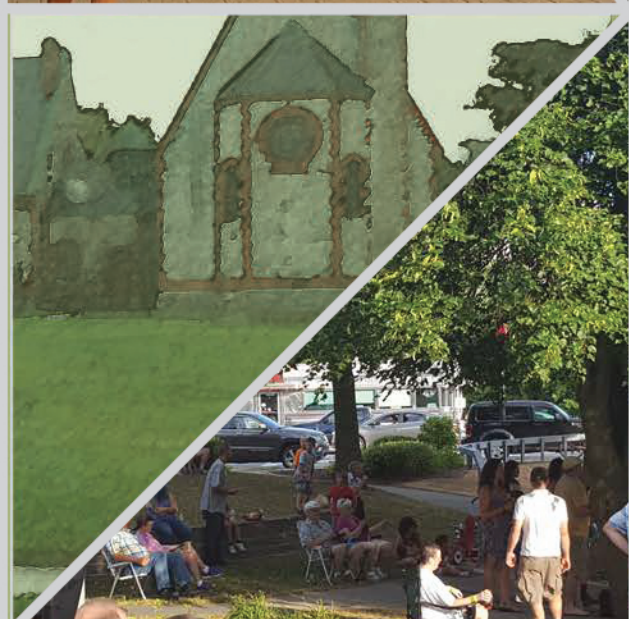
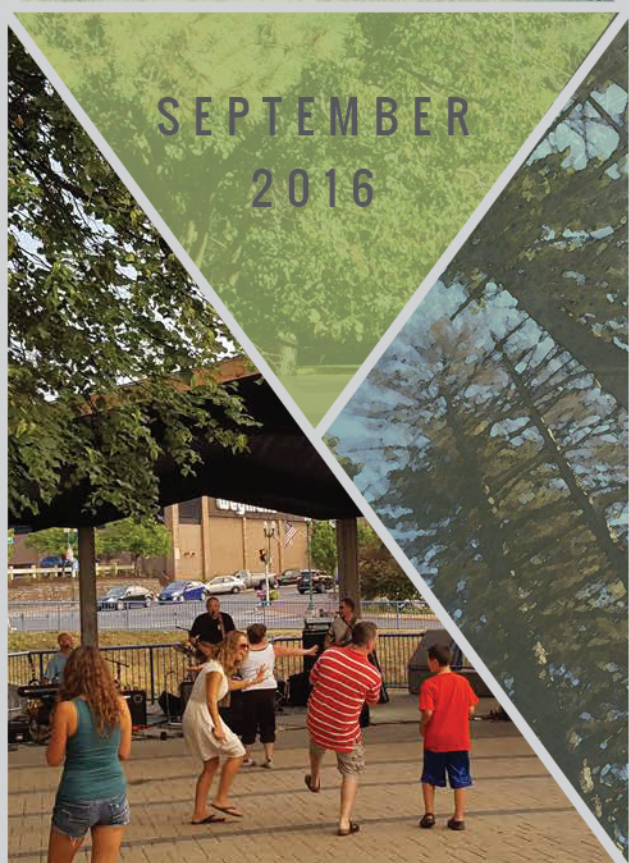




SEPTEMBER
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CITY OF AUBURN, NY **PARKS MASTER PLAN**

Adopted by City Council October 6, 2016

City of Auburn, NY Parks Master Plan



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves multiple purposes. It will guide the maintenance and investments in the parks over the next 10 years, shaping and improving the delivery of services that are consistent with the City's sustainability goals. At the same time there is the commitment to meet changing needs and make best use of resources. For community members the Plan describes and illustrates a Vision for the Parks that they helped shape and will have important roles in implementing. For existing and potential partners, the Plan reinforces the benefits and value of Parks in maintaining a high quality of life and reinforcing the social, environmental and fiscal health of the City. The Parks Master Plan complements the City of Auburn 2010 Comprehensive Plan which serves as the City's primary land-use planning document. That plan established goals that laid a strong foundation upon which the framework of this master plan for the City's parks, playgrounds and other public open space could be developed.

A series of questions guided the development of the plan, including:

- How are the City Parks used and how are they meeting current level of service demands?
- What is the value of the City Parks and how are they fulfilling their roles in the community?
- How can the City Parks be improved to better meet level of service demands and better fulfill their multiple roles in community life?

Responses to the questions that framed this planning process came from a combination of sources, including community members; the project steering committee; on-site observation and investigation; and research into best practices in contemporary park systems.



Above: Over 250 community members participated in the planning process through workshops, open house sessions and an on-line survey.

Current Context and Conditions

The City of Auburn has a rich history that is visible along its major circulation routes, in its Downtown and across its diverse neighborhoods. Although the population has been declining there are efforts by the City to stabilize and attract new residents and businesses. The Auburn City Park System is also diverse and consists of 23 sites that range in size from less than half an acre to over 40 acres. Their settings and facilities provide choice for residents and visitors of all ages. The activities most enjoyed currently in the parks are walking, use of playgrounds and attending music events.



Hoops Park (above), Casey Park, and Clifford Park are the largest parks in the system and get the most amount of use.

Concerns noted about the existing parks included playgrounds that had not been updated or replaced in many years, other facility repair and replacement, and regular maintenance. Maintenance and management of the Parks is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works, which has routine practices that provides basic maintenance to all of the parks. Like many communities the City of Auburn has been struggling with rising costs, declining population and declining tax base. The analysis of current conditions indicated that additional resource strategies are needed to address community concerns and maintain high quality parks.

The Importance of Community Participation and Synthesis of Responses

The participation of community members was valuable in many ways. Not only did they provide information about existing park use, conditions and desires for the future but it was evident that residents and organizations are willing to take part in park care and programming. There is general agreement and awareness that parks are important for many reasons, including as places for youth activities, social interactions, healthy lifestyles, family places and providing space for organized and informal activities. Secondary roles include parks as places of beautiful landscapes, interaction with nature, support for city living and opportunities for economic growth.

Desires for the future included keeping the parks well maintained, with upgraded playground equipment, which some believe will equate to more use of the parks. Trails for walking, running and biking, with connections between different parts of the community would expand already popular activities. Also expressed were desires for landscape improvements, supporting parks as places of beauty, relaxation and connection with nature.



Left: Community members expressed concern about the age and condition of some playgrounds, including Bradford Street. Right: Concerts such as this one in Market St. Park are popular among residents and visitors.

The Master Plan Vision and Goals

The Auburn Parks Vision Statement represents a collective view of how the community wants to be able to describe the parks system 10 years in the future. It is supported by goals that the community wants to achieve in and through its parks. The Vision and Goals came directly from community responses about the existing parks and ideas for the future.

Vision Statement

Our Auburn Parks are public places of beauty and respite, activity and healthy living, where all people feel comfortable and welcome. The design and care of our parks reflects our community pride and recognizes their vital importance to the physical, social, economic and environmental well-being of our community.

Goals

1. Create a parks system that supports the physical and mental well-being of people of all ages.
2. Provide care and maintenance of the parks that reinforces the desired character, supports safe and responsible use, and represents wise use of resources.
3. Strengthen community relationships and respectful use of parks.
4. Promote the value and multiple roles of parks to contribute to a resilient and sustainable community.
5. Ensure long term support and resources for parks programming, maintenance and capital improvements.

Key Themes of Level of Service and Facility Recommendations

Level of Service refers to if and how existing recreation facilities are meeting the demand, identified in this planning process primarily by community responses and research on contemporary recreation trends.

- **Distribution and Location of Parks** – The existing parks in the city are fairly evenly distributed and most neighborhoods have access to a park within a 10 to 20 minutes walk. An exception to this standard is the State Street neighborhood for which a pocket park is recommended.
- **Athletic Fields** – The demand for baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and football fields are being met through a combination of existing fields in the parks, the schools or other organization’s properties.
- **Game Courts** – Tennis and basketball continue to be popular sports that are enjoyed by a wide range of ages. Courts in several parks were identified for resurfacing, replacement or relocation based on condition and community comments.
- **Children’s Play** and facilities to support their growth and development ranked high by Auburn participants. Guidelines provided for playgrounds and equipment will help ensure consistent quality and encourage continued involvement in design and programming by community members. Developing areas for tweens and teens, with their involvement, can provide space for desired activities and use their ideas and energy productively. Providing alternative play experiences, including natural play areas and access to natural features, can encourage exploration and appreciation of the natural environment.
- **Paths and Trails** – Expanding path and trails within the park system will build on what community members see as one of the strengths of the parks and improve access for all abilities, encourage healthy activities and provide connections between different neighborhoods. The Owasco River Greenway Trail proposed in the Comprehensive Plan is a key component of a connected system.
- **Gathering and Social Spaces** – A primary value of parks is as places where people can come together for a variety of reasons. Guidelines for providing spaces and facilities to support for socializing and gathering include improvements to picnic facilities in the larger parks and providing seating at multiple areas in a park including close to the entrances.
- **Winter Activities** – Intentional support of cold weather activities, especially plowing paths for walking and jogging in parks with extensive path systems, will encourage year round exercise.
- Other elements to support park use include design and phased installation of a signage system to identify all city parks, and provide wayfinding in those that are large and likely to have out of town visitors.



Left: Upgrading this poorly draining field at Clifford Park with a turf lawn would provide space for a variety of activities and programs. Middle: The new playground at Lincoln Park has structures for different age groups, walkways for access, and tree-shaded areas. Right: Picnic facilities for smaller groups and families at Casey Park would complement the other facilities.

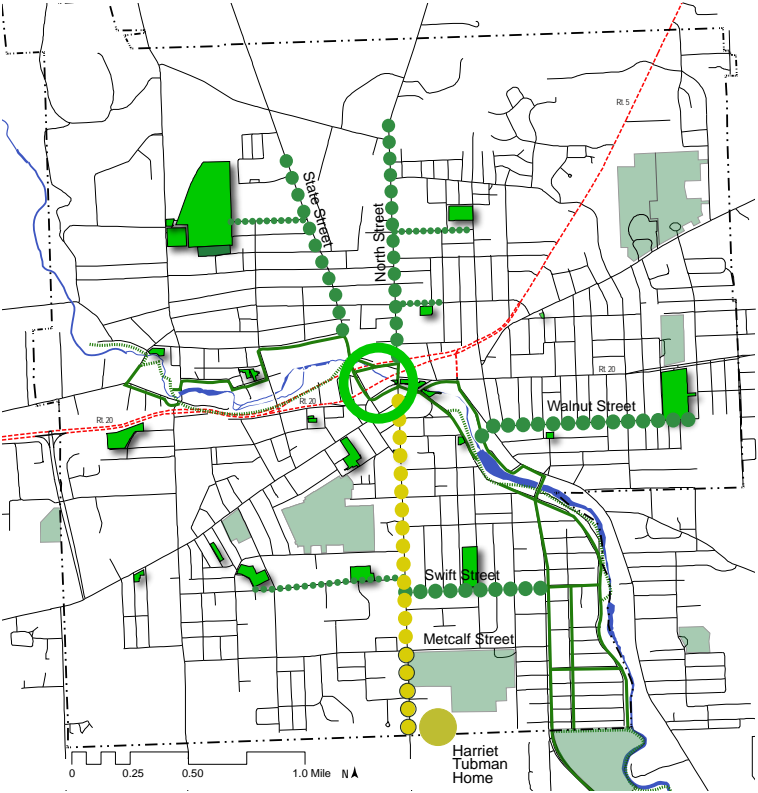
Sustainability, Management and Design Recommendations

In addition to being places for active and passive recreation, parks are landscapes that contribute to neighborhood image and environmental quality. They can provide ecosystem services such as improving air quality, lowering hot weather temperatures, storing and filtering stormwater, and providing wildlife habitat. These functions can be improved and several strategies are proposed including planting more trees in the parks, reducing the amount of turf grass, and utilizing these and other green infrastructure methods for stormwater management.

Parks can have different types of landscapes based on their setting, design and activities. Understanding this provides a way to consider the options to vary maintenance practices in some of the parks. Hoopes Park is appreciated by many as a manicured garden landscape park. Its more intensive care, including flower beds should continue if possible but a well organized volunteer program would reduce the time required by park and DPW staff. Even athletic facility open space parks such as Clifford Park, St. Francis Park and Lincoln Park have edge areas that would benefit from more trees and reduced mow zones.



Above: Naturalistic Landscape Parks including parts of Casey Park, Pomeroy Park and Miles-Lepak Park can be the setting for the establishment of more diverse plant communities, and less mown lawn, increasing their ecological value.



Left: The Master Plan includes a Parks System Connection Plan utilizing the proposed Owasco River Greenway Trail to provide a framework and central spine to accomplish connections between many of the existing parks. Community members expressed the desire for adults and children to safely ride their bicycles to different parts of the system. In addition to being a fun, healthy activity these connections would be especially valuable for people who are unable to drive.



Above: Design studies were prepared for nine parks that were identified by the City as being in need of some level of improvement and illustrate how the guidelines and principles of the Plan could be applied. These were reviewed by community members during the final workshop and modifications made based on their comments. The design studies can serve as the basis for additional discussions with residents, development of funding proposals, and preparation of phasing diagrams. A facility inventory and recommendations as appropriate were prepared for the other parks in the system.

Strategic Actions and an Action Agenda

The recommendations in the Master Plan will be put into motion through accomplishment of a series of Strategic Actions associated with each of the goals. These include planning or feasibility studies; programs and events; guidelines or policies; staffing changes; and design and construction projects. They represent a mix of immediate simple projects that can be implemented with locally available resources and longer term projects that require more extensive planning, coordination and resources to accomplish.

While each Strategic Action will require its own set of tasks and schedule to accomplish, an important first step for implementation of the Master Plan is the development of an Action Agenda to plan out the preliminary sequence of projects, timing and implementation responsibilities. To assist in this task, defined for each Strategic Action are:

- Priority - defined on a range of higher, medium to lower based on impact and importance
- Resources needed - with a focus primarily on people’s time and expertise
- Relative cost of the action - based on order of magnitude budgetary categories with high being capital expense over \$35,000, low to moderate being \$10,000 up to \$35,000, and low being below \$10,000.

Strategic Actions identified as higher priorities include a mix of capital improvement projects, development of guidelines and an oversight structure to support city staff:

- *Develop and implement a multi-year phased strategy (8-10 years) to guide the upgrading and improvement of the nine parks and playgrounds that were identified by the city as part of this master planning process. Highest priority parks: Sherwood Street, Wall Street, Cottage Place and Bradford Street.*
- *Develop a care and maintenance plan for the parks system and individual parks.*
- *Distribute a summary of the Parks Master Plan broadly throughout the community so that many people are aware of the Vision and Goals.*
- *Create a Parks and Recreation Steering Committee whose mission is to advocate for and advise on the parks and implementation of the Parks Master Plan.*
- *Create a parks and environment staff position to develop and manage a long term resource strategy for the parks with oversight by the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee.*

The Parks Master Plan as a Working Document

The Parks Master Plan can be a valuable tool for guiding decisions about the Auburn community’s parks, playgrounds and public spaces. It is a working document that provides a snapshot of current conditions, including assets, concerns and opportunities, and can be referenced to chart and evaluate progress. The Vision and Goals developed through the planning process should be used to help make decisions about ideas and proposals, asking the questions, “How will this proposal help us achieve our Vision? How is this idea contributing to our goals?”

Periodic evaluation is necessary to ensure that the master plan continues to be a useful document, with changes and updates based on experience and new information. Celebrating and publicizing progress and success on a regular basis is important to keep people engaged and optimistic as they work together to achieve the vision for the Auburn parks.



Above: Continuing to involve residents of all ages in the park activities will help ensure that design, programming and maintenance are meeting needs and desires.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Auburn Parks Master Plan has been prepared at the request of the City office of Planning and Economic Development. The purpose this master plan is to guide decisions about the improvement, management and maintenance of city owned parklands for the next 10 years. The city seeks to create a resilient and sustainable park system that provides multiple benefits to the community while utilizing its resources as effectively as possible. It is intended to supplement and support the City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan.

The master plan was developed through a collaborative design research process that explored and integrated community values, preferences and trends for parks and recreation activities. It actively engaged community members, city departments and other partners to provide information and to build community capacity to implement the plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the master plan was accomplished in four stages from September 2015 through June 2016.

1. During the first phase, *Understanding Existing Conditions and Community Values*, the project team worked with the Auburn community to uncover and document answers to many questions including the existing use and physical conditions of the parks, how existing parks are used; assets, concerns and opportunities; the role of parks in community life; and preferences and ideas about parks and recreation.
 - An overview of the proposed project process was presented to the Auburn City Council.
 - A Project Advisory Committee composed of community organizations and city department representatives was formed to connect the project team with the broader community and provide guidance for outreach and engagement strategies.
 - An inventory and documentation of existing conditions and characteristics of the 23 parks and playgrounds was performed by a city intern and by the ESF team.
 - Community members were invited to participate in this phase of the process through workshops held at several different times in November 2015 or by filling out a questionnaire on-line or hard copy available through December 2015. There were two

What is a Master Plan?

Master plans are working documents that provide a framework within which to make decisions at various scales and time frames.





open house sessions in February 2016 for residents to provide information about existing conditions and ideas about specific parks in the system. The data collected were first documented, then analyzed and synthesized to create a comprehensive panoramic view of the existing parks and their role in community life, including strengths, challenges and opportunities. Looking ahead, participants identified preferences and desires for the future. From this synthesis, a draft Vision and Goals for the parks system emerged.

2. In the second phase, *Confirmation of Findings and Project Vision and Goals*, the findings and draft vision and goals were reviewed and discussed with city staff and the Advisory Committee to ensure that the information gathered and shared by the community was analyzed, interpreted and represented in ways that made sense to use as the foundation to proceed with the master plan. This information was also reviewed and confirmed at a City Council meeting and with community members at a workshop meeting in early April 2016, and included the development of strategies to achieve the goals.

3. The primary task of phase 3 was the *Development of Master Plan Alternatives*. The ESF team prepared design studies for 9 selected parks to illustrate alternative approaches to achieve the vision for the Auburn Parks system. These alternatives were presented and discussed with community members at the workshop meeting in early April. Based on comments, final site master plan designs were prepared. A draft Auburn Parks Master Plan was developed from the selected site master plans, synthesis of the community engagement and other data collected.

4. The *Final Master Plan* was produced based on the findings from the iterative design research process. It is organized into the following sections:
- Overview of the city and existing parks conditions and patterns of use
 - Community parks and recreation desires and preferences
 - Auburn Parks vision, goals, and strategies
 - Level of service and guidelines for the parks
 - Park system design and maintenance recommendations
 - Master plan design studies of selected parks
 - Actions and priorities, developed an action agenda
 - Appendices – workshop results; inventories.



SECTION 2

OVERVIEW OF THE CITY AND THE PARKS

OVERVIEW OF THE CITY OF AUBURN

Auburn, NY, was established in 1848 when it became the Cayuga County seat. It is located just north of Owasco Lake and developed along the Owasco River which runs north to the Seneca River and the Erie Canal. US 20, 5, and 34 all run through the center of the city. The city encompasses 8.4 square miles.

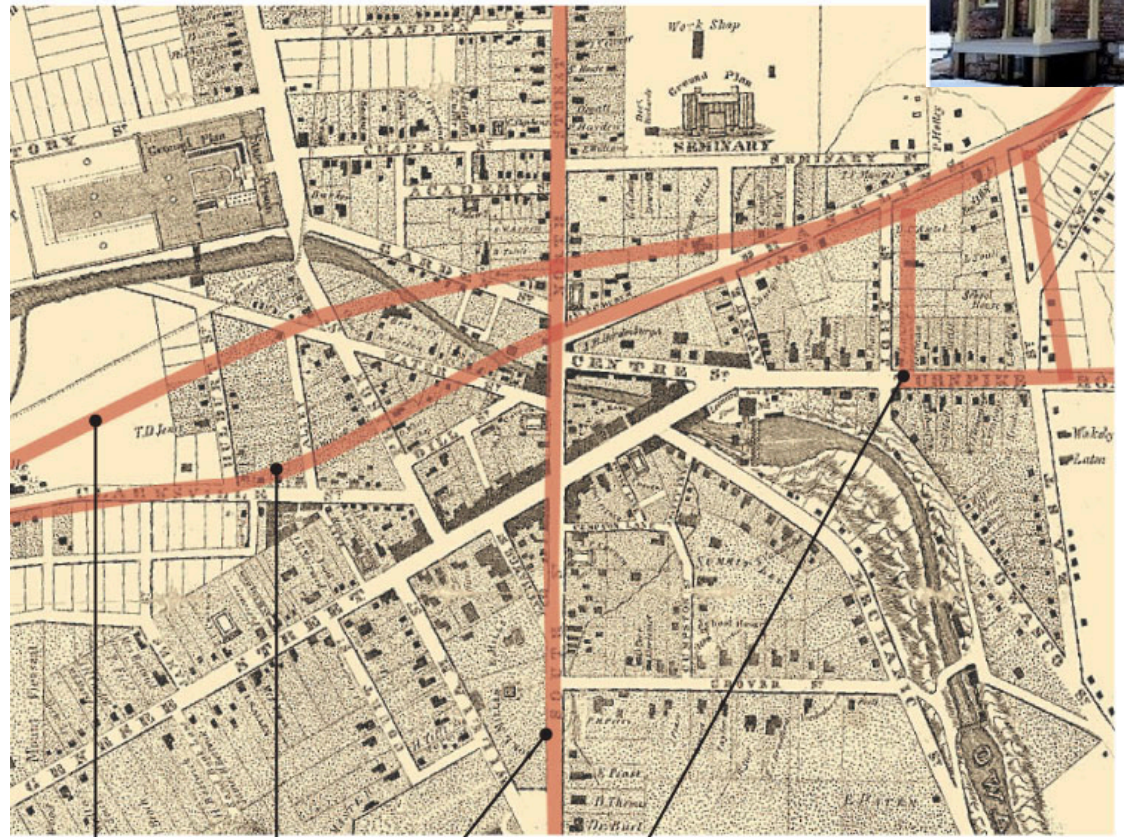
The city has a rich and varied history. The area of Auburn was originally the home of the Haudenosaunee, part of the Iroquois Confederacy. The tribe played a strong role among the loyalists during the Revolutionary War, and were driven out of the area to other parts of the state. Fort Hill Cemetery lies on the site of an old Haudenosaunee fort; the only clear landmark is a tribal mound. The city was the home of William H. Seward, Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln, and abolitionist Harriet Tubman who provided a safe haven for slaves seeking a new life in the North. The city's rich architectural history includes Willard Memorial Chapel, designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The presence of this and other historical landmarks creates a strong identity and culture for the city. In the workshops, community members identified many of these places as cherished and highly valued.



Above: Fort Hill Cemetery
Left: Historic map of Auburn
Below: Harriet Tubman house



harriet-tubman.org



Arterial W (5) Arterial E (5) North St (34) Route 20 Current Road (Route #)
auburnhistoricproperties.org

As the city developed, it became centered not only around the river, but also around the arterial roads that formed originally from old Iroquois trails across the state. The “Great Genesee Road” was adopted from these, and then engulfed by the Seneca Road Company and turned into a turnpike known as the Cherry Valley Turnpike. Eventually in Auburn it became Genesee Street, and neighborhoods are situated around it. North Street is shown as having been almost always a part of the city. These roads have always been a vital part of the city. Travelers originally passed through downtown. During urban renewal the construction of Arterial West and East, traffic is bypassed and the roads divide the city, making pedestrian use more challenging. However significant strides have been made to revitalize the city’s downtown including improvements that support safe pedestrian and vehicular movement along Genesee Street and other streets.

The city had a population of 27,687 according to the 2010 census. In the period from 2000 to 2010, the population declined approximately 3 percent. While it is likely that the number of city residents will continue to get smaller the efforts by the city to attract new residents and businesses may help slow or stabilize the population.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the changes in population by age from 2000 to 2010__. There was increase in older middle age people and decreases in children of school age, young adults and those 65 and older. The median age rose from 36.9 years to 39.1. In general the population is aging, although with children under age 5 remaining somewhat stable the community should expect to see continued demand for children and family activities, in addition to increased demand for activities desired by older, active adults.

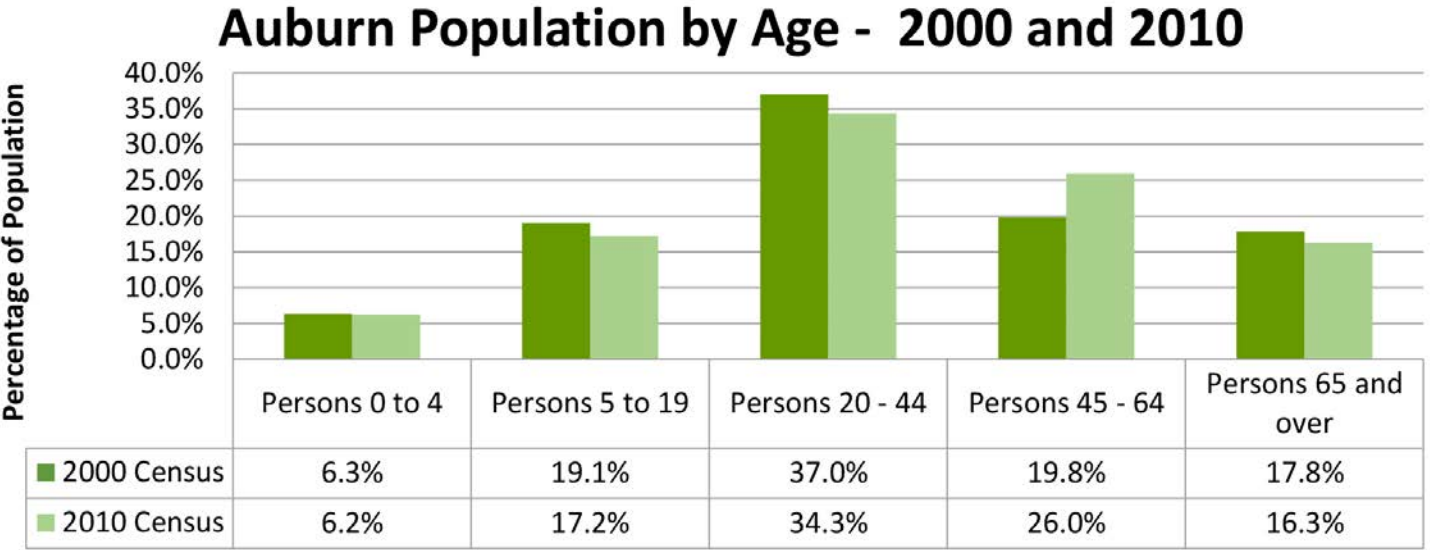


Figure 2.1 Auburn Population by Age - 2000 and 2010

RELATED PLANNING

The Comprehensive Plan

“Building A Sustainable Auburn”, The City of Auburn’s Comprehensive Plan, was adopted in January 2010. In the process of developing the Parks Master Plan it has been clear that a vital parks system can directly support the accomplishment of the comprehensive plan goals, in particular the first four listed below.

- Boosting Downtown
- Revitalizing Neighborhoods
- Creating a Welcoming Community
- Re-engaging the Owasco River
- Shaping Business Growth Across Auburn
- Simplifying and Improving Development

The Brownfield Opportunity Area Planning

The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) planning process known as SPARKS is focused on revitalizing the City’s downtown core and Owasco River corridor. The study area includes six city parks within its boundaries. Proposals for neighborhood improvements within the BOA should be coordinated with the Parks Master Plan goals and proposals for those parks.

THE EXISTING PARKS SYSTEM

Characterization of the City Parks

The Auburn park system includes 23 sites that are distributed throughout the city. They range in size from less than half an acre to over 40 acres. The total acreage of the existing parks is about 95 acres. They serve different roles and support a variety of activities depending on their size and location. Some are referred to as parks, some as playgrounds and some as park/playgrounds.

As shown on Figure 2.2, the Existing Park System Map, the parks that make up the existing system have been characterized based on information on use and purpose shared by community members and city staff. Following is a basic description and photographic illustration of the existing parks. For more detailed information about each of the existing parks from the inventory and community comments, see Section 7.

Community Parks

These parks have diverse facilities and features used by many people in the community and visitors from outside of the city. They are the largest parks in the system.

- Casey Park
- Hoopes Park



Casey Park is categorized as a community park.



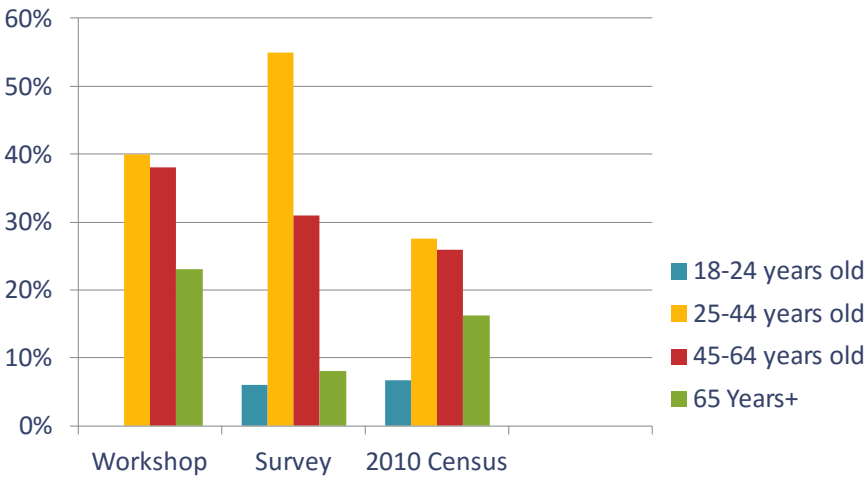
Lincoln Park is a neighborhood park.

to the western border of the city to at the southeast border of the city. It was identified as a goal in the City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan. The trail system is intended to connect neighborhoods through the City and provide the only direct non-motorized connection between downtown Auburn and Owasco Lake.

Existing Use and Assessment of the City Parks

Data Source

Information on existing use, conditions and assessment of the city parks was derived from several sources. Through participation in workshops (30 participants), open house sessions (20 participants) and/or the questionnaire (190 participants), community members responded to questions about the parks they use, activities they enjoyed, the characteristics of parks they enjoy and the concerns and challenges of parks and the parks system.



Participation in the forums and questionnaire was by self selection. The different methods attracted varied age groups as shown in Figure 2.3. The survey which had primarily on-line responses had a large percentage of adults 25 to 44 while older adults 65 and up were represented in the workshops. In terms of gender, workshop participants were split evenly between men and women while survey respondents were over 70% women. This may be an indication of both interest and availability. Not represented in this stage of planning were teens and children who should be provided other opportunities to become involved during the future phases of programming and design.

Figure 2.3 Participation in Workshops and Survey by Age

*2010 Census date for 20 to 24 years old not 18 to 24 years old

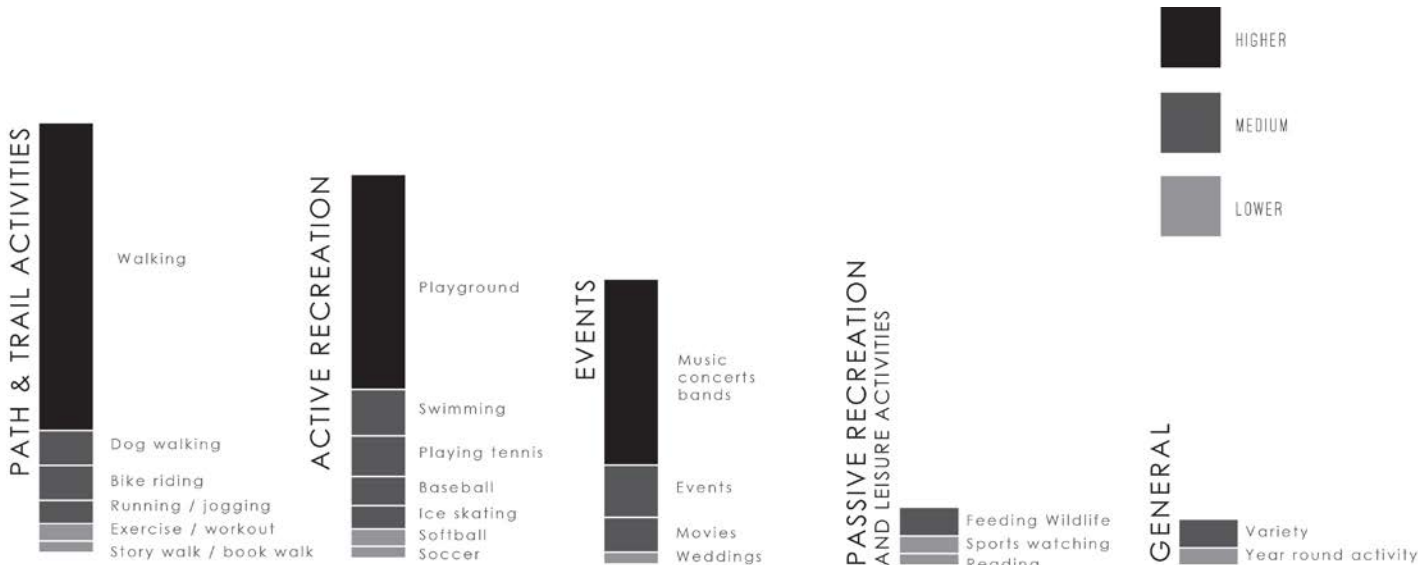


Figure 2.4 Activities Enjoyed in the Park

Activities Enjoyed in Parks

There are a wide range of activities described by respondents as ones they enjoy doing in the parks. Shown in Figure 2.4 are the range of activities with relative popularity indicated by color and size of the bar charts. By far the most popular activities are walking, playgrounds, music concerts, and band events. However, what emerges from this information is that there is a broad range of recreational activities that currently take place in the city parks.

These activities correspond with what community members identified as the strengths or assets of much of the existing park system, including as places to:

- Spend time with family, where they can play, have a sense of safety, have access to open space and nature
- Walk for exercise or to take a break, with attractive landscape features and paved paths, that might be peaceful settings and provide access to nature
- Have playgrounds that provide variety, are age appropriate, well kept and promote play year round
- Attend events, including free concerts and festivals, and movies, that have food, and particularly in the summer to provide a place to socialize and spend time with family.

This information is used as the foundation for the master plan, which should build on the many strengths and assets of the existing parks. These are things that community members like to do and want to continue, and combined with desired improvements are the basis for the vision of the parks in the future.

Amount and Frequency of Use

The amount and frequency of use is strongly related to the size of parks and the number of activities that are supported there. Hoopes, Casey and Clifford are the parks most frequently used by community participants in the master planning process. This is not surprising as these are the largest parks and have facilities that support the greatest number of activities. They are very different from each other, having distinct landscape characters and providing a different experience for those that use them. They all appeal to wide range of age groups. The most popular activities identified by community members are,

- Hoopes Park
 - Passive recreation
 - Enjoy: Walking, events, landscape
- Casey Park
 - Sports/Activity variety
 - Enjoy: Proximity to home, playground, walking, swimming, track/walking paths
- Clifford Park
 - Courts, playground, fields – Active recreation
 - Enjoy: Playground, courts, watching sports, playing tennis, and walking

By the Numbers:
Among community participants,

The most popular activities,

Walking	53%
Playgrounds	37%
Music, concerts, bands	32%

The most frequently visited parks,

Hoopes Park	72%
Casey Park	40%
Clifford Park	28%



Hoopes Park



Casey Park



Clifford Park

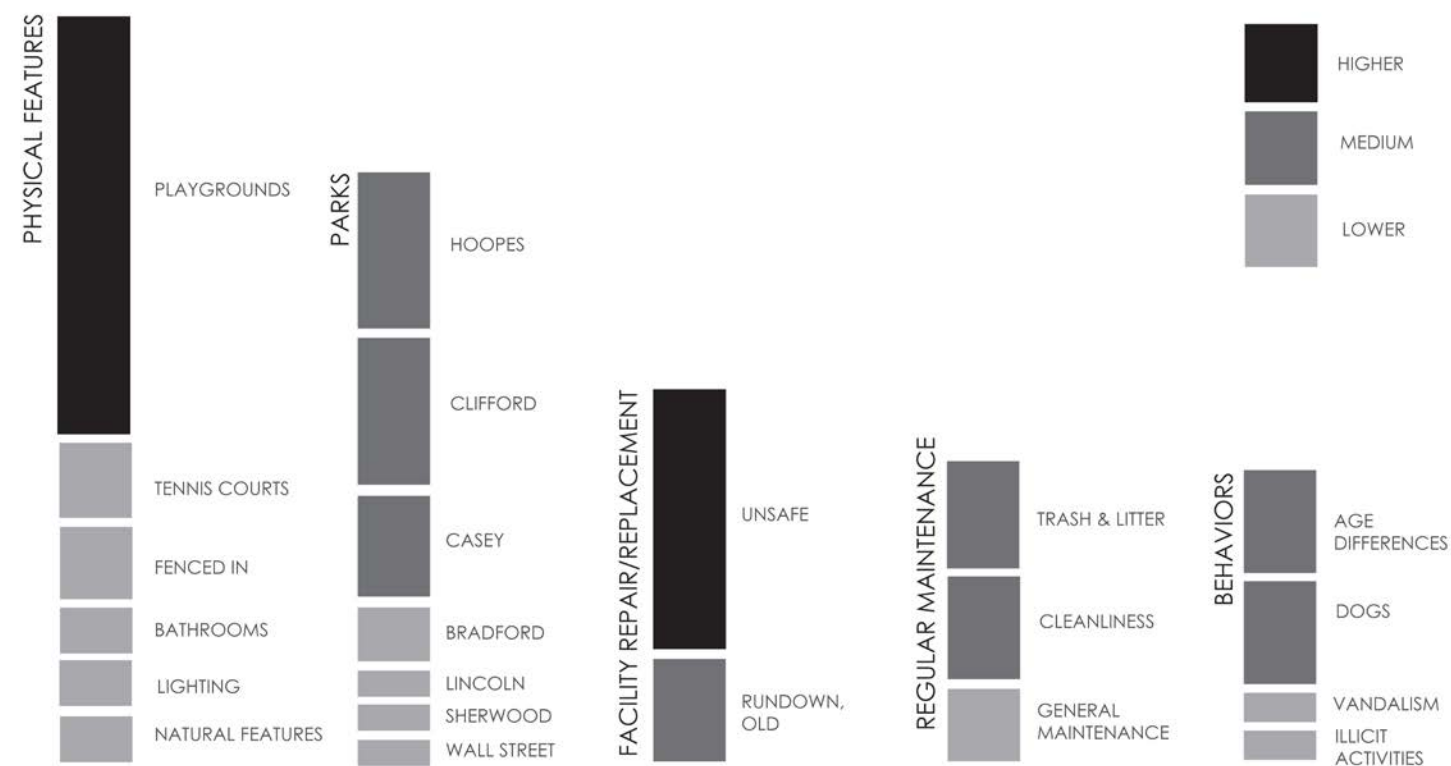


Figure 2.5 Concerns about the Existing Parks Categorized by Major Topics

At the other end of the spectrum are the pocket neighborhood parks that did not rank high in frequency of use. This is not necessarily an indication of existing or potential value to those that live near them, and we need to look further to understand the reasons why. One obvious reason is that they are small and support few activities beyond children's play, and thus they draw from a smaller number of people. Frequency of use is also affected by concerns about the existing parks described below.

Concerns About the Existing Parks

Part of the intent of the assessment of the existing park system is to understand the aspects about which community members have concerns or issues so that they can be addressed in the future. To the extent possible the project team tried to understand the reasons why community members expressed the concerns they did to provide clarity for developing strategies.

The comments fall into a number of major categories, some of which are overlapping and closely related. These are illustrated in Figure 2.5. In the physical features category, most of the concerns were about the age and condition of the older playgrounds that had not been updated or replaced in many years, which in some cases respondents described as unsafe. There were also concerns about age appropriate playground equipment.



Community members noted that Wall Street Playground has a single, small playground structure.

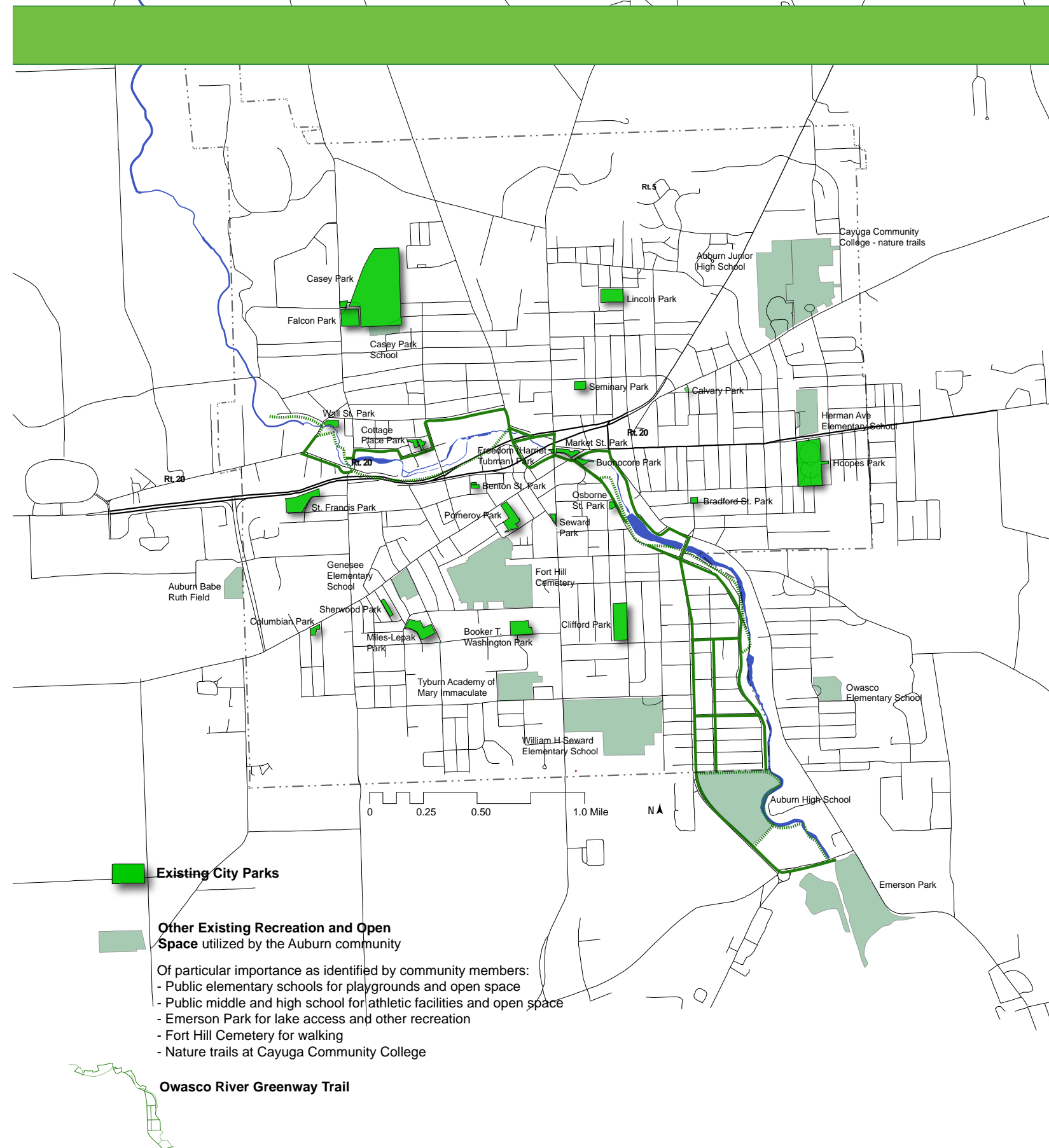


Figure 2.6 Other Existing Recreation and Open Space

Most of the concerns expressed about specific parks were in the three most highly used parks in the system. In addition to general maintenance, unleashed dogs were noted in Hoopes and Clifford Parks. Concerns specifically related to Bradford, Sherwood and Wall Street Parks were about the condition of equipment and lack of recent updates.

Other Recreation and Open Space in the City of Auburn

Community members identified other recreation and open space facilities and properties that they use in the City of Auburn. These are shown on Figure 2.6. Identified by community members as facilities and open space that are used and valued are:

- Public elementary schools for playgrounds and open space
- Public middle and high schools for athletic facilities and open space
- Emerson Park for lake access and other recreation
- Fort Hill Cemetery for walking
- Nature trails at Cayuga Community College

Existing Management, Maintenance and Funding of the Parks System

Existing Management and Maintenance of the Parks System¹

The existing parks in the city are managed and maintained through the Department of Public Works.

There are several parks and recreation staff that are under the supervision of the Superintendent of the DPW. The parks and recreation director position was eliminated a number of years ago.

Routine Maintenance Practices

- Mowing and weed trimming is done on a weekly schedule to maintain a lawn height of 3 to 4 inches. There is currently no meadow grass areas and the department follows the zoning code height requirement for maintenance of lawns on residential properties. The DPW is investigating methods to reduce the amount of mowing, including the use of growth retardants.
- Trash cans are located only in Hoopes, Casey and Clifford Parks, which receive the highest use, or special events. In other parks there is a carry in, carry out policy because there is not enough staff to service additional cans.
- Facilities and equipment at every park are checked once a week for safety and repair needs.
- Snow removal occurs on the perimeter sidewalks adjacent to all parks. Snow removal on internal paths occurs on a regular basis at Hoopes Park; it is less of a priority at Casey Park.

Special Maintenance Practices

- Hoopes Park has annual and perennial flower beds. Some planting is done by community members, including Herman Ave. School and

1. Information about current approach and practices has been obtained primarily from conversations with Mike Talbot, Superintendent of the DPW.

maintained by the DPW.

- The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) provides funding for various improvements and maintenance of the streets, sidewalks and downtown parks. The 32 street planters are taken to the greenhouse over the winter for reuse the next year.

Community Involvement

- Some park cleanup and improvements are done by the Auburn Beautification Committee (ABC).
- Parks Friends groups - None of the parks has a named friends group. The neighborhoods around Hoopes Park and Clifford Park seem to be fairly engaged. Neighborhood involvement is evident in some of the other parks including Lincoln and Benton St. in promoting repair and replacement of outdated facilities and equipment.
- Seward Park is maintained with the assistance of the Cub Scouts.

Programming in the Parks

- Current city funded programming in the parks includes movies and concerts primarily in Hoopes Park. Women’s and men’s softball leagues are organized through the city and funded through program fees.
- There used to be playground programs in every park. The summer were phased out in the last 15 to 20 years due to budget constraints and changing demand.
- The YMCA partners with the City to provide summer and other recreation programs at Casey Park.
- The YMCA manages and staffs the Casey Park pool and runs the aquatic programs.
- The ice rink at Casey Park is currently managed and programmed by the Auburn Hockey Boosters under a two year agreement. The rink is open for public skating on Friday nights from December to March.

Existing Funding of the Parks System

Like many communities, the City of Auburn has been faced with rising costs, declining population and declining tax base. They have to make choices as to how to allocate resources and how to tap into other strategies to maintain high quality parks and open space systems recognizing that they are important in so many ways.

Maintenance

The funds for parks maintenance comes primarily from the general operating budget. Fees paid for the use or rental of parks facilities are used to cover maintenance and repair costs.

Programming

The funds for programming come primarily from the general operating budget. Some parks located in income eligible areas receive funds for programming through CDBG.

Capital Improvements

Funding for capital improvements to the parks comes from state and foundation grants, CDBG funds, and from the general operating budget.

COMMUNITY DESIRES AND VISION FOR PARKS

The Auburn community’s vision for the future of its parks comes from bringing together responses to several different questions. One contributing set of data are the concerns that have been expressed and the desire to address those. Another set or responses are the existing strengths and assets that can be built on and expanded. The topic of the importance of parks and the broader roles they can play and specific desires for the future are also significant contributing information. This section describes and synthesizes this information shared by community members and city staff as the basis for the vision and goals that follow.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS IN THE CITY

Since the late 1800’s, parks have been planned and designed as part of our communities. The roles and physical design features of urban parks have evolved as societal and community values and focus have changed. In studying the history of parks and current trends, researchers have identified periods of parks development that are related to societal expectations and demands for recreation and open space. . The importance of parks will vary by community, and may change over time based on many factors. Contemporary parks have been identified as serving, or having the potential to serve, multiple roles in the social, environmental and economic life of communities. Communities may ways that parks can be important and roles might promote new ways of looki



Hoopes Park Clubhouse
NYHistoric.com

The Importance of Parks in Auburn

As part of the master planning process, the community participants expressed their thoughts about the importance of parks in Auburn in several different ways. The survey provided a list of 10 reasons why parks can be considered important to the City. The statements were rated on a system of 1 (not important) to 4 (very important). The ranking of the responses in shown in Figure 3.1. The list was developed from initial responses of community members who attended the workshops and from research on this topic.

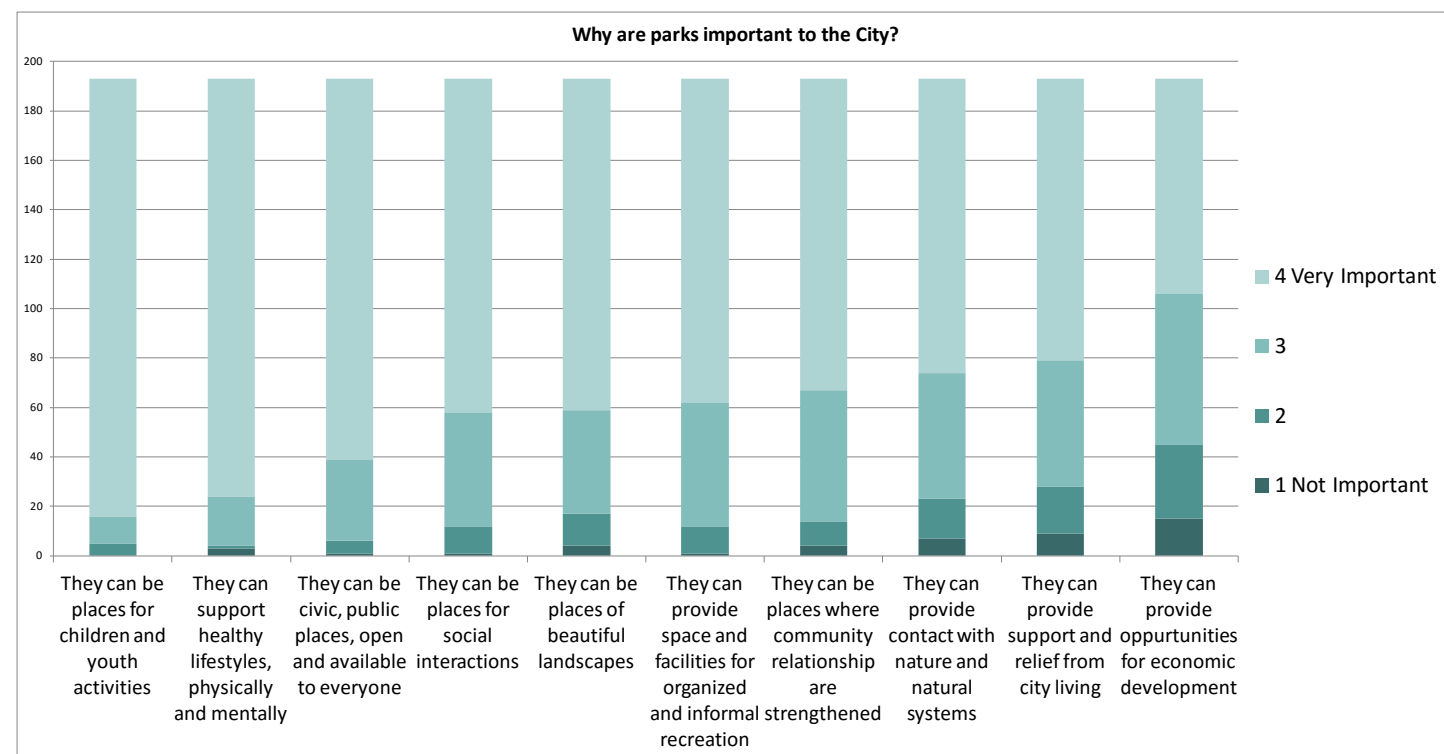


Figure 3.1 Survey responses to the question, “Why are parks important to the city?”

In People’s Own Words: Why Parks are Important to the City

“Filled with children and families enjoying activities”

“Locally built and maintained, spaces that encourage exploration and engagement as well as ownership, encourages visitors to come back”

“The pride of Central New York and a tourist destination”

“Parks are places of community interaction and pride”

“Place for residents to connect with nature. Supportive of the ecological functions within the city”

This list provides quantitative, or number based data on the reasons why survey participants believe that parks are important. It is not possible to tell from response to only this question why the reasons at the lower range are not considered as important as those at the upper range. The synthesis of the responses to this and other questions provides a more complete picture.

Expanding the Role of Parks in Auburn

Community members also expressed their thoughts on the role of parks in Auburn when asked to consider the future, and how they would like to be able to describe the parks in 10 years. The responses to this open ended question can be categorized by different themes, one of which was the role or importance of parks in the future of the city.

Places for Children and Youth, and Family Places - Responses included describing the parks as places that provided space and activities for children and youth, and are family places. This overlaps with parks as safe places to have fun, play and spend time together. “Filled with children and families enjoying activities”; “Kids and families will come outside to the parks on a consistent basis to take advantage of the cool and innovative”; and “As a place kids can go to where they feel safe and can hang out with their friends”.

Building Community pride - Some respondents saw the parks as places they would be proud to show visitors and be a model for other communities. “The pride of Central New York and a tourist destination”; “Locally built and maintained, spaces that encourage

exploration and engagement as well as ownership, encourages visitors to come back”; “I would like to be able to say that this community finally did something”. Many of these statement overlap with the desire to attract visitors, which could also relate to economic development as well as community pride.

Social interaction - The parks can provide the setting to be with people you know, like family and friends, “A beautiful place to bring my kids to play and have fun with their friends” They are also seen as places to gather and interact with others in the broader community. “Parks are places of community interaction and pride”. “Areas that bring people together”. Related to social interactions is the desire that the parks be welcoming and friendly.

Ecology and Nature - A few respondents focused on parks as a place to connect with nature and to integrate ecological function into them. “Place for residents to connect with nature. Supportive of the ecological functions within the city” and “Community friendly and welcoming areas with unique focus on nature, fun and relaxation”.

By bringing together responses to different questions, a clearer picture of the desired or potential role of parks as defined by community members is created. The synthesis of this information is illustrated in Figure 3.2, which bring together the important roles that parks can play the reasons why they play these roles and the changes that would make them even stronger.

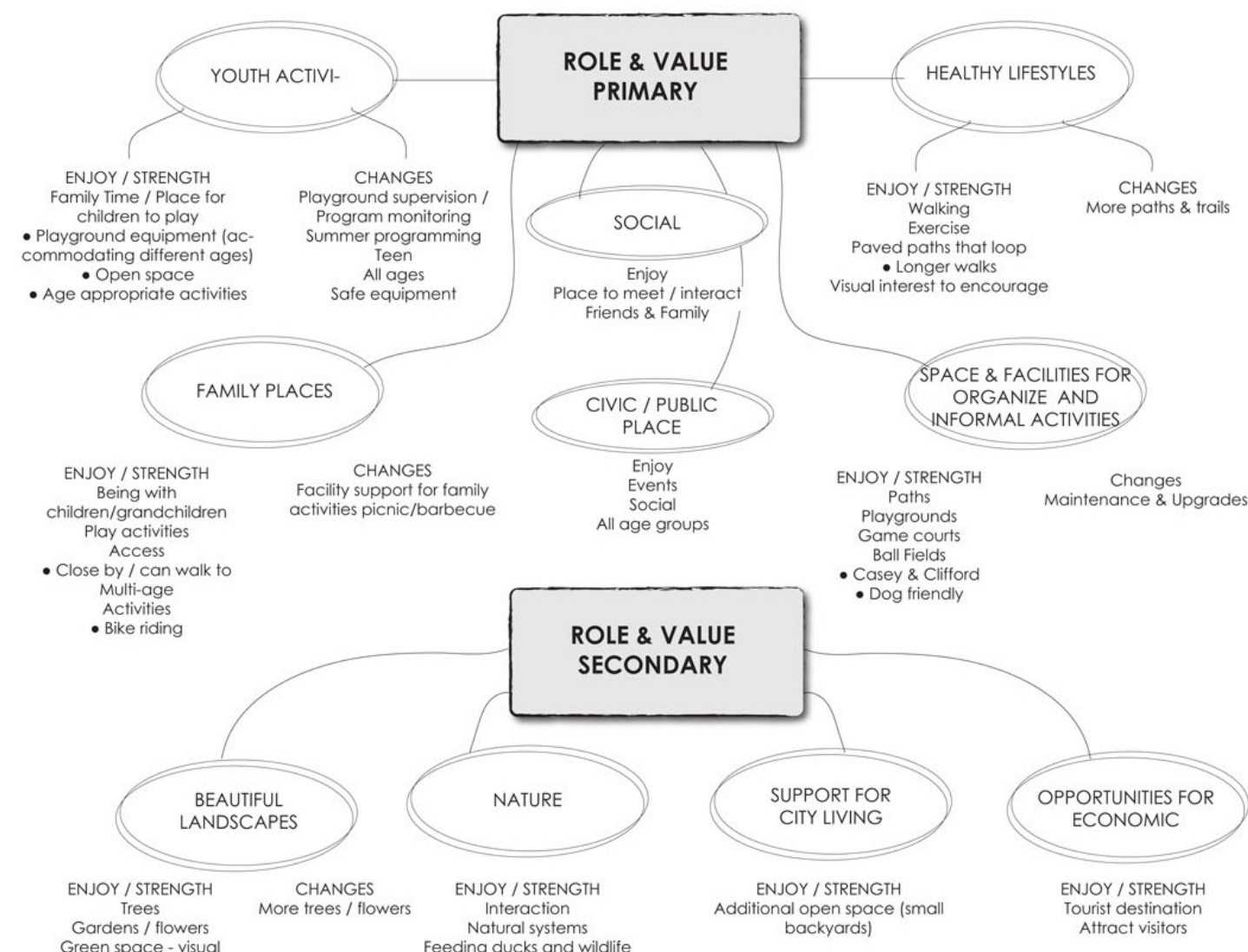


Figure 3.2 Role of Parks Synthesis Diagram

The diagram illustrates that one of the primary roles and uses of the city parks expressed by community members is as ‘being places for children’. Middle aged to senior adults expressed the memory of taking part in, or having their children take part in, summer playground programs which no longer exist. While providing places for children and youth activities remains very important, the physical and mental health benefits for all ages, social and community building benefits, being places of beauty and connection with nature, quality of life and support for economic development are also evident. Understanding these values helps define the goals for the master plan and guide strategies for implementation.

The Dichotomy of Care and Maintenance

The topic of care and maintenance emerged from the responses to several questions including what participants enjoy about the existing parks, things they are concerned about, and how they want to describe the parks in the future. One of the major issues with the parks is what participants described as maintenance and cleanliness.

The diagram in Figure 3.3 categorizes the comments related to park maintenance. Community members are pleased with many aspects of maintenance, and recent upgrades to playgrounds and other improvements in some of the parks received positive comments. Many of the concerns have to do with replacement of aging, outdated equipment and facility repair that may affect safe use and are most related to capital expenditures.

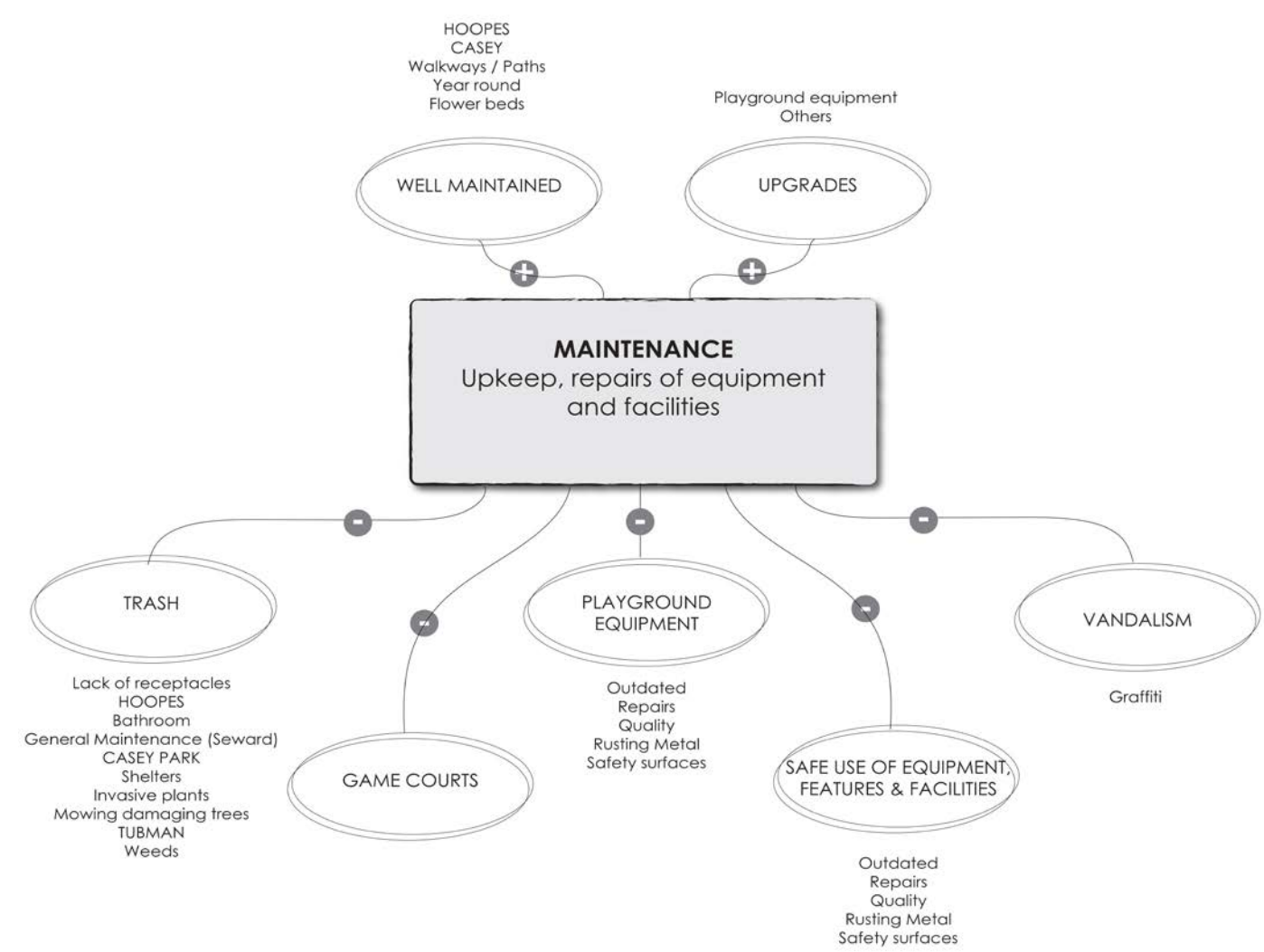


Figure 3.3 Synthesis of Maintenance Comments

Desires Expressed for Parks in the Future

Increase activity level and park use

A number of people want the parks to be better utilized, they want to see people in the parks, and some want that use to be on a daily basis. “...being a leader in their everyday use”. Some relate utilization to better maintenance and care. “Parks will be well maintained, highly utilized and provide a space for social gathering year round”.

Some respondents see the parks as busy active places. “Encourage outdoor activities, physical movement and stimulation”; I would love to see more activities for people of all ages going on in all of the parks and not just the ones like Hoopes”

There is also the desire for places that are more quiet and peaceful. “An area away from the louder children’s areas for people who just want to relax outside in the sun”; “not too crowded, quiet, peaceful”

Landscape Characteristics

The description of park landscapes ranged from general landscape improvements, such as “better landscaping”, to descriptions that include trees and flowers for different reasons; “place with lots of trees and just sitting area...a quiet place to relax”; and “Landscape with more planting and flowers. Increasing the number of mature trees”.

Facilities

Within the parks of the future descriptions there were not many references to specific facility desires with the exception of trails and playgrounds and children’s play areas. The trails are desired for walking, running and biking. Some describe interconnections; “Connected, walkable, used by all ages; well maintained; long enough for a good walk with kids or dogs”; “would love a walking trail along the river as in many European cities”.

The desire for updated playgrounds expressed by some respondents was accompanied by the request that they have other elements that would support family use; “Flourishing parks with picnic tables, benches and a playground” and “Play area for children and picnic and family area, lots of seating”.

Programming

A few people described the parks as having programs and events, “maybe even a place to lunch or BBQ on summer evening and listen to music”; “also providing venues for economic and political functions that have a positive impact on the community”. Activities and events for children and youth, especially in the summer, were described by several respondents.

Park System

Several ideas emerged as to how to consider the parks as a system. This included creating a connected system, as mentioned by several people who also desire trails. “...a walking trail into downtown that would lead to parks so its easy for families to use.”

Another idea is for the parks to have diverse characters and function, described by one person as “The parks reflect the character of the respective neighborhoods, are places of community interaction and pride, and are used by many.” and by another, “Serves a specific purpose for each area of the community”.



Lincoln Playground was noted for its updated playground equipment.

The Auburn Parks Vision Statement represents a collective view of how the community wants to be able to describe the parks system 10 years in the future.

The Vision is supported by Goals, which are high level aspirations that the community wants to achieve in and through its parks. Goals are general statements indicating a desired condition or type of accomplishments sought during the 5 to 10 year timeframe of the plan. Goals provide a general direction for the plan activity but do not provide yardsticks for measurable results.

Objectives, action strategies and recommendations are how the Goals are accomplished. They provide a more specific framework and focus for activities to implement the plan. The objectives may be physical changes, programs, policies and management.

The Vision and Goals for the Auburn Parks were developed from the responses of community members, comments about the existing parks and ideas expressed about how the parks could be described in the future. In making decisions about plans, policies and practices related to the parks, refer back to the Vision and Goals, and ask how those decisions are helping to achieve the Vision and Goals.

What are
vision, goals
and
objectives?

How were
they
developed?

The Vision for Auburn Parks

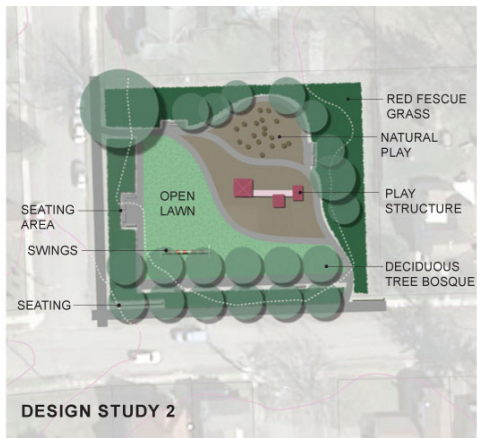
Our Auburn Parks are public places of beauty and respite, activity and healthy living, where all people feel comfortable and welcome. The design and care of our parks reflects our community pride and recognizes their vital importance to the physical, social, economic and environmental well-being of our community.

GOAL 1: Create a parks system that supports the physical and mental well-being of people of all ages.

Parks can support a variety of activities in different settings that will encourage use by the diverse population of Auburn through all seasons of the year. This includes active recreation, relaxing and socializing, walking and bicycling, places to gather in large groups, and spaces to be alone or with just a few others.

Objectives/Strategies:

- *Develop and implement a 5 to 8 year strategy to guide the upgrading and improvement of the ten parks and playgrounds that were identified by the city as part of this master planning process.* (See Section 7 for the design studies.) The six neighborhood pocket parks for which design studies were prepared seem to be the most in need of attention. These pocket parks are very important to the surrounding neighborhoods and have facilities or amenities that are beyond their useful life. Make a special effort to involve older children and teenagers to determine how to integrate facilities and activities that will be of continued interest to them.
- *Develop a plan to expand the opportunities for trails and paths within and connecting parks and neighborhoods.* Include coordination with the Owasco River Greenway Trail and with planned roadway improvements to support multi-modal use where possible. (See Section ____ for Park System connections)
- *Broaden community programming to provide opportunities for all ages to participate in events and activities in the park.* Seek to better understand community preferences using questionnaires and comments at existing events and programs and through existing organizations, agencies and the schools. (Related to Parks and Environment Resource Coordinator)
- *Partner with local health organizations to implement park improvements and program activities that are targeted towards groups that could benefit from getting outside and being active.* There are some groups in the community who are more likely than others to have poor health that is related to physical activity, community design and environmental factors. This includes people living in poverty and elderly adults.



A design study for Bradford Street playground.



The Onondaga Creekwalk in Syracuse is a popular walking and biking connection between downtown, Inner Harbor, and to Onondaga Lake.



Concerts and events at Hoopes Park are well liked. Expanded programming for all ages is desired.

Goal 2: Provide care and maintenance of the parks that reinforces the desired character, supports safe and responsible use, and represents wise use of resources.

Multiple factors must be considered in making decisions about allocation of resources to provide the appropriate type of care and maintenance of the parks in times of declining economic resources. While there are typical maintenance practices, some of the parks have different landscape characters and uses which will allow different types of care and maintenance. Places that show signs of care, including those provided by community members, tend to be safer, more respected and less subject to vandalism and misuse.

Objectives/Strategies:

- *Develop a care and maintenance plan for the parks system and individual parks* –Start with the vision, not the status quo, and develop a plan with a variety of stakeholders. Beyond basic maintenance determine what else might be needed or desired. Include the long term maintenance requirements of the proposed Cayuga River Greenway Trail. In addition to city workers, consider what other resources can be drawn into a long term sustainable maintenance strategy, including business sponsorships, friends groups and donations.
- *Implement a pilot program to develop practices in selected parks that will reduce the amount of grass mowing, and increase landscape diversity and ecologic function.* This can be structured as a research project. Introducing community members to a different landscape aesthetic than mown lawn in parks will require a combination of education, outreach and in the ground examples of appearance and function. City staff would need to be introduced to different maintenance practices and keep track of time for different practices. Involve children and teens to keep track of the ecological differences.
- *Create a handbook of small community based projects that could be undertaken and maintained by neighborhood residents and other volunteers to provide signs of caring, above and beyond the maintenance provided by the city DPW staff.* Providing some manageable but impactful projects that could be accomplished by a small group of people could serve as examples to inspire others, increase pride and sense of ownership. Involving children and teens would be a bonus.
- *Develop guidelines recommending that all new designs and materials choices include consideration of appearance, life-cycle costs, use of sustainable materials and local sourcing.* Sometimes materials that are less expensive at installation have higher maintenance or shorter lifespans, have other or undesirable environmental costs or do not take advantage of adding value to the community in other ways. Understanding these differences should be considered in decision-making.



Onondaga County's Lakeview Amphitheater has extensive meadow areas with mown edges along walkways.



About 75 residents organized into small groups plant and maintain the endcap gardens along Meadowbrook Pkway in Syracuse.
Source: www.praxislandarch.com
Photo courtesy: M. Margaret Bryant

Goal 3: Strengthen community relationships and respectful use of parks.



Community members can create get to know each other through park activities



Children and teens should continue to be involved in parks design and programming



Beautification commission and community members participating in fall planting projects
Source: www.beautifulauburn.org

Parks are public places in which everyone is welcome, offering the opportunity to interact with people we know and those who are new to us. Having facilities and activities that attract use by different age groups can provide opportunities to learn from each other, and can help ensure that community members are watching out for each other and the park facilities. Encouraging involvement of children and teens in the design and care of the parks can promote a sense of ownership, responsibility and community.

Objectives/Strategies

- *Distribute a summary of the Parks Master Plan broadly throughout the community so that many people are aware of the Vision and Goals.* Celebrate the Auburn Parks, current and future with a graphically rich summary of the master plan, including how community members can be involved in park improvements and activities. Make this available digitally on-line and in print version with copies available at City Hall, the Library, the Recreation Center, senior centers and community gathering places . Print out a few copies of the entire plan to have available at City Hall and the Library and provide on-line access for those who want more detail.
- *Research the possibility of a Parks Watch program and establishment of parks friends groups.* Having “eyes on the park” and a group of residents who advocate for a specific park can help ensure respectful use, a sense of ownership and localized signs of care.
- *Continue to engage community members in meaningful ways in the parks design process.* Neighborhood residents have local knowledge, desires and concerns that when understood can be translated and integrated into park improvements. Seek ideas and commitments for their involvement through and beyond implementation.
- *Develop an education program in association with the school district that fits into the curriculum at several stages of primary and secondary education about care for the environment, harms of litter, and problems of graffiti.* This program could be developed in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension or another environmental education organization. There may be existing programs available that could be tailored to the Auburn environment.

- *Distribute parks programming and events in the different geographic areas of the city so that residents have the opportunity to get to know other people and areas.* Encourage residents in the different sectors to serve as hosts to come up with ideas to introduce other residents to their neighborhood and park.
- *Design and implement a signage and information program that identifies every city owned park.* Identification of the city parks will bring attention to them as part of a system and as important locations in neighborhoods and downtown. Providing information on-line about the facilities and character of each park will publicize the range of opportunities available.



Community wayfinding sign design standards
Source: Cayuga County Vehicular Wayfinding System.

Goal 4: Promote the value and multiple roles of parks to contribute to a resilient and sustainable community.

Parks are increasingly recognized as being critical components of a community’s infrastructure contributing to the interconnected social, environmental and economic systems that make a community able to adapt and change when faced with both short and long term disruptions. Many Auburn community members are already thinking about expanding the role of the parks, for example the use of Miles-Lepak Parks as the site of a permaculture based Forest Farm. Tapping parks for other services in addition to traditional roles can provide added value and benefit to the community. Following are a few ideas:

Objectives/Strategies

- *Develop and implement a plan to highlight the downtown parks and parks visible from primary routes in the city as part of the visitor and tourism experience.* Auburn has many features and activities that make it attractive to tourists and visitors from within and beyond the region. Make sure that they look inviting and welcoming from passing cars, bicyclists and pedestrians, will contribute to the image of the city. Provide comfortable places to sit and relax, with a choice of sun or shade. Highlight historic, natural and built features.
- *Consider integration of green infrastructure practices when planning parks capital improvement projects and maintenance strategies.* There can be value added benefits of integrating ecologically based practices, including aesthetic improvements, improved air and water quality, ecological diversity, community engagement and education, and expanded funding opportunities. Examples include planting trees, utilizing bioswales and rain gardens to capture runoff and installing permeable paving in parking stalls.



Harriet Tubman/Freedom Park is at a gateway to the downtown and South Street but is difficult to see.



Porous asphalt basketball court at Comfort Tyler Park in Syracuse.



This large maple tree in Bradford Park helps clean the air, provides shade and is beautiful to look at. It is the only tree in the park.

- *Document and highlight the environmental benefits provided by the parks and green spaces in the city.* Many community members appreciate the aesthetic and social value of parks but may not understand the environmental work that is being done by the natural elements and systems. Enlist the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY ESF or other environmental groups to develop educational materials that document the economic and health benefits that come from the environmental services. Bringing attention to these contributions will increase understanding and support when changes or improvements are proposed.
- *Collaborate with local realtors to market the city parks as positive features to potential residents and businesses.* Research shows that parks that show signs of care and use are attractive features. Identify existing parks with these characteristics to implement a quality of life and community pride program that markets the city to newcomers and to itself, and add other existing parks as they develop these characteristics.

Goal 5: Ensure long term support and resources for parks programming, maintenance and capital improvements.

Communities throughout the United States are thinking creatively as they develop sustainable sources of resources for parks and open space. Funding for capital improvements tends to be available through public and private grant funds, but longer term funding and resources for maintenance and programming are more difficult to come by. Recognizing the important roles that parks have in community life provides the justification and the impetus for ensuring that they are appropriately maintained and well used. A five year strategic plan must be tied to the maintenance and care plan, programming planning and capital improvement priorities. There are multiple resources in addition to funding through the annual budget and grants that can be part of the plan. This includes community volunteer time, donated goods and services, partnerships with local non-profit organizations and endowments and bequests.

Objectives/Strategies:

- *Create a Parks and Recreation Steering Committee whose mission is to advocate for and advise on the parks and implementation of the Parks Master Plan.* The committee members should come from different sectors of the community that are stakeholders in the parks including residents, the Business Improvement District, the school district, and arts, environmental and health organizations. Members should be good team members, be able to

fairly represent ideas and concerns of other community members and have the time to be part of a working group that can help city staff develop action plans. Their purpose and responsibilities should be clearly defined but they should also be encouraged to be advocates for the parks.

- *Create a Parks Community Resource Coordinator staff position to develop and manage a long term resource strategy for the parks with oversight by the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee.* Community members, local organizations and businesses have good ideas and want to contribute their time and talent to caring for the parks, helping to make physical improvements and volunteering for programs and events. In order for their time and talents to be effective, public participation needs to be consistent and sustained. A person with the right skills in organization, networking, planning and management could leverage and multiply the investment of their time to energize the needed resources from within the community.
- *Develop long term partnerships with area businesses for financial, material and volunteer effort support for every neighborhood and pocket park in the city.* One of the first tasks of the Resource Coordinator or a committed volunteer would be to perform additional research on possible models for developing partnerships and the type of shared goals and benefits that are used to frame them. Create a sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee composed of foundation representatives, different size businesses and community members to develop a draft a partnership program to test and then modify as needed.
- *Expand partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide additional activities and programming that support the vision and goals of the Parks Master Plan.* Programming brings people into the parks and can reinvigorate community the use and enjoyment. The YMCA currently provides some recreational programming in Casey Park. This can serve as a good model to expand programming for different age groups. Ideas from programs can come from community members, potential partner organizations and city staff. This initiative could also be a responsibility of the Resource Coordinator working with a subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee.

Potential Parks Partners in and around the Auburn Community.

There are numerous organizations, agencies and businesses that are potential partners and supporters of the Auburn Parks and the value they provide to the community. A quick brainstorm yielded the following list; there are likely others to add.

Auburn Beautification Committee
Auburn Doubledays (Auburn Community Baseball)
Auburn Enlarged School District
Auburn Housing Authority
Auburn Public Theatre
Banks and Financial Institutions
Booker T. Washington Center
Businesses
Cayuga County Association of Realtors
Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce & members
Cayuga County Health Dept.
Cayuga County Tourism Board
Cayuga County Youth Bureau
Community Health Network
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Downtown BID
Foundations
Historic and Cultural Sites Commission
Homsite
Housing Visions
Merry Go Round Theatre
Public Art Trail
Seymour Library
United Way Family of Agencies
YMCA

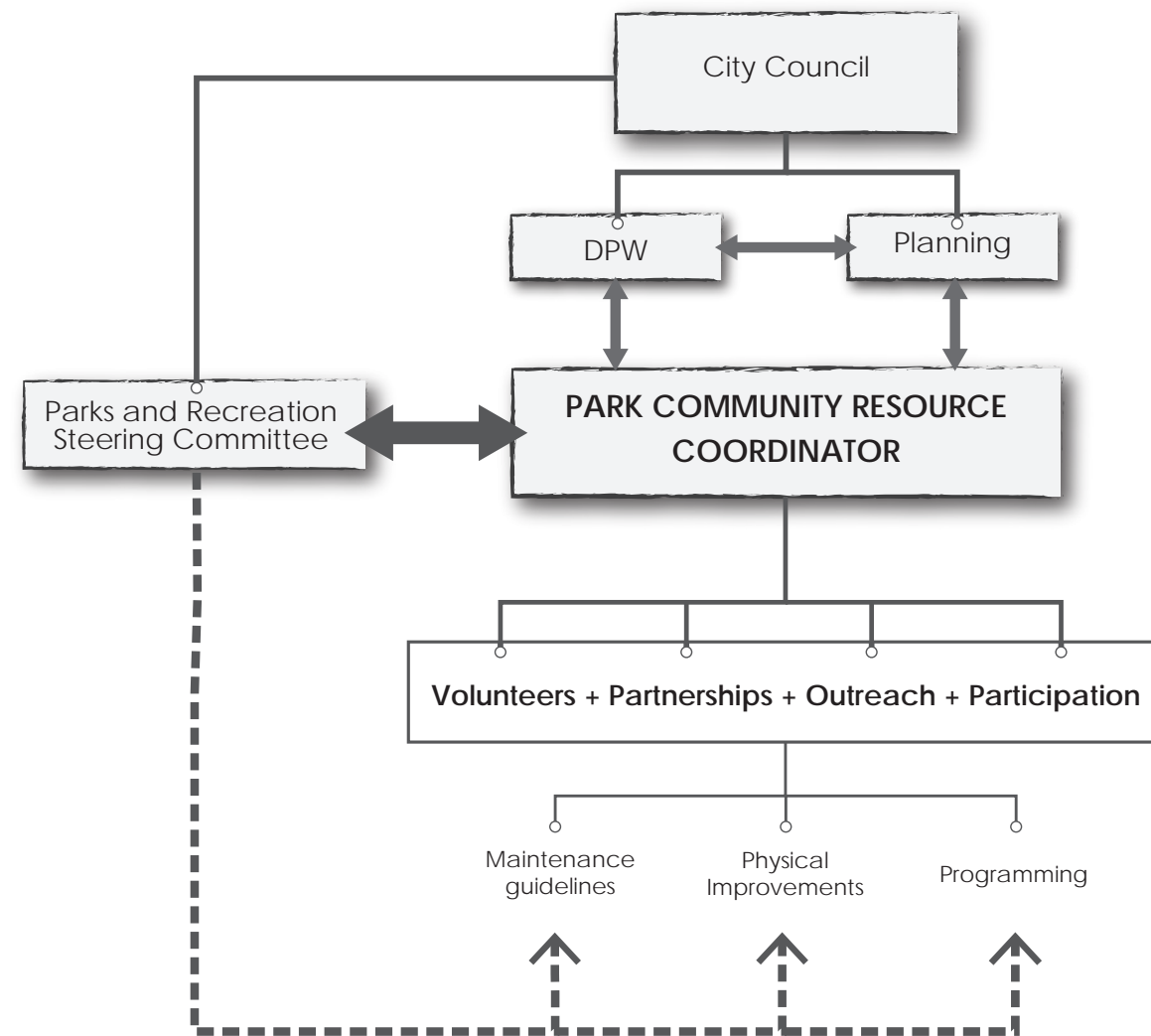


Figure 4.1 Community Resource Coordination Diagram

The Community Resource Coordination Diagram, Figure 4.1, illustrates a possible organizational structure that integrates the proposed coordinator position and a Parks and Recreation Steering Committee with the City Council and the departments closely related to the parks. Under the oversight of the Steering Committee the Resource Coordinator would organize different volunteers and partners in parks related initiatives. The Steering Committee members could serve on subcommittees for some of the Action Strategies, including development of maintenance guidelines, design and physical improvements, and parks programming.

Some Ideas to Consider From: Providence, Rhode Island

This Case Study is based on information taken from the Providence Parks Website and from an interview with Janice O'Donnell, former Director of the Providence children's Museum and now the PlayCorp coordinator with the Partnership for Providence Parks.

Providence, Rhode Island has over 90 parks, with a population of 179,000. They have a significant level of poverty and do not have a large enough tax base to support all that is needed in their parks. They receive significant support for programming and events through the efforts of volunteers, friends groups, and neighborhood residents.



A Community Support Organization

According to the website, 'The Partnership for Providence Parks was established in 2012 to bring together the Parks Department and Friends Groups with businesses, non-profits and schools who have a strong commitment to their neighborhoods and understand the value of flourishing greens space in the community'. The Partnership works with the Parks and Recreation Department is an organization that supports groups that already had interest in the parks. They provide assistance and expertise so that the parks friends groups can make the best use of their time and other resources.

Examples of programs include:

- Free workshops through their Park Academy to provide information on relevant topics including mapping, community build, community gardens, fitness in the park, outreach and communication
- Website with information on relevant topics including garden care and grantwriting
- The Play Corp which facilitates Pop-up Play events in parks around the city. They collaborate with many other organizations to expand the reach of Pop-up Play, including local garden clubs and the free lunch program.

Engaging Community in Care of the Parks

The Partnership believes it is important to engage the community in the care of the parks. They define the community as people who live and work close to the parks, including schools, the library, the recreation department and individuals. Ms. O'Donnell says "everyone needs to work together to make parks more welcome and cleaner." She gave the example of partnering with the elderly who love to walk in their parks in the early morning. The Partnership provides the pickup sticks and when the older people go out for their stroll they pick up trash while they walk. This helps make the parks more inviting and engages this groups of users in the parks care.

Managing Partnerships and Volunteers

Ms. O'Donnell has found that listening to their partners and what they are willing to do is very important. Managing the partnerships is a full time job and she advises creating a coordinator position to organize these partnerships for a community's specific needs; there is no steadfast formula that works for every park system. The position needs someone who is resourceful, practical, pulls strings, and is a hard worker. It can be a challenging job but the reward is seeing the results of transformed parks.



For more information, see the Partnership website at <http://providenceparks.org/>

SECTION 5

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS FOR THE AUBURN PARKS SYSTEM

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS

Level of Service and Standards are used to evaluate the performance of the existing park system relative to what is important to the Auburn community. In the past this was typically a quantitative exercise, establishing the number of various facilities that should be available based on a national or state level standards (e.g. 1 tennis court/2000 residents). Contemporary planning recognizes that individual communities have different desires and needs, and that parks can serve multiple and diverse functions. The standards and level of service metrics for Auburn have been developed using a combination of best practice standards and development of local standards for facilities, practices and element that are important to the Auburn community.

Distribution and Location of Parks

Existing Conditions

Auburn's park system consists of 23 parks of various sizes distributed throughout the city. These parks provide a number of functions depending on size and setting (for example whether they are located in downtown or in a residential neighborhood). In a walkable community like Auburn, having parks within ¼ to ½ mile, or a 5 to 10 minute walk is a reasonable standard.

Recommendations

As shown in Figure 5.1, most neighborhoods meet this standard, however in the State Street neighborhood there is an obvious gap. While there are parks within a half mile of most residents, there is no park directly associated with this fairly dense neighborhood. Providing parks and green space in this area should be included as a part of long range infrastructure planning. If a suitable site becomes available for a pocket neighborhood park within this zone consideration should be given to acquiring it for future park development. (See Section 6 for more further description of the possibilities in this area).

Level of Service is a technique for determining how much parkland or certain types of recreation facilities should be provided in a community.

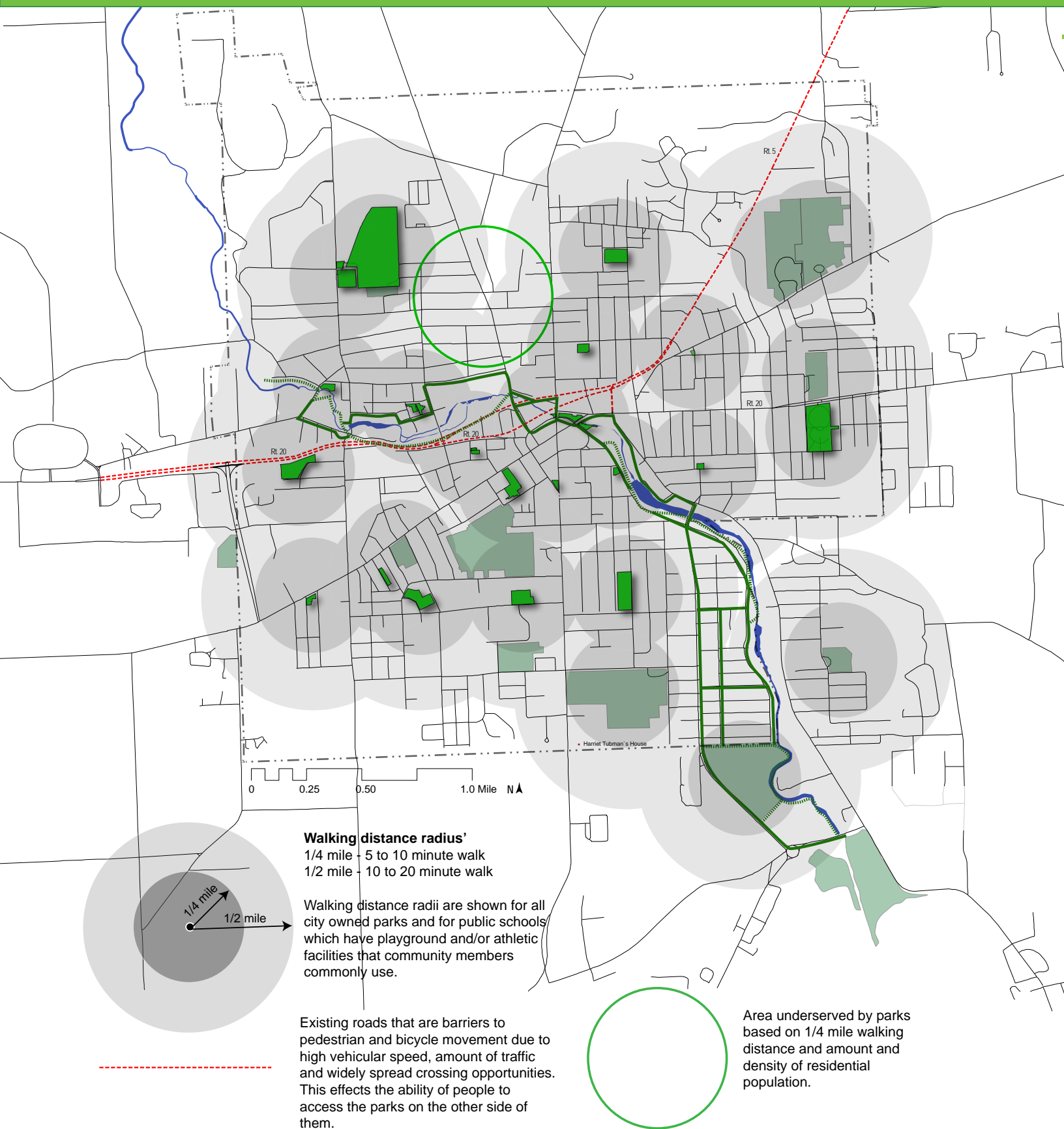


Figure 5.1 Parks and Recreation Space Distribution

		Recreation Facility												Playground Structures												Park Buildings							
		Baseball/Softball Fields		Full Court Basketball		Half Court Basketball		Horseshoes		Indoor Ice Skating		Outdoor Pool		Skate Park		Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field		Tennis Courts		Covered Shelter		Extensive Pathway System		Small/Minimal Playground Structures		Modest / Extensive Playground Structures		Clubhouse		Greenhouse		Recreation Building	
Community Parks																																	
Casey Park		2	2		1	1	1	1	1	4	2	x			x				x*														
Hoopes Park											1	x							x*	x													
Neighborhood Parks																																	
Clifford Park		2	1							2					x				x*														
Lincoln Park		1	1							2	1				x																		
St. Francis Park		1	1								1				x																		
Pocket Neighborhood Parks																																	
Benton St. Playground				1											x																		
Bradford St. Playground															x																		
Calvary Park																																	
Columbian Park			1												x																		
Cottage Place Park																																	
Osborne St. Park															x																		
Seminary Park															x																		
Sherwood Playground			1												x																		
Wall St. Playground				1							1				x																		
Downtown Parks																																	
Buonocore Park											1	x																					
Freedom Park												x																					
Market St. Park											1	x																					
Pomeroy Park			1									x				x																	
Seward Park																																	
Special Use Parks																																	
Booker T. Washington Park		1	1												x																		
Miles-Lepak Park																																	
Falcon Park		1																															
Veteran`s Park																																	
Total		8	9	2	1	1	1	1	1	8	8	6		3	10				2	1	1												
*Restrooms																																	

*Restrooms

Figure 5.2. Location and Quantity of Existing Recreation Facilities

Existing City Park Recreation Facilities and Recommendations

It is necessary to have an understanding of the amount and location of the existing recreation and support facilities in the city owned parks in order to determine the current level of service, and in combination with data on use and preferences, analyze how and if the existing facilities are meeting community demand and desires. This analysis is then looked at through the lens of existing and potential resources to develop recommendations for changes that can be accomplished within the time frame of this master plan.

The chart shown in Figure 5.2 summarizes the existing primary recreation facilities in the city parks that can be counted. There are other facilities and amenities, such as gathering spaces, that are not easily quantified but are important to include in the analysis of Level of Service. Both types of facilities are described and discussed in this section, and recommendations proposed for changes if needed.

Athletic Fields

Existing Baseball/Softball fields – The existing fields that are used for recreational organized teams are located at Casey Park and Clifford Park. These have full skinned infields and can be set up for either softball or baseball.

- Men’s softball is played at Casey Park. In 2016, the two fields are scheduled at least four nights a week from early May to late August. For the foreseeable future there will be the need for two fields for men’s softball.
- Women’s softball is played on the two fields at Clifford Park. For the foreseeable future there will be the need for two fields minimum available for women’s softball. There are poor drainage conditions in Field 2, the northern field.
- The baseball field at Falcon Park is used by the Doubledays, a AAA professional team, and is also used for special games by local high school boys teams during the spring season.
- Youth baseball and softball, including Little League baseball, are played at facilities other than Auburn Parks.
- The existing fields at Lincoln Park and St. Francis Park are no longer used for organized games due to lack of demand.

Recommendations for Baseball/Softball Fields

- Casey Park - The two fields should remain in use.
- Clifford Park - Given that the clubhouse is being renovated and this site has a long history of softball leagues, it seems reasonable that both field remain in use. However the poor drainage conditions of the Field 2, the northern field, should be improved. Consideration should be given to renovating this as an artificial turf field which would extend its use for informal recreation and community events.
- Lincoln Park and St. Francis Park - The DPW has proposed

that these two fields be converted to multi-purpose fields and the skinned infield areas removed. This is a reasonable proposal; they can still be used for informal pickup games by the community and maintenance demands of the infields will be eliminated.

Existing Soccer fields - There is a field at Casey Park that is used for informal soccer games but could be used for an organized program if the demand develops. The Soccer Shots youth soccer program run in the spring by the YMCA uses the interior turf on the ice rink at Casey. There is also a program for preschool children in association with the Early Childhood Center run by a private company that utilizes the field at St. Francis Park a few hours on weekdays.

Recommendations for Soccer Fields - The demand for soccer fields is being met. If needed in the future space is available at St. Francis Park and Lincoln Park.

Football fields – There are no existing fields dedicated to football in the Auburn parks. The demand for football fields is met through other facilities, including Holland Stadium at the middle school. Youth Football through the Pop Warner program is played at David’s Fields, at Seward Elementary School. If the teams make it to the playoffs they sometimes practice under the lights at Casey Park.

Game Courts

Existing Tennis Courts – Based on community responses and review of recreation industry data, tennis continues to be a fairly popular sport. In the city tennis courts are fairly well distributed. In the city parks, tennis courts are currently located at:

- Casey Park, 4 courts - All are in poor condition, due to structural cracking.
- Clifford Park, 4 courts - Structurally in good condition but the existing surface is beyond its useful life.
- Lincoln Park, 2 courts - In good condition.
- There are also 8 courts at the high school and 3 at the Middle School

Recommendations for Tennis Courts

- Casey Park - Replace the existing courts. Consideration should be given in discussion with community members as to whether all four courts or just two should be replaced.
- Clifford Park - The courts are still playable but should be resurfaced within the time frame of this master plan.

Existing Basketball Courts - The basketball courts are well used throughout the city. Based on community responses, basketball is an activity that seems to mostly attract children, teens and young adults, but is also an activity that parents do with their children. Community members living nearby some have mixed comments about some of the basketball courts because the activity is sometimes noisy and attracts a rowdy people at night. This seems to

be able to be handled with enforcement of park rules and location decisions. In the city parks, basketball courts are located at:

- Columbian Park (1 court), Lincoln Park (1 court), Booker T. Washington (1 court), St. Francis Park (1 court), and Benton St. Playground (1/2 court), and. - These are in relatively good condition.
- Casey Park, 2 courts - Poor condition due to structural cracking
- Clifford Park, 1 court - Structurally in good condition but the existing surface is beyond its useful life.
- Pomeroy Park, 1 court - Court is not visible from adjacent streets. Baskets have been removed due to complaints about unruly behavior.
- Sherwood Park, 1 court - Basket has been removed from north end of court due to balls going in neighboring yard; existing surface is beyond its useful life.
- Wall Street , 1/2 court - Existing surface is beyond useful life.

Recommendations for Basketball Courts -

- Casey Park, 2 courts - Replace the existing courts.
- Clifford Park, 1 court - Resurface courts within the time frame of this master plan.
- Pomeroy Park, 1 court - Remove and replace court in location visible from Court Street. See Design Studies, Section 7.
- Sherwood Park, 1 court - Resurface existing court, or Remove and replace with half court. See Design Studies, Section 7
- Wall Street , 1/2 court - Resurface existing court or Relocate court, depending on design study preferences. See Design Studies, Section 7.

Outdoor Swimming

Existing Swimming Facilities - Swimming was indicated as a popular activity by about 25 percent of the participants who responded to questions about activities they enjoy. It is not known if there is a preference for pool or lake swimming. Both options are available within reasonable travel distance of Auburn residents, including the outdoor pool at Casey Park. This facility is open from late June through late August and is programmed and staffed by the YMCA with city funding. Seasonal and long term maintenance are covered by the city. According to the DPW Superintendent it will need a new filtration system. Residents may use the pool free of charge; non-residents pay a fee. Summer programs that use the pool include swim lessons, a swim team, water polo league and Freedom Camp/BOCES, plus there is lap swim, open swim.

Recommendations for the Swimming Pool

The pool provides a valuable community service for a broad range of community members, including those who have difficulty accessing other outdoor swimming options. Continued operation and maintenance of the existing pool at Casey Park is recommended.



Paved surfaces allow for different types of recreation activities.

Source: www.auburnpub.com

Photo courtesy: Jill Connor, The Citizen



YMCA aqua zumba at Casey Park pool.

Source: www.auburnpub.com

Photo courtesy: Sarah Jean Condon, The Citizen

Children's Play

Existing Children Play and Playground Equipment - Children's play is important to their intellectual, physical, emotional and social development. They will find opportunities for play in almost any setting. The Auburn Parks provide varied opportunities for play, including open space for informal play, athletic fields for organized sports, playgrounds with equipment. Less available in the parks are access to natural features and areas, and paths and trails.

Parks as places for children and youth activities was indicated as the highest ranking role of parks by community members who participated in the planning process. The biggest concern indicated was the condition and upgrading of playground equipment. This section will provide an overview of the existing playgrounds and recommendations for updating .

As shown on the existing recreation facilities chart, Figure 5.2 there are playground structures in every Neighborhood Park and Pocket Neighborhood Park with the exception of Cottage Place Park and Calvary Park. There are several conditions to consider in determining if, how and when to replace or upgrade existing playground equipment:

- Cottage Place - There is no playground equipment in this park but there are many children who live in the neighborhood.
- Seminary Park, Sherwood Playground and Wall Street Playground have minimal play equipment that are beyond their useful life and do not provide the setting to promote active use by children.
- Casey Park and Clifford Park have fairly extensive playground equipment that provides choice for different age groups. Clifford Park structures are nearing the end of their useful life. Casey Park equipment is used extensively by children from Casey Park School and assessment for updating should be coordinated with the Auburn School District.
- Lincoln Park, St. Francis Park, Benton Street Playground, Columbian Park and Osborne Street Park have had new playground equipment installed in recent years.

Recommendations for Children's Playground Equipment

Updated playground equipment is recommended for all of the Neighborhood Parks and Pocket Neighborhood Parks, with the exception of Calvary Park, that have not had updated equipment in recent years. Playground ideas are illustrated in the Design Studies in Section 7 and priorities for improvements to the different parks are described in Section 8.

Playground equipment is one approach to supporting children's play and they can be designed to engage and promote a variety of activities and interactions. In developing new or updated playgrounds, the following guidelines should be observed.

- Prepare a needs assessment – make sure that you have team members, whether professional or local community

members, who have the qualifications and experience to both understand the age groups the playground is being designed for and the characteristics of the site where the playground will be located.

– Age range – There are different schools of thought regarding the separation of play areas by age range. In general, there is typically a distinction between preschool play structures and those for 5 to 12 year olds. Provision of separate areas for different age groups will also be dependent on budget and size of area.

– Meet with children, parents and other neighbors to understand their preferences and desires. Having their involvement during the design stage can help ensure that they will continue to care for and utilize the park and its features.

- Consider the quality, appearance and character of play equipment – there are many different manufacturers to choose from. Some community participants suggested that each playground should have a character distinct to its neighborhood location. Weigh the costs and benefits of having a limited number of preferred manufacturers versus having different manufacturers for every new or updated playground.
- Integrate and coordinate playground structures within the overall site design – the experience of play and of being in a park should be more comprehensive than just having a playground structure or equipment.
 - Consider important relationships and support elements including areas of sun and shade, seating and gathering, individual and small group play, and universal access.
- Include features that encourage the use of multiple senses including hearing, touch and smell, and which introduce functional art into the park.
- ADA accessibility – While it is not possible to provide access to all parts of playground structures, playgrounds should allow interaction of children of all abilities with the equipment, play structures and interaction with other children. Where appropriate provide accessible pathway connections to and around the play area.

Guidelines for Playing Safe

- Safety surface - Safety surfaces should be selected and maintained to meet current standards for cushioning and access. The initial cost at installation and the long term maintenance requirements and cost should be considered in selecting safety surfaces. Limiting the number of different types of safety surfaces can help ensure regular maintenance by simplifying the maintenance procedures that need to be accomplished.



When shown this image Auburn community members appreciated the colors and variety of ages that could use it. They felt it lacked identity that could be improved with plants and artwork.



This playground example shows the integration of safety surface with the adjacent walk. Community members like the colors and age variety of this playground.

- Condition of equipment - Continue to prepare a Condition and Safety checklist for regular maintenance, and train park staff on its use.



The updated playground at Osborne St. has a decorative fence along busy Osborne St. but there are no barriers to the neighborhood along its quieter other sides.



Existing skate park conditions at Casey Park

Fencing or barriers – The desire for fencing to prevent children running into roads and parking areas was identified by some community members. This is a common practice especially in play areas designed for children age 5 and under. The need for and location of fencing should be reviewed on a case by case basis. Fence materials should be compatible with the character of the setting and should be of a height that serves as a reminder barrier but does not give a sense of exclusion or unwelcome. For example a 6 foot height chain link fence is generally not needed around a children’s playground. Plant material and changes in paving or ground plane materials can be used to identify edges or different areas.

Skatepark

Existing Skatepark

The skatepark at Casey Park received several comments from community members expressing that it is unattractive and rundown. It is used by older children and teens and receives no special maintenance attention. From a park design perspective it appears out of place within its context. The demand for its continued use and possible improvement has not been determined through the master plan process.

Skatepark Recommendation

Skateparks are popular facilities because they provide a place primarily for older children and teens to gather and socialize, practice biking and skateboarding skills, and enjoy a fun, physical and healthy activity. Their location needs to be carefully selected so that they are accessible and visible but not disturbing to surrounding activities. They should be designed to fit the context and the process should involve the young community members who will be using them. It is recommended that the demand for the skatepark be assessed as part of a broader process that specifically engages older children and teenagers to understand the types of recreational activities and facilities that they would like to have available.

Paths and trails for access, exercise and connection - walking, day hiking, and bicycling

Existing Paths and Trails

Walking was listed as a frequent activity by many community members, and the addition of trails and paths was expressed as a desire. Casey and Hoopes Parks have fairly extensive paved pedestrian path systems and were most frequently cited by community members as places to walk. Pomeroy Park has a linear

path system that provides connections between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Within the existing parks there are no paths that support dual use by pedestrian and bicyclists although it is possible that children on trykes and small bikes use existing paved paths.

Recommendations for Paths and Trails - There are three ways to consider the use of trails and paths as part of the Auburn parks system.

1. Pedestrian pathways for access to features and facilities – Within parks, paths can provide universal access to different areas and features for all community members regardless of physical ability. This would include access to play areas, game courts, shelters and picnic areas. When many of the existing parks were developed this was not standard practice and is most evident in the existing neighborhood and pocket neighborhood parks which have few internal paths. Providing path access must now be considered when making improvements to these parks.
2. Pedestrian pathways for exercise – Many people walk on a regular basis for their health, both physical and mental. Walking in a park provides an alternative to walking on a neighborhood sidewalk, and many people appreciate the separation from vehicular traffic and being surrounded by vegetation and open space. Having continuous pathways that allow interesting walks of ¼ to ½ miles within the larger parks is desirable. People walking at 3 to 4 miles per hour appreciate a diverse landscape setting, areas of sun and shade, different features and activities, distance markers, and amenities like water fountains and places to sit. This standard is met most effectively in Hoopes Park. Casey Park also provides an attractive setting for walking with the loop paths, which could be expanded to provide options to explore the wooded areas and additional paths to allow shorter walks. It is apparent that community members desire additional opportunities, which could be filled through the development of the Owasco River Greenway Trail.
3. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways for connections – Many communities are creating connections for safe and enjoyable walking and bicycling between different neighborhoods and areas, for exercise and transportation. These systems take advantage of existing corridors such as local streets and natural corridors such as waterways. This type of connecting pathway system does not exist in Auburn but the Owasco Greenway Trail will fulfill this role. Creating lateral connections to nearby existing parks will expand the recreation opportunities available to those using the Greenway Trail, and should be designed to provide safe access to and from the adjacent neighborhoods. (See Section 6 for more detail on a connected park system).



Community members liked this trail image because it promotes biking which relates to the goal of healthy living, and that it can be used by people of all ages. The Owasco River Greenway is where it seemed most appropriate.

Gathering and social spaces

Parks have long been identified as places where people can come together for a variety of reasons with people they know, including family, friends and neighbors. They are also places where you can see and be with people who you don't know. Each type of interaction has a value in our personal and community lives and parks in the city should accommodate and support this diversity.

Existing Picnic areas – Picnicking and barbecuing is a popular and desired activity for some community members. It is an activity that is appropriate for large and small groups.

- Casey Park - Space for large group picnics and barbecues is available most noticeably in Casey Park where there are two shelters. Unfortunately due to vandalism there are currently no picnic tables. In addition, several community members felt the shelters were outdated. Picnics by small groups in Casey Park that might need just one or two tables are not accommodated.
- Existing picnic facilities in some of the other parks consist of individual tables, grills and small shelters.

Recommendations for Picnic Facilities

- Casey Park - As shown in the Design Studies for Casey Park (See Section 7), creation of a picnic area with multiple tables, with some accessible from a walkway is recommended. Casey is an attractive park for family picnics due to the presence of diverse activities and an inviting area in the shade of the existing trees. Options for one or two shelters are shown in the design studies and should be reviewed with community members.
- Hoopes Park - A picnic area might be appropriate for Hoopes Park which attracts residents from all over the city, and many visitors, but the location would need to be sensitive to the existing landscape character and views.
- Clifford Park – This park also attracts people from all around the city due to its softball fields, children's play area and game courts. A picnic area would support general day use, and as such would increase the number of desirable recreational visitors. With the renovation of the Clubhouse there will be restroom facilities available, and the treed areas in the northern section of the site provide an appropriate setting.
- Pomeroy Park – Pomeroy Park is used by different groups of people at different times of the day. Nearby office workers would appreciate a place to sit and eat lunch, children from the YMCA and nearby schools could have a place for activities or a snack, and teens have a place to hang out. Tables and sitting areas should be in visible areas that can be seen from park entrances.
- Picnic tables in other parks – There may be other parks where picnic tables are desired. Picnic tables invite informal gatherings and socializing, and as such can support important interactions. To help alleviate issues of loitering or undesirable



The picnic shelters at Casey Park were identified by some community members as outdated.

activities, they should be located in visible areas that can be seen from park entrances.

Existing Seating Options – Having choices of places to sit, alone or with others, in sun or in shade, is a desired element in all parks. Most of the existing parks have benches available. In parks with children's play areas most of the benches are found focused on those, and occur singly. While these are appropriate for those watching their children, they may not be as desirable for others who want a place to sit in the park to talk with friends, sit and read, or enjoy watching the comings and goings.

Recommendations for Seating Options - There should be choices of places to sit in all parks. A seating area should be available close to the entrance to the park or along the street frontage. This allows people who might not want to venture far inside the park, a common behavior of older adults, the opportunity to enjoy being outside and seeing other people. As noted above, seating inside the park, not associated with the children's playground might also be desirable.

Benches are the most common type of seating and they can take many forms. There are many other suitable types of seating including seat walls, boulders, sculptural pieces, swinging benches, stairs and logs. In selecting the form of the seating consider comfort, cost (initial and life cycle), setting, and purpose and value added. For example, a bench might also be functional art, which might add to its cost but provide other benefits beyond seating. A seat wall might also define the edge of a space in addition to providing a place to sit.

Existing Event Spaces – Events such as summertime movies or concerts are typically held in Hoopes Park and to a lesser extent at Casey Park. These are very popular among community members that participated in the study and should continue.

Recommendations for Event Spaces

There has been discussion of distributing the movie and concert events among other parks so that the community experiences other parks and parts of the city, and it may attract community members who have not attended in the past. A consideration in distributing the events is the size of the park to provide space for people to set up lawn chairs and picnics. This will also require coordinated outreach and communication to make it as successful as possible.

Specific ideas for improving event space in city parks include:

- Clifford Park – Field #2 just south of the Clubhouse is a natural amphitheater with a slope down to the field. One of the design studies for Clifford Park (See Section 7) shows the creation of seating walls and steps on this slope to accommodate



Benches at Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York City doubling as seating and public art.



Amphitheater seating surround the turf lawn of Hunters Point South Park in New York City. In addition to accommodating many recreational sports, the lawn is also used for events, picnics, and other passive activities.

watching concerts, movies, games and other events, and as an informal seating area during non-event times. Also shown is conversion of the ballfield to a small turf field which would provide the setting for multiple activities including entertainment events, children’s sports and informal games for an extended time in spring and fall.

Winter Activities

Located in Upstate New York, Auburn is blessed with four seasons and can capitalize on year round outdoor recreation activities. To achieve the goal of the parks being places that support physical and mental well being, year round use and activity should be encouraged. This can occur through making park areas accessible, publicizing and encouraging use and through partnerships and programming with other organizations.



Pomeroy Park serves as a pathway between downtown and neighborhoods to the west.



Sledding can provide hours of winter outdoor activity.

- Walking/jogging - The primary outdoor winter activity that is supported by the city is walking and jogging in Hoopes, Casey and Pomeroy Parks, through the plowing of the internal paths. This is a valuable practice and should continue. As loop or continuous paths are developed in neighborhood parks, such as Clifford, Lincoln and St. Francis, and in the Owasco River Greenway, maintenance should include winter plowing to support continuation of this activity year round.
- Ice hockey and ice skating – The ice rink at Casey Park is currently managed and programmed by the Auburn Hockey Boosters under a two year agreement. This has allowed the facility to remain open at a reduced cost to the city but has resulted in reduced availability of public skating. If there is the desire expressed by a group of community members for additional public skate time, this should be part of the discussions if and when the agreement is renegotiated.

Outdoor ice skating historically was available on the Hoopes Park Pond and at Clifford Park. At this time it is not recommended to be reinitiated due to the inconsistent winter weather patterns which make availability of suitable ice conditions impossible to predict.

- Sledding – Sledding occurs informally in some of the parks that have slopes. This has been observed at Cottage Place and Casey Park, and several community members suggested it as an activity in Pomeroy Park. Sledding draws children outside for hours of fun on cold winter days like no other activity because they are constantly moving. Consideration should be given to investigating the suitability of the existing parks for sledding and if appropriate, include unobstructed space for that activity in the final design.
- Cross country skiing and snowshoeing – These activities can occur in parks that have open spaces and areas that

people would find interesting to explore. While some parks departments or agencies do manage and groom trails for cross country skiing, the inconsistency of snow retention does not justify this expense in Auburn Parks. However, identifying parks where snowshoeing and cross country skiing are invited, such as Casey and in the future the Owasco River Greenway, would give community members the idea that these activities are possible close by. In addition, having links on the Parks website about other places to enjoy these activities or rent equipment to try them out would advance the master plan goals.

ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT PARK USE

Lighting in Parks

Existing Lighting in Parks

There are two main reasons that lighting is installed in parks; one is to support and encourage night time use and the other is to provide visibility for surveillance meant to deter undesirable activity. Both types of lighting exist in Auburn’s Parks.

Community members did not express desires or concerns related to providing additional lighting to support nighttime use. Existing lighting to support nighttime use occurs in the following parks:

- The most significant amount of lighting for nighttime use of outdoor facilities exists at Casey Park where there is lighting at the two softball fields, around the area of the swimming pool, at the tennis courts and at the parking lots for Falcon Field and the recreation center.
- One of the Clifford Park fields and the area around the clubhouse are lighted.
- There are pathway pole lights in Pomeroy Park to support its use as a connection between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Hoopes Park has some lighting that seems to function more as security lighting than to support regular nighttime use.

Recommendations for Lighting in Parks

- Pomeroy Park - The design study for Pomeroy (Section 7) shows new more closely spaced lights to reinforce comfortable and safe use of the existing connecting pathways.
- Clifford Park security lighting - Several community members expressed concern about vandalism and inappropriate activities, including in the north section of Clifford, due to lack of visibility during nighttime hours. They suggested installing lighting to decrease or deter this behavior. Research from other communities has not shown a definitive correlation as to whether adding lights reduces crime or illegal activities in parks (Trust for Public Land). In some cases, providing lights actually encourages unintended nighttime activities. However, if it has been found that providing security lighting in other parks has



Existing pathway lighting in Pomeroy Park seem to be too widely spaced for support a feeling of safety for nighttime use.

alleviated undesirable behavior issues then installation in parks where requested should be considered and discussed with neighbors.

- Casey Park pathway lighting - There were also suggestions for lighting the pathways at Casey Park. Given the remote location of the northern part of the park and lack of visibility from a surrounding neighborhood encouraging night time use of these paths by lighting them is not recommended at this time.

Park Signage

Signage in the Auburn Park system can have several different purposes. These include signs that communicate image and identity, wayfinding and directions, regulations and public service messages.

Existing Park System Signage

The City has a lack of park system signage. A common comment by community members when discussing the existing parks was, ‘Oh, I didn’t know that was a park’, and ‘I’ve never been to that park’. A number of people suggested that all city parks be identified with signage.



This sign at Bryant Park in New York City welcomes people to enjoy the park in addition to listing activities that are prohibited.



A “Smoke Free Park” sign posted on a tree at Hoopes Park.

Recommendations for Park System Signage

There should be a signage system developed for the park system that includes the following components.

- Park identification signs should communicate a positive image and be consistent across the park system. They could derive their design from the sign standards developed by the Cayuga County Office of Tourism but should clearly be about Auburn Parks. They will need to be oriented toward pedestrians and slow moving vehicles. Internal signs within individual parks can vary and be expressive of the activity or setting.
- Wayfinding and directional signage should be considered for parks that attract out of town visitors and that are of a size and layout that all facilities cannot be seen from the entry area. This would include Hoopes, Casey and Pomeroy Parks, and possibly Clifford Park. To be most helpful, wayfinding signs should include a simple map that locates the facilities and paths relative to the users. It could also include path distances.
- Regulatory signs are those that typically list all of the activities that are prohibited in the parks. While meant to promote safe use and as legal protection they can send a message that is antithetical to one of welcome. Give consideration to encouraging enjoyment of the park while also listing prohibited activities.
- Public service signs promote the use of the parks through positive messages, such as the “Young Lungs at Play” signs posted in many of the city parks. These can show signs of care and are meaningful to the community members who may have contributed to their installation. The location of these and other signs should be coordinated with other park elements to reduce visual clutter.

Restroom Facilities

Some community members expressed the need to have restrooms available in parks with activities that encourage longer stays and that attract use by people coming from outside of the immediate neighborhood. This would apply primarily to Hoopes Park, Casey Park and Clifford Park.

Existing Restroom Facilities

All of these parks have or will have in the near future restroom facilities available for use park visitors. One issue shared by all of the parks is that although restroom facilities are available they are not open the entire that the parks are open.

- Hoopes Park restrooms are located in the existing clubhouse and are generally open when the park is open.
- Casey Park restrooms are located in the Recreation Building and are open when the park is open, including weekends. An issue for Casey is that the restrooms are a long walking distance from some of the facilities that would be most attractive to families with children, including the picnic area and playground.
- Clifford Park restrooms in the Clubhouse have been open during the summer and during softball games. There have been some minor problems with unsupervised children stopping up toilets, etc. This might be handled with reminders to parents that this has been an issue.

Recommendations for Restroom Facilities

- At Casey Park, consideration should be given to including a restroom facility if the picnic area and children’s play area are expanded and updated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW RECREATION FACILITIES

Splash Pads

Splash pads or spray pool are water play facilities that have little or no standing water. They are attractive to children but adults also enjoy cooling off on a hot summer’s day. They can take various forms and can be developed in a range of sizes. They are increasingly popular and would be appropriate for installation in a park that attracts residents from around the city.

The idea of splash pads or spray pools were introduced to community members during the preferences activity of the third workshop. Those present liked that they would be fun for all ages, were attractive for kids and adults, provide relief and the summer, and could make a connection to the river and water resources of the Finger Lakes. A splash pad is shown in the design study for Casey Park, to replace the spray pool that has not been used in many years. Community members commented that they might also be appropriate for Clifford Park, or for Market Street Park where it would attract residents and visitors. It is not unusual to see “splash fountains” in downtown parks, functioning as water art and cooling play spaces.

As part of public discussion, in addition to capital cost of installation, maintenance requirements and costs should be considered for this type of facility. In a study of “Best Practices for Public Splash Pads”, most of the case study communities charged a modest



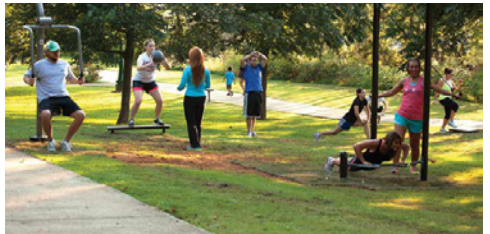
Renovations to Clifford Park Clubhouse include improvements to the restroom facilities.



Community members appreciated this play setting because it was fun for both children and adults for summer relief. They felt it was appropriate for larger parks like Clifford and Casey, or even downtown at Market St.



Auburn community members like the idea of natural play to provide unique experiences, different features, organic play and connection to nature. Of the example shown they felt it was too stark and needed more live materials.



Community members commented that outdoor fitness equipment could provide exercise for all ages. They felt this might be appropriate at Casey and at some of the playgrounds.



Teen plaza in Freemantle, New Zealand and can be found on the Project for Public Spaces website.



In response to images of teen and youth oriented designs and features, community members thought these would be most appropriate for high activity areas, at Casey or Pomeroy Parks, or close to the art museum.

admission fee to cover operating and maintenance costs. Several communities decided to install splash pads after closing swimming pools that needed significant and costly improvements. (http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Best-Practices-for-Public-Splash-Pads_Taha-Hameddudin_FINAL.pdf)

Natural Play Areas and Interaction with Nature

It has become increasingly apparent that children are spending more time indoors with screen activities (computers, television, cell phones, tablets) and less time playing outdoors. Many researchers have cited multiple reasons why play outdoors and first hand knowledge of the natural environment are important to children's development, and to developing an ethic of care for the environment. Given the fact that community members have identified parks as places for children youth, and for family activities, there should be concerted effort to make at least some of them places that promote exploration, investigation, reflection and interaction with nature and natural elements.

Some communities are designing play areas that integrate natural materials including plants; soil, rocks and sand; water; and grade changes within the design to increase the complexity, interest and type of play experience that can be enjoyed. The design studies in Section 7 illustrate how natural elements can be integrated into the Clifford and Casey Parks, and some of the smaller pocket neighborhood parks, as specially designed play areas, or by introducing more diverse natural elements and systems into the parks. These are ideas that can be considered as part of future improvements.

Play and Activity Areas for Tweens and Teens

As children grow older toward adulthood, their interests, activities and interactions with each other change. Spaces and places that engaged them in elementary school no longer fit and they look for other places and activities to express themselves, use their energy and hang out with friends. A common problem in most communities is an expression by teenagers of boredom, no place to go, and nothing to do. There is no easy answer to this issue but from a parks planning perspective one solution would be to engage teens in park activities and the design and planning of places with their interests and desires in mind.

The Project for Public Spaces has case study examples from several other communities, guidelines for involving youth and a list of elements that may make spaces more "youth friendly". (See <http://www.pps.org/blog/young-people-and-placemaking-engaging-youth-to-create-community-places/>). Some of these ideas are shown in the Teen Area developed as part of the design study for Casey Park. While a specific space designed for teens might be a long term goal, there are other short term projects and events that could involve them, their energy and their creativity.

Introduction

The parks master planning process provides the opportunity to ask questions, investigate and understand issues, and propose possible solutions that will address concerns and improve the existing conditions. Some of these solutions focused on specific elements, activities and individual parks. In the prior section, standards and guidelines were described that relate primarily to recreational use and activity. In this section, we look at the parks as different types of landscapes within the city, and how their design and maintenance not only support the various activities that occur but can provide different aesthetic experiences and ecological functions. Ideas for creating a connected system that encourages movement between parks and neighborhoods are described and illustrated.

Park Design and Landscape Character

In addition to containing recreation facilities and pathways, the Auburn parks have landscape characters that are derived from several different factors including their natural setting, design and their care and maintenance. These characteristics influence the parks image and how people use them, as well as their level of comfort and their feelings of attachment. These attachments are not only influenced by physical features but also by experiences and memories.

Decisions about parks design and maintenance now integrate sustainable practices recreation level of service and expansion of the role of parks as important community infrastructure. In part this is about reducing maintenance costs but it is also about the value benefitsof increasing the environmental services, ecological diversity and people's interaction with nature and natural systems.

Strategies to improve environmental quality and diversity of park landscapes

During the final community workshop there were several different strategies that were proposed and reviewed based on comments in previous workshops about the parks maintenance and environment. The following strategies to improve environmental quality and diversity in the park landscapes are listed in relative order of priority, based on likely acceptance by community members.

Increasing the amount of trees - While there are a few parks that have groves of trees or multiple single trees that are admired by community members, there are many parks that have few if any



Community members appreciate mown grass and feel it is appropriate in multiple city parks. They feel it promotes exercise, allows visibility and can have multiple uses.



This parking lot has permeable paving and a bioswale which significantly reduce the runoff that is directed towards the stormwater system.



Some people expressed preference for this walking path through a meadow landscape especially for adults and those with strollers. Other thought is looked “weedy” but generally thought it would be good as an edge landscape and could be used for nature study.

trees or other deliberately planted woody or herbaceous plants. Trees have been shown to provide multiple environmental benefits, including improving air quality, providing cooling effects in the warm months and aiding storm water management and erosion control. From a social perspective, research has shown stronger community ties and reduction of crime in housing projects that have trees in open space versus those that have none. And as found in community responses, many people just find trees beautiful. Some community members expressed concern about trees, including that leaves need to be raked and that they reduce visibility in parks. These issues can be dealt with through proper selection and location of trees, as well as education into the overall benefits that trees provide. One concern expressed by community members is that mowing equipment damages the lower trunks, a particular problem for young trees. This can be dealt with by retaining mulch rings around the trunks where planted in lawn, or having the trees located in meadow or rough grass areas. The design studies in Section 7 illustrate ideas on how trees can be incorporated into the park landscapes. Development of a comprehensive tree planting and maintenance program for the parks is recommended.

Green infrastructure for stormwater management – Runoff from parking lots and large paved areas carries with it pollutants, can overwhelm sewage treatments in systems with combined sewers, and can cause erosion and flooding in certain situations. Capturing and allowing storm water to infiltrate close to where it falls through green infrastructure methods can alleviate these issues. Methods can include vegetative based approaches such as planting trees, creating bioswales and rain gardens, and installing porous pavement such as unit paving, or porous asphalt.

Reduce the amount of turf grass and replace with other grasses and meadow – All of the parks, except for some of the downtown parks that are primarily paved, are covered in turf grass which is mowed once every week or two during the growing season. While mown lawn is required for a number of recreation activities and are an attractive landscape to many people, there are financial and environmental costs to mowing. Consideration should be given to the benefits of decreasing the amount of mowing in areas where regularly mown lawn is not required.



Signs of care, such as this mown edge, have been shown to improve people’s perception that the natural area is deliberate.

Signs of Caring - In making changes to the landscape of some of the parks for economic and environmental reasons, it will be helpful to become more informed about the process, benefits and costs of these conversions, and how they can become more acceptable to community members. Creating a community dialogue and open communication around the reasons and appearance of a more naturalized landscape will ease the transition.

Opportunities for integrating sustainable practices, materials and green infrastructure into the existing parks

In looking across the range of parks there are five main landscape typologies evident in the parks that overlap to a certain degree with the park categories that have been defined by size and location. Some of the parks will be better candidates than others for more sustainable, naturalized design and maintenance approaches.

Manicured garden landscape park – Hoopes Park is described by many community members as beautiful and appreciated for its trees, flower gardens, lake and historic landscape structures. It was designed in the early 1920s as a strolling park and continues that function today. It is well loved and is a cherished part of the community’s history and memory. The community will likely want to support the continued care of this landscape. Those with the time and desire to assist with its care should be encouraged through a well organized volunteer program.

Naturalistic landscape parks – These parks contain many mature trees and landscape features that community members find interesting, beautiful and inviting. All of these parks provide the opportunity to become more naturalized landscapes. They can be the setting for the establishment of more diverse plant communities, and less mown lawn, increasing their ecological value. These parks should be highlighted as providing contact with nature, and other improvements, including play areas, seating areas and path systems can take advantage of this concept. Transitioning to a less manicured and more diverse landscape will be immediately attractive to some community members and organizations but will likely



The low maintenance and infrequent mowing of this creeping red fescue grass was appreciated by community members. They thought it would be appropriate in large parks or along slopes where walking access is not required.



Mulch rings at base trees can protect from mower damage and may be appropriate in some locations. They are also a sign of care that community members might help with.



Hoopes Park planting beds are appreciated by many community members. They require attentive care.



Pomeroy Park has an amazing collection of mature trees that can serve as the foundation for a more diverse, natural landscape.

require education and outreach to help others understand the purpose and value of a more natural landscape design and maintenance practices. Included in this category are:

- Casey (southern section with trees and northern and eastern edges adjacent to vehicle junk yard and woods)
- Pomeroy
- Miles-Lepak



Bioswales capture runoff from adjacent lawn or paved areas, filtering pollutants from adjacent lawn or paved areas as water infiltrates into the soil.



St. Francis Park has edge areas that could be considered for reduced mow zones.



The eastern edge of the Casey fields have areas of poor drainage and might benefit from a bioswale.

Athletic facility open space parks – These parks are generally flat open spaces edged with trees. Their layout is very rectilinear due to the structure of athletic fields and courts. All areas that are not paved are mown lawn with the exception of some tree buffers along park edges. These parks would benefit from the addition of green infrastructure. This includes groves of trees for spatial definition, to improve environmental quality and to satisfy the community’s desire for more landscape variety. Where appropriate and needed, bioswales can be installed to capture and filter rainwater, and to address areas of poor surface drainage.

- Casey Park (northern section with game courts, ball fields, pool and recreation building)
- Clifford Park
- St. Francis Park
- Lincoln Park
- Booker T. Washington Park

Neighborhood playground pocket parks – These parks are small and some are located within fairly dense neighborhoods where the open space of lawn is needed for open play. No mow or infrequently mowed grass should be considered on steep slopes, such as in Cottage Place. In most cases there are few trees and little shade. Adding trees to define spaces within the park, and provide shade and visual interest close to play areas and seating areas will improve the environmental quality and attractiveness of these parks.

- Benton St. Park
- Bradford St. Playground
- Calvary Park
- Columbian Park
- Cottage Place Park



The trees installed at Osborne Park provide spatial definition and shade for the play area and adjacent sidewalk.



The trees at Cottage Park help define the pathway edge but appear to be in poor condition, possibly due to compacted soil and lawn mower damage.

- Osborne St. Park
- Seminary Park
- Sherwood Playground
- Wall Street Playground

Downtown plazas and pocket parks – Downtown parks that contain a significant amount of paving may be good candidates for green infrastructure for stormwater management, especially for pavement replacement. Provide seating areas with options for sun and shade.

- Buonocore Park
- Freedom/Harriet Tubman Park
- Market Street Park
- Seward Park

The Parks as a Connected System

Some community members brought up memories of riding their bikes as children between the different parks, going to the different playground programs and participating in various activities. One man commented that he got to know the different neighborhoods that way and thought it strengthened his sense of community. Other community members questioned whether it would be possible to support that type of activity now, so that adults and children could safely ride their bicycles to different parks in the system. In addition to bicycling being a fun and healthy activity, this would be especially valuable for those who do not have access to a car or are unable to drive but want to access recreational facilities that are beyond comfortable walking distance from where they live. This would include older children and young teens, as well as adults and families

The proposed Owasco River Greenway Trail can provide the framework and central spine to accomplish connections between many of the existing parks. As shown on the Parks System Connections Plan (Figure 6.1) a connected system could be accomplished in association with the Greenway with the following components:

1. Direct connections between existing parks and the Greenway - A few of the parks are located directly adjacent to the Greenway and access could easily be incorporated into the trail system and the park design. This includes Wall Street, Cottage Place and Osborne Street Parks, and the downtown parks adjacent to the river.
2. “Green Street” Connections along streets between large parks and the Greenway - There are other larger parks, including Casey, Hoopes and Clifford, which have facilities that are unique or attractive to the broader community that are further away but are within easy biking distance of the proposed Greenway. By improving selected existing street corridors to support multi-



Community members felt that bike racks are necessary at all parks to promote biking. They said many children already use bikes to get to the parks around the city. Functional art for these and other site furnishings and features are attractive and draw attention to the parks. This example is from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

modal use by cars, pedestrians and bicyclists safe access could be facilitated between the larger parks and neighborhoods in each sector. These “Green Streets” could incorporate green infrastructure to provide stormwater management improvements.

3. North State Street as a “Park Street” - North State Street is designated on the plan as a Green Street and might be thought of as a “Park Street” that could include one or more new neighborhood pocket parks in addition to incorporating improvements that promote comfortable and safe walking and bicycling. These pocket parks would fill the gap in the park distribution, providing green space for neighborhood socializing, gathering, and play in the State Street Neighborhood. They could provide a way to upgrade vacant lots and put them back into productive use.

The concept of connecting these parks is a long term vision that relies on the development of the Owasco River Greenway Trail. Improvements to the “Green Streets” and “Park Street” though could be incorporated into future street improvements, forwarding transportation enhancements to provide safe alternative choices for movement around the city. This should be coordinated with the City’s “Complete Streets Bicycling Plan” which proposes improvements to existing roads for safe use by bicyclists, many of which overlap the those recommended to connect the parks.

Connecting the South Street Historic Corridor

Another connection shown is the South Street Historic Corridor. With the designation of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, there will be the opportunity to improve the corridor in ways that can promote multi-modal use and as important, to highlight the relationship between the historic sites, the people who lived there and the distinguishing characteristics of the settings. As noted on the System Connections Plan, the design should respect the difference in the character and historic land use patterns.

Downtown Confluence Zone

Also indicated on the Systems Connections Plan is the area in the heart of the downtown where multiple connections come together. This area will require special design consideration because it presents tremendous opportunities as a central node and challenges of mixing heavy vehicular traffic with bicyclists and pedestrians.

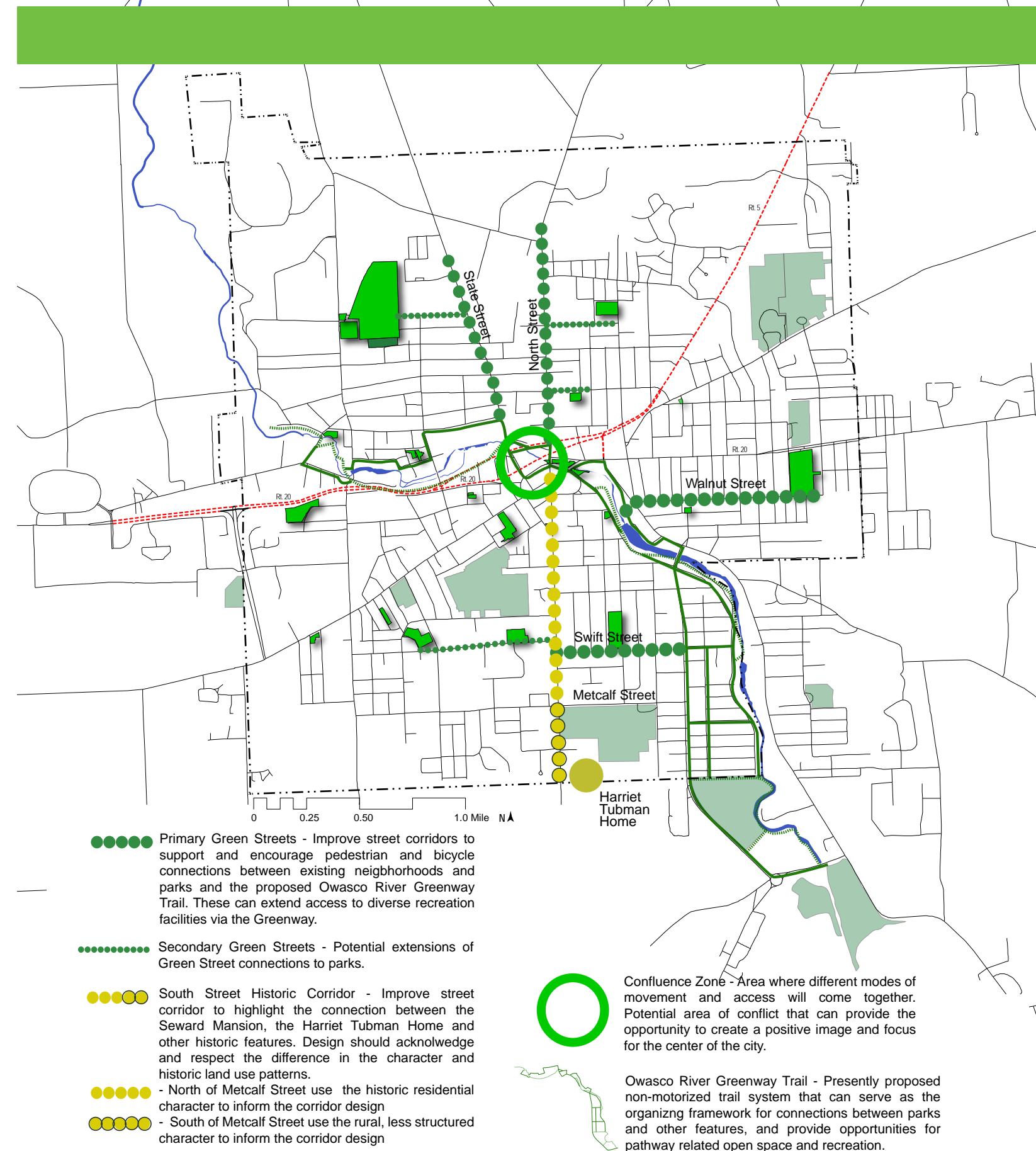


Figure 6.1 Parks Systems Connections

At the beginning of the master planning process, the City identified a group of parks that were in need of some level of improvement and which could serve to show how some of the Master Plan guidelines and principles could be applied. During the community engagement process community members were asked for more detailed information about the conditions and use of these parks, and ideas for the future. From synthesis of this information with on-site investigation by the project team, design studies were prepared. Each park had at least two alternative designs that were reviewed and discussed with community members at a design workshop and with members of the project advisory committee. Based on those comments some of the designs were modified.

Included in this section is the information shared about existing conditions and use, and the final design studies for the example parks. Each has two alternatives which illustrate different program ideas and/or different ways to layout program elements. The designs are intended to support the vision, forward the goals and apply the guidelines that have been developed through the master planning process. These studies can serve as the basis for discussion prior to the next phase of design development.

Design studies were prepared for:

- Bradford St. Playground
- Cottage Place Playground
- Calvary Park
- Seminary Park
- Sherwood Playground
- Wall Street Playground
- Pomeroy Park
- Clifford Park
- Casey Park

Also included in this section, after the design studies are cut sheets that describe the character and facilities of the other city parks, and ideas for improvements or changes that were suggested during the planning process. These include:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Benton St. Playground | • Freedom Park |
| • Columbian Playground | • Market Street Park |
| • Osborne St. Park | • Seward Park |
| • Lincoln Park | • Booker T. Washington Park |
| • St. Frances Park | • Falcon Park |
| • Hoopes Park | • Miles-Lepak |
| • Buonocore Park | • Veterans Memorial Park |



Community members had several opportunities to share information about the existing parks and review design proposals.

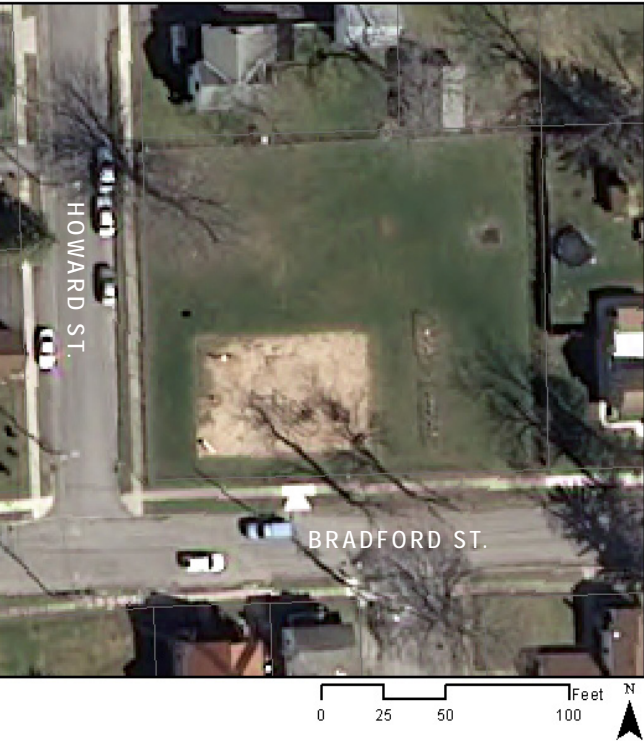
BRADFORD ST. PLAYGROUND

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 49 Bradford St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 0.5 Acres

Bradford St. Playground is located on a corner site in a neighborhood described as having lots of children. It is an uninviting park because it is surrounded by a 6' height chain link fence and it is wide open with no shade or comfortable places to sit. The playground equipment is dated and not supportive of diverse play experience.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	2	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Recreation Facility		
Playground Equipment	3	
Access		
Street Parking		
Vegetation:		
Trees	1	

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with one mature deciduous tree with lush canopy that sits in the park's northwest corner. The site is flat with no topographic relief, except a two foot grade change down to the sidewalk at the southwest corner.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Likes**
 - Place for young kids
 - Easy Access - can walk to park
 - Neighborhood Park
- Concerns**
 - Dangerous
 - Neglect
 - Needs Repairs
 - Tall chain link fence
 - Landscaping
 - Not Inviting
- Ideas for Improvement**
 - Dog Park
 - Update and regular maintenance
 - More diverse play equipment

EXISTING CONDITIONS



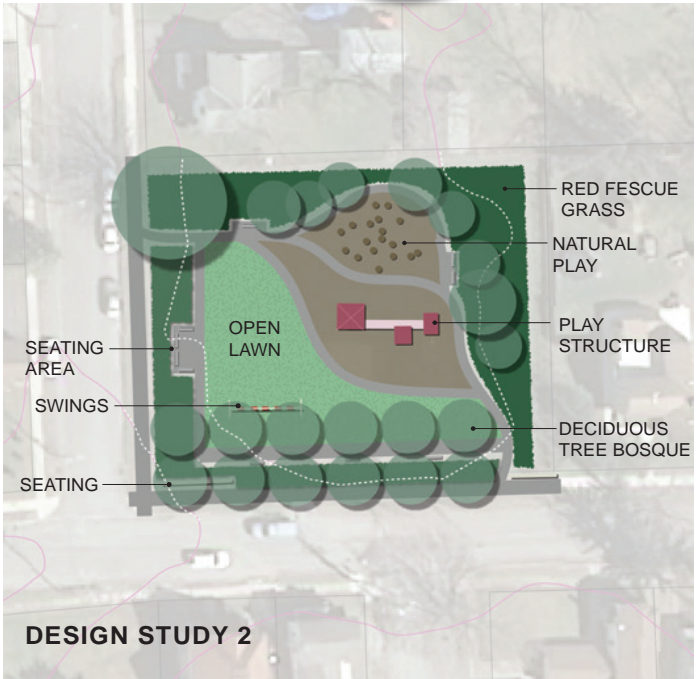
PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDIES



- Common Features**
- Playground area enclosed with pathway, with mix of traditional and natural play structures
 - Retention and protection of large maple tree
 - Removal of 6 ft height chain link fence
 - Bosque of deciduous trees along southern edge for buffer and shade.



- Design Study 1**
- Functional art seating structures at northwest entry area and seat walls along south edge of park along Bradford Street sidewalk.
 - Woodchip trail through tree planting areas
 - Meadow planting on east and west edges.
- Design Study 2**
- More extensive walkway system that enclose open lawn area and allows park to be more accessible.
 - Two separate play area.
 - Red fescue or tall fescue grass on all edges.

COTTAGE PLACE PLAYGROUND

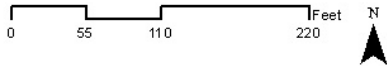
DESIGN STUDY

Address: West St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 1.2 Acres



Cottage Place Park is essentially a blank slate. Playground equipment once there had been removed due to vandalism and age. There is significant grade change from Barber Street along the north border but use and care might benefit by opening up visibility along this edge. The site is also with the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) project boundary, across the street from the Dunn and McCarthy brownfield site.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	2	Security
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Partial Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Few	One large specimen sugar tree, other smaller trees in poor condition.

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with significant tree cover around the park's edge. Neighbors commented about it's Mulberry Trees that are found along the park's northern side. Views into the park are blocked by vines and vegetation along fence along northern edge.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Likes

- Mulberry Trees

Concerns

- Abandoned Property Across the Street
- Fence
- Neighborhood Housing
- Vandalism
- Underutilized

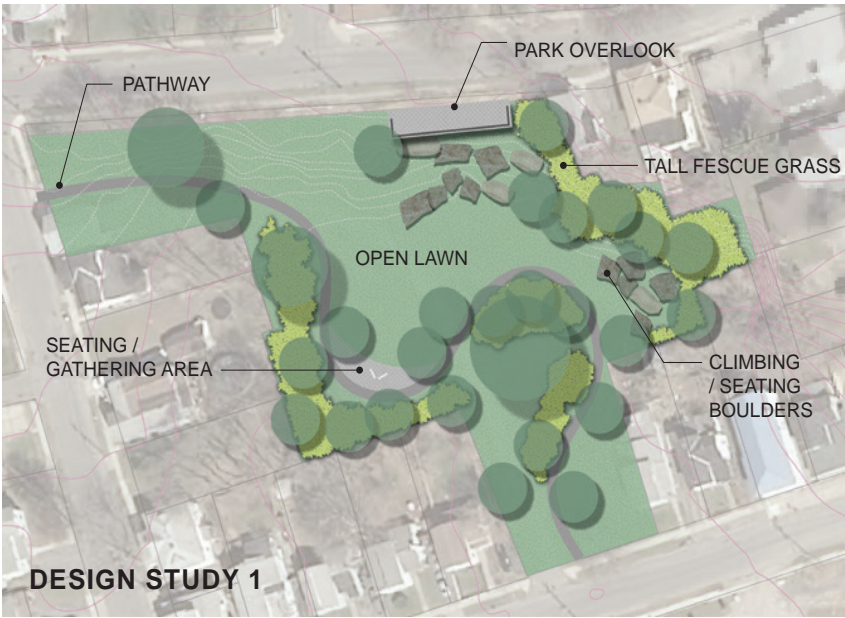
Ideas for Improvement

- Playground
- Dog Park
- Community Garden

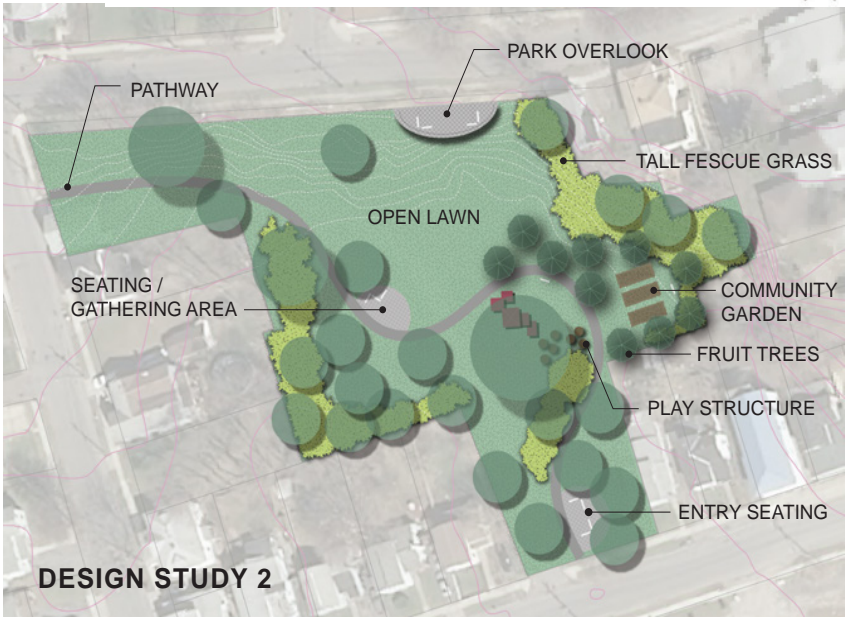
EXISTING CONDITIONS



PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDY 1



DESIGN STUDY 2



Common Features

- Relocation of the walk to make it more meandering and park-like.
- Seating area looking out toward the open lawn
- An overlook from Barber Street to provide visual access/surveillance and a place to sit for neighborhood residents.
- Replace fence at top of slope with one more attractive and neighborhood scale.
- Removal of overgrown vegetation at top of slope to allow view into park

Design Study 1

- Use of natural materials for play and climbing. Integration of climbing into the slope.

Design Study 2

- Play structure with some natural elements
- Community garden
- Seating area at south entry along West Street

CALVARY PARK

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 90 Franklin St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 0.25 Acres



Calvary Park is a small open space used primarily for pick up games by neighborhood children and informal meetings by neighbors. It is adjacent to the AME Zion Church which has used the park for summer picnics. According to community members the church houses a food pantry.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Lighting	3	
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Vegetation:		
Trees	14	
Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with large deciduous trees that provide conopy coverage for the majority of the park. The site slope noticeably from the east to west.		

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Likes**

 - Parking
 - Neighbors meet here
 - Kids Play Ball Games
 - Well Maintained
- Concerns**

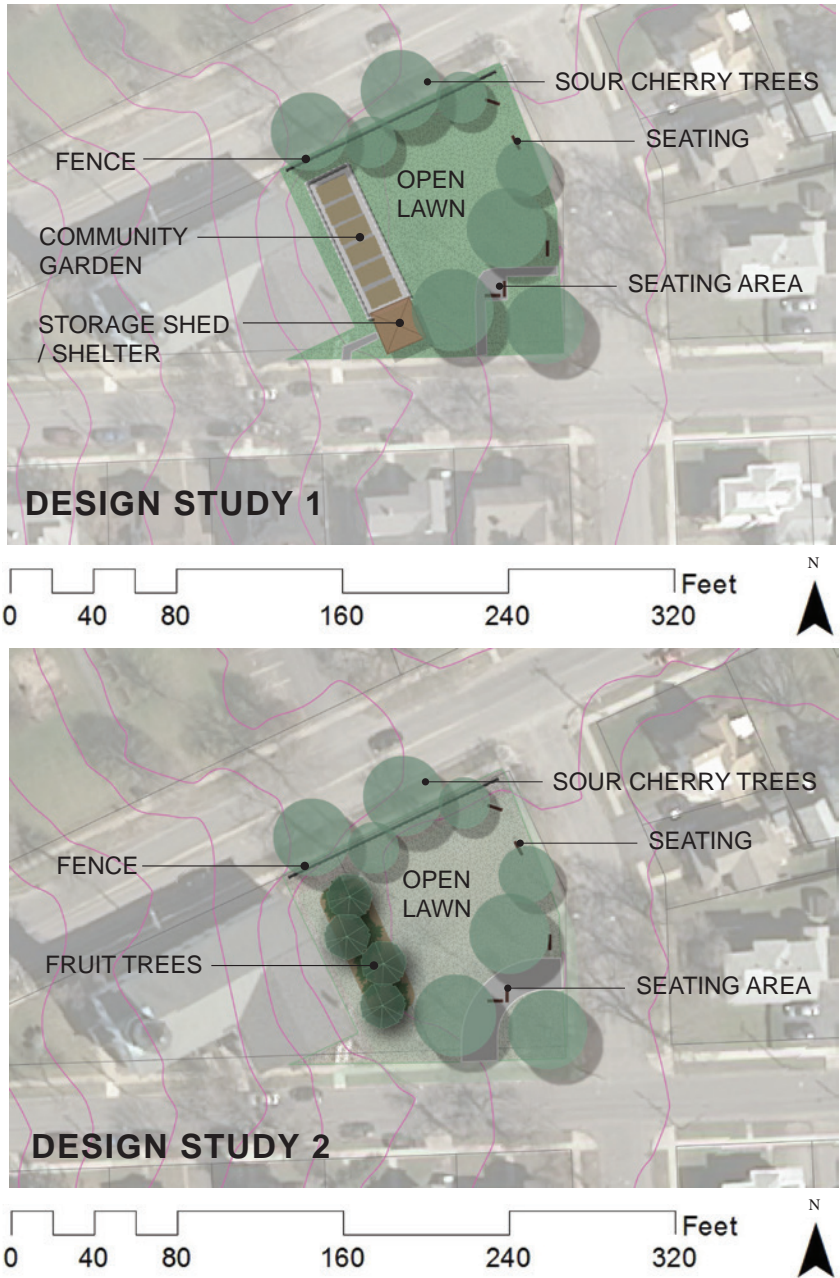
 - Snow gets piled
 - Damaged/Dead Trees
- Ideas for Improvement**

 - Community Garden
 - Fruit Trees
 - Seating

EXISTING CONDITIONS



DESIGN STUDIES



- Common Features**
- Remove several trees in poor condition, including ash trees.
 - Paved path seating area in southeast corner to provide basic access into the site.
 - Decorative fence along northern edge
- Design Study 1**
- Fenced community garden to provide fresh vegetables to food pantry and/ or neighborhood residents, with storage shed for tools and open shelter for gardener socializing.
 - Several sour cherry trees for pies in the early summer.
- Design Study 2**
- Planting bed with fruit trees

SEMINARY PARK / PLAYGROUND

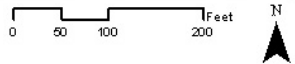
DESIGN STUDY

Address: 72 Seymour St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 1.3 Acres



Seminary Park is located north of and adjacent to Willard Chapel, a historic site renowned for its Tiffany stained glass. Formerly the site of the DPW, the park's primary features are its open lawn and abundant parking. The small play area with climbing structure seems to receive little use. Design proposals should be sensitive to the park's foreground location to Willard Chapel.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements (None) Qty. Comments		
Recreation Facility		
Playground Equipment	1	
Access		
Partial Pathway System		Concrete
Parking Lot	1	
Vegetation:		
Trees	6	
Plantings	1	Overgrown Shrubs

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with modest tree canopy coverage near playground equipment.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Likes	Concerns	Ideas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking• Open lawn/field games• Historic setting for Willard Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little to do• Mowing around trees damages them• Small Playground• Underutilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update Equipment• Space for dialysis center visitors• Play Equipment• Fence/ Boundary

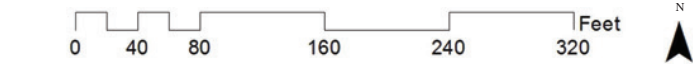
EXISTING CONDITIONS



PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDIES

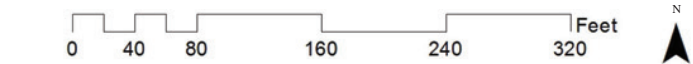
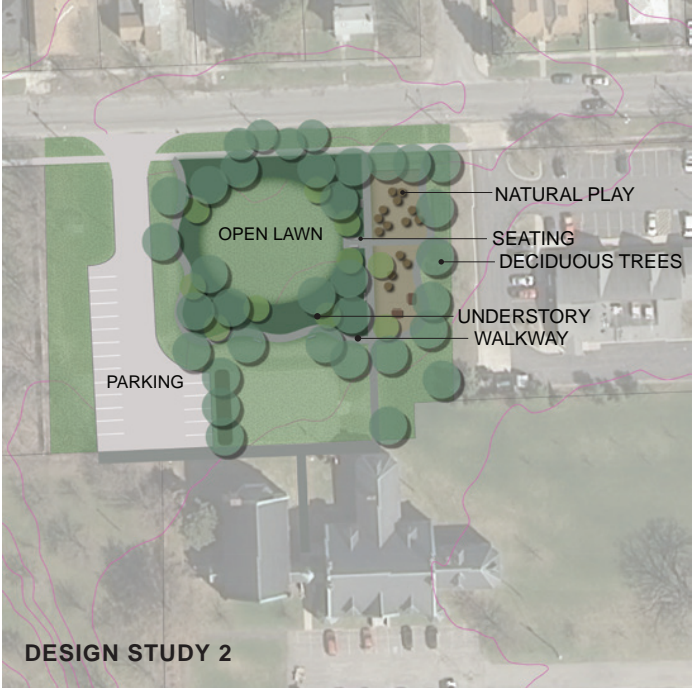


Common Features

- Central lawn enclosed by deciduous trees and understory planting. Continuous paths and sidewalk around space encourage strolling and contemplation.
- Pathway connection to the dialysis center to the east and continued path connection to the accessible entry to Willard Chapel.
- Design that seeks to respect its location as the foreground to the Willard Chapel site.

Design Study 1

- More formal and rectilinear layout of pathways and planting.
- Play area and climbing structure set back from Seymour Street



- Seating area on east side directly accessible from Seymour Street, with swinging benches.
- Semicircular seating area on south edge of lawn and benches along other walkways.
- Retains full parking area

Design Study 2

- More informal layout of pathways and planting.
- Enlarged play area that includes natural play features.
- Reduced parking area to provide lawn as foreground to Willard Chapel rather than parking lot.

SHERWOOD ST. PLAYGROUND

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 824 Sherwood St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 1.5 Acres



Sherwood St. Playground has the bare minimum of recreation facilities dispersed over its length. It is an underutilized space that can be put to good recreation and social use by this neighborhood.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Lighting	3	
Recreation Facility		
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Playground Equipment	2	
Access (Limited)		
Vegetation:		
Trees	5	
Landscape Character: Open lawn with large deciduous trees along the sidewalk and along its eastern border with neighboring houses. There is a down hill grade change from the sidewalk into the site.		

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Likes	Concerns	Ideas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open grass space• Buffer for houses that back up to it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate Playground Equipment<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run down• Not Age Appropriate• Poor Basketball Court Conditions• Underutilized• Neglected• Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update and Maintenance• More plant life/trees• Community Garden• More age appropriate play for children• A place for children to go

EXISTING CONDITIONS



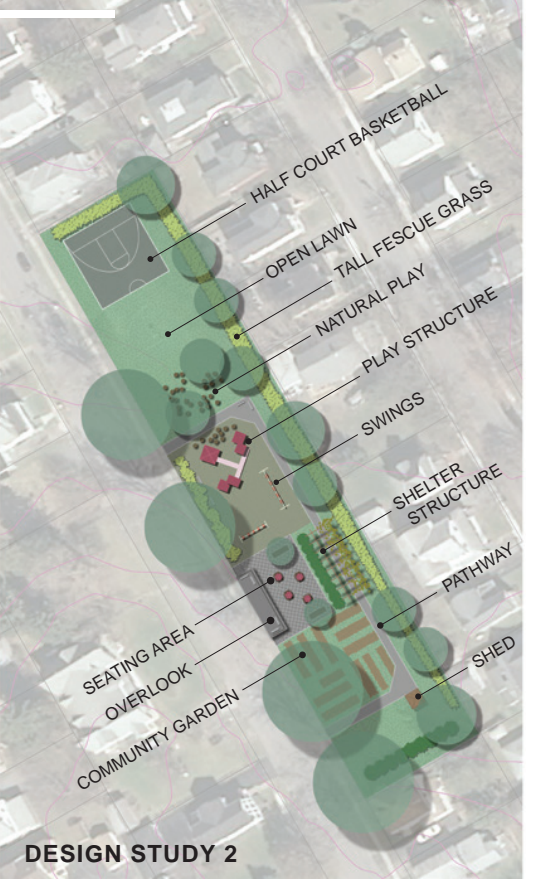
PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDIES



- Design Study 1**
- Retains full court basketball, resurfaced
 - Large open lawn area
 - Play space has both natural elements and traditional playground
 - Access from sidewalk via stone treads that can also be used for seating



- Design Study 2**
- Half basketball court
 - Smaller open lawn area
 - Play space has both natural elements and traditional playground
 - Overlook “patio” along Sherwood Street that provides seating adjacent to the sidewalk.
 - Small plaza and seating area with shelter structure along eastern side for shaded seating.
 - Community garden, storage shed and pathways.

WALL ST. PARK / PLAYGROUND

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 152 Wall St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 1 Acre



Wall Street Playground is a valued open space but the facilities and elements are old and in need of replacement. This park is adjacent to the Cayuga River and the proposed Greenway Trail.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	2	
Recreation Facility		
Basketball Courts (Half Court)	1	
Covered Shelter/Gathering Space	1	
Playground Equipment	4	
Access		
Partial Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with large deciduous trees around the park. A small swath of woodland trees act as a natural border from the edge down to the river. The view of the river could be a feature but is blocked by vines and dense vegetation.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Likes**

 - Social Gathering
 - Street Parking
 - Open Pavilion
 - Open Space
- Concerns**

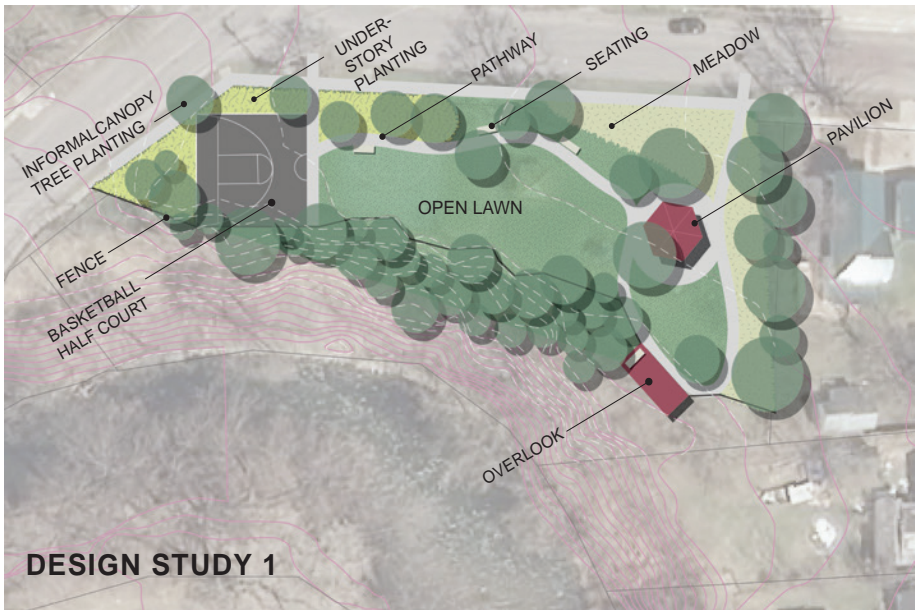
 - Invasive Plants
 - Garbage/Litter
 - Poor playground conditions
- Ideas for Improvement**

 - Update playground equipment
 - Clean Up

EXISTING CONDITIONS



DESIGN STUDIES



- Common Features**
- Remove vines and plants on existing fence to allow views down to the river.
- Design Study 1**
- Relocate half basketball ball further west.
 - Eliminate playground equipment.
 - Overlook deck with seating for viewing river.
 - Open pavilion for picnic and gathering.
 - Pathway through park connecting facilities, with benches for seating choices.
 - Open lawn for informal games
 - Understory tree planting and meadow to provide a natural buffer between park and sidewalk to reduce mowing and provide a different landscape character.



- Design Study 2**
- Repave and upgrade existing half basketball court.
 - New, more extensive playground structures
 - Pathway through park connecting to the sidewalk in several places, with benches in several locations.
 - Two overlook decks, one with a open pavilion.
 - Canopy trees in tree lawn to make sidewalk feel like part of the park.

POMEROY PARK

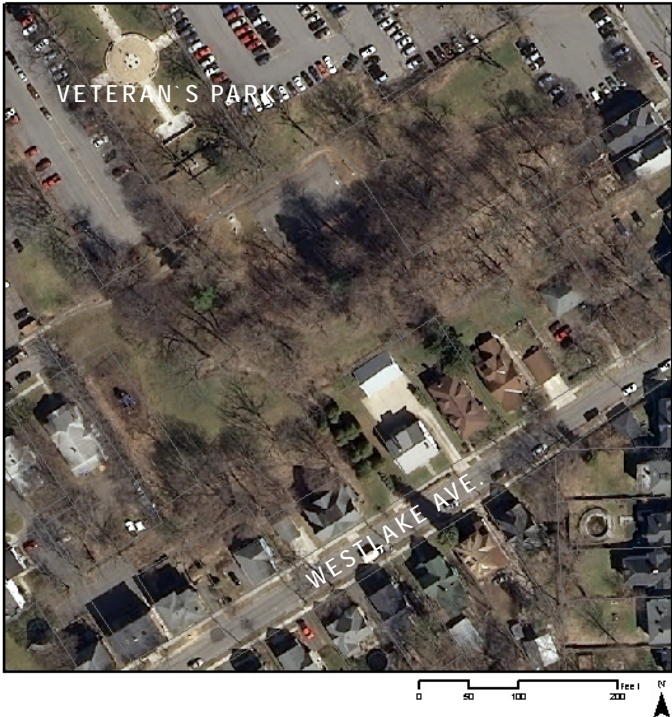
DESIGN STUDY

Address: East end of Bostwick St.
Park Classification: Downtown Park
Size: 2 Acres

Pomeroy Park serves multiple roles including recreation for neighborhood residents, play space for the Montessori School and YMCA, lunch spot for nearby office workers and as green walkway connector between downtown, the library and neighborhoods to the west.



EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	4	
Lighting	12	Post lights along walk
Recreation Facility		
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Playgroud Equipment	2	
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Extensive Walkway System		
Street Parking		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	
Plantings	Few	

Landscape Character: The topographic change in Pomeroy Park gives a unique landscape character of hillsides with a woodland forest feel.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Likes	Concerns	Ideas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual appeal from Genesee Street• Vegetation - Beautiful Trees• Veteran's Memorial adjacent• Used during lunch breaks• Close to library	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark at Night• Vandalism• Unwelcoming• Basketball court - attracts many kids, sometimes fights.• Neglected• Litter and undesirable paraphernalia• Railings on staircase in poor condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repair basketball court• Better Lighting• Trash Cans• Updated Equipment• Regular Maintenance• Seating and Tables

EXISTING CONDITIONS



DESIGN STUDIES



Common Features

- Formal entry and seating areas to make the park inviting and visible from Bostwick Street and Court Street.
- Multiple seating areas and “reading rooms” to support activites of library, nearby office workers and residential neighbors.
- Designation of park as an urban arboretum to take advantage of and expand the unique landscape of specimen trees.
- Expanded playground area, enclosed by accessible pathway.
- Moving the existing basketball court to make it more visible and allow a less confined layout for the east-west walkway.
- Pathway connection to library (see plans for different locations.)
- Street trees lining Bostwick Avenue, and additional trees in the park.

Design Study 1

- Removal of existing parking area at Court Street.
- Pergola and circular seating area, with opportunity for spray pad water feature at Court Street entry.
- Overlook seating area along upper pathway to/from Westlake Avenue.
- Pathway access from Genesee Street through the existing county parking lot.
- Half basketball court.
- Meadow/tall grass areas along northern edge for ecological diversity and reduced mowing.

PRECEDENTS



Design Study 2

- Relocation of existing parking area at Court Street to provide space for pedestrian entry and seating area.
- Additional play opportunities including climbing features that take advantage of the steep slopes with more natural play opportunities.
- Flower bed area at western entry.
- Seating pockets to provide choices for sitting in small groups or alone, and picnic area.

CLIFFORD PARK / PLAYGROUND

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 81 Mary St.
Park Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 7 Acres



Clifford Park has a tradition as the site of sports and athletics. The clubhouse opened in 1898, and it was the home of Auburn High School sports and Auburn softball for many years. Today it is valued and used by neighborhood residents and is the home of women’s softball leagues.

EXISTING FACILITIES



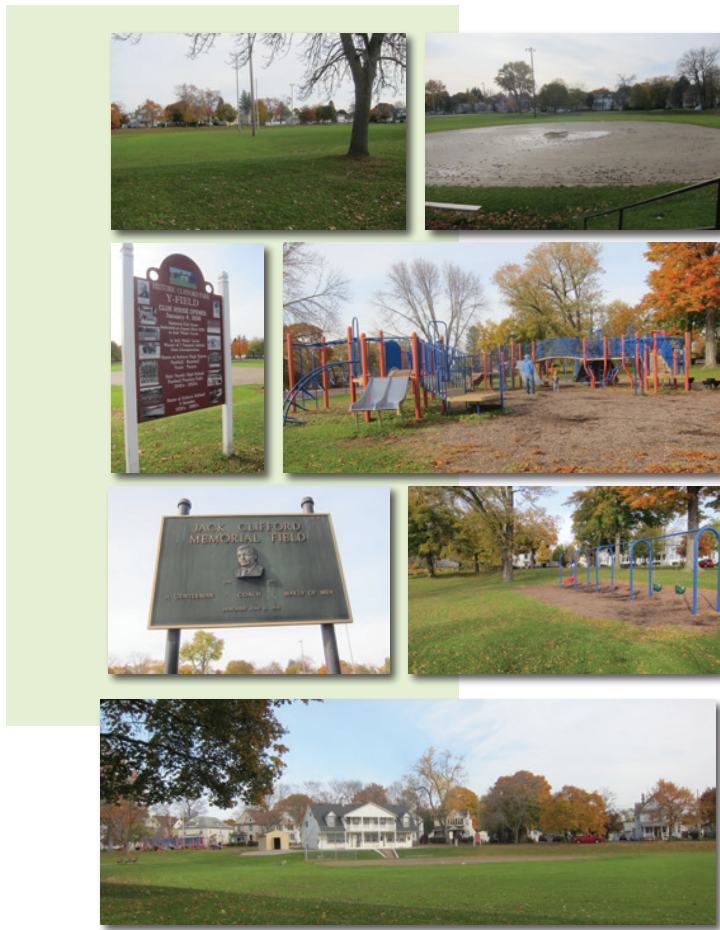
Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	28	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Clubhouse*	1	*Restrooms
Lighting	20	Field and Street
Recreation Facility		
Baseball/Softball	2	Field Lighting
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Tennis Courts	4	
Playground Equipment	2	
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Street Parking		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Numerous	

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn used for recreation with large deciduous trees that surround the park’s edges. Additional trees are found in the park’s north end that create a woodland atmosphere.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

- Likes**
 - Tennis and basketball courts
 - Playground
 - Size
 - Watching softball games
 - Clean/well maintained
 - Active/busy during ball games
- Concerns**
 - Clubhouse Condition
 - Roaming Dogs
 - Vandalism
 - Underutilized
 - Rough behavior and language
 - Condition of fields and courts
- Ideas for Improvement**
 - Improve Playground
 - Events
 - Fruit trees, food perennials
 - Improved ball courts
 - Restore Clubhouse
 - Hybrid fields/improve fields
 - New Benches
 - Opportunities for walking/universal access

EXISTING CONDITIONS



PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDIES



- Common Features**
- Additional trees for shade, visual interest, seasonal variety and environmental benefits.
 - Play areas defined by walkways.
 - Resurface tennis and basketball courts.
 - Multiple places to sit

- To the left: **Design Study 1**
- An extensive loop path system that that connects to the adjacent sidewalks, which makes the entire park accessible and encourages walking by all ages and abilities. There could be seating at several different places along the path.
 - Seating and small plaza area around the existing clubhouse.
 - Replaces the northern ballfield with an open lawn or artificial turf to support multiple activities and events. There could be benches and lighting along the circular walk around this space. Amphitheater seating is shown on the slope adjacent to the clubhouse.
 - Defined play area with space for age separation, natural play and picnic area.
 - Bioswale along north edge of southern baseball field to handle drainage and introduce diverse plant material.
 - Taller grass areas in northern part of park to reduce mowing and provide landscape variety.

- To the right: **Design Study 2**
- Retains northern ballfield but with better drainage.
 - Central plaza and walkway in northern half to connect activities and provide space for events and different types of play. Wide benches for seating and socializing. Overlook onto ballfield allows viewing from above and places to sit.
 - Walk system more direct and less curvilinear.
 - Play area provides two separate spaces.



CASEY PARK

DESIGN STUDY

Address: 150 North Division St.
Park Classification: Communtiy Park
Size: 43 Acres

Casey Park is one of the most well used parks in the city. It has a diverse collection of facilities and a landscape that communtiy members find attrctive. It is adjacent to Casey Park School, which uses the facilities for outdoor play and physical education.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	18	
Drinking Fountains	2	
Lighting	Many	Parking lots, pool, tennis, ballfields
Open Pavilion Shelter/Gathering Space	2	
Recreation Building*		*Restrooms
Recreation Facility		
Baseball/Softball	2	Lighted Fields
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	2	
Multi Purpose Field	1	
Tennis Courts	3	
Horseshoes	1	
Indoor Ice Rink	1	Converts to turf in summer
Playground Equipment	6	
Skate Park	1	
Swimming Pool	1	50 meter & kiddie pool
Access		
Extensive Pathway System		
Entrance Walks		
Parking Lots	2	
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	

Landscape Character: Athletic Fields in the northern half with large area of mature trees in the southern section. An extensive woodland area in the northeast section of the park. The southern section has topographic relief and is 25-30 feet higher that the more level area of the athletic fields.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Likes

- Paths and Trails
- Diverse space/lots of options (swimming, walking, running, biking)
- Concerts and Events
- Playground
- Wildlife
- Parking

Concerns

- Dark at Night
- Vandalism
- Maintenance (playground, paths and trails)
- Benches
- Mowing and invasive species
- Pool and Skate Park

Ideas for Improvement

- Update Facilities
- Better Lighting
- Trash Cans
- Regular Maintenance
- Expand Workout Area
- Trail markers and signage
- Implement green infrastructure in parking lots



EXISTING CONDITIONS



PRECEDENTS



DESIGN STUDIES



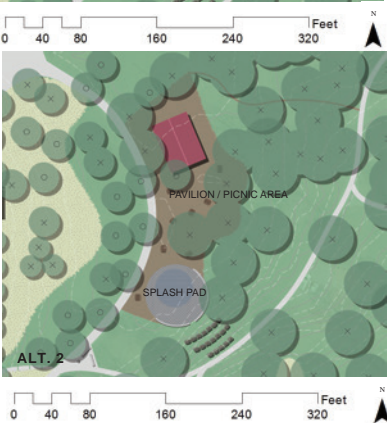
- Parking lot reconstruction to include green infrastructure for stormwater man agement - bioswale in the northern lot, permeable paving in the southern lot and a rain garden at the entrance to the Recreation Building.
- Teen area south of the outdoor pool, directly accessible from the parking lot. Should be designed with the teens and tweens. Suggestions include a wall ball court and multi use court, parkour obstacles of parkouring and skateboarding, ping pong table, seating areas including seat walls, art display and performance space. Open lawn with shade trees for lounging and lawn sports.
- Additional paths in the northern section to provide more options for different length walking routes.
- Pathway nodes with mile markers and tree shaded benches for those that need to take a break. Also possible locations for fitness equipment
- Repaved path between park and housing area to the northeast.
- Woodchip “nature” trail through the northeast woods.
- Redesigned play area north of Casey School to include natural play area, a splash pad and traditional play equipment.
- Rehabilitation/replacemnt of existing tennis and basketball courts to address poor condition of paving and equipment that is affecting playability.
- Conversion of lawn to meadow in the edge areas in the northern section of the park and other areas noted to reduce mowing and increase ecological di versity.
- Canopy trees in meadow grasses on northeast side of recreation building and ice rink to buffer views of equipment and storage.



Alternatives for Picnic Area:

Alternative 1 (on main plan)

- Two separate open shelters
- Picnic area with stone fine or other permeable paving
- Amphitheatre seating in slope to watch performances at picnic area and for informal seating.



Alternative 2

- Two separate open shelters
- Encircling pathway for access to shelters and picnic areas
- Splash pad

Alternative 3

- One open shelter
- Picnic area with stone fine or other permeable paving
- Splash Pad

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

X: Existing Trees
O: New Trees

○ : Rest Areas / Pathway Nodes

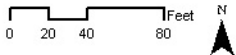
BENTON ST. PLAYGROUND / PARK

Address: 4 Benton St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 0.5 Acres



Benton St. Playground has recieved attention and care from neighbors, and has recently been upgraded with new playground equipment.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	4	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	1	Street Height
Recreation Facility		
Basketball Courts (Half Court)	1	
Playground Equipment	5	Recent Installation
Access		
Partial Pathway System		Provides access between Benton St. and eastern, back area of site.
Vegetation:		
Trees	3	

Landscape Character: Open lawn with several large trees.

COLUMBIAN PARK

Address: 328-336 Genesee St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 0.8 Acres



Columbian park is located on the northern edge of a residential area along Genesee Street, at the western gateway to the city. recent installation of new playground equipment provides activity for different age groups.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	5	
Lighting	1	Street Lighting
Recreation Facility		
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Playground Equipment	5	Recent Installation
Access (Limited)		
Vegetation:		
Trees	8	

Landscape Character: Mown lawn with several large trees. The northern part of the park feels open and exposed to vehicular traffic on Genesee St.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Planting additional canopy and understory trees along the Genesee Street sidewalk edge would provide a buffer and improve the walking environment. There are opportunities for other tree plantings to reinforce the internal walkway and play area design.

OSBORNE PARK

Address: Grover St.
Park Classification: Pocket Neighborhood Park
Size: 0.5



Osbourne Park was recently renovated with new improvements including play structures, walkways, benches and trees. A decorative black fence lines the eastern edge along Osborne St.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Lighting	3	Street Lights, Security (1)
Recreation Facility		
Playground Equipment	5	Recently Installed
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Partial Pathway System		Access to play area
Vegetation:		
Trees	17	

Landscape Character: Open lawn, with deciduous trees lining walks and evergreen trees along southern border.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Osborne Park is well designed for young children and families. If desired by the neighborhood, a seating/ gathering area not focused on the play area would welcome use by those not in the company of children.

LINCOLN PARK

Address: 149 N. Fulton St.
Park Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 4 Acres



Lincoln Park is remembered only for its playground program and tennis courts, and now is appreciated for the new playground improvements. The existing connecting walk provides access to the facilities in the eastern half of the site. It is accessible to the neighborhood on 3 of its 4 sides.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	9	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	9	Street Lights, Internal Security (1)
Open Pavilion Shelter/Gathering Space	1	
Recreation Facility		
Baseball/Softball Fields	1	
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Tennis Courts	2	
Playground Equipment	3	Recently Installed
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Partial Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	23	

Landscape Character: Open lawn, with trees along the borders, and mostly in the eastern half of the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider seating area on edge of park at northeast corner, with small planting bed if neighborhood desires and will care for.

ST. FRANCIS PARK

Address: 25 Underwood St.
Park Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 5.5 Acres



St. Francis Park is a generous and welcoming open space for the adjacent neighborhood. The playground equipment was recently installed, and is tucked away in the northeast section of the park.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	5	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	4	Street Lights, Security (1)
Recreation Facility		
Baseball/Softball Fields	1	
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Covered Shelter	1	Small
Playground Equipment	6	Recently Installed
Access		
Sidewalks along Street		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Numerous	

Landscape Character: Flat, open lawn with deciduous and evergreen tree buffers along west and north borders. Rows of trees along the neighborhood roads to the south and southeast, and internal in the park between the basketball court and the ball field.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide seating area not associated with play area, and accessible from sidewalks. Consider planting hard red fescue and meadow mix along northern border to reduce mowing and increase biodiversity. Replace trees if removed due to age or disease.

HOOPES PARK

Address: 100 S. Herman Ave.
Park Classification: Community Park
Size: 15 Acres



Hoopes Park is the most used and enjoyed park in the city. The primary activities include walking, dog walking, enjoying the landscape, being with friends and family, and attending events, movies and concerts. Hoopes Park is at the eastern gateway to the city on Rt. 20 and is an important welcoming feature.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	2	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	6	Security
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Partial Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	Mix of Deciduous and Evergreens

Landscape Character: Open lawn, naturalistic walks and planting design, pond, gazebos and greenhouse as focal areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider guidelines for memorials to ensure they are not placed without thought for overall design. Prepare landscape restoration plan to retain design and spatial integrity as plant material ages and needs to be replaced, and to guide landscape design decisions. Prepare coordinated signage and information plan.

FREEDOM PARK

Address: 17 North St. (Across from the Auburn Police Dept.)
Park Classification: Downtown Park
Size: 0.15 Acres



Freedom Park, or Tubman Park, is located on the west side of North St. across from Market Street. It’s dominant visual characteristic is a paved plaza with an inset square of pavers, edged with several benches. There is a sign kiosk on the north side of the space with historic information about Harriet Tubman. The western edge of the plaza affords a shaded view of the Owasco River. Neither the sign kiosk nor the presence of the river is obvious to passersby. This is not a comfortable or inviting space.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Lighting	2	
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Vegetation:		
Trees	8	
Plantings	1	

Landscape Character: Open paved plaza with small planter buffered by dense stand of deciduous trees on north side.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given its location, Freedom Park can play an important role as a part of the gateway and welcome experience into downtown Auburn. It can also serve as a place of rest and enjoyment of the river for people walking or bicycling by. To fulfill these roles will require a design that relates to people going by at different speeds whether in cars, on bicycles or on foot, and the different levels of detail that each can take in. Options should be provided for seating away from traffic and closer to the river. It would be preferable that any new design consider both sides of North St., including the entry to Market St. Park. Gateway designs should also consider year round appearance.

MARKET ST. PARK

Address: 23 Market St.
Park Classification: Downtown Park
Size: 1.3 Acres



Market St. Park is situated on the north side of the Owasco River between North St. and E. Genesee St. A continuous pathway located primarily adjacent to the river runs through the park. In the western portion the path layout is angular and in the eastern it is curvilinear. Benches are located at regular intervals and there are several tables with attached seats. At the eastern end is a covered shelter and paved plaza edged with a seat wall. The park seems to be a pleasant place to eat lunch or enjoy small events.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	8	
Drinking Fountain	1	
Lighting	Many	Internal & Street Lighting
Open Pavilion Shelter	1	
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Extensive Pathway System		Concrete
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	Canopy and Understory Trees
Plantings	Many	

Landscape Character: The landscape consists of mown lawn with numerous trees. The type and layout of the planting differs from the western section that has small understory trees to the eastern section that has large mostly deciduous canopy trees. This section has more shade and has a greater diversity of spaces and visual interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Visitors may not be aware of Market St. or the other downtown parks. Redesigning and bringing more attention to the entrances, especially at North St. is recommended. Consider adding benches or movable tables and chairs to the shelter and overlook areas. When existing benches need to be replaced, providing some with backs is recommended as most people find them more comfortable.

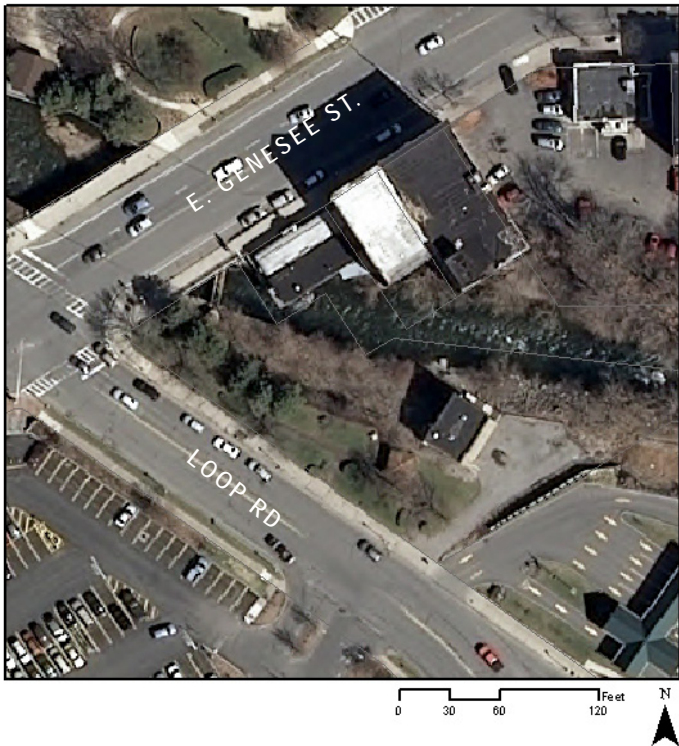
BUONOCORE PARK

Address: Loop Rd. (Across from Wegmans)
Park Classification: Downtown Park
Size: 0.7 Acres



Buonocore Park is located at E. Genesee St. and Loop Rd. /Osborne St. on the south side of the Owasco River. The river is not visible from the park through the dense vegetation. It is a pocket park with several benches, two tables with fixed seats and an open shelter. Directly across from the Wegmans it might be a park that would attract lunchtime use in warmer months.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Lighting	2	
Recreation Facility		
Open Pavilion Shelter/Gathering Space	1	
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Extensive Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	15	
Plantings	7	

Landscape Character: Fairly open space of lawn with canopy trees. Mounded lawn areas help provide sense of separation from vehicular traffic. Several evergreen shrubs are trimmed tight to keep them at acceptable size.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Remove and replace fixed tables/seats, one of which is in very poor condition. If doing redesign in future as part of the Greenway Trail consider opening views to the river (unless views to back of buildings are very poor). As a downtown park, more interesting multi season planting could be considered to replace the evergreen shrubs.

SEWARD PARK

Address: 35 South St.
Park Classification: Downtown Park
Size: 0.4 Acres



Seward Park is located adjacent to and just south of the Seward House Historic Museum. The park is most frequently used in warmer months by visitors and residents as an inviting place to relax and eat lunch.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	3	
Decorative Fountain	1	
Drinking Fountain	1	
Lighting	5	Street Lighting
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Partial Walkway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	9	Mature Specimen
Plantings	4	

Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn, with large trees. Seating area, with focus on the memorial monument.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Seward Park is highly visible and should be highlighted as a historic focal area along the South Street corridor.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON PARK

Address: 23 Chapman Ave
Park Classification: Special Use Park
Size: 3.8 Acres



Booker T. Washington Park is the site of the Booker T. Washington Community Center. The site is used to support their programs, including a 6 week summer program for children in grades 1-6, and before and after-school programs.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	9	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	1	Security
Recreation Facility		
Baseball/Softball Fields	1	
Basketball Courts (Full Court)	1	
Playgroud Equipment	5	
Access		
Entrance Walks		Asphalt
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	Mostly Deciduous
Plantings	4	
Landscape Character: Primarily open lawn with substantial large trees primarily around the edges.		

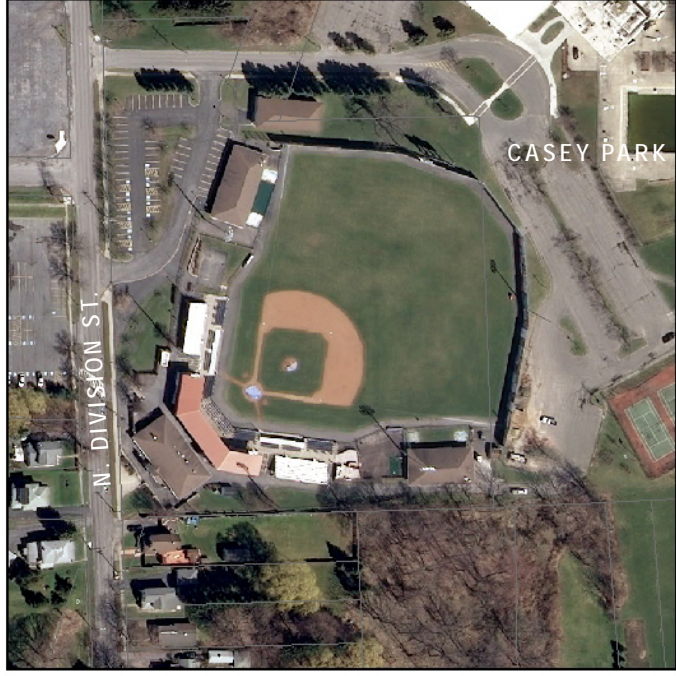
FALCON PARK

Address: 130 N. Division St.
Park Classification: Special Use Park



Falcon Park is home to the Auburn Doubledays, a single-A baseball team. The field is also used for selectively scheduled high school and college games.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	1	
Lighting		Field Lighting
Open Shelter Seating		
Closed Shelter Building*	1	*Restrooms
Recreation Facility		
Baseball Field	1	
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Parking Lot		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Several	
Landscape Character: Baseball Stadium, open lawn		

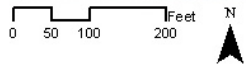
MILES-LEPAK PARK

Address: Arch St. and Lepak Park - Garrow St.
Park Classification: Special Use Park
Size: 7-8 Acres



Miles and Lepak Parks are generally unimproved open spaces that are used for dog walking and informal passive recreation activities. The Parks have been designed for development of Auburn Permaculture Park, an initiative being organized and implemented by community volunteers. The initial focus is on creating an edible forest garden.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	2	
Drinking Fountains	1	
Lighting	6	Security
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		
Partial Pathway System		
Vegetation:		
Trees	Many	Mix of Deciduous and Evergreens

Landscape Character: The northern and western park areas are visually engaging and varied, with open lawn areas bordered and defined by lines or groups of deciduous and evergreen trees. There is mown lawn throughout except in a wooded area between the two sections of the park. The eastern section known as Lepak is open lawn with poorly drained areas. This section is being developed as the initial phase of the Permaculture Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvements to Miles-Lepak should respect the trees and spatial character while supporting the concept of creating an ecologically productive landscape that encourages social interactions and enjoyment of the natural environment. A loop path system and natural play area in Miles section could reinforce this concept.

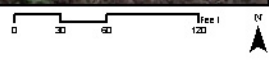
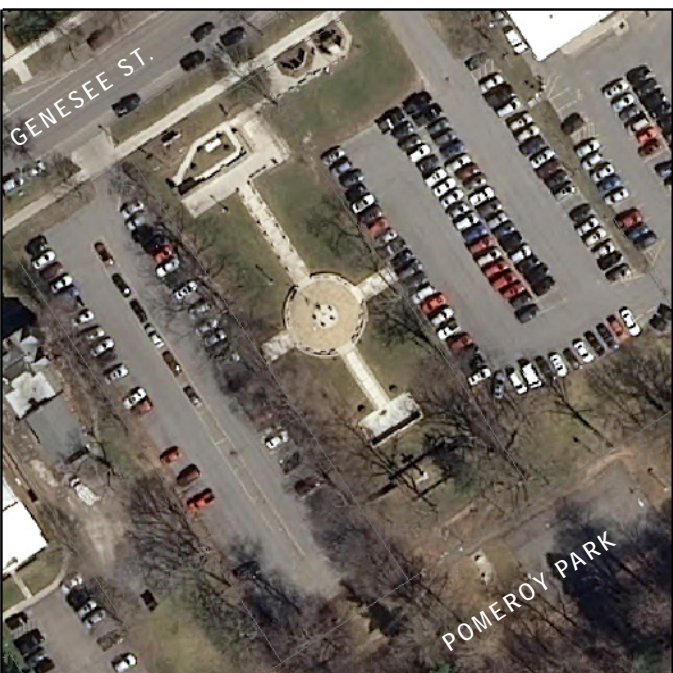
VETERAN`S PARK

Address: 170 Genesee St. (west of Cayuga County Office Building)
Park Classification: Special Use Park



Veteran`s Park is a memorial in honor of men and women who have served in the armed forces. It is a formal design, with concrete walks lined by stone monuments with embedded bronze plaques.

EXISTING FACILITIES



Support Elements	Qty.	Comments
Benches	20	Concrete and Granite
Lighting	10	Traditional, pedestrian scale pole heights
Recreation Facility (None)		
Access		
Entrance Walks		Adjacent to Pomeroy Park. No walkway that connects.
Partial Pathway System		
Street Parking		
Vegetation:		
Trees	23	
Plantings	16	

Landscape Character: Several medium-large trees surround the park. Formal design with focal area of flagpole; seating and gathering area adjacent to E. Genesee Street.

DEFINING STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Master Plans run the risk of making more recommendations than can possibly be achieved within a time frame, which in this case is 10 years. While there are many possible actions that can come from this plan, the ones described in this section are specifically those listed as objectives or action strategies in association with the Vision and Goals, and represent a summary of Sections 4 through 6. Additional objectives and action strategies can be developed by the city and partner organizations if determined appropriate to help achieve the plan goals.

There are a variety of strategic actions that can contribute to achieving the goals described in the master plan. This includes

- Planning or Feasibility Studies,
- Programs and events,
- Guidelines or policies,
- Staffing changes, and
- Design and construction projects.

Projects can occur simultaneously, there may be a mix of projects of varying scale and complexity. Short term projects can be implemented with locally available resources and can provide immediate visible progress to the community. Longer term, more complex projects will require more extensive planning, research and coordination to bring together the necessary resources to accomplish them.

DEVELOPING AN ACTION AGENDA

Developing an Action Agenda is an important first next step that will guide implementation of the action strategies that have emerged from the planning process. At its most basic an Action Agenda should include the sequence of projects, timing and implementation responsibilities. The agenda can be general and flexible, but developing one will help clarify and organize a framework for implementation.

Factors to Consider

In creating an Action Agenda there are several factors to consider.

- What is the value of each project to the community? Certain projects may come forward as priorities given the concerns and desires that were expressed.
- Is there a logical sequence for the projects? Do certain projects need to be completed before others can be started?
- What are the resource requirements and constraints? Depending on the resources required, including funding, people power and

What are Strategic Actions?

Strategic Actions are programs, policies, studies and projects that when implemented will help achieve the master plan vision and goals.

What is an Action Agenda?

An Action Agenda is a type of schedule that identifies the strategic actions that will be undertaken within a specified time frame.

How is an Action Agenda developed?

An Action Agenda is typically developed by a committee that has knowledge of the master plan and what is required to get different types of projects accomplished.

leadership, there is likely a limit on the amount that can be done at any point in time.

- How long will the various projects take? Are they design and construction projects that when completed come off the project list, or are they on-going programs that involve continuous oversight and coordination by a staff member or volunteer? Understanding time frame will suggest opportunities for sequencing, parallel processing and staggering.

CHARTING THE CRITERIA FOR MAKING DECISIONS

Each of the Master Plan goals has a series of associated Objectives or Action Strategies that will contribute to accomplishment of that goal. The charts on the following pages outline the Potential Impact and Importance, the Resources Needed, and the Relative Cost of each proposed Action. While more detailed information will be needed to make decisions the information on the charts should be discussed, and added to as the first step in developing an Action Agenda. This review may also yield revised or additional Action Strategies that should be included in the Parks Master Plan.

Designation of Impact and Importance

Each of the Action Strategies has been given a relative priority of Higher, Medium or Lower. The relative priority of the Action Strategies under each goal were developed by applying several different criteria:

- The relative importance or value of the Action (facility, activity or program) as expressed by community members and city staff in helping to achieve the Vision and Goals.
- If a physical feature, the condition of and level of service of the existing facilities. Valued facilities absent where they should be present to provide a recommended level of service are given the highest importance.
-

Resources Needed

Resources that should be considered in determining how to accomplish an Action Strategy include

- People related resources include expertise, experience and knowledge; and time. People considered include city staff, paid consultants and volunteer residents and business and organization employees
- Partners from local businesses, non-profit organizations and foundations what can provide expertise, guidance, people resources and funding.
- Donations of space for meetings and events, materials and labor.

Relative Cost of Actions

In order to help with developing the Action Agenda, three categories of costs were assigned and included in the charts for each Action Strategy:

- **High** costs are \$35,000 or greater for capital improvements or on-going annual operating or personnel costs.
- **Low to Moderate** costs are \$10,000 up to \$35,000 one time or operating costs.
- **Low** costs are up to \$10,000 one time or annual operating costs.

Priority Key

H Higher priority

MH Higher to moderate priority

M Moderate priority

ML Moderate to lower priority

Goal 1: Create a parks system that supports the physical and mental well-being of people of all ages.			Goal 1: Create a parks system that supports the physical and mental well-being of people of all ages.		
Priority	Action	Potential Impact and importance		Resources Needed	Relative Cost
<div>H</div> <div>M</div> <div>MH</div>	<p><i>Develop and implement a multi year phased strategy (8 to 10 years) to guide the upgrading and improvement of the ten parks and playgrounds that were identified by the city as part of this master planning process.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherwood – high priority • Wall St – high priority • Cottage Place – high priority • Bradford Street – high priority • Seminary – medium priority • Calvary – medium priority • Pomeroy – parts high priority • Casey – parts high priority • Clifford – parts high priority • Miles-Lepak - requires design study 	<p>High – some of the pocket neighborhood parks lack basic facilities and signs of care. Improvements to these parks should be prioritized.</p> <p>Medium - Seminary and Calvary serve a function as maintained open spaces</p> <p>Medium to High - Prioritize various improvements to Casey, Clifford and Pomeroy based on community impact and sources of funding.</p>		<p>City staff – Planning and DPW for planning, and for grant writing and project management; Community members for involvement in design process</p> <p>Consultants – construction cost estimates, then design and construction documents.</p> <p>Partners for funding.</p> <p>Contractors – construction funding</p>	<p>Low cost for initial planning strategy (heavy use of staff time with some consultant if needed)</p> <p>High Cost for design and final implementation over 8 to 10 years</p>
<div>M</div>	<i>Develop a plan to expand the opportunities for trails and paths within and connecting parks and neighborhoods.</i>	Medium – a strong desire by community members but can be phased over time as other project develop		City staff – planning and DPW for planning, coordination with other projects	<p>Low cost for basic planning</p> <p>Low to medium cost for additions to planned roadway projects.</p>
<div>MH</div>	<i>Broaden community programming to provide opportunities for all ages to participate in events and activities in the park.</i>	Medium-High		City staff and person(s) with some expertise to propose possible ideas and develop questionnaire to better understand desires and preferences. Then re-allocation of program funds and/or grant writing.	<p>Low cost for basic planning</p> <p>Low to medium costs depending on programs</p>
<div>MH</div>	<i>Partner with local health organizations to implement park improvements and program activities that are targeted towards groups that could benefit from getting outside and being active.</i>	<p>Medium to High – Location of park and type of improvement will impact amount of use attracted.</p> <p>Priorities - Walking paths, related signage, fitness equipment usable by children.</p> <p>Programming to support activity in parks.</p>		<p>City planning staff and community volunteers to identify and meet with partners and identify potential funding sources.</p> <p>Preparation of grant applications;</p> <p>Consultants to prepare design and construction documents.</p>	Low to High – already have a partner in place and ready to do a project at Casey Park. Health related and Active Living relevant topics and likely can get grant funding

Goal 2: Provide care and maintenance of the parks that reinforces the desired character, supports safe and responsible use, and represents wise use of resources.				Goal 2: Provide care and maintenance of the parks that reinforces the desired character, supports safe and responsible use, and represents wise use of resources.	
Priority	Action	Impact and Importance		Resources Needed	Relative Cost
H	<i>Develop a care and maintenance plan for the parks system and individual parks</i>	High – Community has sense that parks are not being maintained to appropriate level. Need to determine what is the appropriate level of care in the parks, prioritize, determine resources needed, what can be accomplished with current level of city budget support, and what can be accomplished by others including community volunteers		City DPW staff, business representatives, community representatives, to form steering committee Time for planning process and report preparation Development of standards and guidelines Development of resource requirements and presentation to council and community members to seek support Seek other resources (e.g. community help) and how that can be sustained over time.	Moderate At first funding cost is low because using existing staff, but time cost is high because taking away from other work (may possibly need to hire consultant). Eventually should be no additional cost - Idea is to try to improve quality of care and maintenance without increasing the maintenance budget
M	<i>Implement a pilot program to develop practices in selected parks that will reduce the amount of grass mowing, and increase landscape diversity and ecologic function. Suggested parks: Casey, St. Francis and Pomeroy.</i>	Moderate – program could develop a number of different conservation oriented proposals that over the long term could save money through reduced maintenance times and add value through richer environmental qualities.		DPW staff and/or community organization or individual or academic partner with expertise in topic. Develop program, prepare specs for conversion and for on-going maintenance. Manpower to do work once program determined Research process to keep track of time and materials and analyze over several years.	Moderate The intent overtime is to reduce maintenance costs and reduce environmental costs but it will take several years to determine the viability of the approaches. May be able to obtain research funding to the program, especially if located close to urban waterways.
M	<i>Create a handbook of small community based projects that could be undertaken and maintained by neighborhood residents and other volunteers to provide signs of caring, above and beyond the maintenance provided by the city DPW staff.</i>	Moderate – community members want to contribute to placemaking as well as care. Providing guidance to ensure good design and quality construction will prevent issues with the same. Can inspire and build pride in community who take part or see the improvement. Involve youth		City planning and DPW staff, academic partner or landscape consultant, community members to develop process to prepare handbook. Will involve research, discussions with community members, vetting and selection of ideas. City staff or community member volunteers to manage the implementation over time including supplies and materials	Low to Moderate Cost will depend on scale and type of improvement but should be small to start out. May also be able to get grants for community build projects.
M	<i>Develop guidelines recommending that all new designs and materials choices include consideration of appearance, life-cycle costs, use of sustainable materials and local sourcing.</i>	Moderate – this approach has the potential to reduce costs overtime but involves change in policy and requires monitoring overtime		DPW staff, community volunteers, business partners, academic research partner (engineering/ construction) to set research process in place, then training for implementation	Low to moderate costs depending on need to hire a consultant or researcher to assist with the process. Might be able to get a grant to cover (NYSERDA?)

Goal 3: Strengthen community relationships and respectful use of parks.			Goal 3: Strengthen community relationships and respectful use of parks.		
Priority	Action	Impact and Importance		Resources Needed	Relative Cost
H	<i>Distribute a summary of the Parks Master Plan broadly throughout the community so that many people are aware of the Vision and Goals.</i>	High impact – will highlight value of parks, communicate the big ideas of the plan and explain role of community members		Planning Staff and ESF CCDR – prepare an illustrative summary and highlights of the Parks Master Plan; print hard copies for distribution at businesses, library, town hall; email blast for those with internet access.	Low – funding for grad student to prepare summary document; printing costs for hard copies
MH	<i>Research the possibility of a Parks Watch program and establishment of Parks Friends groups.</i>	Moderate to high impact if research process comes up with a doable program – having community members willing to spend time in the parks walking and/or doing small projects will show of care and ownership.		Time of Committee of community members, organization representatives; some support and advice by city planning staff	Low cost in committee time for initial planning; moderate cost in volunteer time for participation, and if any administration/oversight by city staff.
MH	<i>Continue to engage community members in meaningful ways in the parks design process.</i>	Moderate to high impact if involvement results in better design outcome and community attachment and ownership of park		Planning staff, consultants involved in parks design	Low cost if integrated as part of all stages of process as can reduce some aspects of data collection and need to modify designs.
M	<i>Develop an education program in association with the school district on the importance of parks and the environment, and community members role in caring for them.</i>	Moderate impact if it results in less vandalism and poor behavior in the parks, and nurturing responsible behavior.		Time of community volunteers, environmental organization staff, school district teachers, graphic designer to develop curriculum and materials. Ongoing materials and supplies; delivery as part of regular school day.	Low costs initially and in longer term but will require modest funding to support program continuation and evaluation over time.
M	<i>Distribute parks programming and events in the different geographic areas of the city so that residents have the opportunity to get to know other people and neighborhoods.</i>	Moderate impact– If enough people participate in events and have positive experience, can result in knowledge of other parks and neighborhoods, and pride of place where events occur.		Time for city staff for planning how programs will be distributed to different parks, for contact with host neighbors around the park and for publicity and outreach. Volunteer time in preparation for and during event. Might need to plan supplemental activities to achieve desired goal of interaction with different people.	Low costs for supplies, materials, assuming don't need to purchase new equipment.
MH	<i>Design and implement a signage and information program that identifies every city owned park.</i>	Moderate to High Impact - Increase sense of pride and ownership of community towards parks.		Time for city staff to work with a signage consultant to design signage for entire system, including wayfinding in larger parks as described in guidelines. Cost of consultant for design and construction documentation for signs. Staff and volunteer time for fundraising through grants, sponsorships	Low to moderate costs for design consultant to tailor county signage standards to Auburn Parks. Moderate to high cost for installation depending on design. Could be phased over time but should accomplish within a 3 to 4 year time line once started.

Goal 4: Promote the value and multiple roles of parks to contribute to a resilient and sustainable community.

Priority	Action	Impact and Importance
M	<i>Develop and implement a plan to highlight the downtown parks and parks visible from primary routes in the city as part of the visitor and tourism experience.</i>	Moderate – The intent is to utilize the parks to improve the image of the city, giving visitors a positive impression and also providing attractive outdoor places to explore or relax in
M	<i>Consider integration of green infrastructure practices when planning parks capital improvement projects and maintenance strategies.</i>	Moderate – the impact can be viewed in two ways – its function in providing ecosystem services which can be measured quantitatively, and its aesthetic and educational value for community members which are more qualitative responses.
M	<i>Document and highlight the environmental benefits provided by the parks and green spaces in the city.</i>	Moderate – Informing and educating community members about the environmental economic value of parks and green space will help justify the financial investment and will help them see the natural elements in new ways.
ML	<i>Collaborate with local realtors to market the city parks as positive features to potential residents and businesses.</i>	Moderate to Lower. The value of this strategy is in publicizing parks as neighborhood assets. It should start with parks that have had recent updates but as others are improved they should be celebrated and publicized.

Goal 4: Promote the value and multiple roles of parks to contribute to a resilient and sustainable community.

	Resources Needed	Relative Cost
	Time for planning department staff, BID staff, community members and consultant to develop plan. Resources needed for implementation will depend on plan but will likely include detailed design and construction of physical improvements	Low to moderate planning cost. Low to High costs depending on the type and extent of improvements.
	Time for DPW, engineering and planning department staff to become familiar with GI practices, and to understand costs and benefits. Educate city council and community members on purpose and value of practices. May need to hire consultant for early stages. Integrate into park design processes so will need consultant with these qualifications.	Low to moderate planning costs as part of other project designs. Low to high costs depending on the green infrastructure methods applied.
	Staff time to oversee project. Partner with an academic institution that can calculate the air quality, water quality, cooling effect, stormwater management, wildlife habitat and other environmental services provided by the parks. May need design and graphic assistance to communicate to community members effectively. Study could be repeated toward end of master plan time frame to determine changes as a result of improvements to the parks' environment.	Low cost if this is a project through which students can help compile and analyze data.
	Time for economic development staff to coordinate with realtors to highlight recent park improvements. Resources for preparation of brochures or other publicity materials about the parks.	Low planning and implementation costs. Seek partnership with local college marketing programs to develop artwork and brochures, that highlight parks and other environmental assets.

Goal 5: Ensure long term support and resources for parks programming, maintenance and capital improvements

Priority	Action	Impact and Importance		Resources Needed	Relative Cost
H	<i>Create a Parks and Recreation Steering Committee whose mission is to advocate for and advise on the parks and implementation of the Parks Master Plan.</i>	High. Having a steering committee composed of community members can provide additional attention to the parks, serving as a conduit between residents and city government. Steering committee members can participate in subcommittees that address major goal areas including maintenance, physical improvements and programming.		Staff and council member time to develop basic outline and agreement of purpose of parks and environment steering committee and desired characteristics of committee members. Staff and council member time to organize and appoint steering committee members. Committee member time for meetings and committee tasks.	Low cost. The primary cost is for committee member time which will be donated
H	<i>Create a parks and environment staff position to develop and manage a long term resource strategy for the parks with oversight by the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee.</i>	High. Making a commitment to create a position that provides oversight and organization of partnerships and community volunteers places value on those resources to contribute to improvements and maintenance of the parks system. Through this position networks can be developed and nurtured. Impact will depend on selecting right person for the task.		Time for preparation of position description and hiring process. Funding allocation for new position or restructuring of existing position.	Moderate to high cost as this is proposed to be a paid position. Costs could be moderate if it starts out as a part time position, with time increased as the value it adds can be quantified.
MH	<i>Develop long term partnerships with area businesses for financial, material and volunteer effort support for every neighborhood and pocket park in the city.</i>	Moderate to High. Having businesses adopt a park, especially those in neighborhoods where public participation is low may encourage better care by neighborhood residents and participation in park improvement activities.		City staff person (see above) or dedicated volunteer to organize and manage effort. Neighborhood or Friends group representatives to help gather neighborhood participation in business supported park improvements and signs of care maintenance.	Moderate cost, due to potential use of city staff time
MH	<i>Expand partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide additional activities and programming that support the vision and goals of the parks Master Plan</i>	Moderate to High. Additional programming will encourage active use of the parks which is important for many reasons. Partnering with organizations whose missions involve the use of parks and open space is a common way to provide desired programming.		City staff person (see above) or dedicated volunteer to organize and manage effort.	Moderate cost , due to potential use of city staff time.

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