



CITY OF KINGSTON, NY

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

DRAFT – JANUARY 2013

Creating Community Through People, Parks & Programs



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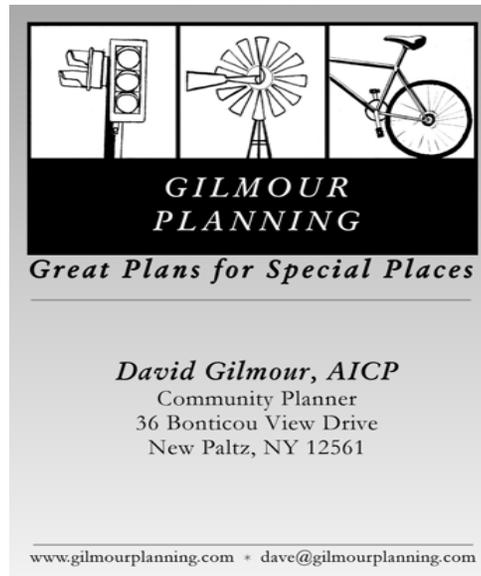
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And in memory of Kenneth Bryant, Jr. for many years of dedicated volunteer service to Kingston community recreation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kingston, New York has high quality natural resources, great parks, and exemplary recreation programs. This ***Parks and Recreation Master Plan*** is a guide, over the next decade, for the continuing strategic improvement and development of parks, recreational facilities and services in the City.

As a central place in a vital region, Kingston has notable recreational, cultural, civic and educational resources. Kingston's historical character, its parks, waterfront, open spaces, and the streets and trails connecting them provide for a healthy population. From the perspective of recreation planning, the quality, size, type, features and array of municipal recreation facilities and services influence community. Assets serve residents, affecting the living environment and the economy. Not surprisingly, City leaders identify recreation as a major factor relating to municipal development and quality of life.



The legacy of recreation planning and service in the city is robust. There is an assortment of parks. Kingston has a diverse population and demands for services vary, but it is assuring that people can recreate in many ways. Special facilities include Forsyth Nature Center, three community centers, a beach, and a pool. These overlap with eight main parks, numerous playgrounds and other public lands and recreation assets.

Strategically investing in parks supports wellness and complements the economic base. Recreation planning will enhance recreation opportunities and link neighborhoods. Multiple physical actions are needed to advance recreation. Policies can also be aligned to progress the vision of – ***creating community through people, parks, and programs*** – and bolstering sense of place.

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009, or SCORP, is a regional guide for recreation resource preservation and development through 2013. It notes that parks and open space are some of New York's most valuable nonrenewable resources (page 9). It suggests that in order to plan for recreation, multiple factors need to be considered, including existing supply, participation rates, demand, demographics and social trends (page 21). Kingston has made various efforts to provide community facilities – this plan reflects on these and helps guide future action.

While sports leagues are popular for all ages and groups, people also express interest in non-traditional sports and recreation pursuits, including dance and music, but also encompassing other aspects of sport, arts, history, community and nature. The richness of Kingston's history and culture and its recreation asset and service base is demonstrated by the art and monuments that adorn public parks, and parades and events like the Artist's Soap Box Derby, many festivals, and Black History



Month observances, which are expressions of community.

Operating parks and recreation services takes constant attention and demands resources. Not least important among the specialized role of Kingston Parks and Recreation is the offering of quality programs. In Kingston, there is also emphasis on civic life and sustainability, as evidenced by substantial volunteerism, support for community garden initiatives, and the popularity of the Uptown Farmers' Market.

On a broader scale, emphasis on health, including recognition of the power of 'prevention' is motivating people to be more active and exercise regularly. With leisure time and daily exercise becoming norms, there will be increased demand for urban parks and recreation amenities. People also want effective government service and value clarity about priorities and how public officials and community partners intend to mobilize, leverage and steward resources.

The plan has nine more elements. Each one explores organizational and community needs, providing rationales for action around parks and recreation. Individually and together they provide context for allocating and leveraging resources systematically, and as opportunities arise. These sections are:

- **Public opinion**, which is used to inform intent;
- **Goals** that reinforce recreation mission and frame strategy;
- **City population and possible development** – reviewing the citizenry and user attributes provides a basis for setting service goals, while examining geography helps tailor Kingston-specific actions;
- **A review of Parks and Recreation public administration and programs and service offerings.** Exploring organization of the Department, it's staffing, budget, and physical operations and maintenance provides context for advancing effective and efficient service. Many pages describe city programs. Examining dimensions of service

shows how and why Parks and Recreation is active in multiple ways.

- **Presentation of Kingston-specific 'Recreation Service Standards', which are applied in 'level of service' analysis.** Table 3 summarizes the inventory of parks and attributes. Table 4 explores existing and projected service for over a dozen types of physical facilities. Besides providing detailed suggestions for how each class of parks can evolve based on service standards set for Kingston, it contains narrative on the ways the community and its leaders can aid and advance the enhancement of fixtures in parks, like: playgrounds, athletic fields and courts.
- **Existing Municipal Recreation Facilities' provides site-specific analysis for all land and building recreation assets owned by the city.** It reviews strengths and weaknesses of each site and its fixtures. It examines land use and transportation character on-site and in surroundings, identifying ways to improve and reinforce context, with a special emphasis on active transport to ensure that parks provide lasting value. The evaluation of facilities and services explores space and equipment conditions, arrangement and fit, plus suggestions to maintain and enhance these types of factors. For most facilities, it describes qualities and characteristics of service, identifies service catchment areas, and analyzes how parts interrelate. This way, there is a holistic examination of challenges and opportunities. Using this balanced approach, it identifies ways to ensure maintenance and investments that are beneficial, desirable and sustainable.
- **Greenway/ Linear Parks & Open Space Planning** (see more below within this section).
- **Recreation Policy Improvements;** and
- **A Conclusion** that discusses possible ways to finance recreation development.

Overall, the plan is comprehensive. It builds on the success of prior plans and actions, recognizing achievements and suggesting ways Kingston can continue to improve its prospects. To help forge consistent strategy, this plan meshes with other city physical and economic plans and programs like the City of Kingston Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan. The LWRP, and its subsequent LWRP Implementation Plan (1999), were forged through detailed resource analysis and public outreach. It also links with the Urban Cultural Park Plan, hereafter called the UCP Plan, to promote sound investment of public resources.

While substantial outside funds flow into the city to aid recreation, finances are tight. Still, there is need to rehabilitate parks and playgrounds. While the City is challenged to maintain its parks and equipment base, capital infusions to replace and upgrade fixtures will deliver noticeable benefits. Committing to the sustainable operation of existing parks will ensure that future enhancements tie-into and complement the existing system and do not over-leverage it.

Overall, there is a need to remain vigilant and ensure that physical hazards are reduced. Facilities need to meet current codes and parks need to be accessible. Vitaly important is for restrooms (and park pavilions) to be fixed and for playground equipment and fields to be in good order with improvements carried out in landscaping and aesthetics.

Accordingly, major capital investment interests identified by recreation leaders and during analysis are discussed at length in 'Recreation Service Standards' and 'Municipal Recreation Facilities'. Some key notions are:

- The Director of Recreation/ Parks Superintendent/ Parks Administrator's (hereafter Director) five-year capital improvement plan (or CIP) assigns priority to replacement of park restrooms, as the condition of lavatories is poor. Most restrooms are beyond their useful physical lives – investing

in them will enable users to stay longer at parks. (There is also desire for new restroom facilities at Forsyth Nature Center and inside Rotary Park at Kingston Point.)

- Replacement of playgrounds at parks. Strategy could target one, possibly two, locations annually. Restoration of the one at Forsyth is necessary, as is the case with many other playgrounds. (Augmentation of playgrounds, including at Forsyth, with more diverse play equipment, and with complementary adjacent landscaping is urged. A new playground is also sought for upper Hasbrouck Park);
- Other major categories of replacement capital spending by the Director are:
 - Structural maintenance and repairs at community centers, including window, door, HVAC and elevator systems;
 - Maintenance of existing stock or fixtures to re-grade and renovate: softball fields; investing in fixing fields and turf at Hasbrouck Park, rehabilitating Sass Field (Block Park), and maximizing space at Hutton Park.
 - Improved surfaces in trafficked areas, such as by the Nature Center pens, and in circulation/parking systems at parks;
 - Pavilions upkeep;
 - Renovated tennis courts;
 - Bandstands rehabilitation (or installation of new ones)¹; and
 - Fencing².

This plan is not a detailed environment audit, safety or accessibility analysis of the park and recreation facilities operated by the City, School District or others. Nor is it intended to displace statutory

1 A precursor for bandstands upgrades is investment by staff and volunteers in advancing one prototype project.

2 The Superintendent's five-year capital improvement plan or program (or CIP) for fixture replacements, upgrades and new facilities has over 50 projects.

requirements detailed in applicable building, safety or fire codes or standards. Rather it is a resource plan recommending a set of actions in Kingston over the next ten years to advance recreation. Managing and developing recreation resources is complicated. As part of capital planning, the Department needs a detailed program for how it will achieve universal design and handicap accessibility, including for major projects. A formal ADA evaluation is urged for completion immediately to define legal obligations and the best practicable approaches to advancing accessible facilities.

Regarding new fixtures, some major categories of action sought by the Recreation Director are:

- Energy generating capacity, like installation of solar panels and generators; and
- Strategic investment in community centers. For example, an architectural program is needed for stabilization and rehabilitation of the barn at Everett Hodge Center for Environmental Education.

Overlapping with short- and mid-term capital needs are these other major thematic capital planning and design recommendations:

- The Forsyth-area complex needs a detailed plan establishing how to go about replacements and upgrades sequentially there and in surroundings. Enhancements to the Washington Street gateway and corridor and the Lucas Avenue corridor to accommodate all modes of transport, including walkers and bikers (as part of a city greenway), will aid sense of place and overall economic development;
- The broader Kingston Point/ Beach needs programming to establish how best to advance replacements and upgrades and achieve linkage, and possibly even by adding to the site.
- Upgrade Hasbrouck Park, upper and lower levels;
- Develop strategy and guidelines to manage and invest in the pool, with enhanced service, such as with spray fountain apparatus; and

- Advance a Greenway – This plan dedicates an element to open space and natural resources planning and another section discusses linear trails, with the plan urging bold efforts to preserve character and foster linear connections through the formalization of a citywide greenbelt. There is strong potential to establish a community greenway that is valued by residents and bolsters economic development.

Kingston is urged to act proactively to develop a greenway and plan complimentary open space conservation. This type of enhancement will create a more livable community by achieving trails and rail trails, complete streets and a 'greenway' hub that converges in Midtown. A city greenway will aid the ability for people to walk and bike about the city, in part by converting unused or low use railroad corridors into shared multi-use trails. It will serve residents by providing safe, universally accessible options for biking and walking while smoothing the flow of motorized vehicles and reducing auto congestion. A Greenway will also connect settled areas and natural environments.

This 'green infrastructure' approach will support compact growth (and tax ratables), stormwater management, reduce fuel consumption, promote habitat conservation, enable freedom of mobility, support physical activity, allow children to walk or bike to school, and establish the waterfront and trails to parks and open spaces as recreational amenities of regional and national significance. There is a need for detailed action, such as through development of a pedestrian and bicycle plan that touches on recreation. Over the next ten years, this will require city and partner resources, including to leverage volunteerism and external grants and investment.

As for other new recreation space or footprints, there is generally a need for playgrounds and 'Neighborhood Parks' in and around Midtown, since there is limited supply in populated areas. This is defined as a need for some new spaces, a half-acre

to an acre, but preferably between two and three and a half acres in size. With some dialogue in the community on desire for a skateboard park, it is worth considering how one might be configured and whether it can be advanced within this type of space. Ideally, neighborhood parks should have flexible/informal play space for children of all ages, nice and interesting landscaping, sitting areas for all ages and quality playgrounds.

When residents can get to parks, other districts and the waterfront safely on foot and by bike via a pleasantly developed greenway, it does not seem necessary to have larger parks in these locations. This is because the greenway itself becomes part of recreation facilities and the user experience.

There is also some need for playing fields in and by Midtown. Really, there is tight demand for athletic fields all around the city, especially modern, well-prepared and equipped sites that meet contemporary service standards for: youth and adult soccer, youth flag football, adult softball, and for emerging field sports like disc football and lacrosse. Providing functional lighting at Loughran Park might ease friction. Attaining sustained public access and broader public use of fields at the private Metropolitan Park and/or Kingston Babe Ruth field are examples of ways to relieve peak demand. Other ideas, although not all must go forward, are: investing in a new field by Kingston Point; optimizing field space at the High School, or exploring adding a small practice field at the Dietz complex.

To gauge whether Kingston-derived guidelines are on target, over coming years there should be monitoring of supplies of softball, baseball, and soccer fields, and levels of demand for football, running track and walking, biking and skate boarding facilities. This will inform how much facilities are encountering scheduling challenges and elevated, or peak, demand. It is supposed that forming new segments of greenway with quality off-road trails will moderate an expected increase in demand for

running track. Finally, basketball is popular here, so demand must be tracked, as the service standard formed does not identify need for new courts over ten years.

Assuming the Hudson Landing project advances and there is land set aside for a large passive park, there will be a major jump in the supply of land in 'community park'³. The same is the case for greenway if the walkway along the Hudson there advances, with its potential for enhanced access around the northern waterfront. Resources need to be carved out, and partnerships implemented, to plan, organize and advance action for incremental development of facilities and phased public access to these assets. There is also a need for public information and involvement so that the community can help guide resource development and take on stewardship.

Driven in part by the Landing project, there is opportunity to form innovative arrangements with landowners and other regional and local partners to develop and manage these new public or quasi-public recreation assets. Influenced by the likelihood of limited resources available to develop new recreation assets, it is worth exploring the potential for inter-municipal partnership, such as with the Town of Ulster, and/or other joint development, use, and management arrangements that minimize the required contribution from the public sector alone, but that can help bring assets on-line and sustain them.

Since this is a long-range plan, it is advised for the Director, in consultation with the Recreation Board, to routinely form

³ There is not substantial new public information that has come forward in 2012 which identifies the pace of the private development and the potential program for the hillside passive park, although efforts to mobilize resources and formalize arrangement continue. It is worth forming strategy on this, including whether stewardship will be centered in the non-profit or public sector.

focused two-year strategies of action. These would delve into operating and project objectives. They will ensure relevant and timely action and resource planning.

Organizationally, City Parks does a good job stewarding resources and facilitating operations. The Recreation Department is also qualified to conduct facilities planning and support community preservation and development. Core competencies in physical planning revolve around the Department Director and one Educator. Over coming years, the Department will have to become even more adept at strategically running unique, high quality, high-functioning facilities. The Director emphasizes the importance of achieving budget appropriations for a full-time Deputy in order to support this type of work, plus more routine administration.

While day-to-day operations are key, the Director must find ways to advance physical planning and public involvement in recreation affairs. For one, staff is expected to spend considerable time cultivating and sustaining parks stewardship, as noted⁴. Another aspect of this work is further defining the preferred arrangement of facilities, implementing projects and carrying them to completion. Enhanced parks level of service and greenway planning are important enough that there should be budgeting, in coming years, to add a full-time recreation project planner. Alternatively, this could be organized as an Educator type position bridging both roles.

The Department is also specially qualified to deliver education, youth and civic services. These core competencies revolve around the Director, Recreation Leaders, Forsyth Nature Center staff and Environmental Educators. The Director has interest in

achieving budgeting to add another full-time Recreation Leader. Having additional capacity will enable more action around a sustainable and healthy community. The benefits as a result will be strong.

In conclusion, a city comprehensive planning process is underway parallel with this plan – this recreation plan is intended to complement that broader, albeit at this point undefined, plan program. It is suggested that this tool supports that main or general plan, and it is suggested to incorporate this plan within it by reference. There is considerable open space in the City, vast coastal resources, and remarkable historical and cultural fabric. Existing strengths, such as the scenic landscape and recreational assets are foundations for success. Having strategy for recreation can inform ways to positively impact infrastructure, neighborhoods, land use, government finances and the economy.

Community parks, greenways, and open space are important to the identity and economy of Kingston. Parks provide quality of life. Parks planning will support community health and fiscal stability over the long-term, through higher tax revenues and careful project execution. Analyzing parks replacements and upgrades can help ensure that existing parks and playgrounds are used and remain focal points for the community. Efforts to reinforce city recreation will also strengthen Kingston's premier role as a center for heritage, arts and waterfront living. As users consider prescriptions herein, they should contemplate priorities, and the mix, and identify particular ones they have interest in and most want to support.

4 This type of stewardship is not novel, although it is being emphasized more – see for instance New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (<http://nysparks.com/>)

PUBLIC OPINION ON RECREATION

Data was collected in 2010-2012 by city staff and Healthy Kingston for Kids (HKK) and Creating Healthy Places (CHP) project partners on facilities usage and activity patterns, perceptions, and resident interests about recreation. It provides a basis for recommendations in this plan.

As part of outreach, in 2010 to 2012 Gilmour Planning conducted interviews with elected and appointed public officials, staff, regional agents, and non-profit leaders regarding health, recreation, transportation, and planning. This research aids understanding of recreation features and trends. Interviewees were selected based on knowledge of Kingston and its systems of recreation, government, infrastructure, community, finance and health. Eight interviews were completed specific to this project and there were roughly 25 additional contacts used to gain background.

There were also queries, not rigorous, of parents and youth, including at a civic event and in focus groups with teenage females at Kingston High School. Also, creative exercises with children by HKK partners asked about their recreation interests and visions.

Considering younger people contacted:

- Children identify with the Nature Center, Kinderland and Forsyth Park;
- Kids report going to playgrounds and to play at parks and schools, and they like swings;
- Children reported playing soccer;
- Youth like to play kickball and tag and just hang out;
- Some were familiar with community gardening;
- Teenage females report liking to relax in groups at playgrounds; going on walks, and dancing with friends.
- Some indicate streets are not supportive of walking.

Kids also express interest in skateboarding and occasionally activities like rollerblading. Youth are also seen biking, although some express concern for bike security.

When parents were interviewed they:

- Valued places to go like Forsyth Park;
- Reported enjoying Uptown Farmers' Market;
- Indicated that children played in area sports leagues (baseball was often mentioned); and
- Were excited about extensions of rail trails, like from Hurley. Some said they load-up cars and drive to trails because they don't perceive safe ways to get them by bike.

Recreation Survey -- Another source of perspective is the 2010-2011 Parks Survey Results⁵. Its purpose was to assess park visitors' satisfaction with the park system and specific park facilities, while also looking at activity levels and facilities used⁶. Given its central position, adjacency to the Nature Center, Dietz Stadium, and Bailey and Edson schools, it is no surprise that respondents reported prevalent daily, weekly and monthly visitations to Forsyth Park. Rates of Nature Center use track with those of the park, although slightly lower – these components complement one another.

Examining other facilities, Kingston Point Beach, T.R. Gallo Park, Kingston Point Park, Andy Murphy Neighborhood Center, Block, Hasbrouck and Loughran Parks had higher reported daily and weekly use. People appear to identify with and value these places as spots to walk and recreate. There is also a set that frequents certain parks often, such as for organized sports and youth programs.

⁵ While not representative, the survey informs community preferences.

⁶ A separate survey of parents by HKK's Safe Routes initiative obtained perspective on walking and biking to schools and parks.

Asked to ID desirable parks improvements, the most interest was for:

- Improved and repaired playgrounds;
- Bathroom facilities; and
- Cleanliness and maintenance.

While cited less, there was interest in 'improved police patrols/ security'. Notably, many preferences involve operating and physical enhancements that do not require large financial outlays. Improvements can be advanced through strategic operations and investments. Moreover, through collaboration with neighborhood groups and non-profits, and agency cooperation, it is possible to enhance the appearance and social environments in parks.

Considering places identified as least visited, Van Buren Park was at the top, although the survey may not capture its users. It is suggested to analyze neighborhood opinion to discern if people do not know the park, or other factors hinder use. A survey, What Midtown Thinks!, 2010, by Philliber Research Associates for Kingston Cares showed less positive feeling for this part of Midtown as a place to live compared with neighborhoods further east. Finally, another facility fewer respondents identified with is Andretta Pool.

Overall, there can be continuing efforts to routinely collect data on parks use, activity and health. Knowing more about interests and perceptions will aid service delivery and planning and it will help achieve quality services. Recreation staff can coordinate with regional agencies and non-profits to map out information needs and explore data sharing, research and sequencing.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & SAFE ROUTES -- *Research shows that youths who live close to parks get more physical activity, so an objective of this project is to have some type of park or playground accessible for all parts of the city. It goes without saying that children who have difficulty getting to a park, and cannot safely walk or bike or there, are more likely to be impacted in this regard. In many neighborhoods, even when a park is in walking distance, parents may hesitate to allow their children to go to parks and play areas alone due to real or perceived physical hazards or crime concerns. One approach is to ensure safe and inviting street and trails leading to and from parks. Furthermore, when streets are complete with continuous access, like good quality sidewalks and decent crosswalks and signals, youths using them are getting outdoors, moving just making their way to the park. The Healthy Kingston for Kids partnership, of which the City and School District are members, has a multi-year Safe Routes to Schools & Parks initiative that is promoting safe and complete street and trail environments. This effort is especially focused on the environments at and around schools and parks and having safe routes to them. See Healthykingston.org.*

GOALS – The City Recreation mission is to “*Create community through people, parks & programs.*” City leaders support recreation and the advancement of a quality community, public health, and sustainable economic development. It is recommended for the recreation master plan for Kingston to follow these goals:

Planning

- Optimize assets and space use, making investments to enhance existing parks
- Design and deliver high quality programs and services
- Provide a range of recreational facilities located so as to be accessible to residents
- Consider how improvements leverage resources
- Anticipate recreation land needs, securing it prior to actual need -- it is in the public interest to earmark some higher quality land and/or redevelopment space for recreation. Consider climate change and natural hazards in related project planning
- Contemplate strong demand by waterfronts, in Midtown, by I-587, on greenways, and at sports fields, and help manage use so that resources are not overburdened

Population & Service

- Serve diverse community recreational needs
- Foster recreation by youth to ensure healthy habits
- Sustain recreation for older persons
- Plan spaces for active and passive recreation
- Help children move safely about the community and to programs
- Continue innovative environmental education

Resource Development

- Enhance public access to waterfronts
- Establish multi-use outdoor playing fields to serve demand by sports and leagues and cultural events
- Plan more civic and recreation space in Midtown
- Aid options at night, on weekends and in colder seasons

- Plan recreation facilities essential to healthy, balanced land use

Natural Resource Management

- Use a triple bottom line approach in investments and operations
- Given extensive open space, promote landscape ecology
- Use parks and greenways as incubators of 'green infrastructure' and invasive species management
- Advance stream and wetland management
- Conserve large contiguous open spaces
- Plan for sea-level rise and design resilience in capital projects
- Push state of the art for energy management and facilities design

Partnership & Leveraged Development

- Foster collaboration with Schools, non-profits and nearby towns
- Aid recreation leaders involvement in local/ regional planning
- Promote partnerships and community stewardship of parks

Design

- Apply environmental design in project development
- Achieve universal design in facilities
- Establish a greenway on trails and rail-and-trails and key streets with enhanced park gateways and open space
- Aid active transportation to and within parks
- Advance recreation goals in community plans and program, including the LWRP and Urban Cultural Park (UCP) Plan
- Given a strong history of the arts – program art installations in City parks and facilities and steward these assets

Management

- Establish and track measures for the parks agency and its units
- Use policy-making to assist recreation planning and operation
- Consider recreation system accreditation
- Promote service efficiency

- Advance joint use and effective and efficient coordination of agencies in the City and region (e. g., Board of Education, adjacent municipalities, Ulster County, non-profits, etc.)
- Develop a system to recruit and manage volunteers and stewards
- Bolster and diversify funding for parks
- Periodically monitor and update this recreation master plan
- Facilitate employee development

Communication & Promotions

- Push recreation public information
- Promote awareness and utilization of City park facilities
- Encourage donations and philanthropy for recreation
- Actively cultivate citizen advisory boards/ committees to aid parks planning and custody

Economic Development

- Nurture development that bolsters recreation, arts, and culture
- Consider how recreation capital investments can revitalize neighborhoods and stimulate desirable business and jobs
- Explore opportunities for joint development
- Foster collaboration, including public-private partnership, to extend and bolster recreation and tourism



POPULATION ANALYSIS

An aim of this plan is to provide direction for the development of parks and recreation resources. This section examines characteristics of local and regional population, including resident population, which is a core service group. It explores demographics, including age features, education, ethnicity, and income characteristics. There is also examination of population forecasts and possible building in order to consider demands and needs that could emanate over time. A review of social and economic trends and the distribution of people and groups in Kingston now and in the future informs how demand may change and how it may vary by locale.

The US Census of Population & Housing (census.gov/) is a 10-year census that can be used to compare points in time:

- From 2000-10 median age increased from 38.1 years to 39.2
- In 2010, more than 1/5 or 21.8% of the city population were 'minors' of less than 18 years of age.
- Older persons, 65 or over, were roughly 15% of all residents. This rate will likely jump as 'baby boomers' age.

Citing Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research projections, the 2009 SCORP, page 21, notes that statewide residents over the age of 60 will increase 52.6% through 2025. In Kingston, growth is also expected in persons 80+ years old.

Ethnically Kingston is more diverse than the region. There is a prevalence of people describing their 'race' as 'blacks and African Americans' (3,478 persons or 14.6%). Separately, in 2010 3,203 people or 13.4% of City residents classified themselves as residing in 'Hispanic or Latino' households.

People in Kingston have lower median household incomes compared with the County (\$46,464 vs. \$58,428⁷). A substantial part of the City's population, 14.6%, is listed in poverty⁸. This compares with 11.3% in the County. As noted in Low Income Populations and Physical Activity, 2012, this group often confronts social and environmental barriers to physical activity and has less means to overcome them than other income groups.

Table 1

City of Kingston 2010 Resident Age Profile Based on 2010 US Census	
Under 5 years	1,565
Five to 9 years	1,387
10 to 17 years	2,255
18 to 64 years	15,045
65 years and over	3,639
Total Population	23,893

The resident population in 2010 was 23,893 persons⁹. Population increased slightly from a decade prior (see more below). Not shown in Table 1, 51.9% were female/ 48.1% male. Kingston's populace resided in 10,217 households and population density was 3,192 persons per square mile, which is high for the Mid-Hudson region.

⁷www.mhvcommunityprofiles.org/indicator_data_tables.php?subregion=3&data=6.1.1 Sourced from U.S. Census Bureau. Figures in constant 2010 dollars with 2005-09 results rolling from American Community Survey.

⁸ As shown in Census 5-Year average estimates for 2011 in the American Community Survey [//quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36000.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36000.html),

⁹ Source: DP-1 - Kingston City, New York: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010. Demographic Profile Data

In 2010 ¼ of the population, or 6,044 persons (25.3%), were under 21 years, and over 1/3 (37%) were less than 18 or above 64 years of age.

Considering the substantial group of older persons, and income patterns, it is not surprising that in 2000 18.6% of Kingston households had no vehicles available. Access to transport clearly influences

activity patterns and whether and how people recreate. Different age groups demand and benefit from different recreation facilities and services. In 2010 Kingston had 1,565 children under five. This group grew slightly during the last decade, increasing from 1,510 (6.4%) in 2000 to 1,565 (6.6%) in 2010. A skew towards younger age cohorts in Kingston is evident when compared with the County's rate, where those under five was 4.9% (8,996) in 2010. A similar relationship plays out with a higher rate of teenagers than in most other places in the region. It clearly makes sense to target programs and facilities to these age groups.



In recreation planning, children five and under are recognized to have unique needs, such as for playgrounds and play spaces that aid healthy emotional development and motor skills¹⁰. Children five and under are also susceptible to unintentional injuries, often minor, from factors like falls and other accidents. While there must be adherence to safety standards in the design and operation of fixtures like play equipment intended for toddlers and very young children, it will be beneficial for Kingston Recreation staff to plan and structure park

¹⁰ See resources at national Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities ncef.org/ri/playgrounds.cfm and reports like From Playpen to Playground - The Importance of Physical Play for the Motor Development of Young Children by Dr. Jeffrey Trawick-Smithby for Center for Early Childhood Education Eastern CT State University.

spaces that are likely to be well used by these children for active play, including by providing open space and landscaping designs and layouts that support creative play.

Potential Change – Besides assessing current population and how it matches up with the supply of recreation resources, various sources, including population forecasts and housing needs assessments, provide information that can be used in a standards-based analysis to assess the future supply of recreation facilities versus forecast population. For instance, future growth could influence demand for recreation services and/or facilities. Examining potential change offers insight about how demand may arise. This is augmented by considering where future development may happen in different parts of Kingston.

Assumption for Population Change -- Considering factors that influence potential for residential population growth, including changes in age cohorts, housing and transportation supply, economic conditions, and birth, death and migration rates, it is reasonable to assume that Kingston's resident population will increase 5.4% over the coming decade. This rate of growth figure is derived by averaging assumptions from three residential growth scenarios identified for Kingston (See Appendix A). An assumption used for 2022 is a population of 27,198 persons. This figure is used to extrapolate recreation facilities demand in 2022 in Kingston.

Development Landscape – To serve the recreational needs of children and adults, adequate properly located recreation space must be provided in each residential area or district, including mixed-use areas. There must also be an appropriate supply of recreation facilities in non-residential business districts. Neighborhoods that lack adequate space for recreation (or are served by facilities too distant or inaccessible for children) tend to be considered less desirable than areas which are well equipped with recreation facilities, and, consequently, can depreciate in value.

Appendix A explores potential future building and development overall in different parts of the City. This information is used in inferring where additional demand may arise for recreation facilities based on new building or redevelopment.

In 2009 Kingston's Planning Board approved a SEQRA findings statement for Hudson Landing, a major planned unit development proposing 1,682 residential housing units mixed with 172,500 square feet of commercial and service buildings. The site straddles the Town of Ulster in Ward 8 north of Kingston Point. The project has advanced into early construction and some part of this development will be completed within the next 10 years. The Landing has on-site amenities planned, including: a linear riverwalk; Hudson River access, boat launch and parking; plus a 300+/- acre open space area that is contemplated to be conserved in perpetuity, possibly through dedication to a non-profit or government. The space will be a major recreation resource, presumably regional in nature, especially with planned trails and amenities. As the Landing progresses, there will be some undefined increase in the use of public recreation facilities in the vicinity, such as at Kingston Beach, Kingston Point and Hasbrouck Parks. There are no turf sports playing fields planned at the site. City Recreation staff should periodically monitor (count) visitation and characteristics of use at the parks on and by the Point.

In other parts of Kinston, excepting Uptown and I-587 environments, Midtown and the Rondout, lower growth rates are expected. There is potential for mixed-use in Midtown, so it is encouraged to consider how future land use may evolve there and its impacts on recreation. The I-587 Study shows a notion for future land use at the Plaza with an expanded grid and new mixed use. A potential program for growth is also needed north of I-587, which can inform the extent of future recreation need in that area attributable to potential new growth. A presumption is that the new city comprehensive plan will analyze all areas and assess how demand for greenway, plaza parks, and other recreation facilities may play out.

PARKS & RECREATION ORGANIZATION

The City Parks & Recreation Department is a municipal service and operating division. Its mission is to “*Create community through people, parks & programs.*” It delivers year-round programs, including organized youth, senior and adult activities, sports for all ages, camps and environmental education programming. The Parks Department has existed for over 75 years, presenting a unique focus on community wellness within the administration.

- Youth programs, including environmental education¹¹, after school programs; trips and summer camps;
- Sports for all ages;
- Senior Programming, including diet and cooking classes
- Adult Programs
- Special Events, both community-wide and age-specific

Table 2

2010 Recreation Budget Breakdown	
Parks	\$367,322.00
Dietz Stadium	\$205,872.00
Forsyth Zoo	\$191,762.00
MidTown Center	\$189,488.00
Administration	\$137,198.00
Playgrounds	\$82,301.00
Rondout Center	\$90,245.00
Beaches/ Pools	\$52,906.00
Adult Recreation	\$37,291.00
Youth Programs	\$17,348.00
Hodge	\$14,324.00
Aging	\$6,441.00
TOTAL	\$1,392,498.00

Overall, diverse facilities are operated and maintained by the division. Likewise, the services and programs are comprehensive as described in this plan. Programs offered include:

Organization – The Department is led by a full-time professional Director of Recreation/ Parks Superintendent/ Parks Administrator (referred to in this plan as Director). In the City Charter (www.ecode360.com/12699984), the Director reports to the Mayor (Art. IV; V & XV). There was formerly a Recreation Commission, but according to policies on-line, it was repealed in 1997 with responsibilities assigned to the chief executive with the establishment of an Advisory Board for the Department of Parks and Recreation (see former Art. V, Recreation Comm., of Ch. 33 of 1984 Code; Charter Art. XV, [§C15-2](#)). The Board has seven members who serve two-year terms without compensation (Chapt. A, Administrative Code). The Director, with strong assistance from this group, makes recommendations to the Mayor on practices, procedures, policy and planning.

Budget – The recreation division is within the 'Culture and Recreation' classification of the budget. According to the [2011 Budget As Modified](#), page 4, the 2011 broader culture and recreation appropriation was \$1,622,441, or 4.5% of the total budget. The cultural and recreation realms have had to do more or the same with less, driven by the impact of recession. This is evidenced by the fact that this budget category dropped from an average of about 6.6% of municipal expenditures between 2004 and 2007 according to the City's 2009 Fiscal Performance Plan (page 4). In other words, not including changes in Tourism, recent appropriations are about

¹¹ Kingston environmental education services are novel and regional in nature. This group leads external funding and 'green'/ sustainability initiatives that deliver many administrative and community benefits.

\$34,000 less than the average five years earlier. Compared with almost all other city divisions, the impact of budget austerity has been greater on Recreation.

City Parks and Recreation has 12 budget line items, not including affinity units like: Urban Cultural Park (part of City Clerk's budget) and the Rondout (Strand) boat docks. These 12 units accounted for \$1,392,498 expenditures in 2010, as shown in Table 2. City staff directly administered all services except a \$14,324 contract appropriation for youth, after-school, weekend and summer programs to the Everett Hodge Center operators¹².

Staffing/ Administration – The Director of Recreation lists 11.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees: Director; two Educators; two Recreation Leaders; and six Laborers, with the one Educator shown based out of the Department half-time and a Clerk listed at 40% with both remainders under DPW. In addition, 70 part-time personnel, predominantly youth, are hired seasonally and managed by the Recreation Department as maintenance staff, park counselors, lifeguards, and tennis instructors.

In 2010 the budget for seasonal employees was roughly \$80,000 under the Parks, Stadium and Zoo (FNC) line items, including Social Security benefits. However, budget cuts provided for reduced levels of part-time staffing, which were 7-14% higher a couple years earlier (Recreation Director Interview, March 2012)¹³.

12 An operating change effective June 2012 has Recreation leading Everett Hodge Center operations with continued assistance by Family of Woodstock, Inc. with Federal CDBG funding.

13 Besides losing laborers in recent years, the Director (June 15, 2011) notes that loss of a clerical staffer in 2009 impacts operations, as staff had to shift more time to calls and reservations. The change caused the Director to spend less time in the field. Current efforts to update the web site and implement program software should ease some constraints.

Department administration is conducted on the 2nd floor of the Andy Murphy Midtown Neighborhood Center. The office space consists of an executive office, an open office for five staff and restrooms. It is not possible to conduct public meetings on the 2nd floor as the administrative space is only accessible by multiple stairs, plus an open floor plan limits meetings unless all other staff is involved or are out of the office. Achieving funding for an elevator and architectural modifications is a priority (Director Interview, June 2011). Staff is urged to obtain architectural assessments and cost estimates to advance this short-term priority¹⁴.

Physical Operations & Maintenance – The Department operates and maintains parks (and community buildings). Roughly 2/3 of staff costs involve this purpose. Not surprising, like most organizations, review of 2010, 2011 and 2012 budgets shows labor as the largest part of operations. There are also substantial expenditures for energy and moderate ongoing outlays for General Materials and Supplies (primarily at Nature Center; Parks; Playgrounds and Pool) and Contracted Expenses. There appear to be small expenditures and reserves for Capital Outlays, Maintenance of Buildings, and Equipment. It is presumed that material and supply purchases are conducted jointly with other departments and central purchasing in order to maximize efficiency.

Energy use – The City's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory & Climate Protection Plan (2012), gives insight into operations, including by inventorying major motorized equipment, energy usage and costs. According to draft data from the City Climate Analyst in December 2011, electricity costs make up the bulk of energy consumption (58%) with natural gas use accounting for 24% of total

14 In evaluating alternatives to access the 2nd floor, an option might be to explore the feasibility to extend an elevator to the basement, in order to achieve additional secure and accessible equipment storage space.

costs¹⁵. It is assumed the remainder of Departmental energy use is attributable to fuel for equipment/ rolling stock.

The climate plan also estimates green house gas (GHG) emissions attributable to Parks & Recreation with total departmental GHG in 2010 of 373 tonnes of CO₂e with buildings and facilities representing 81% and vehicle use accounting for 19%.

Given the environmental education role of the Department, forming active strategies, with specific targets for quantifiable and aggressive emissions reductions demonstrates leadership. Forming monitoring and training protocols to act to achieve targets is a first step.

Department Vehicles & Transportation – A full equipment inventory was beyond the scope of this project, but according to the Climate Plan, Recreation operates 16 vehicles: 15 gas and 1 diesel. Over half are heavy trucks with 8 gas and 1 diesel. The remaining vehicles are 6 gas light trucks and gas passenger vehicles. There is also shared use of equipment with DPW. Developing an equipment inventory and updating it yearly will aid budget formation and provide information on efficient operations.

Important to Recreation program service delivery are three passenger vans, circa 2001, 2007 and 2010 (Staff interview). The 12-person vans are used in summer and after-school programs, out of town trips, and for equipment transport by staff. Having mobility for programs is essential – it enables diverse offerings, not to mention fuller use of facilities in Kingston. However, stock is aging. It is suggested to pursue federal aid for acquisition of transit/human service agency rolling stock through UCTC (Section 5307) funding. Opportunity exists to target a higher capacity small bus, possibly in collaboration with CitiBus, Ulster County Transit, adjacent communities or area non-profits¹⁶. Adding capacity supports larger

class size, broader service areas and new services, like transporting youth in the Summer Parks Program between sites on rainy days.

Revenues – According to the 2011 As Modified Revenue and Appropriations Budgets, revenues for Recreation were \$587,304 or 39% of all appropriations. Using this figure and ones in the 2012 adopted budget means that about 2/3 of the cost of recreation is derived from the municipal property levy.

A formal breakdown was not obtained or derived describing income attributable to: recreation impact fees (pursuant to NY State zoning enabling laws); program fees; rentals; sponsorships; and contributions. A review of revenue line items in 2010 and 2011 budgets for different recreation subdivisions appear to show incomes from grants (Forsyth Nature Center and Youth Programs); and lesser amounts from users fees (Adult Recreation; Forsyth Nature Center; and Youth Programs); rentals (Parks); and sponsor fees (Forsyth Nature Center; Adult Recreation and Youth Programs). There are also some minor revenues from trips.

Education staff has a track record of securing external grants that benefit administration, including beyond recreation. For instance, resources for energy planning and sustainability, such as secured from DEC for stormwater management and green infrastructure, benefit broad aspects of the budget. According to the 2011 City of Kingston Environmental Program Annual Report, Educators directly secured or aided 15 grants worth over \$750,000. Three were from foundations. While the funding environment is tight, working with City Economic Development staff and partners like Ulster County Community Foundation, staff can pursue charitable trusts and regional foundation resources when philanthropic aims align with Recreation Department goals. Service offerings directed to children are targets and partnership can be leveraged in this realm.

By forming revenue and expenditure metrics the Director can monitor activity. Reporting this twice per year can aid budgeting.

¹⁵ Total electric use/ cost figures don't include park lighting, as lighting is accounted for separately in the climate plan section on Public Lighting.

¹⁶ One that still only requires a basic Commercial Drivers License

It is difficult to identify opportunities to increase revenues. An option is raising fees for out of town participation in adult leagues 10-25 percent. A possibility identified by the Director is for more concessions, such as at the beach. Data on visitation rates and the opinions of users can provide perspective on feasibility. There also may be opportunity to leverage greater sponsorships, such as for adult sports. Efforts to market the pavilions, including for corporate events, might stimulate some revenue. Finally, while there are benefits of pleasing public spaces unadorned with signs, as plans for a greenway advance, policy will be needed to establish underwriting consistent with naming protocols now used by the Department.

Recreation Programs -- the Parks Department provides year-round programming, including organized youth, senior and adult activities, youth and adult sports, and environmental education. Service delivery is by two Recreation Leaders and two Environmental Educators. Also instrumental to the effort are the Nature Center Caretaker; seasonal staff, including Summer Parks Program Camp Counselors, Tennis Instructors, Junior Naturalists; Camp Education Assistants; and the Director. In developing programs, the city collaborates with initiatives such as HKK and others in providing recreation facilities and programs.

Youth programs are the largest aspect of the activities budget. Sports of many types are conducted on a league basis for many age groups. This includes flag football and tennis with its strong legacy in Kingston (tennis in conjunction with NJ Tennis League). Also, the city is committed to expanding supervised recreation, including after-school activities for school age children. Among other popular offerings are summer camps, after-school programs, youth basketball leagues and clinics (four age-groups including 'Biddyball') and Black History Month celebrations. Under the Nature Center, the Department offers guided kayaking and snowshoeing tours, hikes, children's reading and instructional classes. These are important programs for community wellness. Regional programs help support city-based offerings.

The Department began seasonal environmental education in 2005. The two full-time Environmental Educators develop and implement learning projects in the community. Educators work with students in every school in KCSD at no charge under a program started in 2006 with a grant called "Kingston Parks: An Outdoor Classroom." In this time, the broader community has called for less "sterile" school and park and for use of these spaces for education and service projects that demonstrate stewardship.

In 2011 the summer program operated out of Hasbrouck, Forsyth Park, Loughran and Hutton Parks. It is not a drop-in program, as participation by pre-registration. Maximum capacity is 80 children at any one park, but attendance averages closer to 60. Staff believes the \$200 registration fee is reasonable, although households need to come up with a lump sum fee. A Junior Naturalist Program offered for one week and longer periods in summer is more expensive but fills up. A recruiting objective is to increase marketing to Hispanic children and families and a staffing target is to hire Hispanic-speaking staff.

After school, a main offering is a drop-in program at Rondout Neighborhood and Everett Hodge Centers. At the former, on-site Recreation Leaders organize pick-up games, arts & crafts, and counsels and



Dig Kids program

encourages girls and boys. There are snacks, free play and socializing¹⁷.

Staff identifies opportunity to incorporate more environmental education into the KCSD, as a formal curriculum does not exist. Environmental service projects can also be established as teaching tools. Relatively few projects exist in schools or parks intended to protect or restore ecosystems and educate the public on sustainable practices. Community gardening efforts by HKK and KLT, supported by Recreation staff, have been popular and there has been strong set-up to enable extension of these efforts to more neighborhoods. Achieving complimentary demonstration projects is also called for in the Climate Protection Plan. Projects can be tailored to school, park and neighborhood characteristics.

It is important to consider gaps. Besides dance, it is suggested to explore potential to coordinate with local businesses and instructors to offer introductions to: yoga, meditation, marshal arts, and gymnastics. The KLT is a possible programming ally – the group has made innovate forays to stimulate civic pride and get kids and adults outside and into parks.

Adult & Community Programs – offerings are varied, including:

- Adult softball (men's and women's leagues, 71 teams in 2012); co-educational beach volleyball (32 teams); adult basketball; and Ulster Co. Open Tennis Tournament (June);
- Forsyth Nature Center family programs and



¹⁷ Other afterschool programs are at the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and two KCSD schools.

community education and lifelong learning, with local weekend kayak trips being highly popular;

- Out of town excursions, such as to visit cultural and sports events or regional tourism destinations.

Private sponsors are instrumental in underwriting adult programs.

Athletic leagues -- the Director indicates high levels of demand associated with softball leagues, although there are logistical challenges due to limited playing fields and impediments in layouts of fields, including lighting (two out of three fields). Basketball leagues probably could be even larger if there was more indoor space mobilized, such as at schools.

Family and continuing education are oriented to Forsyth Nature Center. On- and off-site learning forums cover: composting, recycling, gardening, rain harvesting, nature viewing, and ecology, sometimes in conjunction with the non-profit arm, Friends of Forsyth Nature Center. FNC staff also help execute the major Fall Festival at Forsyth Park and Educators lead the Kayak and Winter Festivals, exhibit and provide outreach at civic offerings like Uptown Farmers' Market and many other evening and weekend events.

It is encouraged for programs to enhance contact between children and adults, including parents and relatives. The current 'Use Your Parks Campaign', and its 'Parks Passport' are exciting ways to support this objective. The Community Heart Health Coalition reports positive results with parents and children working



together to learn about and achieve healthy body images.

Restoring the Prominence of Kingston's Parks – Kingston's parks serve a major civic role, fostering a sense of place and belonging for community members (see the books by Ron Woods on Kingston's parks and the history of athletics and recreation). During outreach for this project, many residents opined that as of late parks lack vitality. The community-based '*Kingston Parks Movies Under the Stars*' initiative set out to reverse this tide and revive parks as focal points. The goal of this multi-party effort was to fundraise for equipment and operating expenses in order to screen eight movies in summer 2012, each in different parks. The effort was wildly successful garnering much of the required resources in just a few months through efforts like raffles, bowling, sponsorships and a benefit concert. These events also inspire people to work (and play) together towards a common goal. Led by the new Friends of Kingston Parks and Recreation, and with strong support by KLT and the Recreation Board, the effort also involved numerous contributing and collaborating organizations and businesses including Kingston Lions Club, Kingston Cares, and volunteers. *Movies Under the Stars* is a great example of the power of partnerships and shining attention on Kingston's park amenities.

Organized concerts, dances, and movies were historically popular in parks. Summer movies (see sidebar) are a return to this offering. Also, as shown by buzz around flash mobs and well-attended Zoomba dance events, like one organized at Dietz Stadium by Ulster County Health, dance is popular. It is suggested to try structuring family and inter-generational dance activities. Among a group of KCS D high school women interviewed in 2010 about what they like to do have fun and be active, many expressed a preference for dance.

The HKK and CHP projects are major efforts to achieve community health through environmental and policy change. These initiatives can motivate people, and help them experience their environments

People seem to take pleasure when they get out and walk and bike. Community challenges and inspirational programs can build awareness of health topics and establish support for health policy change. Staging an 'Open Streets' event on a preset date and route, such from Forsyth Park/Dietz Stadium along the 'corridor' to a Broadway turn-around closed to motorized traffic would be novel and liberating. People-friendly activities like this have been shown to be popular and can aid business and community cohesion. A foundation appeal for support to catalyze an event will probably succeed because the impact can be gauged.

Senior Programs center on aiding older people in getting together to discuss issues and socialize, with some groups organized as classes on cooking, arts and craft, or for exercise. Senior hikes are organized a few times a year mid-week during the day. City staff also partners with County Office of the Aging, which aids independent living, assists and advocates for seniors, offers information and referrals.

In 2010 a Recreation Leader that assisted senior and adult programs moved to a different role within the civil service; however, in 2012 the Mayor indicated intent to bring back more senior and adult programs, possibly as part of Hodge Center reorganization. Given growth in older age groups, staff can collaborate with Ulster Health and others to organize walking groups and challenges to get seniors active and out on trails and streets. With the consent of cemetery trustees, walks could take place there.

One opportunity may be to achieve greater coordination with Ulster Corps, a non-profit that coordinates volunteer service. Retirees might be used as docents at the Nature Center. It is also suggested to recruit people from this age group to volunteer with HKK partnership efforts, such as by helping organize and run walking school buses as part of the safe route to schools and parks initiative and mentoring teenagers in the HKK-assisted youth common council.

RECREATION SERVICE STANDARDS

This section defines a system of classification for all parks and fixtures that comprise the recreation system in Kingston. These groupings are intended to aid descriptions of how recreation facilities supply and demand are playing out and may play out in the future.

A modern recreation system has different types of facilities with alternate functions, sizes, locations, service areas, designs and development. For this analysis, recreation facilities are divided into the general classifications, or categories:

- **Special Purpose;**
- **Greenway;**
- **Community (city-wide); and**
- **Neighborhood-level.**

These categories are formed by distilling ones in Planning & Urban Design Standards, edited by American Planning Association (APA), published by John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 2006, and From Recreation to Re-creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning, Meagan Lewis, Editor, APA, Planning Advisory Service Report #551, 2008.

This provides for examination of recreation level of service in Kingston. Analysis explores possible opportunities and gaps. It was decided not to compare service with adjacent communities or comparable cities in the Mid-Hudson Valley because there is not a ready set plans and data by which to compare. Therefore, this needs assessment is framed by considering service standards used in other communities in the US, especially in the northeast. Many places have formed recreation service standards using 1993 guidelines by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA). The standards that follow roughly parallel NRPA guidelines with adjustments provided as explained below.

The service guidelines presented are based on an inventory of facilities, observations of facility use, interviews, reviews of

geography, and facets of demand for recreation in the city and region. Planning goals were considered in forming service guidelines, particularly the interest of recreation leaders in optimizing and sustaining resources.

Neighborhood Parks – the basic unit of Kingston's recreation system, neighborhood-based parks serve recreational and social purposes. This type of park usually is represented by a small area intended to provide an attractive setting and place for lite or informal recreation that is within easy walking distance of those it is designed to serve. In Kingston it is desirable for all areas to be served by neighborhood parks that are readily accessible. Children need places to play, so neighborhood parks serve younger people by providing open space/ play lots for different ages up to 18 years. This type of park also serves anyone else seeking outdoor space. While designed primarily for informal recreation, neighborhood parks often have playgrounds and grassy fields that enable varied use and free play. In instances where there are fields, these may afford some use by sports leagues, such as for practice, although often footprints may be inadequate to accommodate formal games. These parks should have benches for people to relax, playgrounds should be shaded from sun with attractive areas for adults to accompany children.

Neighborhood parks are essential in multifamily neighborhoods with two- and three-family housing, since these types of residences often have limited yards. Moreover, in all districts it is desirable to have neighborhood parks to allow for social contact. Parks and plazas are also desirable in mixed-use and nonresidential areas as places of respite for workers, shoppers and tourists. Neighborhood parks in Kingston do not usually mimic natural areas; rather, their character embodies that of the neighborhood they are in. Neighborhood parks are especially valuable when tied into greenways.

While spacing at ¼ mile density is preferred, it is acceptable to have a service standard where there is a neighborhood, or higher order park, within ½ mile of all areas, uninterrupted by major roads like

the Thruway or Route 9W¹⁸ (see also Greenways). Typical neighborhood park size is three acres, but preferably it is five to ten acres. Still, there are parks classified as neighborhood service in Kingston smaller than three acres. This includes plazas like Academy Green and vest pocket parks like Gill Street Playground and Peace Park. Since schools in Kingston sometimes complement recreation, a few accessible schoolyards and fixtures are treated as part of the potential neighborhood park supply. Privately controlled recreation facilities, including playing fields used by little leagues, are also classified under this heading.

Community Parks – these city parks serve broader purposes and areas, focusing on larger geographies. Being multipurpose facilities, community parks support activities of all ages, providing recreation centers for the City. Often, these comprise landscape units. The size of community parks varies, but a minimum of 20 acres is preferred with 40 acres and more optimal. Community parks occupy more accessible, central locations and provide for more wide-ranging needs. Community parks make possible valuable and popular forms of recreation that require more space. Accordingly, they are more diverse facilities than neighborhood parks. Community parks usually have open play fields as part of site mix, including athletic fields designed for organized sports, especially for youth. They have a section as a play lot or playground that serves adjacent neighborhoods, which is typical in Kingston.

A sub-class of community parks is Large City Parks which usually compose tract of 50 to 450 hundreds acres. An example is the 300+/- open space planned for the hills above Hudson Landing development. In Large City Parks, there are often prominent natural features, such as a section of forest with a stream, or the basin of a pond. The primary purpose of a large City park is to provide a pleasant environment for people to engage in low impact activities, like hiking, nature viewing and picnicking which benefit from

natural and scenic environments. Large city parks can also provide a cultural center for citywide activities.

Special Purpose Parks & Facilities – this group addresses unique landscapes and open spaces. It includes facilities oriented towards single uses like community centers and historic sites. Typically, with citywide service areas, or larger, this includes: beaches and riverfront environments, swimming pools and indoor athletic facilities. More extensive acreage in very large 'regional parks' or preserves that provide natural resource preservation and stewardship, with service areas consisting of many municipalities, such as the nearby Mohonk Preserve and Catskill State Park, are special purpose. 'Special' facilities often comprise 50 acres, although typically the desired effect is achieved in 100 acres. Still, this standard is treated flexibly in Kingston recognizing there are smaller special parks/ facilities parks, including abutting the water.



The Strand viewed from Rondout Creek

¹⁸ City recreation leaders advised using ½ mile service area radius.

Table 3 – Parks Inventory

PARK / FACILITY <i>Special Purpose = Blue (1-9); Community = Green (10-12); Neighborhood = White (13-23); Other = Orange (24-29)</i>	ACRES	FEATURE	OTHER FEATURES	Playgr'nd (L= large)	'Bat'ball field	Tennis	Basketball	Volleyball
1. Andretta Pool	1.4	Pool facility	Picnic					
2. Andy Murphy Midtwn Cntr	1.1	Indoor court	Meeting room, stage				1/2	1/2
3. Dietz Stad(ftball; fieldh; lax)	12.1	Multipurpose field	Track				1	
4. Forsyth Nature Center		Zoo (part of Forsyth Park)						
5. Hodge Center	0.2							
6. Kingston Point Beach	10.6	Bathing beach	Car-top boat launch	1				4
7. Rondout Center	0.3	Indoor court					1	
8. Rondout Lighthouse	84.7	Iconic structure	Dike					
9. TR Gallo Park	1.4	Waterfront	Linear park					
10. Forsyth Park	18.5	Lawn field		1L	2L	6		
11. Hasbrouck Park	45.0	Rec Court		1	1S		1	
12. Kingston Point	87.4	Field lighting; BMX course	Trails, picnic		1S			
13. 4th Ward Memorial Park	0.9							
14. Academy Green	1.5							
15. Block Park	7.1	Field lighting		1	1S		1	
16. Cornell Park	3.0							
17. Gill St. Playground	0.2			1				
18. Hutton Park	6.0	Lawn/ Rec field		1		2	1	
19. J.R. Schultz Complex	18.7	Lawn/ Rec field			2L			
20. Loughran	7.5			1	1B	4	1	
21. Murray St. Courts	1.7		Open space				2	
22. Peace Park & Chapel St. Park	1.8		2 sites / each passive					
23. Van Buren Park	0.1			1				
24. Bailey & Edson Schools	5.0	High/low ropes			1L		1	
25. G.W. School	0.5			1			1	
26. Kingston High School	3.0	Small rec field				4		
27. B's/G's Clubs & Metro' Park	2.8			1	1L		2	
28. YMCA	1.0	Small rec field		1			3	
29. Ballfield @ Kingston Plaza	3.3				1B			
TOTALS				11	11	16	15.5	4.5

Trails/Greenway – As discussed under 'Linear Parks', greenways are designated corridors that follow natural areas, key streets, and other rights of ways thereby providing appealing multimodal connections between parks and population centers. Greenways typically contain trails and other bicycle and pedestrian access. Greenways have distinguishing features like: landscaping, buffers, historic attributes and other design treatments that aid visually appealing and cohesive spaces. Greenways link open space and cultural nodes, establishing those points as destinations. A baseline criterion for a Kingston Greenway is to preserve high-quality and unique landscape features of the city, including key corridors that have cultural and/or natural heritage, within street and rail rights of way and around stream (and river) corridors.

Facilities Inventory & Supply Analysis

Table 3 is an inventory of parks and facilities within Kingston. It is grouped to show the service standard categories:

- Special Purpose (1-9);
- Community (10-12);
- Neighborhood Park (13-23); and
- 'Other' resources (24-29).

Other – These six resources exist on school property, non-profit and private lands. The set is treated as Neighborhood Parks. Fixtures on them are counted within the total facilities supply that is used in a needs projection that examines existing and projected surplus and deficit. There are roughly 16 acres in 'Other' park facilities, consisting of parts of school sites that are readily accessible to the community and used for recreation (three), non-profit sites operated by the YMCA and Boys/Girls Club (two¹⁹), plus one on private property. These are critical facilities, especially as sources of recreation supply for populated parts of the city; however, it is not

¹⁹ Metropolitan Park shown as Boys/Girls Club (#27) is on private land.

presumed access is guaranteed to the community, so working to formalize recreation uses, joint use and protection of these supplies is important.

Special Purpose - There are 155 acres within the Special Purposes class now, including the Senate House museum site that is a State owned heritage resource (not shown in Parks Facilities Supply inventory, Tale 3). *Reviewing the set of parks and spaces defined as Special Purposes, it must be recognized that a substantial part is 85 acres within the Rondout Light parcel, although there is limited direct public access and extensive land under water, which currently limits public use for this facility for recreation.*

Considering Special Purpose parks and facilities, recreation staff must form plans for the long-term development of Andretta Pool. It is important to plan for Environmental Education staff use of Everett Hodge Center, and budget for stabilization and upgrade of the barn there. Moreover, there is a need to plan whether and how the Environmental Educators and/or Forsyth Nature Center would operate out of a nature center proposed at the Hudson Landing site. Recreation staff must also be prepared to help plan and implement other identified special projects articulated in local plans, any one of which may ramp-up during the next decade.

One proposed recreation site discussed at length in the LWRP is Island Dock. There is corresponding strategy in the City's Waterfront Brownfield Opportunity Area Step 2 Nomination Final Report, 2010, in which the preferred land use plan calls for Island Dock becoming a new recreation node. A private party is exploring alternatives, including recreation and marina uses. Proposed improvements include a boat launch, boat slips, a crew (sculling) pavilion, park and trails, a pedestrian connection (bridge) from the east end of Island Dock to West Strand Park, and new parking near Block Park (page 5). Given marine frontage and unconsolidated fills it is not supposed that athletic fields will go here, but the site provides for substantial extension of special purpose recreation. It is

sensible to reinforce maritime and industrial heritage there and augment public access to the water. This is a project for which it will be important to define how to maximize public recreation opportunity through limited public expenditure. Should the project come forward, the estimated supply addition will be on the order of five acres. The resource allocation for city staff to review and facilitate the development will be a significant, but it is critical for recreation stakeholders to be involved in setting details for the future use and arrangement and sustainable management and development.

To assure an even and equitable geographic distribution of special purpose facilities in the future, there must be frequent points available for public access to the water, with informal recreation opportunity planned by the Esopus River. Preferably supply can be planned and arranged so that there is non-profit stewardship, such as by a land trust or watershed organization.

Community Park – Three existing Community Parks comprise 151 acres. They do not have many athletic fields and substantial space in them is programmed for special purposes, like FNC, Colonial Little League field at Forsyth Park and the BMX track at Kingston Point.

The 300+/- acre planned Large City Park at Hudson Landing will bolster the supply of Community parks. That space is a major and multifaceted opportunity. A priority is achieving formal conservation and development of the site. City Recreation staff must take involvement in planning and programing the site and access to it from the waterfront and nearby environments.

While Kingston has a high proportion of special use facilities, there are aspects of deficient supply for sports athletic playing fields. Recreation leaders must define cost-effective ways to add some new athletics field capacity and/or supply, especially that is centrally accessible. Enhancing existing facilities and protecting private open spaces are effective way to advance this objective, as this will upgrade level of service.

Neighborhood Parks & Greenway – there are 46.8 acres in this type of public park plus 16 acres listed in ‘Other’ facilities. Of this, 18.7 acres is at ‘J.R. Schultz Field Complex, which has limited community use. Given that pocket parks and playgrounds are grouped in this category, the city can benefit from supply additions, such as more one-half to one and one half acre parks, especially in Midtown and Uptown. Achieving formal development of the Greenway is important to aid access to existing parks and derive additional space to serve neighborhood needs. As noted under Community Parks, there is need for new and/or upgraded athletic fields -- it acceptable for that type of development to occur within this class.

For greenway, which is part of this category, the main existing trails are: Burning of Kingston Trail; walking tours of historic districts; the Rondout waterfront extending east and west from the Strand; and ones at Kingston Point. A NRPA general standard is for one linear trail per community; however, achieving a more comprehensive greenway is in line with open space character of the area, the tourism base, and the recreation vision of the city and region. *Importantly, by achieving Neighborhood and Community parks integrated within a connected city Greenway system, the distance between parks can be allowed to expand slightly within moderate density areas from ½ mile to ¾ mile.* This is because Greenways will afford easy, pleasant access for users, with the corridors themselves becoming part and parcel of the parks system and the recreation experience.

A high priority for enhancing the City of Kingston’s recreation supply is advancing the formal design and development of the local Greenway. Private developers must be convinced to forge formal connections to Greenway and enhance Greenways on and fronting on their properties. Developers should also be encouraged to contribute financial resources to enable development of the greenway and associated amenities community-wide.

Table 4

Existing & Future Facilities Supply Analysis Based on Kingston-derived Facility Standards														
RECOMMENDED RECREATION FACILITY STANDARD (Per Population Increment)	Playground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Volleyball Court	'Bat'ball Field	Running Track	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pools	Field Hockey Field	Lacrosse Field	Skate Park	Golf Driving Range	Golf Course
KINGSTON-BASED STANDARD	1 per 2,000	1 per 4,000	1 per 3,500	1 per 4,000	1 per 3,500	1 per 30,000	1 per 20,000	1 per 25,000	1 per 30,000	1 per 30,000	1 per 30,000	1 per 35,000	1 each per 50,000	1 each per 60,000
FACILITIES IN KINGSTON IN 2012	11.0	16.0	15.5	4.5	11.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
CURRENT DEFICIT/ SURPLUS (Using 2012 population of 23,893)	-1.0	10.0	8.5	-1.5	4.0	0.0	-1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.5	-0.5	0.0
TEN YEAR PROJECTED DEFICIT/ SURPLUS (Using 2022 population of 27,198)	-2.5	9.0	7.5	-2.0	3.0	0.0	-1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.0	-0.5	0.0

Table 4 summarizes population and distance service standards derived and used for different types of facilities in Kingston. These guidelines are based in part on NRPA standards for communities throughout the U.S. While they are used sometimes unchanged, tailored adjustments were made for Kingston. This means that these individual facility service standards are Kingston-specific and based on features of the community. Table 4 shows aspects of service, now and in the future, that are satisfactory or need supply improvements.

The following commentary explores the facility standards used and the corresponding assessment of facilities existing and future needs:

- *Basketball* – The supply of courts is mostly outdoors, plus two indoors at neighborhood centers, with Midtown Center court assigned a half unit as it is used for other activities like volleyball (one at Rondout Center is more compatible for youth basketball given size)²⁰. While there is diverse supply, some courts do not meet clearance space on all sides, so staff must strive to make adjustments to improve safety when reconstruction is planned on courts. Basketball is popular and leagues are well attended. Therefore, the population service standard set for basketball in Kingston is ambitious, although there is adequate existing supply. Assigned a half-mile service radius, possibly more if accessed by greenway, there can still be targets for new outdoor courts in Midtown, by the high school and/or Foxhall Ave./ O'Neil Street.
- *Soccer/ Field Hockey/ Lacrosse* – many places set separate service standards for soccer, field hockey and lacrosse fields. Besides KCSD-team use of Dietz Stadium for lacrosse and hockey, strong or added demand is not anticipated for those two sports. Yet, sustained and increased demand is anticipated for soccer based on observed informal play plus a youth league (use of Loughran for soccer can conflict with

youth baseball and adult softball). As a long-term objective it is suggested to target some type of new athletic field. The footprint should be 1.75 to 2.0 acres and carefully laid out to serve all of these sports, and even broader multi-purpose use. A central location is desirable. While achieving this objective will be difficult, there can be monitoring for opportunities by the waterfront. And it is suggested to explore potential to jointly develop a field with adjacent communities or schools. While there may be potential around Ulster Avenue, the area may not be ideal as it is beyond easy reach of the city's core.

- *Softball/ Little League & Baseball* – these sports are popular in Kingston, as evidenced by many 'batball' fields. Minimum space requirements typically range from over an acre for little league fields to 1.75 acres for softball and over 3.0 acres for regulation baseball. There was not rigorous assessment of fields size mix or adequacy of individual fields, so information can be augmented. Two softball fields have lights, which extend use. Management and control of fields varies. For this use in Kingston the focus is investing in turf, safety and accessory equipment upgrades and optimizing access and management.
- *Volleyball* – Based on popularity of indoor and outdoor volleyball leagues, the population service standard suggested for Kingston is 20 percent more aggressive than one suggested by NRPA. The supply centers on the Beach, which limits this activity when it conflicts with bathing. It is suggested that the small footprint required for courts, just over 1/10th of an acre, plus low equipment and site preparation costs support efforts to provide this type of use in other points within Kingston Point complex, and possibly elsewhere in the city, such as at Andretta Pool, Forsyth/Bailey/Edson or the High School sites in order to achieve accessible service for more of the city.

²⁰ Inventory does not count courts indoors at schools.

-
- *Tennis* – There are courts at multiple parks and KHS²¹. Youth tennis instruction is offered in summer, there are tournaments (youth and adult), a cooperative arrangement with a private school for use of courts, and a recent donation will underwrite some drainage improvements at Forsyth Park courts. The future supply appears adequate, even with two courts off line at Forsyth Park. The focus should be on completing drainage improvements and maintaining courts. Area tennis clubs are willing to assist tennis courts management and sustaining programs.
 - *Ice-skating* – at one point there was an effort to berm a former tennis court in lower Hasbrouck Park, while years ago the city provided winter rinks on ponds. However, given weather variability and cost, it is not suggested for the Department to prioritize skating. Supplying one rink could be an activity for non-profit or friends groups. Given the accessibility of Kingston to the broader region, as a form of economic development there might also be encouragement for some party financing and siting an indoor rink.
 - *Golf Course* – There is no publicly owned city golf course in the city. Nor is there a publicly owned course identified within 20 miles. There is, however, a private course in the city (Twaalfskill – 18 holes) and the High School team is allowed access. There are multiple courses open to the public for fee within 20 miles, including in Ulster, New Paltz and Saugerties. The potential to accommodate a public facility in the city does not seem feasible based on space requirements, but there should be exploration into whether Twaalfskill would partner with the city to donate lessons and play by city children to exposure them to the sport.
 - *Golf Range* – There are no public or private driving ranges in the city. A private one, such as on Albany Avenue, probably could be sustained by market demand.
 - *Marinas (Not in Table 4)* – there are several presently on the Rondout. Further use of Kingston's waterfront for this purpose appears encouraged in city plans. Any marinas developed in the future must have public access components. There was not a scan for additional publicly owned land suitable for a marina, but public control can mandate ecological practices and enable revenues.
 - *Disk Golf (Not in Table)*. In plan research residents expressed interest in disc golf. Game requirements, while variable, assume “All courses share the basic elements: targets, tee pads, signage, topography, and safety” wikipedia.org/wiki/Disc_golf That there probably is demand for a facility is confirmed by growing popularity nationally and groups in the region as well as one that meets at the YMCA to play Frisbee football. There is no formal facility in Ulster County, but there is one in Orange County.

A model used in other local efforts, such as for a city dog park, has been encouragement of volunteers to determine what it might take to implement an initiative after consultations with City leaders. A strategy for catalyzing disc golf course should be community-based, with equipment siting planned so it can be phased to fit with existing recreation uses, in an existing park. Alternatively, this may be a compatible use on private woodlands, such as in vulnerable floodplain. Economic development staff could be consulted to help spur investment. Either way, a recommended early step is for interested parties to caucus. Given a presumed requirement for a large space to accommodate a four to six unit course, a candidate location for a course may be at the Forsyth/Bailey&Edson locus or

21 City Recreation leaders indicate the City partially owns tennis courts at Kingston High School. This assures joint use. It is suggested to establish protocol for police monitoring, provide informational signage, and arrange for neighborhood volunteers to locks gates in evenings,.

the High School. While Kingston Point may be feasible, analysis must explore its fit with future growth and other uses and activities at that location.

Playgrounds – review of locations, distribution, and population characteristics shows deficient supply, especially around mid-town. Ideal locations for playgrounds are near the center of neighborhoods. Playgrounds are important elements of healthy places.

The roughly 0.6 acre playground at Forsyth Park has a citywide function. Its age and strong user base make this a priority site to invest in diverse equipment. There appears to be adequate space for an upgrade considering there could be 100-125 users at peak operation with a target service standard of maintaining 125 square feet per child. Still, there needs to be landscaping to achieve tree succession and siting of equipment by mature trees. It is suggested to add more space for swings, seating, free-play, and fencing to isolate children from vehicles at the adjacent main entrance.

Considering other city playgrounds, while most serve neighborhoods, Hasbrouck and Kingston Point are busier. The Point serves a large population given beach and regional visitors, but Hasbrouck is accessible to more residents. Both have surrounding space,



Hutton Park playground (2013)

such that upgrades could assign more square footage to features like pivoting swings, tunnels and bridges, drinking fountains, benches and shade. While space is more constrained at Hasbrouck, adjacency to the elementary school makes it a good space to try out apparatus designed for

dramatic play, like abstract shaped equipment, such as using buried tree trunks or remnant industrial structures determined to be safe. Besides city-owned playgrounds, there are ones important to neighborhoods. Fixtures at George Washington School show heavy use weekends and after-school²². KCS D is encouraged to reclaim pavement by fixtures and add equipment accessible outside school hours. On private lands there are also playgrounds at the YMCA.

Adding moveable fixtures, like rocking boats or tire swings, is a way to increase vigorous activity, and this is an objective when playgrounds targeted for preschool ages are upgraded. Effort can achieve equipment and space additions to stimulate active play and motor skills development. Fixtures used by more than one child, like tubes children crawl through, aid social development. For equipment specification, research must identify fixtures that aid motor learning. Expensive equipment may not capture stimulate children. Since one way to increase activity is to increase natural features and elements like grass, trees, hills, water and sand, staff can define ways to structure complimentary space. Finally, evidence shows that children with access to larger parks are more vigorously active. This points to a need for new and larger parks or spaces in Midtown and populated areas around O'Neil Street and Foxhall Avenue. HKK can help educate and advocate about the importance of this supply.

In conclusion, the above standards should be reviewed and reappraised from time to time, say every three to five years; and, if found advisable, adjusted to changing conditions. The standards presented here have been developed considering local conditions like demographics, economic conditions, public finances, climate, transportation patterns, and population density and distribution. Standards offer a norm or a point of departure and as such they can form the basis for the intelligent formation of local development plans and programs.

²² Most other school-based playgrounds are isolated and have poor access such that potential for joint use appears limited.

EXISTING MUNICIPAL RECREATION FACILITIES

This Section provides detailed review of individual recreation facility sites and their surrounding area. It defines and characterizes features. It characterizes the recreation facilities supply, spaces, and explores physical planning and corresponding notions for site-and area-specific architectural/ landscape architectural physical programs. It also examines relationships between recreation resources and city geographic features. For each park or facility, opportunities are identified to enhance resources and achieve complimentary economic development.

Each site is identified by its location and size along with an inventory overview of its main physical assets and facility attributes. Then there is a description of the site and surrounding environment and access (as mobility and active transport – meaning feasibility to walk, bicycle and use transit in and around recreation assets are factors that influence use). Then, for each park, there are descriptions of ways to enhance and invest in parks over the short and longer-time frames using human resource and financial outlays.

As examined in detail below, major parks, buildings and facilities the Department stewards include: [Andy Murphy, Rondout and Everett Hodge neighborhood/ community centers](#); [Andretta Pool](#); [Academy Green Park](#); [Block Park](#); [Forsyth Park & Nature Center](#); [Hasbrouck Park](#); [Hutton Park](#); [Kingston Beach, Kingston Point & "Rotary Park"](#); [Loughran Park](#); [TR Gallo Waterfront Park / Rondout Landing Dock and Gill Street and Van Bureen Playgrounds](#).

A main source of data was interviews with City Recreation staff. Some plans, publications and reference materials were provided to the project consultant. Other sources of city and regional data were the municipal web page and on-line databases and geographic information, including as available on Ulster County web pages. Gilmour Planning did not research Recreation Department park-specific files or those of City Clerk's office; however, extensive site

visits and field reconnaissance were performed, with some photo documentation. Regional data was also accessed from county, state and non-profit web pages and other published reports.

FORSYTH PARK (18.5 acres) *Ward 1* – Forsyth Park is a community recreational hub with many components, including a large playground. It is centrally located. The park has roughly 50% open space in rolling lawns and lightly manicured forest. It is a focus for community events and regional festivals and the adjunct Forsyth Nature Center or zoo (characterized separately) is a unique regional resource. The value of the Forsyth Park is leveraged by adjacency to Dietz Stadium, Andretta Pool and Bailey and Edson Schools. The site does not appear susceptible to flooding that could degrade investment. The optimization and enhancement of Forsyth Park and its environs is a major opportunity for the City.

Resources of Forsyth Park (not including FNC) are:

- A roofed pavilion with concrete slab floor and picnic tables (available for reservation);
- A large wood playground, named Kinderland, circa 1992;
- Women's and men's restrooms, at the playground, operated roughly three seasons;
- A tennis facility: six adjacent courts in three separate fenced enclosures, plus a portable bleacher – court rehab started in 2012, focused on drainage and aspects of four courts;
- An open lawn/ field area, roughly 2.0 acres, including a small baseball diamond and backstop (plus a remnant concrete band stand and a small, unspecified outbuilding);
- Picnic areas and woodland trails in a forested setting – observations show low attendance and use for relaxation;
- A roughly 1,250 square foot program building (used seasonally by summer youth programs);
- A WPA-era handball court (two sided wall); and a

- Another isolated little league field and appurtenance structures, about 1.0 acre, adjacent to Edson Elementary driveway, operated by Kingston Colonial League.

Environment & Access – Forsyth Park's entrance on Lucas Avenue is 1/4-mile from Washington Avenue. For pedestrians, there are sidewalks along Hurley Avenue with links to Washington Street environments by sidewalks (and crosswalks), although linear connectivity and accessibility is hampered by sidewalk conditions and gaps. Importantly, since Forsyth Park abuts two public schools, the pool and Dietz Stadium, access is afforded across the park to these uses (a metal gate at Dietz Stadium is used during events).

Internally, Forsyth Park has a driveway around the site. The level of circulation, and friction, is heavier by the main entrance and the popular Nature Center. There is sparse use by motorized vehicles in the upper level and by the tennis courts. Pavement conditions vary, with some recent improvements in highly trafficked areas, but there are worn surfaces plus heaves on low use driveways. There is new signage for a walking route across the lower part of the Park into the Dietz complex. Occasionally cars drive out onto the main lawn as there is not landscaping and signage to deter this.

With its central location, the park is accessible from schools and adjacent neighborhoods. A priority is fostering a safe walking and biking environment in and around it. A Safe Routes to School Master Plan (2011) for Bailey and Edson Schools, facilitated by the Safe Routes to Schools and Parks Committee of HKK, points to area non-motorized access improvements. There are efforts to advance these 'safe routes' strategies. For one, KCS D students are not allowed to walk through the Park without parental authorization, such as to access Dietz Stadium for after-school activities and instead students are bused 1/3 mile for school sports. An issue surrounding youths walking in the park centers on concerns that individuals might be apprehended, as some spots in the upper park have poor lines of sight, compounded by low levels of users, so that safety in number

principles do not prevail. There is growing interest in enhancing walkability – with school principals involved in dialogue.

Concurrently, the group 'Bike Friendly Kingston' is advocating for bike access improvements on Washington and Lucas Avenues. In 2010 Lucas Avenue was paved, but painting shoulders and enhancing signage will specifically accommodate bikes.

Many residents access Forsyth Park via Dietz stadium. As discussed under the Stadium, some mobility upgrades are being advanced by the front entrance as part of signalization upgrades at Washington Ave./Hurley Ave/Swenk Drive. There are also complimentary actions in the Uptown Stockade District Transportation Plan (2009). Providing enhanced landscaping will benefit the park and Nature Center as it will create a welcoming, signature environment around the park and its gateways.

Considering a primary neighborhood service of ¼ mile, Forsyth serves the tip of Lucas Avenue, northern Washington Avenue, eastern Hurley Avenue and part of Uptown. As noted, efforts are occurring to implement context sensitive improvements in streets and sidewalks by the park. Extending the service area to one half mile, recognizing the park's city-wide/ regional service function, besides Lucas and Hurley Avenues having limited or no sidewalks, there are barriers to access, other than by auto, from the west and north (NY State Thruway, State Route 587 and Esopus River). Still, considered in relation to the business, governmental and civic functions in the Uptown and Stockade District, Forsyth Park has a central role and linkages are being forged, including through rail trail connection to the north (see below).



Park Design & Enhancement – While there are toilets at the playground, the structures are old, and open about a half year, May through October. In addition, there are not permanent convenience facilities at Forsyth Nature Center, which necessitates rent for portable toilets. While there are restrooms year-round at Dietz stadium about 1,000 feet from the core of the park, staff interviews and opinion research indicate that having accessible restrooms influences park and nature center use. Therefore, replacement of the restrooms is a priority.

Given adjacent and diverse public lands and recreational uses, a priority is undertaking design-planning to integrate access, layout and optimize recreation utilization. A Forsyth Park/ Dietz Stadium/ Andretta Pool/Baily-Edson Schools landscape master plan should



look at all of these land uses holistically and optimize and achieve better and higher use of components. It is suggested to budget \$20,000 for this type of design mater plan. Achieving a more park-like atmosphere and recreational offerings in and at Forsyth Park will deliver higher-order service to children, residents and region.

A challenge is securing funding for an integrated plan for all of these adjacent public properties and getting various parties to advance it. Forming a program will insure smart investments. One question to

address will be how much and where to provide motorized access and parking in Forsyth Park itself? There is a need for parking, especially at peak periods. A 2008 plan, since abandoned at this location, provided architectural analysis for a new Nature Center building and changes in the driveway network. New analysis can explore greenspace reclamation through reconfigured circulation and the impact of turning two mis-oriented tennis courts into parking.

A priority is replacing Kinderland, the most heavily used playground in the city. It is busy most days, especially weekends. Wood structures are worn. Valuable features are: diverse play platforms, fences that keep children from wandering off, and perimeter benches. Currently, the Director plans a four-year replacement program, including restrooms. The master plan must advance detailing for equipment and construction specifications and landscaping.

Other objectives for master planning are to define:

- Coordinated signage, with formation of symbols and a sign hierarchy that can be applied across the park system;
- Planting program;
- Potential structure for advancing multiple uses at the upper baseball diamond;
- Ways to enhance the lawn, bandstand, furniture, and provide new drinking fountains;
- Improvements by the park edge by Lucas Avenue;
- Stormwater management, and
- Optimized space, including in upper picnic/sitting areas.

Having a planting program and schedule, can aid budgeting to replace specimen trees and ensure native and hardy species and reinforce the site as an urban arboretum the complements FNC²³.

²³ In 2011 community-based efforts aided landscape maintenance. There is pride and support for keeping the park vital. A landscaping program is a tool for catalyzing a Forsyth Park friends group and civic investment.

FORSYTH NATURE CENTER – This is one of a few municipally run zoos in the northeast US. The community prizes this regional resource. Popular since its inception, animals and birds are housed in structures and stalls. While retaining broad appeal, the FNC has transformed to provide a wider mission, with guided wildlife tours and year-round environmental education.

There is no permanent, accessible public restroom, although there is a lavatory for staff in a maintenance building. In 2007, planning for FNC explored siting a new building in the core of Forsyth Park with bathrooms. While no longer being pursued, architectural specifications were generated to renovate space for a fuller, publicly accessible lavatory. Restroom improvements within FNC are a priority for investment in that building (or elsewhere) with recognition that there will be operating cost savings over ‘porta-potty’ rental.



Overall, the FNC site is busy, space is tight, and there is not integration of the rear of the site and adjacent Dietz Stadium.

Landscaping design and coordination of space with the Stadium Commission is critical. One objective is to achieve a shared maintenance area with Dietz plus shared equipment use. This will achieve valuable functional space for the Nature Center and operating efficiency. The master planning can inform siting and interpretive signs and displays, including wayfinding, and designs for receptacles for donations by the zoo entrance. Finally, aggressive planning to deploy 'green' technologies is important since children are exposed to healthy living through the programs here.



HASBROUCK PARK (45.0 acres), Ward 8 – This park provides Citywide service. Another of the parks with two tiers, the upper level has magnificent views of the Hudson. Its picnic amenities, pavilion, softball field and woods make this a desirable location for family and group gatherings. The lower level is a base for summer youth programs and adjacency to John F. Kennedy Elementary School ensures frequent use during and after school. Steep terrain prohibits additional athletic fields. Besides



Upper Hasbrouck Park

adding trail access, it cannot be expanded beyond present limits because of topography. Still, there are ways to increase use and promote compatible design and improvements, including by advancing landscape architect formed programming (2011).

Lower Level features include:

- Playground – circa 1994 -- children's equipment and swings;
- Basketball court (with lights – lights not used);
- Single handball court and backstop (with vibrant mural)
- Stone building – roughly 1,000 square feet, with restrooms and storage space (available for lease and containing a kitchen – it can host meetings or large picnics); and a
- Paved, fenced area for games (formerly tennis courts/skating rink with non-functioning lights).

Upper Level – on top of a hill with nice views, it is has a perimeter drive. There one was a ski lift/slope. It has:

- Softball field/ backstop (not lit and constrained by uneven surfaces and exposed ledge);
- Pavilion – used for picnics, weddings, etc. (can be leased);
- Restroom, concrete block, functional but in serious disrepair and poorly sited in relation to park amenities;
- Grills, refuse receptacles and stage (latter in disrepair); and
- Some plantings within an informal arboretum.



the park intersection and signs identify the park and the 'Burning of Kingston Trail'. Still, the access drive itself is non-descript and cluttered by multiple vehicles on the edge of the right of way at an abutting residence.

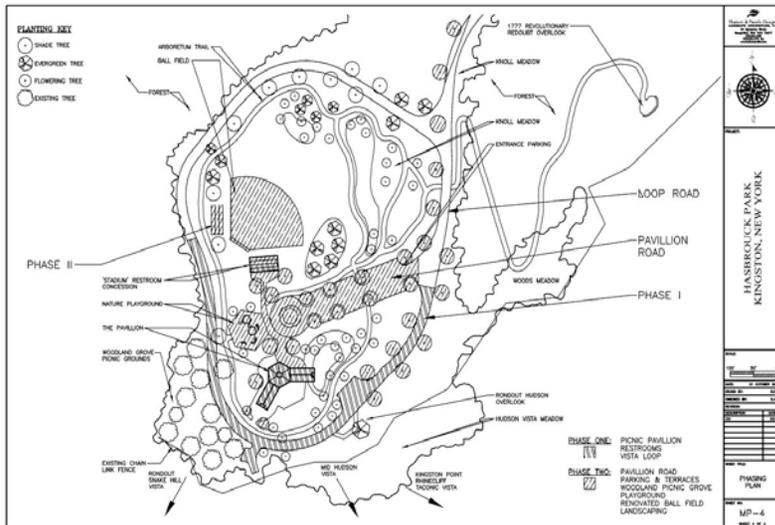


Dumpster by park gate

Most lower level users access from the school, with parking and a pedestrian way extending beyond the school south to the Rondout Garden multifamily neighborhood. There are no bike racks at the park or school. A dumpster in the school parking lot right by the crosswalk and park gate does not set a welcoming tone and should be moved. Internal to the park, there is parking in the lower level for 17 cars, while the upper level has about 10 spaces by the pavilion. At peak periods, such as during softball games, vehicles park by pulling-off the side of the driveway.

The Recreation Director identifies need to pave the lower parking area and driveway by the stone building. Given challenges of the economy, it may be hard achieving a budget appropriation. Since there is low demand for parking in the lot and adequate pavement conditions, it is suggested to establish no-parking by the building (except handicap), to temporarily hold on paving, and assign Environmental Education staff with exploring the feasibility to provide stormwater retrofits, such as with porous pavement or pervious pavers, in hopes that grant or technical assistance resources can be leveraged – the site is not used in winter and drains into the mainstem of the Hudson by Kingston Point.

Environment & Access – The main entrance is off Delaware Ave at Hasbrouck Park Road. On Delaware Avenue there are sidewalks by



Landscape Design for Upper Level Upgrade (2011)

Rondout & Kingston Point Connections – the LWRP Implementation Plan identifies a long-term project to connect the park and waterfront. While steep slopes pose a challenge creating access and drive high costs per linear foot, the former Economic Development Director identified explorations of options on and by Yeoman/ East Union Streets (S. Finkle Interview, Sept. 2011). Planning this linear connection can occur in conjunction with other trail planning, including for long-range connections extending north by and around business park environs.

Park Design & Enhancement – For the lower level, a short-term objective is to upgrade the playground, presumably in five years and at a budget of \$125,000. Another recommendation is to explore arts organization's ability to repaint murals, or develop new ones, as these are nice but show wear. Another task is to define uses for the former tennis courts. With an established tree buffer between it and adjacent residences, and a recreation leader present on-site in summer, a

consideration is to retrofit it as a skateboard park (an alternative may be at Forsyth Park on surplus tennis courts). There could also be efforts to partner with the school community to optimize space on the edge of the site, such as with an enhanced arrangement of school parking in order to establish a garden on the grassy area by the basketball court (in concert with a playground, upgrade on an expanded footprint). Park character might also be enhanced with native shade tree plantings, possibly fruit trees, on this border.



Scenic View -- Upper Hasbrouck

Rehabilitating the field is important for safety. Also key is maintaining safety fencing and signage by steep slopes on the south part of the site.

Hasbrouck's highlands provide excellent views of the Hudson and Rondout. The top tier is a destination on the Burning of Kingston and Hudson Valley Art Trails, but these themes need to be made evident. Besides developing overlooks, Recreation staff is encouraged to form guidelines for how it will annually conduct tree pruning to maintain scenic vistas. More broadly, greenway planning is needed to link Hasbrouck Park and Kingston Point.

A lower-cost objective is site historical and/or environmental themed interpretive displays. The State Greenway is a possible funding source as is a State OPRHP Certified Local Government Grant. The latter requires collaboration with the City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Park history also relates to construction trades and transportation, as prior to dedication 100 years ago there were mines

with cement business operations out of the stone building. Most users probably do not know of this heritage. This is consistent with LWRP implementation.

In 2011 plans were developed for upgrading the upper tier (see drawing excerpt). The notion involves:

- A new pavilion, with the addition of kitchen facilities;
- Constructing new restrooms by the field within a structure for concessions, storage and seating²⁴;
- Establishing two overlooks;
- Rehabilitating the softball field through earthwork and re-grading (a priority);
- A 'nature' playground;
- New alignments of driveways and the provision of trails.

Given the park's views and its standing as an older park, the Department can tell its story and build awareness of its assets²⁵. Given popularity of running and biking races, since there is a steep hill here, when event organizers seek to facilitate a race in Kingston, they might be encouraged to organize a start and finish here.

A Recreation Director concern at this site, and others, is for vandalism. Interest is expressed for security cameras. Prior to requesting funds, research must document cases, operating costs, and alternative approaches, including whether surveillance in low traffic areas can reduce crime and aid convictions. Besides getting quotes, it is suggested to engage the police and visit small municipal parks in other communities with monitoring. This should be compared with alternative investments, such as stimulating parks use²⁶ through

²⁴ Restrooms enable enhanced use, especially for blocks of time. Getting upgraded, functioning, accessible facilities here is a priority.

²⁵ This is an example of a possible site and curriculum link.

²⁶ Safety in numbers is the principle that personal assaults and other crimes occur less in higher traffic places.

marketing, designation of staff or volunteer watches on-site, and more police presence.

CORNELL PARK – (3 acres), 9th Ward – This Park is centrally placed in the Rondout-West Strand local Historic District, on Wurtz Street, and is emblematic of the character that forms area identity. The park serves surrounding neighborhoods. Proximity to the Rondout Center and Head Start programs there provide for these facilities complimenting each other. A passive park, there are benches and open spaces for relaxation or light play. Park features also include a war memorial and historic landscaping.

Environment & access – the park can be reached on foot from adjacent blocks and there is ample on-street parking. Remarkable features of the neighborhood include bluestone sidewalks and unique architecture, including historic cut stonewalls on and next to the site.

Park Design & Enhancement – Cornell Park is zoned Rondout District (RT), with adjacent areas assigned the same zoning, excepting three parcels zoned Central Commercial (C-2) by the park's southeast corner. Paraphrased from the RT District description, Section 405-19, the District purpose is to permit and encourage use, rehabilitation and adaptation of existing



Yoga in Park (Source: KLT)

structures in this unique area in accord with original character; to apply current standards for use, parking, height, yards, etc., only when or in a way that they can be met without undue difficulty or

where essential to the public welfare; and to ensure that new construction is compatible with the established character of existing development in the district.

A theme of the City Heritage area, and the Historic District overlapping the park, is the role of the Rondout and city in State transport history (see [Historic Districts](#) brochure). It is encouraged to identify ways to enhance interpretation of this history through a low profile interpretive panel that heightens visitor experiences and ties into brochures and walking tours (which suggest this park as a picnic spot and identify bathrooms nearby). The southeast corner, by a remnant cut stone carriage drop-off, is a good spot for a panel.

Sidewalks fronting the park are ideal for extending bluestone rehabilitation and restoration efforts. A CLG or Heritage Area grant is a good source of support. Ideally, there will be collaborations with community stakeholders to achieve in-kind matches and/or monetary donations, which leverage this objective.



In 2011 the KLT, Department, and HKK partners teamed-up for Yoga in the Park held on four days in summer. This was a success and directed attention to neighborhood parks and ways to enhance parks use and health. In 2012 the program is planned for expansion with two sessions per month at two different parks. Taking this notion further, the park is a good candidate site for a community garden and some fruit trees. If there is not one already, it is also a good base for a neighborhood walking group and organization of a block party is a way to build dialogue about stewardship.

Benches and trash receptacles are in poor condition. Their replacement is a priority, with ornamental furniture consistent with District character. If publicity is likely, it may be possible to obtain business sponsorship. Other project objectives are:

- Production of a tree and landscaping inventory and formation of guidelines to inform how to advance routine replanting of native on-site vegetation and street trees to ensure continuation of a strong tree edge and canopy; and
- Research into park documents and architectural plans, such as by a volunteer, to enhance understanding about the war memorial and aid stewardship of stonewalls.

A final objective for Cornell Park is fostering collaboration with the landowner on the only adjacent parcel on the block. What happens there will influence the park environment. If building is proposed, an objective is to minimize shadow effects (by encouraging building placement and massing fronting on Spring Street). The proponent can also be encouraged to restore stonewalls at the north edge of the park and provide complimentary landscaping.

HUTTON PARK (6.0 acres, not including right of way off Sylvester Street), Ward 7 – This neighborhood park is in the street grid and residential neighborhoods north of Broadway, 3/5 of a mile west of Route 9W. Hutton Park is well used, including as one base of the Summer Park Program. It is also used by the youth flag football league and for tennis programs and tournaments. The park is over 75 years old. There are two-tiers, with a small hill between parts and a small forested area on the west edge. Hutton Park has:

- Playground, circa 2007, with toddler fixtures and swings;
- Restrooms, drinking fountain, and storage, circa 1970's. The concrete block structure is seasonal and in poor condition;
- A pavilion (electrified) that programs use (can be leased);
- A full basketball court (not lit);
- Tennis courts (two), fenced, rehabbed in about 2007;
- Benches;
- A WPA-era handball backstop (there is no mural);
- Two shuffleboard courts; and
- Open space field, 1.4 acre, and softball backstop by Grant St.



Environment & Access – Fronting on Grant and Sherman Streets, Hutton Park has multiple access points, although one unfamiliar with the area could find entrances hard to find. The right of way off Sylvester Street is the most important source of pedestrian (and bicycle access) to the park²⁷, as children often entered there. Bluestone sidewalks front on Grant Street.

The Park’s signage can define access points identifying markers on Sylvester Street and north Sherman Street will bolster identity. Likewise, bike racks and lighting at gateways can aid sense of place and security. The top-tier has wide lines of sight, which is an asset because it is presumed neighbors can help monitor use.

Park Design & Enhancement – The Director cites immediate need to upgrade restroom/ storage space with ecologically advanced technology. Providing a peaked roof with metal sheathing will aid

²⁷ It is presumed there is formal access from Sylvester Street.

durability and minimize repair frequency. Day-lighting will conserve electricity. Matching design of the lavatory/ out-building with pavilion style can advance a 'standard' or base architectural style possessing features that are identifiable and replicable across the City Park system. There should also be upgrades of paths to ensure ADA accessibility from the pavilion and restroom.

New plantings lined-up along Grant Street are a nice amenity, so care is needed to sustain these and establish a defining edge and shade. Neighbors should be asked to monitor trees, possibly also watering them, as a way to get them involved in stewardship. Finally, signage is needed to encourage pet refuse management.

The Director also identifies short-term capital need to re-grade the field, presumably with remediation of rocks at the southwest corner. Moreover, while it does not serve all of Midtown, it is worth exploring the feasibility to upgrade the field for use as a small auxiliary soccer pitch, or for games like pick-up Frisbee football. A final capital need is to replace a pavilion pillar and level/re-grade around the structure. Cost analysis informing whether and when it may be necessary to replace the pavilion, can help identify whether a broader investment in upgrading the pavilion may be more beneficial. Given that the summer youth program operates here, rain or shine, level of service would increase if some walled enclosure were provided, at least in part of it, so that operations are enhanced in foul weather. This action will aid three-season and weekend use.

FOURTH WARD MEMORIAL PARK (0.94 Acres), Ward 7.

Located on Livingston Street, just off Delaware Avenue by the 9W cloverleaf, this City-owned space has a war memorial. Use here is passive. Given adjacency to 9W and U&W right of way, no investments are recommended at this time. However, presuming a rail trail advances, this site should be evaluated for enhanced use in relation to people accessing it. Veterans groups could be consulted to identify their vision and stewardship objectives. Research was not provided into characteristics of the memorial or park purpose.

BLOCK PARK (& SASS FIELD) 7.1 acres, 8th Ward. Located on scenic Abeel Street, near but not on the Rondout Creek and historic Island Block, this park's amenities include:

- A softball field with lighting, fencing, concession stand;
- Male and female restrooms;
- Two full basketball courts;
- Playground equipment, roughly circa 1985;
- The Dan Smith Pavilion (renovated in 1995) and grill(s);
- Two paved, single (shared) wall handball courts, with backstops with vibrant murals dating to the 1990s; and a
- WPA-era remnant roller skating rink and garden/fountain.



Service & Environment – Block Park is as a neighborhood park for residents on the hillsides around Hudson and Ravine Streets. The softball field is a main community playing field along with two others in parks. The area's character is defined by Rondout Creek water-dependent uses, like marinas, industry and its remnants. A tight layout of Abeel Street and the residential neighborhood emerged with Rondout commerce. Park zoning is Rondout Creek (RF-R), while across the Street is Rondout District.



Although the Park and surroundings are not part of the Rondout-West Strand Historic District, Rondout heritage is eminent. There is value in emphasizing historic themes in park enhancements. The site is low elevation and prone to flooding; there must be consideration as to how sea-level rise relates to improvements.

Environment & Accessibility – Block Park has limited accessibility by foot or bicycle, as neighborhood streets to the north are steep and lack sidewalks as does Abeel Street. Transportation enhancement plans are advancing to upgrade Abeel Street in stages. This will benefit pedestrian and bike and auto access to and at the site and transform the park's role into more of a community- and even low-level regional park. As the adjacent brownfield site, Island Dock, and

SEED A HANDBALL CRAZE?

Handball is a fun, simple sport that might offer a way to promote pride and health in Kingston. Single wall handball courts are fixtures in Block, Hasbrouck and Hutton parks. These icons date to the 1930s when WPA investments established walls and court bases. In the 1990s the walls were adorned with brilliant murals by Hendrik Dijks. These remarkable large-scale murals help set the parks' identities. Most of these same parks are bases for Kingston summer youth programs, with children playing around the walls everyday. Might single wall handball thrive in Kingston, like pickleball in New Paltz?

Currently, a small, loosely organized group of men plays handball indoors at the YMCA. With impetus, such as through instructions and some basic safety equipment, might it be possible to get kids playing handball in Kingston? The sport is popular in Canada and New York City. A suggestion is to explore whether gentlemen who play at the Y might do some demonstrations, with KCSD Athletics also helping to germinate the seed. Some places in the US even have service standards for handball, typically for three-wall courts. No standards are proposed herein, but strong interest in the sport could be a reason to rehabilitate court surfaces.

Rondout environments build-out over multiple years, this park has potential to experience higher rates of use.

Specifically, as part of Kingston's LWRP implementation program, public access improvements provided along West Strand/ Dock Streets, including waterside sidewalks, now extend from the Rondout core by T.R. Gallo Park and public docks to within 1/10th of a mile of the Park. These upgrades end at the Abeel/West Strand Street intersection, 525 feet to the east. The Strand is a major waterfront greenway amenity. There is a vision for ultimately providing waterfront pedestrian connections from Island Dock and recreation access and amenities there.

Given varied right of way width of Abeel Street and its pavement, vehicle access to Block Park is constrained by poorly defined parking, including by Sass Field. Currently, there is parking for vehicles in two areas on the edge of the park and Abeel Street with another pull-over/parking area on the west part of the Park.

As part of UCTC programming a project is underway to reconstruct Abeel Street in phases. According to City Engineering (March 2012), an aspect underway involves designing reconstruction of the street fronting on the Park and providing a new bicycle/pedestrian path in the southern edge of the Park. This change is prompted by geometric limitations of the road and efforts to provide managed access for parking. This inhibits establishing sidewalks on Abeel Street, but establishing the path is consistent with a vision for pedestrian access in City waterfront environments and this is a logical priority within the park. Evidence shows that adding trails in parks is a sound way to induce use. A subsequent phase of street reconstruction will link the Abeel/West Strand Street intersection and the Park's eastern edge.

Based on planned transport investments, there is potential to target areas around the park for compatible development. As part of City comprehensive planning in 2012/2013, there should be consideration

for providing upgrades to land use standards to encourage undefined tourism-based business to form

around Abeel/West Strand Street. Complementary development has potential to stimulate park use and leverage the waterfront environment while stimulating positive economic change in the neighborhood.



Park Design & Enhancement – A ten-year improvement program for this park (in addition to greenway connection) involves:

- A playground upgrade;
- Replacement of restrooms;
- Turf field rehabilitation; and
- Landscaping enhancements (internal).

TR GALLO WATERFRONT PARK/ RONDOUT LANDING DOCK (1.36 Acres + city-owned acreage as parking, water areas and linear walkway), Ward 8 – This charming waterfront park with public docks at the base of Broadway on the West Strand is adjacent to the historic 19th century Rondout Block. It is popular with residents and visitors and hosts summer concerts. It is walking distance to the Urban Cultural Center, Trolley Museum, tour boats,

Hudson River Maritime Museum, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, lower Broadway, the East Strand and Abeel Street. The plaza is in the lee of restored

Italianate buildings with restaurants, shops and housing and it's under the Wurtz Street Bridge designed by John A. Roebelling. It has a bandstand, sitting facilities, decorative lighting, a restroom, a sculpture, an info kiosk and trolley tracks nearby.



Accessibility – The area is easy to get to, although there are not bike racks and the street grid beyond the park, excepting along the waterfront, has impediments in that sidewalks are uneven and narrow in spots. Parking is extensive, including in an unmetred lot by the bandstand. Given its popularity, recreational objectives are to accommodate high levels of users and a variety of activities, which often go on simultaneously. One way that users can be aided is through wayfinding so that they discover other amenities and this area does not get too crowded.

FNC kayaking programs operate from the public docks. Separate kayak facilities at the Maritime Museum are a key access point on the State Greenway River Trail. At the Museum, the City stores nine kayaks (eight single; one tandem) plus gear. This allows Rec staff to work with KCSD youth to access free kayaking so they can get out on the water. The intent is to teach youth (also ones from adjacent schools) about river ecology, history and paddle sports.

Park Design & Enhancement – There is a lot of focus on development and management of this area, but there must be

emphasis on resilient design because it will be impacted by flooding and sea level rise. Some other suggestions:

- Given the use of City-owned docks for kayak access and rowing (KCSD teams; local clubs) consider when and how to replace decks to improve traction, possibly as a lease-term for the contract operator.
- Leverage a small part of the docks and adjacent land-side public space to achieve new recreation service and supply, such as kayak/ canoe rentals and put-ins and public access.
- Consider whether and how to accommodate fishing, such as from select established point(s)²⁸.
- While it may not require a public space set aside, there may be sufficient market for Economic Development staff to stimulate bike rentals in or by this locale.
- To foster turnover and revenue generation, it is suggested to install metered parking by the park.
- Businesses are said to encroach on sidewalks. While Recreation staff should not serve as lead, there is a need to ensure access across and within the street grid.
- A long-range goal is to explore how to seed and support a community boating (sailing) program based in the Rondout.

GILL STREET / RICKEL KNOX PLAYGROUND (0.17 acre)

Ward 8 – This 4,000 square foot City-owned parcel in the Ponckhockie neighborhood, was improved about 12 years ago with playground equipment. The site gives neighborhood service. While there were arrangements between the City and a church for monitoring/maintenance, this has not been effective. Effort to revive this agreement or form new interest in the park and stewardship is essential. A block party may provide a way to explore this topic.

28 This objective applies to the whole Strand.



Image in I-587 Study showing traffic rotary concept and area landscaping-- Academy Green at very right edge

ACADEMY GREEN PARK (1.5 acres) *Ward 4* – Situated at Albany and Clinton Avenues and Maiden Lane between Uptown and Midtown, this neighborhood park with some community service is a passive public space where people sit in a pleasant atmosphere. This historic site has significance to Dutch and early State and city history – themes that can be interpreted for users. There is a major monument with three individual statues; benches; a bus shelter; an ornamental fountain (not functioning); and signs. Academy Green is often used for ceremonies. The park experiences moderate use. Stewardship of flowers is provided by the Garden Club and the landscaping program, including street trees and specimens internal to the site, is critical to park and district aesthetics.

Park Design & Enhancement – Main objectives include:

- Provide urban design treatments to mesh planned improvements at the 587 intersection with the park;

- Confirm a program for vegetation management/ replacement; protocols for the sustained management of monuments and estimates of capital fund requirements to maintain statues²⁹; and standards for the replacement of lighting fixtures in a more ornamental design so there is guidance available when an upgrade is contemplated.
- Repair bluestone around the park, such as ornamental edges and bluestone bench sills. When sills are complete, upgrade the benches atop these with a more appropriate decorative style (adjacent refuse containers as well);
- Restore operation of the fountain, starting with analysis of sanitary code requirement and cost estimates; and

²⁹ Given historic significance of the monument, besides a local appropriation, sources of support to explore include NY State Council on the Arts, private foundations specifically for the purpose of monument restoration, and State Parks or National Park Service.

- Request enforcement of litter and no smoking laws and reinforce police on-foot presence.

As planning progresses to establish detailed specifications for a State DOT upgrade of the Broadway/I-587/Albany Avenue intersection, staff must advocate for actions harmonious with Academy Green. New public spaces should mimic the design features of Academy Green (a reason why is good to confirm future designs and capital programs for the park now). The current project proposal provides some action realigning Maiden Lane at Albany Avenue at the edge of the park. This requires coordination. I-587 project architects and engineers should meet with Recreation staff on the program, including space use, streetscape treatments, furniture, materials, and plantings. There can also be determinations whether efficiencies can be achieved, such as if resources are aligned so that the landscape architect for the transport project also work on programming for Academy Green. The benefit will be coherent surroundings that aid the aesthetic appeal of this gateway.

LOUGHRAN PARK (7.5 acres) Ward 6 – This neighborhood park fronts on Manor Place and Charlotte Street in lower-density neighborhoods west of Albany Avenue. Components are:

- A playground, including fixtures for tots – circa 1998;
- Four (4) tennis courts (with lighting);
- Basketball court;
- Regulation baseball playing field equipped with appurtenances (dugouts, fences), with additional space used



for youth soccer that overlaps with the outfield (there are soccer goals on-site).

- Water fountains;
- Restrooms (seasonal); and an
- Equipment storage building.

The park is used mostly for organized youth sports and adult sports. The nonprofit Colonial Little League and the Kingston Youth Soccer Association are active here. There is neighborhood accessibility over the Manor Avenue area street grid and Loughran primarily serves lower density neighborhoods west of Albany Avenue, as traffic on the Albany Avenue corridor influences the extent children and households access the park from the east across the arterial (there are high visibility crosswalks on Albany Ave. and sidewalks on the north side of Roosevelt Avenue, but gaps on the south side). There do not appear to be bike racks. Parking on Manor Place holds 25 cars.

There should be a schedule to replace the basketball court surface. Another objective for this park is to establish functional lighting of the field as a way to extend use into early evenings.

DIETZ MEMORIAL STADIUM (12.1 acres) Ward 1 – Named after a national medal of honor recipient, with monuments by the entrance, the Stadium at 170 North Front Street is a major organized sports facility, adjacent to Forsyth Park/ FNC, by Uptown. The adjacent Andretta Pool shares access and parking. Used foremost for KCSD athletics, a joint School District-City managing entity, Dietz Stadium Commission, was formed in 1989. Facilities include:

- A synthetic field, surface rehabbed in 2011, used for football, women's and men's lacrosse, and field hockey, with an electronic scoreboard;
- An adjacent, 8-lane oval running track, 400m+ meters, and fixtures for long jump, shot-put, etc. – also replaced in 2011;
- Lighting for track and field events;
- Stadium bench seating accommodating 4,300 persons;

- Restrooms (open year-round);
- Locker rooms, concessions fixtures, and equipment storage;
- An outdoor basketball court;
- The Dietz monument and walking route signs.

The site serves a community and regional function. According to KCSD's Athletic Director, the field is heavily used from 3:00 through 10:00 p.m. (interview, July 27, 2011). Observations show that residents use the oval track for walking and running. Many also walk the site perimeter, on paved trails, including with dogs, across roads and parking, and into Forsyth Park. The school athletics function includes staging for regional sectional playoffs. There are also civic events, such as team relays, bike and running races. A 2011 Lets Move zumba dance event was well attended.



Chapter 310 – Parks & Recreation Facilities, Article IV – Dietz Stadium (1995) outlines facility policy, including 15 mph speed limits³⁰. The Athletic Director and City Recreation Director each serve on the Commission. There is no other information available on

the City's or School District's web sites concerning operating protocols, including how residents or groups may access and use facilities in evenings and on weekends, when school activities are not underway. Most likely, this hampers public understanding of operations and it inhibits higher joint use.

Environment & Access – The Dietz site and surroundings is a recreational hub, so it is important to consider circulation in accordance with that role. The main access is from Washington Avenue at North Front Street, an important junction, as corridors leading north and south as well as to Uptown and Midtown, Lucas and Hurley Avenues convene near here.

³⁰ From E-Code 360, link via City web site to electronic City Code.



Entrance to Stadium

Internal to the site, there are not clear parking area circulation routes³¹. There are roughly 3.5 acres of space used for parking and access. Overall, motor vehicle circulation causes friction because there are not pedestrian facilities and paved areas lack cohesion due to limited landscaping. Parking is organized to serve peak visitation; yet, this causes many spaces to stand vacant long periods, even though there is shared use with Ulster County DPW operations (adjacent to the west and north) and the regional Trailways transit operation on Washington Avenue.

One recent improvement here is a new sidewalk at the stadium/pool gateway. It is important to advance multi-modal circulation improvements for the area using the Safe Routes organizing platform with formal involvement by the Stadium Commission, CSAC, Recreation leaders, and City Engineering, DPW and Police. Examination of traffic flow, parking, safety, and land use will identify network and space use refinements. These notions will be

31 Research was not provided into formal layouts of rights of way on and adjacent to the site, alternatively listed as Severyn Street, Municipal Stadium Road and Grandma Moses Lane.

useful in advancing another priority, which is coordinating enhancements at the Forsyth/Dietz/Bailey/Edson/Andretta public lands³². This will support coordinated access and land use on adjacent private parcels and can aid traffic circulation and economic development. Design guidelines and reduced setbacks may offer possible ways to achieve adjacent service uses with outdoor plazas and porches facing the stadium and pool.

Some other recommendations for the Dietz site:

- Community members note that the basketball court is well used. Upgrade to target include: benches, water fountain, fencing, lighting; and shade tree plantings;
- Off-site parking options can be formalized and publicized and combined with bike racks and a campaign to encourage walking and biking to the site .
- Provide space programming on the feasibility to site a small athletics field by the track and basketball court (a long-range objective). This could serve peak demand and provide an outlet for community sports for adults and children. Also



Basketball court at Dietz Stadium (Source: S. Ladin)

32 Public meetings could explore area circulation and approaches to enhanced access and design around Washington Ave and on-site.

explore if it could be an indoor facility.

Enhance landscaping through native tree plantings. Besides improving sense of place, this will improve stormwater management and enhance adjacent property values³³.

Finally, the HKK initiative, with the City and KCSD as partners, is active in encouraging healthy eating and access to healthy foods, including good nutritional offerings after school. Given joint operation of the stadium, it is important for the Commission to mandate 'healthy' vending of foods and snacks by user groups. HKK partners would offer education and support.

ANDRETTA POOL (1.4 Acres) Ward 1 – Located at 76 North Front St. at the Stadium's entrance, this public swimming pool, circa 1973, is operated seasonally by the Department, six days a week, late June to Labor day. Providing community wide service, it is accessed for a fee, and besides lap swims and open pool, lessons are available for a fee. A 2011 event was Family Fun Day. The pool has:

- A 25 meter (4,000 square foot) 6 lane pool with deck, lifeguard stands and fenced-in lawn;
- A 3,000+/- square foot bathhouse/ locker rooms with common area;
- A separate fenced-in picnic and grilling area by the pool; and
- A bike rack.

The pool is centrally located, reachable by walking and biking, although users have to negotiate busy thoroughfares like Washington Avenue. Seasonal attendance is around 2,700. Respondents to a 2010 parks use survey did not identify with Andretta Pool.



Winterized pool -- viewed from south

Operations, Park Design & Enhancement – Pool service was cut back due to budget constraints. In 2010 hours were decreased from seven to five days, although a donation enabled one lost day per week to be recovered. There have been maintenance issues, centered on pumps and filters. The Recreation Director identifies a short-term need for filter equipment. Another short-term improvement to consider, which does not appear to rise to the level of major capital expenditure, is providing benches.

There are vending machines at the pool. The Director can advance adherence to healthy snacks guidelines; signage might even be developed explaining the rationale.

As the facility is 40 years old, a program and sequence is needed for maintenance and investment. Presuming changes to pool footprint are not envisioned, it is imperative to provide ADA accessibility and invest in the roof, system/ equipment replacements, fences,

³³ This type of action is a candidate for an environmental benefits project, as it offers a way to sequester carbon.

landscaping, lights, spray pool/ fountains, possibly a playground and a photovoltaic system. For the fence, it is suggested to reduce the height (presuming it is allowed by code) and enclose more grassy area just south and north of the concrete, so there is more space for users. Added lawn can be available for programs, sunbathing, informal play, benches or fixtures like tetherball, volleyball, or a playground that might be added at some undefined point.

Analysis is needed of physical, social or operational constraints influencing pool use. Compared with Rosendale and New Paltz public pools, hours start and end earlier in Kingston, which closes at 5:45 p.m. (this compares with 7:00 to 8:00 in the other locales)³⁴. Summer evenings are a time when people probably would attend as families and after work.

A municipal study group is urged for formation. It can be charged with exploring pool programs and facilities and ways to sustain and enhance service and broaden the user base. This effort can help catalyze a 'friends group' for the pool. To aid analysis of long-term strategy, it is recommended to generate structural evaluations of the bathhouse, review pool systems, and assess site and space needs and potential, such as to add broader concession space. This information can guide management and sequencing of capital investment. The Recreation Director has a mid-term goal to establish a zero-depth spray pool. While this feature will be popular, given facility age and overhead, there is a benefit to exploring how the parts relate to a broader strategy for asset management. This process will also be advantageous for assessing the feasibility to include energy efficiency measures and the possibility of achieving grants or low interest loans through NYSERDA or the regional utility.

The pool is a valuable public recreation asset, but it is worth exploring whether there is potential to rapidly advance asset improvement through collaboration. It is suggested to consider

34 It is not clear if this policy is influenced by tree shading in evenings.

whether public-private partnerships may offer a way to leverage improvements, greater use and sustained operations. Office of the State Comptroller Local Government Efficiency Grant resources might be targeted for this purpose³⁵.

Summer Youth Program offerings would be enhanced with trips to the pool (and beach). A lack of group transport is a factor inhibiting this potential service. Also, some nearby communities have summer swim leagues with non-profits operating team training and races at public pools. If there were community interest in exploring the feasibility to start a team, those groups would probably help out.

35 A Kingston Recreation Local Development Corporation was formed to aid project finance. The mechanism may offer a way for partners to target financial resources the city cannot pursue.

KINGSTON POINT BEACH (10.6 acres) Ward 8 – This is the only outdoor public bathing beach in the City. There are lawns and picnicking on the Hudson, which make this a popular attraction. The park has as high a level of use as any city resource.

This site is a community and regional resource that is really part of a larger recreation complex, as users seldom differentiate it from adjacent Kingston Point/ Rotary Park facilities, playing field and open space³⁶. City waterfront and cultural plans prescribe detailed treatments, with the location defined as a destination along two miles of Hudson River and Rondout Creek waterfront. There is potential to establish north and south linkage plus connect with Hasbrouck Park ½ mile west.



Beach viewed from southeast

³⁶ For 20 years Kingston Rotary has played a major role in bringing attention to Kingston Point, where there was once major ferry docks and an amusement park. The group catalyzed and underwrote dollar and volunteer contributions to open up and enhance the setting. These efforts are now part of the legacy of the broader Kingston Point/ 'Rotary Park'.

Kingston Point Beach is accessible until one hour after sunset, but formal staffing by lifeguards in summer 2011 was on weekends: Friday to Sunday from 11am-5pm. The park has³⁷:

- About 900 linear feet of river frontage including a 450 foot sand beach with swimming (lifeguards seasonal);
- Pavilion (circa 2008, available for rental), plus picnic and sitting areas and lawns;
- Children's playground equipment, at least 10 years old;
- Small non-motorized/ motorized boat launch (free), kayak storage shed and support equipment;
- Volleyball fixtures; and a
- Veteran's monument (wood sign).



Source: Scenic Hudson

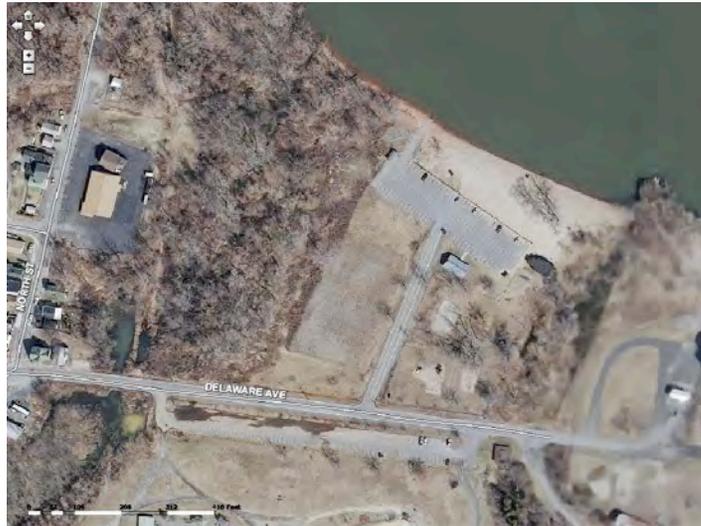
Volleyball leagues that the Department facilitates here are popular. The Director indicates courts are at capacity during league play, so another court, if developed, probably will be used, although any new court(s) should be developed to enable informal, pick-up play³⁸ with siting to avoid conflicts with bathers.

Environment & Access – access is afforded by a 450-foot driveway off of Delaware Ave. There are no bicycle racks. There are roughly 100 motor vehicle parking spaces in the interior lot, while roughly

³⁷ Seasonal restrooms in poor condition were dismantled in 2012.

³⁸ Explore having laborers and/or lifeguards manage nets daily.

another 100 spots are available in a lot south of the Delaware Ave causeway, 1/10 a mile away. The approach along Delaware Ave does not have sidewalks or shoulders – this segment has low volumes with weekend peak surges, but there is an adjacent industrial use. Nor are there footpaths on-site like across the street³⁹. The area is not served by public transit and street approaches along North Street and Delaware Avenue offer challenges for pedestrians and bicycle users; yet, the LWRP Implementation Plan suggests major developments at Kingston Point and coordinating parking and access with the Rondout, including in conjunction with bus or trolley service.



Kingston Point Beach (Sourced from Ulster Co. ReConnect)

39 Delaware Ave from North St. east to its terminus at private land by 'Rotary Park' is a nominee for complete streets enhancement. The 2003 LWRP Implementation Plan proposes landscape enhancements for recreation areas at the beach (\$125,000). Some improvements were installed. As part of planning for other upgrades, it is suggested to calm traffic, reinforce drainage and planting by the road, driveway, and parking, and introduce shade and landscape texture by the playground.

The culvert under Delaware Avenue is occluded and the road and a major part of the parking to the south flood. An evaluation of drainage is required by an engineer. It is suggested to consider the impacts on ecology and transportation that may arise if the problem is addressed by restoring wetlands and enhancing tidal flows in the larger wetland complex. On the southwest, by wetlands, is a former landfill. The LWRP Implementation Plan, 2003, notes on page 19 that leaching is still a concern and the overall impact of the landfill is not fully understood, so review of this should be part of the analysis.

On weekends May to September, FNC, as part of city programs, provides guided kayak tours. There is also a 'Paddle Festival' each spring. These seasonal programs are unique, providing children access to the river via 'Kingston Kayaks' excursions, which enable them to explore the Hudson's natural and cultural wonders and instill sense of place. Kayak programs are conducted in partnership with local businesses, including outfitters. Bolstering kayaking in Kingston is an economic opportunity.

Kingston Point Beach is a designated site on the prestigious Hudson River Greenway Water Trail.⁴⁰ This canoe and kayak linear water trail extends 200 miles along the lower Hudson. It is a major component of the Hudson River Greenway.

In addition to supporting 'cartop' launching, there is a secure kayak (and gear) storage rack. While the beach is less protected than other Water Trail access points in Kingston in the Rondout, the Beach is important for residents and visitors, including for getting to the water for shorter trips, including day excursions, as afforded by easy boat put-in/ take-outs, particularly with a supply of other accessible take-outs nearby, in the Rondout, Esopus and across the River in Rhinecliff⁴¹.

⁴⁰ www.hudsongreenway.ny.gov/Trailsandscenicbyways/watertrail.aspx

⁴¹ The State Greenway funded water access improvement; kayaks, equipment/storage, signage and pavilion construction.

There are not boat or trailer access standards set by the city for the boat launch. Given the bathing beach and fact that the ramp is not improved all the way down into the water for access during low tide, it is suggested to keep an orientation to very small crafts there.



Kayak Storage Shed at Beach

New restrooms are a major priority. Having showers available could aid hygiene. A proposal by the Recreation Director is to establish a structure with space for bathrooms and concession space (Interview March 2012), but this investment could degrade rapidly with flooding, so it must be designed to withstand flooding. One notion is to site a modular restroom close by the beach while placing a bathhouse and concession in a separate structure, such as built into the hill across the street. An architectural style could be used that mimics the amusement park heyday, such as with a viewing platform and porch around the outside (see Kingston Point/ Rotary Park below). If this concept is advanced the use would need to be minor to the open space recreational theme. There must be a review of deeds to define permissibility. Economic development staff could test the market for this type of option intended to help elevate site use, reinforce destination status, and augment revenue stream.

Some other distinguishing features, besides stunning views, are:

- A tidal wetland complex bordering (on west side), partly forested, extending to the tidal pond across the street; and
- A rocky point on the eastern corner of the beach.

Operations, Park Design & Enhancement -- As the park comprises lowlands, the site floods. Severe erosion of beach sand in 2007 during major weather events resulted in FEMA resources to replace 680 tons of sand. Again in 2010 sand was lost and replaced. Analysis by Recreation staff must identify ways to optimize beach landscaping to minimize repetitive losses of sand. Applications for grant and technical assistance can aid study and the detailed specification of beach treatments.

Water quality at the Beach is shown to vary. At times it can be a risk to the health of swimmers. Risks are higher after wet weather events, when contaminants are swept off land. Developing protocols and signs to inform swimmers of possible health risks is essential. Given the extent of dog walking (and a proposal for a dog park nearby), deploying signs (with refuse bags) can ensure pet waste management and water quality. Since water resource themes are prominent here, interpretative materials, in kiosks or displays, can educate visitors.

Off-site to the north, there are vacant brownfields. These areas are low and may repeatedly flood with climate change. Further west is a hamlet neighborhood by North Street/Delaware Ave. The evolution of these areas will be influenced by the Kingston Landing project. Importantly, there is strong opportunity to plan a linear greenway link from the north with this neighborhood and the beach. The LWRP implementation plan points to a need to plan land use on the site west of the beach, suggesting public acquisition and use for festivals and events. If acquired, some space appears suitable for new athletic fields. An option is providing landscaping so that the space could be used for both purposes. Given the character of the Hudson River environment, the value of public access to the water, and array of recreational resources, it is best for City leaders to define how to leverage desirable private investment by North Street and Delaware

Ave at Kingston Point gateway, while leveraging the greenway and other desirable development compatible with flood hazards.

KINGSTON POINT/ ROTARY PARK (87. 4 acres) Ward 8 – Opposite the beach on Delaware Ave is lawn and improved areas, including a sports field and access to a tidal pond and river. This is a key amenity on the Hudson/Rondout waterfronts with history as a NY City Dayliner ferry landing. Specific features include:

- An ornamental iron gate, restored with the help of Rotary, emanating from the 'Cornell' property heyday when it was a regional amusement park and ferry dock;
- A pavilion, with southerly views (available for rent), also restored by Rotary, in 2007;
- Seasonal bathrooms plus secure space for equipment storage;
- Sinsapaugh Field -- a fenced softball field, with lighting;
- Kingston Point BMX Track (dirt bicycle course – fenced);
- Nature trails;
- Picnic areas; and a
- Pedestrian bridge that accesses the ferry landing and an earthen berm rail right of way.

Environment & Access – Besides organized activity at the ballfield and BMX track, the site is popular for walking, nature viewing, including bird watching, and fishing. City plans call for improvements that will aid light recreation, including bold plans by the pedestrian bridge, tidal pond, and landing. The berm bisects Kingston Point and the Rondout lighthouse parcel, with the 'causeway' going into the East



Strand⁴². In the park, the right of way covers about four acres, with over 2,000 feet of frontage on the Hudson on one side. The berm has rail tracks and is used under lease from the City by the Trolley Museum as the



Rotary Park, Ballfield, BMX Track & Berm -- Kingston Point (Source: Wikipedia Commons)

destination of a tourist trolley that operates seasonally out of 89 East Strand. Community interests propose arrangements to develop the berm as a rail and trail corridor. Separately, a community group is forming details and raising funds to establish a fenced dog park, covering an acre, east and south of the softball field.

There are two driveways into the main parking area off Delaware Avenue, plus a pullout by the ornamental iron access gate into 'Rotary Park'. A gravel path network internal to the park is used by visitors and maintenance staff, as there are gates (bars) preventing motor vehicle access. There are no bicycle racks. Access from the parking is at accessible grades.

The LWRP envisions a waterfront esplanade with pedestrian access from Block Park to Kingston Point Park and access extending north along the Hudson beyond that (page 12). It proposes a split, with one trail on the west side of Kingston Point Park and another leg on right of way to the former Dayliner dock and bridge connecting into

⁴² This linear right of way extends 40 miles into the Catskills

Kingston Point Park (page 15). It would be beneficial for community stakeholders to collaborate on planning for the long-term development in the right of way for rail plus trail use since there will be strong demand for waterfront walking opportunities. Accommodating multiple uses will aid economic development assuming it is possible to achieve both safely. The U & D Rail + Trail Feasibility Study (page 31) shows a segment by East Strand and North Streets as a focus.

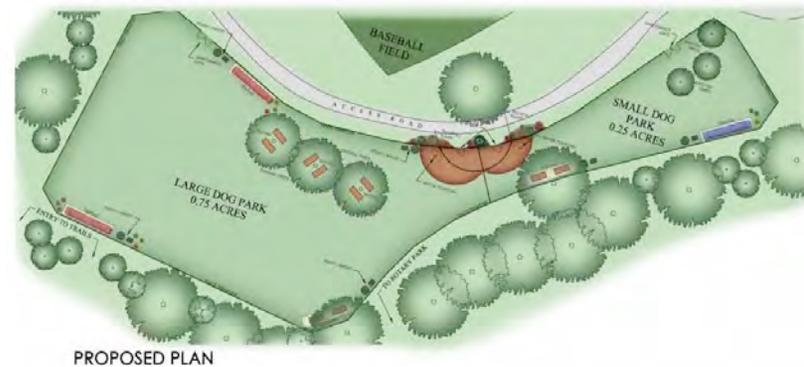
Operations, Park Design & Enhancement -- The LWRP implementation plan also calls for enhancing Kingston Point Park through action to construct a carousel and establish historic amusements. It suggests feasibility analysis for an amphitheater with

a floating stage. There is also a notion for a restored Dayliner dock to serve visiting cruise ships plus facilities for non-motorized boating. The amphitheater and stage would serve 400 along a terraced grass slope for community theater, concerts, and dance programs. The budget for these activities set in the 1999 plan on page 42 was \$1,750,000 dollars (a figure not adjusted for inflation).

Recognizing these broader proposals, there are shorter-term measures available to aid recreation. The Director prioritizes construction of a new restroom inside Rotary Park at Kingston Point. Recreation staff can aid trail work and define how to blend in the proposed dog park with existing features, including nature trails, through fence layout, new tree and vegetation planting, and by trail signage. Another action is to advance wetland restoration planning (see Kingston Point Beach). Funding is sought to replace the field.



Kingston Point Environment



Proposed Dog Park Concert (Source: Kingstonpointdogpark.org)

Finally, vista pruning and landscaping around the gate can define the main path and restore grass to draw visitors. Ideally, fishing will be accommodated by the bridge and other spots in a way that minimizes user conflicts and protects the park.

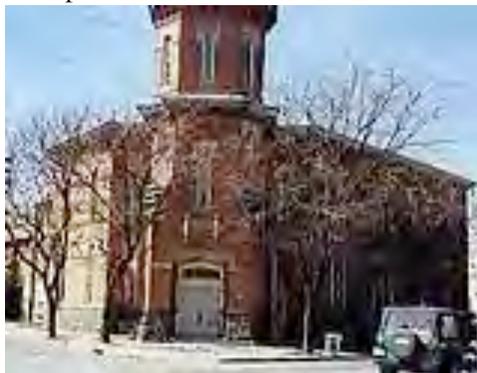
ANDY MURPHY MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

(1.1 acres) Ward 5 – This late 19th century armory on Broadway and Hoffman Street is the center for Parks & Recreation operations, on the 2nd floor, while the 1st floor has an indoor open floor plan gym that is well used for indoor sports. It has:

- A main gym, 10,500 square feet, with a parquet basketball court, wood bleachers (seating capacity of roughly 400). The space is also used for volleyball group gatherings;
- 1st and 2nd floor restrooms;
- Large elevated stage (used for boxing);
- First floor meeting room/ senior lounge, about 1,250 square feet, capacity roughly 30, with kitchen;
- Equipment storage; and
- 2nd floor offices consisting of roughly 4,500 square feet.

Environment & Access – located near the high school and city hall, the Center is in the densest part of the City and is accessible by foot and bicycle, transit and auto, although there are no bike racks. There is parking for roughly 40 vehicles (unmetered).

Operations, Design & Enhancement –According to the Director, the court is booked most afternoons, evenings and Saturday afternoons. The gym's open floor plan is not conducive to simultaneous uses; however, sometimes multiple uses are accommodated, such as when a mothers group meets and children play just off the main court. The Center is not air



conditioned, so use drops in summer⁴³.

One set of side doors, heavily used, opens directly from the gym onto parking. This causes friction, noise, and temperature disruption. Replacing exterior doors and adding a vestibule are short- to mid-term capital objectives⁴⁴.

The Center occasionally gets used for regional or civic events. It is surprising there is not more demand for use of the space on weekend evening for galas and dances. Constraints may be the stage design/ inaccessibility and limitations of sound systems and lighting. It is suggested for staff to research why groups do not seek to use the Center for social and cultural gatherings,

While the open floor plan limits use, recommendations are:

- Specifically define operating cost requirements for extended weekend and evening use and encourage dances or meetings by dance groups, such as that practice hip-hop, square or ballroom dancing (it is assumed that the Center for Creative Education and Carnegie Center serve some of this demand).
- Determine how to structure and operate an open gym on Friday or Saturday evenings (a school facility, like the high school may also be good for this purpose); and
- Consider whether to work to accommodate some summer youth programs indoors at this and/or other sites like the Rondout Center, such as during hot or wet weather. This requires long-range planning for an HVAC system⁴⁵.

⁴³ Gym lights were replaced 2011; windows are scheduled for replacement.

⁴⁴ A major capital improvement objective is installation of an ADA compliant elevator. For the doors replacement project a presumption is that expenditure will aid universal design and provision of handicap accessible entrances.

⁴⁵ This facility is used as a disaster relief center and that form of investment is consistent with that role.

RONDOUT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (0.25 acres) Ward –

Located at 103 Broadway, at Spring Street, this multipurpose indoor City facility dates to 1971. The building's characteristics include: a gym (with parquet floor, basketball hoops and scoreboard); a weight room; youth lounge; youth media lab; arts/crafts room; and game room. A secure dedicated space hosts a head-start program, run by Ulster County Community Action, and accessed by a separate entrance. Finally, there is a full kitchen and a staff office. A small playground outdoors in the rear used by Head Start appears well used and near the end of its useful life.

Kingston Recreation runs an after school, drop-in program. A Recreation Leader leads the service with support by a second one. Adult and youth basketball leagues do not use the site, although a seniors group sometimes does.

The Center is one block from Cornell Park, which does not appear used by the Rondout Center patrons, probably because the Leader cannot leave the site during operations.

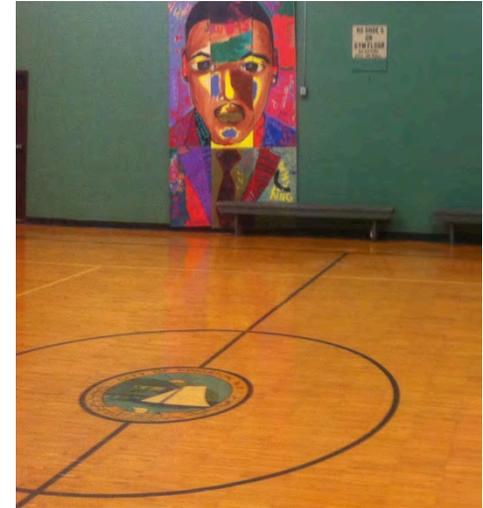
Godbey and Mowen (2010) note that organized recreation programs offer a way to increase physical activity. There is also evidence that girls are more likely to use parks, feel safe and exercise when they have supervision or guidance. The Center is well suited to aiding healthy lifestyles by teens and girls.

There appears to be moderate to high levels of use of the Rondout Center when it is open for routine programming. This makes it like the Andy Murphy Center in that these places are trafficked parts of the City's recreation system. Specific figures on youth use of the site, or annual program attendance, were not provided, but an observance of operations (March 20, 2012) showed a positive environment and youth use rates, excluding day care consumers, that probably exceed 3,500 and may be up to 5,000 visits per school year.

Research shows it is typical for large parts of residents to be unaware or have limited knowledge of youth programs and services (Godbey and Mowen, 2010). It is suggested to evaluate, through surveys and/or focus groups, the perceptions of the Center's programs by residents living within ½ or 2/3 of a mile away (a population likely to use offerings). Since Catholic Charities is renovating a community facility nearby on

Broadway that will have an indoor gym and which may have a public access component, this information can help inform how to ensure success at both sites. Regular programs are not offered in summer, but it is recommended to explore potential. Currently, attendance drops dramatically during bad weather days at the summer in-park programs at Hutton or Loughran Parks that do not have indoor facilities.

In 2012 municipal financing is approved to partially upgrade windows. There have been undefined problems with the heating plant in recent years. Over the next five years, the Recreation Director identifies major capital needs as: retaining wall; drainage; removal of oil tank; HVAC system; completing window replacements; and repair of a cobblestone wall (March 2012). Whether to provide air conditioning as part of HVAC upgrades is a threshold consideration in terms of the potential to offer expanded services. Like all facilities, detailed specifications are needed to advance ADA access (handicap) accommodation here. Moreover, as indoor facilities are documented as consuming large amounts of



Gym at Rondout Center

energy for lighting, heating and ventilating, it is suggested to calculate long-term operating payoffs for energy efficient investments. While the flat roof may be in good condition, when an upgrade is contemplated, it may make sense to add daylighting, use a white surface, or a 'green' or living roof system.

Some other suggestions for the Rondout Center:

- Target some FNC educational programming here. For instance, include open offerings on two to three weekdays/weekends per year;
- Plan for bike racks and street furniture and consider hosting 'share bikes' for access by Center users and public art installations indoors and outdoors – as the Center is a gateway to the Rondout; and
- Push recycling.



VAN BUREN STREET PLAYGROUND (0.1 acres) – This neighborhood playground, mid-block at 47 Van Buren Street, is 450 feet, or 1/10th of a mile, off Broadway in Midtown. The park is in a populated residential area accessible by sidewalks.

There is a circa 2000 playground, including toddler fixtures, along with a gazebo, bench and raised bed garden. The entire site is encircled by mesh fence, with the front roughly eight feet high and a two-door gate (often the park is locked). A short-term priority for the Recreation Director is replacing the playground structure. There is not a lot of parks supply in the area, as within one-quarter mile this is the only outdoor park. Extending one half mile, Academy Green is just over a quarter mile to the northwest, while the Boys Club, YMCA and associated outdoor spaces overlap with that larger service area, although some are separated by major corridors, including the freight rail line adjacent to Greenkill Avenue. Importantly, Kingston Library is a close by at Franklin/Liberty Streets and the Hodge Center is three blocks away.

For people accessing the park on foot, there is adequate sidewalk access, although the Kingston Cares Survey (2010) notes that residents of Midtown expressed concern for crime. There are no bike racks. Auto access is afforded ample on-street parking.

Interested volunteers implemented the community garden in 2010 with the raised beds and flowers offering beautification. The site is an excellent resource for the Dig Kids program, a community-based gardening program



for teenagers administered by KLT, or for other community gardening, stewardship and beautification efforts.

CPTED – The HKK partnership seeks to use this site for a community-based Crime Prevention for Through Environmental Design project. Assuming users are concerned about safety at this park, it makes sense to retain a fence around the perimeter, to deter toddlers wandering, or stray dogs entering; yet, a worthy objective is improving fence design, such as when routine replacement is scheduled, or if donations or a grant becomes available. Making it lower and ornamental will improve sight lines and aid atmosphere. Also, it is suggested to provide a no parking zone for the length of the park frontage to improve lines of sight. If enacted, another consideration is to widen the sidewalk to enhance pedestrian refuge. Finally, planting shade trees in front of housing adjacent to the park, or on opposite sides of the street, can improve aesthetics.

More community stewardship is desirable for this park. Two organizations suggested for involvement are Kingston Library and Family of Woodstock. For instance, library staff or Friends of the Kingston Library can be asked to facilitate and regularly convene a children's reading group at the park, weather permitting.

RONDOUT LIGHTHOUSE (84.7 acres) Ward 8 – This parcel, composed mostly of land underwater and tidal area, is the site of the iconic lighthouse and breakwater at Rondout Creek's mouth. There is extensive discussion about Rondout Lighthouse in the LWRP.

In 2002 the Coast Guard transferred title of this marine facility to the City. The beacon is an active (automated) navigational aid and the lighthouse serves as a satellite museum of Hudson River Maritime Museum, with the structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places (reference #79001640). A breakwater (dike) extends west from the lighthouse to East Strand/ Ponckhockie.

City Planning is the day-to-day contact for lighthouse management and development. A Friends of the Lighthouse Committee assists (kingstonlighthouse.com/) community involvement, although the group does not appear very active. Public access is by boat from the Museum, which as a major cooperative partner aids maintenance and facilitates boat launch access on a daily afternoon schedule during peak season, May to October.

The City web site identifies an engineering study that defines costs of a “reasonable and complete preservation project”, while the LWRP discusses a capital project to add pedestrian (and fishing) access across the (west) tidal breakwater⁴⁶. The City Planner also indicates an objective, to facilitate some joint development, such as a commercial operating license for a tourist concession, such as an inn (personal interview, October 24 2011). According to City Environmental Educator, Steven Noble, non-motorized boat access, such as by kayak, is possible, although docks do not have low profiles that enable safe, easy entry/exit for these types of craft.



There are opportunities to enhance site recreation access, including as part of the State Greenway water trail. Given challenges advancing lighthouse pedestrian access, a recommendation is to incrementally augment fishing and walking access, such as by advancing right of way planning and/or programming for a smaller segment of the 2,000+/- foot total proposed breakwater/ walkway

⁴⁶ This fixing elevated berm and providing surface decking.

upgrade. A focal point could be by the unimproved part of North Street adjacent to the Creek. Certainly, the impacts of sea level rise on planned investments must be considered. This area is a focal point for community and regional recreation. With development of this major resource, use is expected to be high⁴⁷. Overall, improvements like this will reinforce waterfront recreation, aid revitalization and bolster the identity of maritime, transportation and trade history, especially in conjunction with other parks and access improvements around Kingston Point, as well as along the Rondout.

EVERETTE HODGE COMMUNITY CENTER (0.22 Acres)

Ward 4. This community center at 15-21 Franklin Street in Mid-town is a 3,500 square foot one floor building. It is equipped with a computer lab and program space. Outdoors a 2,000 square foot courtyard with a separate out building (a former carriage barn at least 100 years old.) Separately, there is on-site parking for about 15 autos and a bike rack is hidden behind the building. In 2011 Dig Kids initiated a garden in front of the building. The garden was designed and tended by local children with assistance by a farmer. The Center has been central in popular Midtown Make a Difference Day, an annual community service event, in Black History Month events, and it was out of the Hodge Center that Kingston Hoops Summer Sizzle started. This basketball league remains popular.

Until mid-2012 the Hodge Center was run under contract by a non-profit with a focus on youth, providing after-school tutors, games, entertainment, snacks plus adult and youth programs, including

music and art workshops. Family of Woodstock's Inc. runs the Kingston Cares project out of an office at the Hodge Center. Starting mid-2012 the city will jointly operate the Center along with Family of Woodstock. Through this arrangement, FNC Staff will serve on-site weekday afternoons during the school year.



Indications are that outbuilding architectural conditions will be assessed with intent to develop the space for environmental education. This must involve an effort to preserve historic character of the structure. A first step is to define an approach to renovations and establish a framework budget to achieve occupancy and gradually restore its features and amenities in-line with curriculum.

On other fronts, an appeal to local arts groups offers a way to achieve donated installations in the foyer, in front of the building, and/or in the courtyard. Performing an energy audit will define system characteristics and inform the feasibility to save energy.

⁴⁷ Given challenges funding breakwater and/or lighthouse upgrades, consider potential to site a single small- to medium-scale wind turbine as a way to raise revenue through leases and/or power sales. For this type of action to proceed, there should be consensus that the use is consistent with area plans, fits with waterfront and lighthouse character, and can meet environmental standards, such as if it involves one turbine where the tower is less than a hundred twenty feet and diameter of each blade is no more than fifty feet. For an example see: hullwind.org/



PEACE PARK (0.12 acres) Ward 2 – This city-owned vest pocket park at the corner of North Front and Crown Streets has a vibrant map showing points of interest, a sign explaining the origin of Park, and ornamental landscaping and sitting areas. This space is used for relaxation was dedicated in 1996 and maintenance is aided by volunteers. On the adjacent building there is a mural, but it is fading and a candidate for restoration or a new one.

MURRAY STREET BASKETBALL COURTS (1.7 acre) Ward 7 -- at the corner of Route 9W there are two basketball courts with fence enclosures and some adjacent lawn. The courts are well used. The City's Summer Sizzle basketball league organizes games here. The site is about a quarter mile from the J.F. Kennedy School/ Hasbrouck Park and is adjacent to U&D right of way. It is suggested to provide a fountain, benches, refuse and recycling receptacles, and bike racks. There could be consideration to light the courts. With an upgrade this can be a model for a quality public space in a mixed-use area.

J.R. SCHULTZ SPORTS COMPLEX/ LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS (Roughly 18.7 acre) Ward 7 – This city-owned land located off Moore Street with Route 9-W as its western border has two little league baseball fields and appurtenances like fences, dugouts and bleachers, storage and a smaller practice lawn. The fields and

practice area encompass about 3.6 acres. There is also a gravel driveway into the site. The remainder is lightly forested with a riparian corridor and pond.

The city does not maintain the site. Other than an on-line search, municipal records were not reviewed; however, signs indicate the site is operated by Kingston National Little League, although there is little contemporary information available on-line regarding it. Details on use and management of the site are unclear. Given that lands appear to be city-owned, it is warranted to ensure the non-profit is operating in good standing, following adequate safety protocols and insured. City legal staff should be requested to frame protocols and stipulations for nonprofit site management.

An effort to identify similar cases in other municipalities and the recommendations of state or national recreation organizations on this type of joint use does not turn-up much information. Yet, given local interest in public and non-profit agreements that enable non-profit management and stewardship of public lands, it seems appropriate to have contemporary agreements in place for older, similar arrangements. Finally, presuming the space might be applied to other useful recreational purposes, such as by other sports groups, Recreation staff can promote using the site for such purposes.



CHAPEL ST. PARK (1.8 acres) Ward 8 – This 1.8 acre undeveloped parcel (forested) at 93-111 Chapel Street was donated as park and is said to have interesting and educational surface geology. The Director does not identify any development objectives for it.

GREENWAY / LINEAR PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLANNING

This element recommends strategies for developing a community greenway consisting of non-motorized trails combined with complete streets. It also suggests planning to advance conservation of open space as a means to support a greenway, but also as a part of sustaining ecology and natural environments and quality places and spaces that support health and wellness.

Greenway/ Linear Parks Planning -- There is excellent potential to form this greenway as a major part of the city's overall recreation facilities supply. Moreover, connecting trails with parks and laying trails out in parks is a proven way to increase parks use and provide for quality recreation.

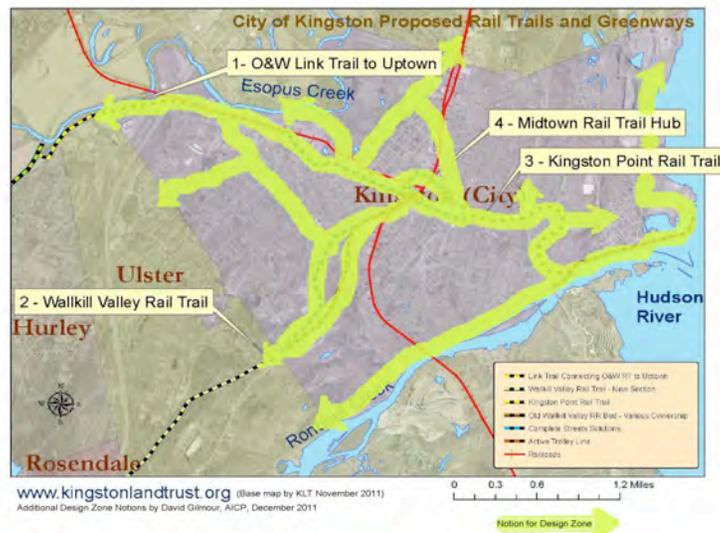
Multi-modal trails provide safe, universally accessible ways to move about the city by bicycle, on foot and other active means. According to 2009 polling research in the NY SCORP, the second most pressing recreation facility need identified by the public was for trails⁴⁸, while

park professionals ranked it highest. Strong demand for trails is also evidenced by the National Bicycling and Walking Study, which showed bike use increasing 89% and walking 13% since 1990. Active transport is also popular in the region – while projections prior for Walkway Over Hudson were for 275,000 visits per year, actual use is 750,000 per year (*Wikipedia*).

Greenways connect open space and populated places and bolster parks. Forming trails and complete streets will have a positive effect on quality of life and economic vitality, including in Midtown. Establishing multi-modal infrastructure aligns with a significant regional effort to create a trail network that serves as a transport alternative and recreational amenity of national significance. Adding trails will smooth the flow of autos and improve connections between the human and natural environment. Overall, Kingston will create 'green infrastructure' that reduces fossil fuel use, enables freedom of mobility, aids healthy physical activity, allows children to walk or bike to school, and supports economic growth.

The notion for forging a greenway network in Kingston involves converting abandoned or underutilized railroad corridors for shared multi-modal use as rail trails, advancing complete streets strategies along key connecting routes like Broadway, Greenkill Avenue, and siting waterfront promenades and trails. Aspects of the greenway are laid out in the LWRP, the UCP Plan and regional plans.

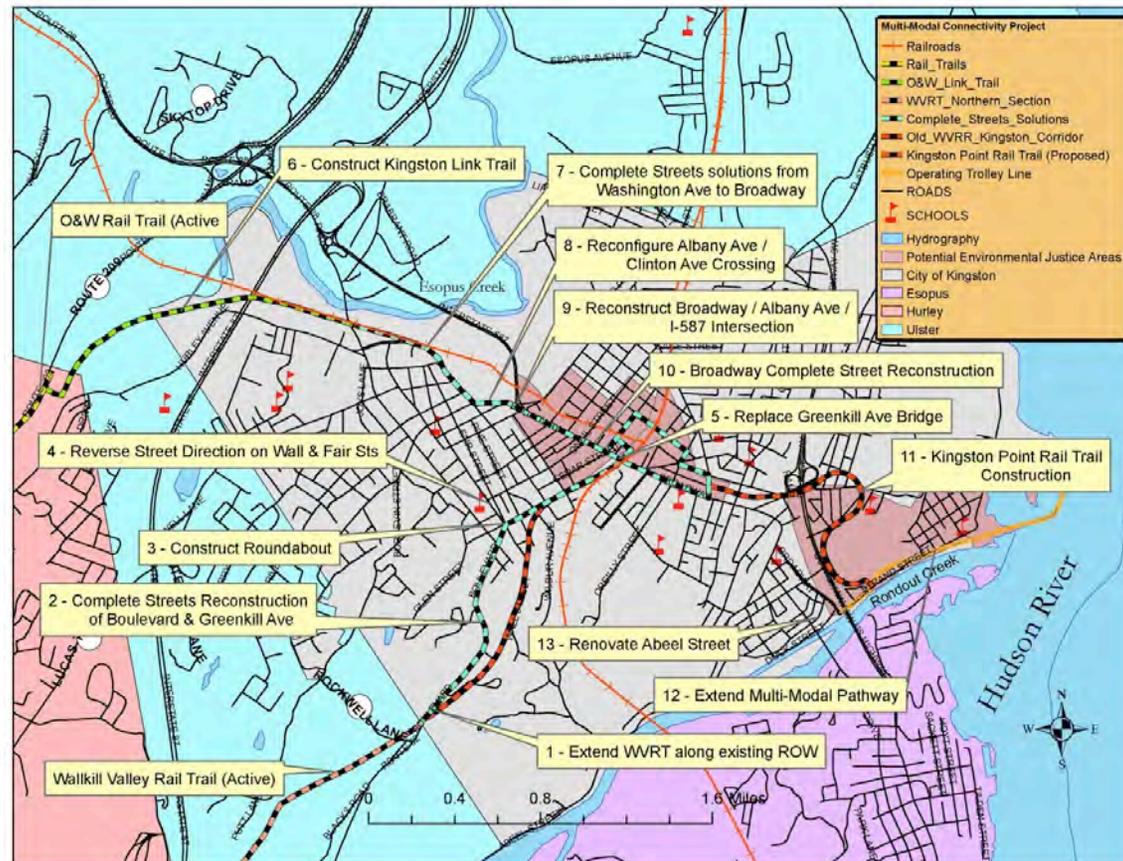
Implementing a Kingston greenway will involve pedestrian-oriented enhancements at parks gateways, along corridors and at key nodes. There is potential to form a greenway hub converging in the heart of Midtown. Trails by the Hudson and Rondout will aid access to the water, parks and scenic views. Sign systems will guide users and control traffic to aid safe and effective transport.



Establishing non-motorized trail enhancements is a cost-effective way to enlarge recreation supply in Kingston because it allows for larger service radii. Also, there are underutilized corridors already identified as feasible for accommodating trails. Furthermore, there is support for advancing these types of projects, and external funding and volunteer resources can leverage non-motorized infrastructure formation. Investment will stimulate economic revitalization, plus maintenance costs for trails are low. Currently, corridors come to the city's perimeter, but there are few formal trails and biking is not well

accommodated on streets, as there are not striping or bike lanes. In many places there are no sidewalks or sidewalks are not serviceable. The potential for a community greenway is shown by the popularity of the linear walkways by TR Gallo Park.

There are many potential trail and path projects, including as outlined in Ulster County's 2008 Non-motorized Transportation Plan. Some segments to plan for implementation over coming years include:



- *Kingston Point*. Notions involve perimeter trails and connections with the Rondout (preferably using the U&D corridor), Hasbrouck Park, and further north by the Hudson;
- *Linking Kingston Point to City Center /Midtown Hub* (see 2011 Draft Management Plan for the Kingston Point Rail Trail: Midtown to the Rondout Waterfront at the Trolley Museum by KLT) - this roughly 1.45 mile segment would consist of a rail trail on former rail right of way, with some street alignment where there are buildings and intersections.
- *Bringing active Wallkill Valley Rail Trail into city* – using a vacant rail right of way and providing a bike path adjacent to Greenkill Avenue, this project would stretch about 2.2 miles from the city's border to Washington Street;
- *The Ulster & Delaware Railroad Corridor U & D Rail + Trail Feasibility Study, 2006*, by Alta Planning & Design, analyzes potential phased implementation and maintenance of a major trail in the U&D rail right-of-way, from Kingston Point Park to Belleayre Mountain 40 miles west. The study provides analysis, section by section.
- *Establishing O&W Rail Trail* (Link Trail), from the Town of Hurley by the Esopus River connecting into Washington Avenue – about 0.94 miles, along unused rail bed. This corridor has scenic qualities and would help access NYS Route 209 and open spaces with recreation potential.
- *Waterfront Walkway/Bike Path Connections at Hudson Landing* – this involves design and construction of a multi-modal path on the Hudson for over a mile, extending along the development. A current proposal is for a publicly owned promenade constructed through a public/private inter-municipal partnership (City, Town of Ulster, Ulster County, and Hudson Landing Development LLC). It will have benches, landscaping, lighting, interpretative signage, and parking. There is also need to plan access and circulation to and within the proposed 300 acre 'Large City Park' on the hill above Hudson Landing.

- *Wilbur Ave Trail Corridor* – A focus segment with recreation enhancements is around the main stem of the Twaalfskill, with a core from Abeel St./ Wilbur Ave. northeast towards West O'Reilly Street. Here stream banks are susceptible to erosion. Grades along Wilbur Avenue and right of way constraints appear to inhibit installation of sidewalks and bike access on the road's shoulder. Alternatively, a meandering off-road trail could connect the Rondout and Mid-town, and possibly the Washington and Greenkill Avenues corridors. From Mid-town, this can provide a way to access the Rondout, including Block Park.

It is essential for recreation leaders to take involvement in defining recreation features, fixtures and management structure for a greenway with linear parks. Given tremendous opportunity for trails and rail-trails, it is important to define how various actors can collaborate and leverage resources. There is a need to involve the community in designing and stewarding a local greenway. Also critical is establishing appropriate roles for the Recreation staff, Recreation Board, friends groups and non-profits. An assumption is that community groups can serve as catalysts, managers and custodians. Meanwhile, Park's staff can assist the design and buildout of facilities so they serve diverse needs, including a full variety of recreation.

Open Space Planning – In conjunction with greenway development, it is suggested to plan for conservation of open space.

There is extensive undeveloped lands and habitats in the city. This will help sustain natural environments and quality places and spaces that support health and wellness. Besides an important role in ecology and the cultural landscape, there may be



opportunities to plan open space in harmony with future residential and nonresidential growth.

While this subsection provides rationale and suggestions for open space planning and conservation, it is not an open space plan, per se. There was insufficient budget under this project for the natural resource analysis and open space assessments required to form a full and detailed open space plan and program. It is strongly suggested for the City's Conservation Advisory Council (CAC⁴⁹) to be encouraged and supported in aligning resources and forging an open space plan. The Recreation Board can serve a supporting role. Open space development should happen in conjunction with community comprehensive planning and implementation of this plan. The discussion that follows identifies ways to advance open space planning and ensure that strong resource and environmental planning underpins Kingston's community and economic development efforts.

Open space has many benefits. Natural resource and recreation planning are harmonious. Natural areas:

- Are aesthetically pleasing and support public health; and
- Serve as habitat that enable biological diversity and sustain ecology, including human systems. For instance, wetlands facilitate stormwater management, while forests attenuate noise, give shade, build soils, air quality and serve as carbon sinks.

In Local Open Space Planning Guide, 2004, the New York State Department of State and the DEC define open space as:

An area of land or water that either remains in its natural state or is used for agriculture, free from intensive development for

residential, commercial, industrial or institutional use. Open space can be publicly or privately owned. It includes agricultural and estuarine lands, undeveloped scenic lands, public parks and preserves. It also includes water bodies such as lakes and bays. The definition of open space depends on the context. In a big city, a vacant lot or a small marsh can be open space. A small park or a narrow corridor for walking or bicycling is open space, though it may be surrounded by developed areas. Cultural and historic resources are part of the heritage of New York State and are often protected along with open space.

A feature of Kingston is that while this is a central city, there is a lot of open space in and adjacent to the city. There is opportunity to manage and direct growth to avoid the impacts of sprawl. In addition to parks, there are significant viewsheds, unique landforms, riparian corridors, including unregulated wetlands, open uplands, and other unique ecological and special habitats. Open space complements Kingston's economy, history and urban core.

⁴⁹ Created by Resolution 180 of 2008, it advises the Planning Board and Common Council on matters pertaining to the natural environment.

State Conservation Plan Framework – the 2009 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan by the DEC and OPHRP sets goals for open space planning and provides regional strategies. It points out that the lower Hudson River valley and the Catskills are part of a diverse natural and historic landscape, including remnants from earlier eras and spectacular scenery (page 70). The area is rich in biological, geological and historical resources, provides diverse outdoor recreational opportunities and critical water reserves. In referencing a conservation framework, it notes that one important feature is the Karst Aquifer Region (page 71). Paraphrased, this narrow band of carbonate rocks extends through Ulster County, generally parallel with the Hudson trending south-southwest, through parts of Kingston, continuously outcropping just northwest of the Shawangunk Ridge. Features like caves, sinkholes, mines, springs, lakes and sinking streams characterize this karst region. The regional plan also cites importance of the Route 28 corridor

(page 79) as the primary road through the Catskills, connecting population centers, including Kingston. Based on tourism potential, it notes that preserving the natural environment around the corridor is an opportunity to conserve land and enhance outdoor recreation/ tourism. Really, Kingston should be established as the gateway for Route 28, with a local greenway extending from Kingston Point, up and around and parallel to Broadway and I-587. Prominently establishing Kingston as the eastern gateway to the Catskill Park will aid larger, coherent open space planning, including Scenic Byway planning, particularly for the sub-region near the base of Route 28.

Accordingly, it is essential to plan open space and future land use around I-587 and the part of the Esopus River valley in the city. West of I-87 appears to be a priority area. Recreation opportunity should be planned now, not only for a trail from Hurley, but also for nature viewing, and mountain biking, and public access to the



Esopus. This should include small boat put-ins/ take-outs. Kingston Heritage Area themes are relevant in the Esopus/ Route 28/ I-587 environs, relating to colonial history and transport, so it is important to plan open space, trailhead access and scenic views management. Noteworthy is the potential to form links with the regional recreational trails at Bluestone Wild Forest, a place with cultural significance in quarry (transport) industry. By taking involvement in regional Byway planning, the city can leverage resources for recreation and open space planning. Designating the area as part of the city LWRP zone, or exploring a 'recreational river' designation may also aid the establishment of a management framework and access to funds for implementation.

Consistent with the subsection above, a conservation objective in the State Open Space Plan is the Hudson River Corridor Estuary/ Greenway Trail (page 94). It includes projects to create links in the Greenway and to provide public recreational opportunities with physical and visual access to the Hudson River environs. It includes suggestions to promote habitat conservation, watershed and tributary protection and adaptation needed in response to climate change, as described in the Hudson River Action Plan (2009).

That objective covers sites in categories: Hudson River Access, including recreational and visual access to the estuary at Island Dock in Kingston; Hudson River Greenway Trail Links (land-based trails and visual access); Hudson River Water Trail Sites; Hudson Tributaries (sites that protect habitat and provide access to stream banks including Rondout Creek); Scenic Viewsheds; Buffer, Access or Addition to Historic Sites, Conservation and Park Lands; Historic Sites Related to the American Revolution; Fish and Wildlife Management (to conserve the habitats of species of greatest conservation need in priority habitats); and Urban Waterfronts.

Open Space Planning for Parks – A main recommendation for open space planning in Kingston is to establish a city greenway on uplands and key streets as well as river and stream corridors. Linkages may

follow natural features, such as streams and terrain, in some cases can act as linear parks and a community corridors. Besides natural corridors like forests, agricultural land, streams, floodplains, and other low-density lands, a Kingston greenway should be defined to include some tree-lined streets and right of way. This will enhance connections of people with parks and green space, providing for recreation opportunity and active transport.

Formal Recreation Space -- this plan advises limited land acquisition or easement dedications for establishing new parks in areas of limited service, although appears to be some need is for space for a multipurpose athletic field. Preferably new supplies can be achieved in central and accessible locations⁵⁰. New space(s) will have sufficient areas and quality that these can be used for diverse and flexible activities and sports. Depending on future land use and surface transportation, some new incremental demand is expected for recreation in association with potential future growth, including around I-587, in Midtown, and also to an extent in and around the Rondout. This potential will be informed by the new comprehensive plan.

As noted in the climate protection plan (May 2012), substantial areas are susceptible to climate change. It proposes prohibiting new development in floodplains and preserving and protecting open space, biodiversity, and water supplies (p128). It goes on to note that one impact to prepare for will be for potential flooding to waterfronts on the tidal Hudson and Rondout Creek. Many land uses around the shoreline appear in jeopardy due to increased flooding and sea level rise with the greatest risk on East Strand between Broadway and North Street; at Tompkins Street, Ponckhockie Street, Abruy Street and Gill Street: and the intersection of Abeel Street and Wilbur Avenue. This likely will impact Island Dock, the trolley tracks and the mouth of the Rondout including by the Lighthouse and Kingston

⁵⁰ Sites that are auto-dependent and poorly served by transit do not mesh well the high proportion of consumers who do not use cars.

Point Beach and Park. Planning analysis as part of project development can help define whether any areas in transition would be suitable to revert to more open uses, such as for recreation.

Regarding current parks, 'Existing Municipal Recreation Facilities' explores the future designs. Within that discussion there are some spots called-out as possible targets for possible public acquisition. An example is lands west of the beach. Some other areas to monitor for possible use and acquisition as parks and recreation facilities are:

- Around greater Midtown – given a need for space for smaller neighborhood fields and playgrounds, recreation staff should monitor opportunities for the city to acquire and dedicate for recreation suitable properties that come into County possession through foreclosure. Staff should also monitor for vacant available parcels, especially that may come up adjacent to public facilities. A final objective should be to determine if any churches, non-profits or businesses have surplus space of 5,000 or more square feet that might be subdivided off, or dedicated through a recreation easement, or other means. Preliminary screens turn-up few candidate sites.
- The baseball field at Herzog's. It may be feasible to program this for more diverse use and establish field lighting. The Metropolitan Park field on Greenkill Avenue is also suitable given the role it serves supporting neighborhood recreation.
- If there are changes in patterns of surface transportation that afford easy, direct access from Uptown to 587 and the areas to its north, it could be beneficial to set some space for playing fields to serve existing demand as well as for anticipated new growth.
- Along Twaalfskill Creek bounded by Wilbur Avenue, South Wall Street, railroad right of way, and Abeel Street, as the UCP recommends development of linear park in the area.

East of Kingston Beach/ adjacent to Kingston Point/Rotary Park – The City can target a recreation easement for space it does not own. The LWRP is uncertain about how private lands on Kingston Point

should evolve. If an appropriate private development option is not a priority on all of that space, the city could attempt to add more space east of the ornamental gate at 'Rotary Park and north of current city lands (much of this area appears not used or underutilized), or by the rocks next to the beach and area further east.

RECREATION POLICY IMPROVEMENTS

A way to help advance quality recreation in Kingston is addressing change opportunities, such as through policies that support recreation. The HKK and CHP initiatives, of which the city is a partner, represent efforts to provide positive change using policy. Laws and policies that influence recreation provision include the charter, city code, zoning, and subdivision laws. One policy success in 2011 was the Common Council's resolution banning smoking in parks, which was an expansion of a prior policy, stimulated by recreation leaders, prohibiting smoking within range of certain fixtures in parks. This section identifies policy changes for community leaders and recreation stakeholders to work on.

Community Gardens – while garden clubs have aided ornamental gardens in parks, policy does not recognize community gardening as an allowed activity. It is suggested to designate this as a permissible as these contribute to sustainable living, health, social interaction, environmental education, open space and food security. Native fruit trees can also be an acceptable type of landscaping, especially in low maintenance areas, or where there might be an education benefit, such as if school children help care for these resources.

Land Use Laws & Regulations – Stakeholders are encouraged to evaluate how zoning is working to improve aesthetics around parks, achieve distinctive streets and create plazas. Vest pocket parks and street edges will often be formed and reshaped as part of private development, while these accessible public spaces will be maintained by property owners. It is also worth examining standards for open space, recreation amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle linkage within nonresidential developments.

Greenway Overlay Zone – consistent with the greenbelt notion, there is a need for an overlay zoning district along certain city roads, trails, natural corridors and around parks to promote connectivity and character enhancements. For parks gateways, an objective is to

enhance aesthetics and pedestrian safety. The district will establish standards for active mobility and complimentary sense of place. There can be standards for linking private land uses into corridors and criteria for street furniture, landscaping, and lighting. Besides defining a greenway footprint, design guidelines can lay out specific treatments for character classes or areas.

Sidewalk encroachments -- Outdoor dining supports tourism, but officials note that in locations, the use encroaches on public access and adequate level of service on sidewalks. Recreation and Planning staff can aid the definition of desired policy. It is suggested to form protocols to determine, case by case, whether to support this activity. There can also be an attempt to derive more licensing and permitting fees. Laws for sidewalk vending (as accessory activities) and for street merchants could address: sidewalk and public space characteristics and level of service requirements; vending location and area; exemptions; permit caps; restrictions on certain goods; cart or display design, and fees and taxes. Such policy can ensure safety while enhancing street life on greenways and by parks.

Achieve Open Space Design – Since 2010, the CAC's Green Development Guidelines Committee has worked on conservation guidelines that address environmental issues that arise during the planning process. Consistent with this, as a means to protect special site features and open space, the Planning Board should work towards the adoption of Open Space Design permitting process. This technique is being used often in the region. The process uses early stage development planning to guide quality development by identifying special natural and open space features of a site and promoting a layout of site-level building and transport so as to maximize the retention special and salient features. Open space design should not be construed as restricting development; it is density neutral. Its purpose is to provide flexibility in the arrangement of lots and to allow smaller lot sizes than the minimum provided for within the underlying zoning (or odd shaped lots),

provided there is dedication of open space. A difference from clustering is that the technique does not have a density bonus.

Incentive Zoning – this is a tool to achieve developer contributions of public benefits that are desirable like recreation enhancements. For instance, this might entail granting density in return for high quality open space dedications or recreation facility contributions. These dedications would be over and above any base open space or recreation requirements required of all development. Again, all new developments need to contribute their fair share of quality recreation, but if a developer does agree to go further, this is rewarded through development allowances. In order to create demand for using such incentive mechanisms, it may be worthwhile to drop base densities and allow density increments to be recovered under incentive structures. Often recreation fees are not triggered in non-residential developments, such as in site plans that do not involve subdivisions, so this is a way to advance the improvements of parks, or new additions to recreation land or facilities supply, consistent with this plan (recreation fees are a separate subject).

Recreation Fees – Parks dedication and recreation fee assessment process is part of Subdivision Regulation Art. IV, Sect 7. According to a 2011 interview with the City Planner, the Planning Board considers application of this standard case-by-case, with a practice to require the provision of public recreation lands. The Planner notes attempts to dedicate space that is constrained, including with high proportions of wetlands. The law may be unclear because it links to the 1950's master plan and its parks/ facilities maps and service standards. The code sets a contiguous parks/open space dedication of three to five acres (and appears to call for suitable land for parks and playgrounds). Alternatively, the Board may allow a fee in lieu of dedications – a route often used.

Park/ open space dedication requirements need clarification. Definitions should be precise with clear explanation of the service standard for on-site space and the amount and proportion of

developable and constrained land that can be assigned for playground, athletic fields, on-site trails and informal open space. The standard should call for setting aside necessary space on-site to connect with greenway, as safe and easy access and connected open space is critical. It should also require legal arrangements for dedications to be ironed out at the point of subdivision approval.

Developers do pay fees in-lieu of dedicating space. It is suggested to set this fee higher to ensure it accounts for high costs of land, including to obtain, assemble and configure it. It is reasonable to raise the fee 20-50 percent from its current level. City Recreation and Planning staff is advised to conduct recreation fees assessments routinely, every three years. Process to set the subdivision recreation fee was last conducted in 2005. Doing it routinely will ensure information on-hand to inform whether fees are adequate. More statutory framework can be included in the comprehensive plan and added to City Code to establish annual updates to account for the effects of inflation. Designated staff could carry out that update in October, such that the adjustment factor is ready when elected officials annually update the broader fee schedule. Keeping the fee current should not be burdensome for staff acting in cooperation with the City Attorney and finance staff.

CONCLUSION

Kingston has high quality natural resources, great parks, and exemplary recreation programs. This Plan is a guide, over the next decade, for the strategic improvement and development of parks, recreational facilities and services in the City.

A rough guide for the cost to sustain existing parks and provide major upgrades in and adjacent to them over the next decade is \$3.0 to \$5.5 Million. This includes programs like in the LWRP. The city appears to have seldom recently been involved in land acquisition. Roughly \$2 to \$6 Million could be budgeted to develop the greenway, advance open space planning, and develop some additional land as new playgrounds/parks and playing fields.

These numbers may appear large given the current economic and fiscal environment. Therefore, detailed strategy formation and prioritization should occur to define the most pressing objectives. Substantial resources should be requested from the State and Federal government and foundations to aid city priorities. However, local finances will still be needed. To form a fuller picture, the Recreation Department and executive staff should form broad, city-wide, and interdisciplinary capital budgets and policies.

Exploring how to maximize investments and diversify funding will help structure action. Some options that the city could explore, besides incentive zoning (discussed in the preceding section) are:

- Establishing capital reserves;
- Budgeting funds for small capital projects of \$10,000 to \$25,000;
- Structured debt;
- Public-private and joint use projects and agreements; and
- Tax increment type financing.

If it were possible to obtain community support for a bond act, this would offer a sound way to establish a predictable funding stream that can be used selectively and metered out over time for priorities.

Capital budgeting will promote projects readiness. It will also help ensure that are matches to leverage outside and private investment.

Since the city has a core competency providing recreation planning and service delivery, and the need for government efficiency is emphasized by many, it is also recommended to explore with adjacent communities whether some form of shared service could be established with city staff leading its execution. A benefit of a shared service type arrangement, such as with a town like Ulster, is that consumers would have one point of contact and expanded access to programs, parks and special facilities that they can use. Moreover, while this plan does not delve deeply into the local non-profit sector, there may be opportunities to collaborate on future facilities with the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs. For example, nonprofits like these may be useful in helping augment the indoor and outdoor recreation offerings in Midtown.

Switching to a more micro-scale, staff should make a practice of regularly consulting landscape architects and allied professions. This will support exploration of options for capital projects and provide insight on sequencing replacements.

As for operating expenditures, the Recreation Director maintains a multiyear budget, including planned capital projects, showing Departmental investment needs, priorities, and objectives. Examining lower cost spending needs, defined as \$5,000 or less, evaluated according to their assigned urgency, pinpoints challenges keeping up with safety and maintenance at parks and especially playgrounds. A cumulative small-scale need consists of outlays for replacement/ repairs of playground surfaces. Other lower-cost fixture needs and upgrades proposed are: structural renovations in outbuildings; traffic controls; HVAC (at Murphy Center);

playground lighting; drainage repairs/ stormwater management; and work on fields.

Playgrounds are major fixtures at most parks. Budgeting operating expenditures annually for surface replacements will protect children in falls, as unintentional accidents are a prevalent way for injuries to arise in younger age cohorts, including toddlers (not just in parks).

Also, when spending on fixtures, adherence to energy efficiency standards and the use of timers and switches, such as to shut off lights late at night, is urged to achieve lower operating costs. It is also suggested to consult the Complete Streets Advisory Council (CSAC) regarding proposed expenditures on traffic and circulation.

On another note, when any outdoor surface like pavement is planned for upgrade, it is a good time to consider long-term stormwater management. Renovations and replacements are also a good time to consider plantings and enhancements for landscaping. Accordingly, policies that specify durable and low maintenance plantings provide a way to minimize long-term operating costs and enhance park ambiance. The national Sustainable Sites initiative of ASLA is a strong model.

Staff can provide city-wide leadership by mandating the specification of Energy Star certified equipment and actively pursuing NYSERDA and electric utility resources for energy technology. Friends group campaigns might gain traction by exploring the potential for entities to donate energy efficient equipment so they can dually benefit from a charitable contribution and investment tax credits. Finally, having ecologically beneficial projects ready for development may position their implementation through environmental benefit projects when mitigation is mandated for a regional or private project.

In summary, city parks, greenways, and open space are important to the identity and economy of Kingston. Parks provide for good quality of life. Parks planning and careful investment in parks and recreation, related services, and adjacent environmental including the connecting corridors will support community health and fiscal stability over the long-term.

A main theme of this plan is that it is important to support and reinforce existing parks and facilities. Small investments will provide returns on community character, vitality, health and overall development. As this document was developed, the Healthy Kingston Partnership was emerging as a group with capacity to educate and advocate on the merits of a healthy community, including as advanced through quality recreation services and facilities provision. That group is a good candidate for aiding community outreach and engagement, in Midtown, and all around the city.

Reinforcing Kingston's parks and recreation environment will strengthen Kingston. As users consider prescriptions herein, they should contemplate priorities and the mix and identify particular ones they have interest in and most want to support.

APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF DATA & ASSUMPTIONS USED IN ESTABLISHING EXPECTED POPULATION CHANGE AND POSSIBLE GROWTH PATTERNS

Potential Population Change – Various sources, including a population forecast and a housing needs assessment, were explored in forming the standards-based analysis that is used to assess the future supply and demand for recreation facilities. For instance, future growth could influence the potential demand for recreation services and/or facilities and examining potential change offers insight about how demand may arise. This is further augmented by consideration of where future development may occur within different neighborhoods and districts of the city.

In 2000 the City's population was 23,478. By 2010 there was a slight increase of 415 persons or 1.8% from 2000. Over the decade 2000 to 2010 there was growth, but on the order of 0.2%, or roughly 42 persons per year. While population growth was slow, the change was greater than predicted in some models. This seems to show that some factors are influencing growth and migration into the community and/or less natural change and out-migration. A prolonged economic recession may be causing slowed out migration, but there is also evidence that urban areas are increasing in popularity throughout the nation. Besides potential for young people and artists to gravitate to Kingston, if inflation in transportation costs continue, greater numbers may choose to reside in urban areas that are walkable, have transit, and where persons may choose to forgo owning an auto. Based on the pattern of population change from 2000 to 2010, and the trends identified, a plausible scenario is that population growth may continue over the next ten years at roughly the same rate, which would put the 2022 resident population at 25,222.

In August 2010, the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) shared city-wide population and job growth projections through 2035. UCTC forecasts growth in total households over the long range of 3,503 households, or 100 per year. Considering there were 10,217 households in 2010, this translates into a rate of household growth of roughly 9.4% per decade. Using these figures, assuming an average household size of 2.27 persons (2010 Census), residential population could grow by 2,082 persons over the 10-year project horizon. Long-range trends pointing to decreasing fertility and smaller household sizes may mean this scenario is somewhat of an overestimate. Still, independent of residential growth in Kingston, UCTC also forecasts some low to moderate job growth, which is another possible source of increased demand for recreation facilities, especially around Midtown and Uptown.

According to data cited by the City's Climate Analyst in 2011, US Census data showed an increase in total housing units of 510 from 2000 to 2010 in Kingston, from 10,637 total units to 11,147. This translates into a 4.8% increase in housing units over the period, or 51 per year. Extrapolating this figure, using the same persons per household as above, and a housing occupancy rate of 91.7 percent (2010 Census), it is reasonable to expect growth in residential population by 1,062 persons per over 10 years.

Considering various factors that influence potential for residential population growth, including changes in age cohorts, housing and transportation supply, economic conditions, and birth, death and migration rates, it is reasonable to assume that the resident population will increase 5.4% over the coming decade. This rate of growth figure is derived by blending, or averaging, the three residential growth rates above. Inasmuch as there may be job growth in the city, there are affordable housing opportunities, and regional and national trends point to increased urban migration by empty-nesters and recent college graduates, a figure for a 2022 population of 27,198 seems reasonable. This figure is used to extrapolate recreation facilities demand in 2022 in Kingston.

Development Landscape – To serve the recreational needs of children and adults, adequate amounts of properly located recreation space should be provided for each residential area or district, including mixed use areas. There should also be consideration of how to provide for recreation facilities

in non-residential areas, like in central business districts. Neighborhoods that lack adequate space for recreation activities (or which are served by facilities that are too distant or inaccessible for children) tend to be considered less desirable than areas which are well equipped with recreation facilities, and, consequently, tend to depreciate in value.

According to the City Planner (2011 interview), there are no city-wide or district buildout analyses available. A buildout analysis is a projection of overall potential future development based on applicable zoning and the conversion of all developable raw land (and some redevelopment factor). This type of information can be used in inferring demand for recreation facilities, including by considering new building or redevelopment within neighborhoods or districts. It can show places where there may be increased demand for recreation facilities or services. Buildout analysis can also be used to assess the possible impacts of land use change on open space and natural resources.

In 2009 Kingston's Planning Board approved a SEQRA findings statement for Hudson Landing, a planned unit development proposing 1,682 residential housing units mixed with 172,500 square feet of nonresidential (commercial and service) buildings. The Landing project site straddles the Town of Ulster border in Ward 8 north of Kingston Point. Since then, the project has advanced into early construction. It is conceivable that some part of this development will be completed and occupied within the next 10 years. The Landing has on-site recreation amenities planned, including: a public linear riverwalk; Hudson River public access, a boat launch and parking; plus a 300+/- acre proposed public open space area. That space is contemplated to be conserved in perpetuity, possibly through dedication to a non-profit or government entity. The space will be a major recreation resource, presumably regional in nature, especially with the provision of planned recreation trails and complimentary amenities.

As construction and occupancy of the Landing progresses, there will be some undefined increase in the use and demand for public recreation facilities in the vicinity of this major development, such as at Kingston Beach, Kingston Point and Hasbrouck Parks. There are no turf sports playing fields planned at the site, besides the major open space area planned at the site (a planned waterfront promenade will also aid outdoor relaxation and exercise). Given the Landing's scale, City Recreation staff should periodically monitor (count) visitation and characteristics of use at the parks on and by the Point. Moreover, with waterfront development contemplated at the Landing, including a linear walkway north of Kingston Beach, City Recreation leaders should take active involvement in planning walking and biking linkages between the Point and the Landing.

In other parts of the city, excepting Uptown and I-587 environments, Midtown, and to some extent the Rondout, lower growth rates are expected. There is potential for mixed-use growth in Midtown, so it is encouraged to consider how future land use may change there and whether and how it may impact and relate to recreation. The city comprehensive planning program should be expected to analyze that area specifically, including an assessment of how greenway trails and the possible evolution (expansion or new development) of public, nonprofit and private recreation supply may impact and relate to anticipated recreation demand.

On another note, the I-587 study showed a notion for future land use at the Plaza that has an expanded street grid and new mixed-use growth. However, the conceptual future development in terms of numbers housing units and amount of nonresidential building was not presented. Besides considering future growth in that area, a potential program for growth should be established for north of I-587 in conjunction with comprehensive planning, which can inform the extent of future recreation need in that area that will be attributable to potential new growth.

End of section.