, artists, and school children reflects the many sides of the Chappaqua Hamlet and provides a focal point in the park. It is often used by visitors as a way to quickly escape into lush greenery on a warm summer day. Parking is offered adjacent to the Park on the street as well as the municipal parking lot across from the Park. Other amenities nearby include the Chappaqua Metro North Railroad station, several restaurants, and a wide variety of locally owned and operated shops.
Depot Plaza Park

Depot Plaza Park (AKA A.H. Smith Memorial Park) is located adjacent to the Chappaqua Metro North Train Station and is the oldest Park in Town. The daughter of Horace Greeley, Gabrielle Greeley Clendenin, gifted the land to be used as Depot Plaza Park to the Town in 1902. The passive Park is home to the New Castle Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial and is most notably used for the Memorial Day parade speeches, Community Day, and the Farmer’s Market during the warmer months. In 1979 the Park was designated as a Federal Historical Landmark, subsequently designated by New York State as a State landmark in 1980 and designated by Westchester County in 1988 as a County historical landmark. The historical landmark designations at every level of government demonstrate the immense civic and historical value of the Park. The 1.17-acre landmarked Park area currently consists of the paved roundabout and the first ring of parking closest to the green space where the War memorial and flagpole are located. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan there have not been any notable changes to the Park.

The green portions of the Park are landscaped all year round as a Flower/Herb Garden which is populated with daylilies, tulips and irises. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial is bordered on three sides by Taxus/Yew shrubs with paved walkways on the south and north that lead to the Train Station and cafe. The planting bed to the east is the buffer between the War Memorial and the mowed lawn area of the Park. The mowed lawn area of the Park is intentionally non-programmed space that can be used by visitors however they see fit. Recently, the Town added multiple picnic tables to the mowed lawn area in order to encourage use of the Park and to provide safe outdoor dining spaces.

Major events held annually or seasonally at Depot Plaza Park include:

- Memorial Day Parade (May);
- Farmer’s Market (May-October);
- Community Day (September).

Glazier Preserve

Glazier Preserve is located at 359 Whippoorwill Road in the southeastern end of Town. The Preserve totals approximately 68 Acres of passive park created through both a land donation by Henry Glazier Jr. in 1976 and a land purchase by the Town in the mid-1970s. The land Mr. Glazier
donated stipulated that it be preserved as an arboretum. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan 50 trees have been planted near the entrance of the Preserve to enhance the density of the flora. Other updates include refurbishing sections of the Blue Trail with crushed stone as well as the placement of a wooden footbridge to facilitate traversing a particularly wet area over a perennial watercourse. The four hiking trails, totaling approximately 2.3 miles, extend throughout almost every facet of the Preserve. Other amenities in the Park are minimal and include a small gravel parking area that can accommodate approximately eight cars and a kiosk at the head of the Blue Trail.

The Preserve is a passive use resource with minimal routine maintenance activities as defined by mowing a narrow, initial linear length of level trail way between the open shrub/wildflower meadow hillside and wetlands. Sloping mature woodlands represent the predominant characterization of Glazier Preserve, which also includes a mix of aquatic resources and the open shrub/wildflower meadow hillside. The historical development of mature woodlands includes a combination of planted (e.g. European larch, Norway spruce) and naturally occurring native forest trees that include Oaks (Red and White), American beech and Red Maple to name a few. A successional shrubland with Blackberry, Staghorn sumac, and honeysuckle represent the majority of the shrub species found at the Preserve. A successional old field is a meadow dominated by forbs and grasses that occur on sites that have been cleared and/or plowed, and then abandoned, and includes a number of goldenrod species (lance-leaved flat-topped is dominant, rough-stemmed and Canada), mugwort, rattlesnake master, and prickly lettuce just to name a few. Topographically level areas include wetlands and open water hydrologically connected to a flow-through perennial watercourse which originates offsite, traversing the sloping woodlands to the south, and eventually flowing offsite to the north. The majority of wetlands within Glazier Preserve represent shallow emergent wetlands characterized as reed grass/purple loosestrife marsh, which is heavily dominated by the non-native, invasive species common reed. Other herbaceous species present in
lower quantities included purple loosestrife (another non-native invasive species) and broad-leaved cattail.

Glazier Preserve offers four (4) trails:

- Blue Trail = 0.8 mi;
- Orange Trail = 0.5 mi;
- Red Trail = 0.6 mi;
- Yellow Trail = 0.4 mi.

**Jean Craighead George Park**

As the newest park in Town, Jean Craighead George Park, also known as JCG Park, is located on Douglas Road, just outside of the Chappaqua Hamlet. The passive Park is approximately 0.8 acres and contains a designated New York State Department of Environmental Conservation wetland. At the northern end of the park there is a seating area for residents of the neighborhood to enjoy the densely vegetated area. Recently, many types of invasive species have been removed by volunteers from this Park. In their place the Town has secured over 200 native trees and shrubs to rejuvenate and restore the Park. This is an almost completely passive park and will be preserved as such for the foreseeable future.

**Millwood Community Garden (Formerly Millwood Swim Club)**

The Community Garden at Millwood (formerly known as Millwood Swim Club) is located on Sand Street, just off of Saw Mill River Road (NYS RT-100) in the Millwood Hamlet. The passive property totals 1.24 acres in a quiet neighborhood setting. In October of 2014 the Town acquired the land and it has been subsequently revitalized into a community garden for the Millwood area. The garden currently supports over two dozen raised planting beds that house a variety of in-season herbs and vegetables. The garden is fenced and locked to inhibit trespassing and wildlife. The remainder of the property is unused and generally maintained by the Parks Department.

**Smith Park**

Smith Park is nestled in the Kisco Park neighborhood with an entrance on Pineview Road. The land for the two (2) acre passive Park was originally set aside as green space for the Kisco Park development in the early 1960s. It was officially dedicated in 1979 as Eugene Smith Park to honor the local resident who organized volunteers to clean up and improve the Park. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan the only major update to the Park is the addition of a water
fountain that was installed between the playground and the basketball court. As New Castle’s only neighborhood Park it offers the following amenities:

- Basketball court;
- Benches;
- Picnic tables;
- Playground;
- Grills;
- Paved biking/walking path.

The natural environment of Smith Park beyond the mowed lawn and programmed areas consists of a red maple-hardwood swamp to the south and a small area of mixed maples (red and sugar) woodland to the east. The red maple-hardwood swamp is dominated by red maple, and also includes characteristic codominant species contributing to canopy coverage such as ironwood, American elm, and swamp white oak. The swamp at Smith Park does not represent a well-developed dense shrub layer, and includes mostly the non-native species honeysuckle and multiflora rose, as well as large pussy willow. Wetland herbs, sensitive fern, reed canary grass, common reed, and tussock sedge are also present. The herbaceous layer within mixed maple woodland to the east includes few native species (e.g. small white aster), and comprises a relatively large number of non-native species, which included mugwort, pachysandra, and stinging nettle to name a few. Transitioning out of the wetlands to sloped, wooded areas represents a decrease in shrubs, both in the number of species and total individuals, and includes relatively open woodland maples (red and sugar) and shagbark hickory, which comprise the overstory layer.

**Sunny Ridge Preserve**

Sunny Ridge Preserve is located on the western end of Town on Croton Dam Road (NYS RT-134). The 82-acre passive Preserve offers several hiking trails with varying degrees of difficulty. The Preserve land was acquired through a combination of donated lands and land purchased by the Town in 2000 and 2001. The Preserve offers a small gravel parking area on Croton Dam Road (NYS RT-134) that accommodates roughly eight (8) vehicles. A trail map kiosk is located at the trailhead of the White Trail, which is adjacent to the gravel parking area. The White Trail gives access to the other seven trails available at the

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The natural environment of the Preserve is intact and undisturbed, apart from the eight walking trails. The Preserve boasts a challenging topography with a mature forest canopy and a relatively open understory that hosts tree saplings and various shrub species. The majority of the mature trees encountered at the Preserve are hardwoods such as oaks, Eastern hemlock, American beech, Black birch, Red maple, and Tulip. These tree species are typical of Southeastern New York in areas within a floodplain system that includes wetlands and interconnected streams, such as the Preserve offers. The streams running through the Preserve ultimately either discharge to Purdy Pond or the Lower Minkel Dam water body. Vegetation in the wetland areas are dominated by sensitive fern, skunk cabbage, and tussock sedge. The scattered shrubs beneath the forest canopy represent both native
and non-native species that include mountain laurel, winged burning bush, common greenbrier, and Japanese barberry.

Sunny Ridge Preserve offers eight (8) trails:

- Blue Trail = 0.1 mi;
- Green Trail = 0.3 mi;
- Orange Trail = 0.3 mi;
- Purple Trail = 0.2 mi;
- Red Trail N = 0.4 mi;
- Red Trail S = 0.4 mi;
- White Trail = 0.8 mi;
- Yellow Trail = 0.3 mi.

**Turner Swamp Sanctuary**

Turner Swamp Sanctuary is located on Hardscrabble Road adjacent to the Town Art Center. The Sanctuary covers approximately 37 acres of completely passive and natural land. It is not currently accessible to the public in any way and is completely preserved as a natural wetland. The land was purchased by the Town in 1973 in order to protect and preserve the large functioning wetland. The entire property is designated as a New York State and Federal wetland that facilitates several small streams.

The Turner Swamp Sanctuary flora is represented as a red maple-hardwood swamp which occurs in poorly drained depressions, typically on inorganic soils. Although this ecological community is broadly defined with many regional and edaphic variants, red maple represents the only species contributing to canopy coverage within the saturated soil areas. The shrub layer of red maple-hardwood swamps are usually well-developed and quite dense. Although Turner Swamp Sanctuary does not represent a well-developed dense shrub layer, it does include characteristic species scattered within this community type such as dogwood, arrow-wood and blueberry. Similar to the Swamp’s shrub layer, the herbaceous layer would not be characterized as diverse and dominated by ferns as has been recorded for red maple-hardwood swamps. The density of a characteristic herb (tussock sedge) that has been recorded as a species ‘occurring’ in these swamps, is abundant and represented in the dominant herbaceous species present throughout the understorey. Intrusion of the non-native, common reed appeared at the relatively narrower, southern swamp limits where adjacent developed properties (private residences on Hardscrabble & Elizabeth Streets, and the Chappaqua Arts Center) collectively form a three-sided border that transitions into non-wetlands.

**Warburg Park**

Warburg Park is located on the northwestern end of Town adjacent to the Taconic Parkway on Pinesbridge Road. This passive Park totals 82 acres of rugged, varied terrain that can be traversed via the four main trails. James and Bessie Rosenberg originally donated the majority of the land
for the Park to the Taconic State Park Commission in 1963. The Taconic State Park Commission considered the lot size too small for a State Park and subsequently gifted the land to the Town with the stipulation that the property be used for park and recreation purposes only. Since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan, a trail kiosk has been installed at the edge of the parking area along with a larger park identification sign on Pinesbridge Road. Amenities are minimal, which include a gravel parking lot that can accommodate approximately eight (8) vehicles, an information kiosk at the entrance of the Park, and a few wooden park benches scattered throughout the trail system. The Park offers four trails, which span over two miles and circumvent the Town operated composting area located at the center of the Park.

The natural environment of Warburg Park includes ecological communities ranging from Oak-Tulip Forests to Shallow Marshlands. Anyone visiting the Park will notice that the majority of non-wetland areas represent mature forest communities. The most prevalent of which is consistent with an Oak-Tulip Forest as well as sparse outcroppings of Hardwood trees that are characterized as: Oaks, American Beech, Black birch, Red Maple, and Tulip. Other flora interspersed throughout...
the Park are a mix of shrubs such as maple-leaved viburnum and burning bush along with herbaceous species such as Virginia knotweed, oriental bittersweet, and white wood aster.

The wetland system of Warburg Park can be observed from many of the current trails. Of the three types of wetlands within the Park, Shallow Emergent Marsh are the first type of wetland visitors encounter on the walk from the gravel parking area to the Blue trailhead. A second shallow emergent wetland is also most visible along the shores of the mapped water body that can be seen from the Blue and White Trails. The Flood Plain Forest is not immediately visible adjacent to the Blue Trail, but rather represents an open pocket area at the Park's northeast corner which is observable when viewing the distant landscape. The wetlands and surrounding areas are home to wetland-tolerant species such as skunk cabbage, tussock sedge, or jack-in-the-pulpit. Vernal pools are devoid of emergent vegetation, are more intermittent and most visible when flooded in the springtime or after a heavy rainfall, and can be seen on the Red Trail. Warburg Park offers four (4) trails:

- Blue Trail = 1.5 mi;
- Red Trail = 0.3 mi;
- White Trail = 0.4 mi;
- Yellow Trail = 0.5 mi.

**Whippoorwill Park**

Whippoorwill Park is located on the eastern end of Town on Whippoorwill Road approximately half a mile off of Bedford Road (NYS RT-117). Whippoorwill Park is the largest passive Park in New Castle at 215 acres. The Town purchased the majority of the Parkland in 1964 from the Berol Estate utilizing, in part, State funds for the $270,415 purchase. The Park offers approximately four miles of trails that vary in topography, with the Green Trail reaching the highest point of the Park at approximately 640 feet. Updates since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan include the Town purchasing 48 additional acres of land to expand the Park to its current size of 215 acres. Amenities are limited to a gravel parking lot located on Whippoorwill Road that can accommodate approximately eight (8) vehicles and an information kiosk at the head of the Red Trail, adjacent to the parking lot.

The 215-acre Park is predominantly characterized as mature forested communities consisting of Red Maple Hardwood Swamp, Oak-Tulip Forest, and Chestnut Oak Forest. Forested areas are located within wetlands at lower and more level elevations, whereas non-wetlands areas are situated on gently to steeply-sloped contours. The sub canopy ranges from relatively open with interspersed saplings and shrub species, to more dense cover. More densely covered shrub areas

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31 Ibid
32 Ibid
include communities dominated by non-native species, Japanese barberry and multiflora rose, in areas generally located closer to residential properties, which border the park boundaries, and also include native species, mountain laurel, in steeply sloped rock outcropping traversed by the Orange and Green Trails.

Aquatic communities within Whippoorwill Park included Shallow Emergent Marsh\(^{33}\) and Vernal Pool\(^{34}\). Shallow emergent marshes typically occur in lake basins and along streams with herbaceous species including areas of cattail, tussock sedge, and sedge species, while alder and blueberry shrubs are rooted along shallow pond edges. Vernal pools represent intermittently to ephemerally-pounded, small shallow depressions typically within an upland forest that are flooded in spring or after a heavy rainfall, but are usually dry during summer and sometimes fill again in autumn. A centrally located defined watercourse bisects Whippoorwill Park, which is interrupted by an oval shaped shallow open water body/Shallow Emergent Marsh that formed courtesy of a

\(^{33}\) Ibid
\(^{34}\) Ibid
small dam and spillway retaining a relatively large volume of water. The watercourse flows into this shallow open water body from the south and re-forms its course as outflow over the spillway to the north, whereby it continues until leaving the Park near Kitchel Road.
CHAPTER 4

TRENDS, PROGRAMS
AND NEEDS
4.1 Overview of Uses and Trends

This chapter is divided into several sections that offer insight into the parks and programming needs, offerings and use trends. More specifically, this chapter takes a deeper look at the programming, recreation, events and facilities that the Recreation and Parks Department are not only responsible for, but take pride in. This chapter also provides baseline data on outreach that was performed in the community that informs the Plan and the Town of what residents want, and their likes and dislikes in terms of current and future programming, facilities and parks.

Identification of current programming, recreation activities and event trends over time helps to better plan for future recreational needs of the community. The historic values of the community and high standards that the New Castle Parks and Recreation Department representatives, along with program, recreational and event trending over time, work together to create a unique opportunity for the Town to plan and provide for the future. In order to capture current trends and plan for the future, data was collected and analyzed using several methods;

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**Location of Parks and Open Spaces to Residents**

- 60% of Residents Live within .25 Miles of a Park or Open Space
- 86% of Residents Live within .5 Miles of a Park or Open Space
- 97% of Residents Live within .75 Miles of a Park or Open Space
- 100% of Residents Live within 1 Mile of a Park or Open Space

Graphic 4.1
• Stakeholder input, which is key to the success of any Plan, was collected through several outreach methods performed over the period of the writing of this Plan, approximately two years. These methods included two surveys, one online and one posted in Parks which received over 1,200 responses, two public meetings and outreach on Community Day;
• Current programming, recreational activities and events data were gathered from the Recreation and Parks Department records;
• In person, online and passive stakeholder outreach methods were utilized including a long survey that was posted to social media and emailed to residents, a short survey that was posted in Town Parks and Open Spaces, interactive outreach at community events; and
• Passive trail counter data was collected from all of the trails in Town. This data has never been collected and will give a snapshot of the number of visitors to the trails and in turn understand and plan for maintenance and upkeep.

Outreach does not end when the Plan is completed and published, it will continue through surveying residents and continuing trail counting for the foreseeable future.

The data gathered from the surveys gave a snapshot of how users interact with the Parks programming, events and recreation system throughout the Town. The Town has limited walkability and most people utilize a motor vehicle to access the many parks in Town. According to the 2021 National Recreation and Park Association report titled 2021 American’s Engagement With Parks Report 7 in 10, or 70%, of Americans say they live within walking distance, approximately a half a mile, to a park. New Castle exceeds this standard with 86% of residents living within a half a mile of a park or open space.

Key findings within the survey data will be utilized to plan for future recreation programming and events. The preferences of survey respondents, along with the program attendance data, will be documented in the Appendix of this Plan.

4.2 Programming

One of the most common concerns in the recreation industry is creating innovative programming to draw participants into facilities and to use services. Although staff continually look for new programs, this document will help narrow that focus and assist in pinpointing the specific needs of the residents and program users in New Castle. Current programming runs year-round and accommodates every age group. The programs offered have evolved since the 2007 Recreation and Parks Master Plan was written, over a decade ago, to accommodate the current population and programming needs in Town. In total, the Recreation and Parks Department offers almost 400 programs annually, not including the summer camp programming. By far the most highly attended program offered is the Summer Camp program, with over 900 participants annually. This is also the largest revenue generator for the Department. Other popular programs include youth basketball, adult flag football and senior strength and balance, just to name a few. A full list of current, 2022, programming is available in the Appendix of this Plan. Survey results show the most popular youth programs to be soccer, art classes, basketball, summer camp and t-ball, with more than half of the respondents indicating they had enrolled a child in one of the aforementioned programs/sports. Soccer appears to be the overwhelming favorite among the youth programming options with more than 65 percent of respondents enrolling a child to participate. Adult programs are offered, but are not as popular among residents. The availability of time is the number one
reason why, according to the survey results, they are not as popular. The most popular adult programs include general exercise class, tennis and softball.

4.3 Recreation

Residents and visitors alike utilize the Parks and open spaces across every season of the year. In this Plan, recreation resources are considered to be the passive parks and open spaces that are operated, owned and managed by the Department. In total there are 13 parks and open spaces, which range from the passive trails in the 130-Acre Whippoorwill Park to the .08 Acre Chappaqua Pocket Park in the Chappaqua central business district. According to the 2021 National Recreation and Park Association report titled *2021 American’s Engagement With Parks Report* “Eighty-one percent of Gen Zers and 80 percent of millennials report having walkable access to parks, while access for Gen Xers (71 percent) and especially baby boomers (60 percent) is far less common.” The survey results and the national trends data solidify the need for a diversity in what the Town’s park system should offer in order to reflect the diversity of different generations living in the Town.

Parks, both passive and active alike, provide endless benefits to residents of all ages. The highest rated reasons for visiting Parks and open spaces include exercise, family time, walking pets and utilizing children's play spaces (over 45 percent). Recreation resources such as playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, as well as pickleball courts, are all very popular destinations. The survey confirms what Parks staff see every day at the Town Hall basketball court and playground; heavy use even during winter months. Even though the Town offers five playgrounds there is still a need for more as the youngest population in Town over utilizes these facilities. Parks not only encourage children to be active and provide for the overall wellness of Town residents, but they also allow a space for connecting with friends, other residents and nature.

4.4 Events

Events that are either hosted or endorsed by the Recreation and Parks Department are highly popular in the community. Annually, an average of 10 events are hosted by the Department and an average of five community events are endorsed and or supported by Parks staff. Events are held year-round and are well attended with some events drawing visitors from other municipalities and
visitors from outside of Westchester County. Staff take great pride and devote significant hours to create and offer events that residents will want to attend.

According to the recent online survey responses the most popular event that the Recreation and Parks Department hosts is the Ragamuffin Parade, with more than 60 percent of respondents attending annually. This parade has been a steadfast tradition for over 20 years and it continues to grow each year. Other top attended events were the Summer Concert Series along with the newly inaugurated Holiday Parade and the Egg Hunt. It is worth noting that these four events represent every season of the year as the Department strives to provide year-round opportunities for the community. Other notable events offered include the Fishing Derby held at Gedney Park, the 10k/5k Road Race, Summerfest (to celebrate the last day of school), Supper on Senter, Outdoor Movies, the 9/11 Ceremony and the Scarecrow Festival.
4.5 Facilities

The Town owns several facilities that are concentrated within or near the Chappaqua Hamlet. The Town is in the process of acquiring the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center, formerly the Wallace Auditorium, located at Chappaqua Crossing, which will help to expand the Department’s opportunities for additional programming. Current Recreation and Parks facilities include the New Castle Art Center and the Community Center/Senior Center. The Arts Center offers four separate rooms dedicated to different modes of art. This facility is programmed year-round by the Recreation and Parks Department. The Arts Center also plays host to the annual Summer Arts Camp, targeted towards the community’s younger children. The New Castle Community Center/Senior Center, originally the location of the Town’s first library, is a small two-story building that offers programming for all ages, from toddlers to seniors. Recent improvements to the Community Center have been completed and include a new slate roof and remodeling of the ground floor which is the dedicated senior area. The Community Center and the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center serve a dual purpose for the residents of the community in that they are designated as critical facilities/acute emergency shelters in the case of severe weather events.

The Town has been steadily out-growing the existing parks facilities over the last decade and it currently relies heavily on the Chappaqua Central School District to accommodate many of the indoor programs because the Town does not have adequate indoor space for its recreational needs. This fact is echoed by the survey respondents who prioritized an indoor space for sports and programming.

4.6 Trails

According to the survey responses, almost 70% of people visiting a park or open space do so to walk the trails. This is a significant finding since this is the first-time data on passive park use has been captured and analyzed. In recent years National trail use has increased. According to a Rails to Trails Conservancy Report released in December of 2021 there was a 36% increase in trail use from 2019 to 2021. New Castle has followed this trend with an increase in trail use over the last year alone, making the Town’s trail system a main attraction for outdoor enthusiasts within the community.
community and visitors alike. During warmer months, the New Castle trail system sees over 5,000 visits per month, on average, across the almost 40 trails the Town has to offer.

The trail system has expanded in response to the increased usage since the 2007 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was produced and now includes Sunny Ridge Preserve. The Town now offers nearly 20 miles of trails. Recently, the Parks and Recreation Department has partnered with the New York-New Jersey Trail Association in an effort to improve the experience visitors have on the Town’s trails. Trail rehabilitation work has been completed at Burden Preserve and is underway at Whippoorwill Park, which both have the most utilized trails in the system. The Department has also made improvements to Glazier Preserve, including the extension of the existing boardwalk and installation of a new bridge in 2018.

4.7 New York State and National Recreational Trends

In 2018 New York State surveyed over 10,000 adult park users to determine the most frequent and enjoyed uses of State Parks. This survey, 2018 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey, revealed that the top outdoor recreation Glazier Preserve.
activity, with almost 87%, is walking, hiking and jogging. This was followed closely by relaxing in the Park at 86% which includes picnicking, utilizing a playground, visiting a nature center and dog park usage. These recreation activities can be duplicated in the Town of New Castle, span across generations and speak to all park users.

National trends reveal that people are placing a higher level of importance on having access to park and recreation opportunities when choosing a place to live, with 80% of people across all generational, racial and political groups citing access to a park or recreation opportunity as a priority.  

4.8 Assessment

Current Town programming, recreation uses and event trends show that there is a large rate of participation from the community. It also reveals that passive recreation is highly popular and diverse, from utilizing the trail system to walking a pet. Events are and always have been a staple for bringing the community together. Future program offerings may center on the steady youth

36 National Recreation and Park Association, 2021 Engagement with Parks Report
contingent and the growing senior population in Town. As time goes on there is a need for a larger space to host larger groups of people for programming, sports and events. Additional programmable indoor recreation space and outdoor sports fields for local recreation games, practices, programs and activities is needed, as indicated in the survey (over 70% of respondents). Other areas of improvement, as discovered from the survey, include: promoting parks and open spaces to residents (40 percent of respondents), flexibility in the time a program is offered (30 percent of respondents) and increased publicity of programs offered (30 percent of respondents). Another finding in the survey showed residents want more variety in terms of programming and sports as well as more programs for younger children (see the Appendix for the full results of the surveys). Staff will continue to make every effort to ensure that community needs are being met through a wide variety of programs that are offered at the highest quality to encourage and retain participation for all ages, abilities, and interests.
CHAPTER 5

GOALS AND ACTIONS
5.1 How Did We Get Here

The 2023 Recreation and Parks Master Plan recommendations are a result of direct and indirect stakeholder input, an in-depth evaluation of active and passive recreational uses and the applicable goals and actions from the 2017 Town of New Castle Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations establish goals and actions to guide decision making and investments for Town parks and the recreation system over the next decade. The following chapter outlines these recommendations, including their priority level as well as an estimated time frame for the completion of each action. During the writing of the Plan, draft goals and actions were developed in coordination with stakeholder feedback from residents and park users, the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Recreation and Parks Department staff, the Recreation and Parks Master Plan Working Group and the 2017 Town of New Castle Comprehensive Plan, which was used as a guiding document. The draft recommendations were then presented to the public to measure support, evaluate prioritization and to gather additional stakeholder input. The input from the public was presented to staff and the Recreation and Parks Commission to refine the recommendations in order for the Plan to reflect a resident driven vision.

Specific actions are listed under the five goals:
1. Plan for the future;
2. Protect, manage and maintain existing parks, open spaces and facilities;
3. Provide quality programming and events;
4. Engage and inform the public, and;
5. Utilize and improve parks, open spaces, facilities and connections among them to maximize resident and visitor benefits.

5.2 Methodology

The priority ranking for each action was determined through stakeholder outreach which included in person meetings with Town residents, survey results (over 1,100 responses to date), Recreation and Parks Commission member input, staff contributions, as well as passive data from car and trail counters located at several Parks. Timeline parameters were determined to be ongoing, short term (0 to 4 years), medium term (5 to 9 years) and long term (10+ years) according to the scope and depth of each action.
### 5.3 Goals and Actions Matrix

The following tables list the 2022 Recreation and Parks Master Plan Goals and Actions.

#### 1. Plan for the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Action Detail</th>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Implement the recommendations of the updated 2023 Recreation and Parks Master Plan. (Commission, Staff, Goal 32 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Identify and Map locally significant vistas within Parks and Open Spaces owned and operated by the Town. Ensure identification includes a process to protect them, such as codification within the Town Code. (Goal 18 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Participate in the completion of a Town-wide Natural Resource Inventory, including mapping, with a focus on any resources related to the Parks and Open Spaces under the operation and maintenance of the Recreation and Parks Department. (Goal 16 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>In-Process</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Explore the development of pocket parks in residential neighborhoods. (Goal 33 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Create a Town Trail Development and Maintenance Master Plan. (Goal 35 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 Continue the assessment of parklands and facilities demand through the ongoing survey of community residents to identify interests and needs. (Goal 32 Comp Plan)  

1.7 Work with the Conservation Board and the Environmental Coordinator to create an Open Space Management Plan. (Goals 16,18,33 Comp Plan)  

1.8 Explore feasibility of an indoor athletics, recreation and community facility or multi-purpose facility. (Staff, Q13 Survey)  

1.9 Explore feasibility of locating an indoor or outdoor pool in Town. (Q13, 24 Survey)  

1.10 Explore feasibility of locating a dog park in Town. (Q24, 25 Survey)  

2. Protect, manage and maintain existing parks, open spaces and facilities  

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Continue to maintain existing parks, open spaces and facilities. (Goal 33 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Collaborate with the Vine Squad on a plan to remove invasive plants from all Parks. (Goal 17 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Identify the different habitat areas located within Parks and Open Spaces owned by the Town to ensure they are being management properly. (Goal 16 Comp Plan)  

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Transition lawn maintenance equipment to hybrid or electric. (Goal 24 and 33 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Provide quality programming and events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Action Detail</th>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Utilize Chap PAC for Recreation and Parks programming and events in order to expand the current facility shortage. (Goal 30 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Continue to monitor park and recreation program enrollment in order to cycle programs in and out based on popularity and attendance. (Goal 34 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>On-Going Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Continue to host and support events, recreation and programming within the hamlets of Chappaqua and Millwood. (Goal 30 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Increase the variety of events hosted while continuing to host and support those events that are well attended by residents. (Q18 Survey)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Continue to offer programs at convenient times and dates to residents of all ages. (Q 8, 12, 21 Survey)  

3.6 Examine opportunity to create special events and new programming during the summer and winter months. (Q20 Survey-4th of July had the most votes for this)  

3.7 Examine the opportunity to increase existing programming focusing on the most popular programs. (Q19 Survey-soccer, basketball and art classes are the highest rated)  

4. Engage and inform the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Action Detail</th>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Create an interactive mobile application that addresses trails, location of parks, and maintenance needed at parks and open spaces. (Goal 35 Comp Plan, Commission)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Improve upon the inventory and dissemination of social service information, including the creation of an online resource center for social services (Goal 37 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Improve advertising for programming and events. (Q12 Survey)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Improve Park and facility signage. (Goal 35 Comp Plan, Staff, Q12 Survey)  
Medium  Medium Term

4.5 Continue to inform the public of events and programs. (Q 12 Survey)  
Medium  Ongoing

5. **Utilize and improve parks, open spaces, facilities and connections to maximize resident and visitor benefit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Rehabilitate Millwood Park’s existing playground, tennis courts and walking path. (Commission)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Explore opportunities to improve Amsterdam Park to fully accommodate summer camp. (Commission, Staff)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Explore feasibility of converting existing high-use grass fields to turf fields. (Commission, Staff)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Explore opportunities to increase the number of tennis courts. (Q13 Survey)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Explore feasibility of establishing pedestrian connections to and between recreation and park facilities. (Q16 Survey)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Identify and pursue partnerships where trail linkages can be strengthened or established across municipal boundaries. (Staff)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Evaluate parks and facilities to ensure ADA compliance access. (Q15 Survey, Goal 34 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Continue an open dialog about Park and Facility use and scheduling with the Chappaqua Central School District. (Goals 32, 34 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Support existing and future community gardens located on Parks and Open Space lands. (Goal 36 Comp Plan)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Create a Trail Management Position in the Recreation and Parks Department. (Q10 Survey)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Continue to upgrade existing playground equipment based on Superintendents recommendations. (Commission, Staff)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Develop needs analysis (i.e., restrooms) for each of the existing recreation and park facilities. (Q24 &amp; 25 Survey)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>