Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation
Open Space and Recreation
Five Year Master Plan Update
2014 - 2018

A PLACE TO REMEMBER
LOWER TOWNSHIP, N.J.

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1.0 Introduction

This document represents an update of the Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation Master Plan ("Plan"). The last Plan update submitted to the Township covered 2009 - 2013. The updated Plan contains an inventory of Township recreation facilities, an assessment of recreation needs and recommendations for improvements and enhancements that the Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) determined would fulfill the identified needs of the Township's recreation infrastructure. The preparation of the Plan update by the RAB is in accordance with its duties as described in Article 2 of the Lower Township Recreation Advisory Board By-Laws. Theses duties are:

a) Make recommendations to the Manager concerning or relating to the operation and administration of the Recreation function.
b) Advise and make recommendations to the Council concerning the recreation program and policies and the use of recreation areas in the Township.
c) Start creating and expanding on ideas and recommendations which would better the overall recreation program of the Township.
d) Work closely with the Director of Parks and Recreation to best implement a balanced and well guided recreation scheme for all of our citizens.

In order to provide a basis for determining the adequacy of parks and facilities in the Township, in conjunction with input from the Superintendent, the Recreation Advisory Board looked to utilize an established set of standards. For the purpose of this report the RAB adopted the standards set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Use of the NRPA guidelines for this report allowed the RAB to apply park and recreation standards that are appropriate nationwide for planning, acquiring and developing parks, recreation and open space lands, primarily at the community level. These guidelines are referenced in the Township's Land Use Development Plan and serve as a good baseline for determining the adequacy of the Township's facilities based on its current population. Though the NRPA now recommends a "Level of Service" methodology the old NRPA guidelines have provided an excellent baseline to work with as communities plan for future parks and recreation demand (Levigne 2010). It is important, however, that these standards be reviewed closely so to ensure that they fit with a particular community's needs, participant demands, financial constraints, and community desires (Levigne 2010). Therefore the use of these guidelines, coupled with the Parks and Recreation Department's input and analysis of participation numbers for various activities, provided the necessary information to support the RAB's recommendations for the number and size of facilities that may be appropriate for the Township.

The RAB's ongoing Master Plan evaluation process has included considerable public awareness with input from RAB members and volunteers that actively participate in recreation programs and the community at large. This report contains the goals and objectives identified by the RAB that guided the recommendations made for park and recreation facility improvements. Goals are the broad topics corresponding to the major elements of the plan. Objectives are the specific policies to be ad-

vanced by the goals. Although the planning process is continuous, Section 6.0 of the Master Plan, contains the recommended projects that the RAB determined will help meet the objectives of the Township's recreation program within the current planning period.

1.1 Geography of Lower Township

The Township of Lower has a total area of 31.015 square miles, of which, 27.740 square miles of it is land and 3.275 square miles of it (10.56%) is water (2010 Census). The Township contains approximately 9.5 miles of coastal shoreline bordering on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware Bay. The Township also comprises waterfront along Cape May Harbor, Cape May Canal and the inter-coastal waterway from Shawcrest to the mouth of Cold Spring Inlet. Lower Township is unique in its location at the southern cape sharing borders with Middle Township, Wildwood, Wildwood Crest, Cape May City, West Cape May and Cape May Point.

The Township is comprised of several unincorporated communities known as Diamond Beach, Erma, North Cape May, Townbank, Fishing Creek, Villas, Cold Spring, Schelleger's Landing and Shawcrest.

Demographic information taken from the 2010 census indicates there were 22,866 people, 9,579 households, and 6,351 families residing in the township. The population density was 824.3 per square mile. There were 14,507 housing units at an average density of 523.0 per square mile. The median household income is $53,699. In the township, 19.8% of the population were under the age of 18, 7.6% from 18 to 24, 20.4% from 25 to 44, 31.0% from 45 to 64, and 21.1% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 46.5 years. For every 100 females there were 90.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 86.9 males (2010 Census).

1.2 The Planning Process

Recreation planning involves collecting and analyzing information to make sure the right facilities are developed and that the right places are protected to meet future recreation needs. The Master Plan is the core document of the recreation planning process. It provides Township officials with data and recommendations to assist them with decisions regarding what facilities they should consider to address identified needs, and if a new recreation project under consideration is financially viable.

Numerous approaches to recreation planning are available. This plan attempts to answer these questions:

1) What Township recreation facilities are available now?
2) Do these facilities fulfill the identified needs of the community?
3) What facilities are required to meet the needs of the community?
4) Will a recommended recreation facility or project satisfy the identified need and how it will it be acquired, constructed and managed?

In order to answer these questions information was collected and reviewed in preparation of this Plan. This information included Township demographics, the present inventory of recreation facilities, recreation programs, participation rates in recreation programs, with and assessment of current and future recreation demands and the potential impact of recommended recreation projects on the local environment and residents. The Plan and its recommendations were prepared consistent with the land use recommendations and policies developed by previously published and adopted local and County Land Use and Comprehensive Plans and State Policies.

2.0 Park Inventory and Recreation Program Data

At the time the Master Plan was last drafted the Township recognized the need for acquisition of land for open space and recreation. Opportunities for land acquisition were sought through the Cape May County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Subsequent to the last Master Plan, two (2) properties came under the control of the Township for the purpose of developing recreation facilities on them. The Freeman S. Douglass, Jr. Memorial Park was acquired by a land swap deal with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife and developed as a multi-sport facility adding approximately 20 acres of active recreation area in the Cold Spring section of the Township.

The Rutherford parcel was acquired through a purchase and lease agreement with the Cape May County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program. This parcel located in North Cape May contains approximately 33 acres of woodland, including wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. Further planning efforts with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection are required prior to development of recreational facilities on this site.

The Ponderlodge Golf Course located in the Villas adjacent to Cox Hall Creek was acquired by the New Jersey Green Acres Program with preliminary plans for the Township to obtain a 20 acre special leased area for recreational use. However, these plans were abandoned by Township Council and the NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife has retained full use of the property as a Wildlife Management Area.

Of regional significance, Lower Township, Middle Township, and the Delaware River and Bay Authority were recently awarded County Open Space funds to develop another phase of the County Regional Bike Path. The proposed bike path is a shared use path that will eventually extend from the Cape May County Park and Zoo to the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal in North Cape May encompassing approximately 15 miles. The County has completed portions of the path. With the path extensions Middle Township and Lower Township are positioned to be a hub of recreation activities for the County, serving to complement the activities on the barrier island communities. It is envisioned that this safe and accessible bike path will attract significant numbers of people. More ambitious bikers will be able to actually board the ferry and continue their journey on the Junction and Breakwater Trail in Delaware.

Streets and roads where it feels comfortable to ride a bike are good for residents, tourists, and the economy. The added bicycle infrastructure and increased bicycle traffic is shown to promote local commerce and increased bicycle friendliness improves livability and quality of life (CMCOS 2014).

Currently the Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation maintains one (1) indoor recreation facility, eight (8) parks, one (1) historic site, one (1) community center and one (1) outdoor community swimming pool that are owned and/or operated by the Township. These facilities are located throughout the Township. The parks and the Recreation Center are open to the public at no cost. A minimal fee is charged for use of the outdoor pool. The Millman Center is available to Township civic organizations and may be rented for private functions.

The Department of Parks and Recreation supports a year round program consisting of fifty six (56) sports, events and activities including organized sports, camps, team & individual participation activities and special events for its residents covering the Township's entire demographic.

2.1 Park and Open Space Inventory

Lower Township operates and maintains the following facilities:

- **Paul Will Recreation Center**, 2600 Bayshore Road, is an indoor recreation complex. It contains an outdoor playground and basketball courts, a gym, game room, fitness room and several meeting rooms.
- **The Millman Center** has two (2) meeting rooms and a full kitchen and is located at 209 Bayshore Road, Villas. Twenty (20) non-profit organizations and groups utilize the Millman Center for their meetings.
- **Clem Mulligan Complex** is a neighborhood park located on Mowery Ave. between Caroline and Bates Aves. in the Villas. Mulligan Complex has two (2) lighted basketball courts, two (2) Little League Baseball Fields, a Street Hockey Rink, jogging path, concession building, benches, picnic tables and playground equipment on a 5.5 acre site.
- **Rotary Park** is located on Bayshore Rd. right in front of the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority. This is a wooded mini-park with playground equipment, swings, benches, pavilions, restrooms and picnic tables. The small recreation area is surrounded by woods on a 4.6 acre parcel.
- **Mindy Park** is located at the end of Mindy Ave. in North Cape May. Mindy Park is a a mini-park with a swing set and table. This small recreation site is also situated on a large 25.6 acre wooded and wetland parcel within the Cox Hall Creek watershed.
- **Freeman S. Douglass, Jr. Memorial Park** contains a 20 acre recreation facility located on Shore Road (US Rt 9) adjacent to the Lower Cape May Regional High School. It consists of 3 lighted fields including: a foot-

ball/soccer field, multi-purpose field, and a regulation size baseball field. There is also a lighted hockey rink, 3 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, concession stand, restrooms and a playground area. The park is leased and sits on a portion of the 105 acre State owned parcel managed by the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife. The remaining 85 acres are comprised of woods and maintained fields.

- **Tranquility Park** is a mini-park located in Tranquility II. The 1.25 acre park has a gazebo with park benches. It is used as a passive recreation area.
- **David Douglass Park** is located on the canal next to the Cape May - Lewes Ferry terminal. It provides waterfront parking along the canal with pavilions, picnic tables, benches. The park offers a scenic view of the bay, fishing and direct beach access.
- **Mitnick Park** is located on Jonathan Hoffman Road and Bayshore Road in North Cape May. Mitnick Park has two (2) tennis courts, a basketball court, a beach volleyball court, playground equipment, pavilion, benches, picnic tables and a youth soccer field.
- **Diamond Beach Park** is a mini-park located at Seaview Avenue and Rochester Avenue in the Diamond Beach section of Lower Township. The 0.31 acre park contains a playground and picnic benches.
- **The Lower Township Swimming Pool** is located on Winslow Ave. in North Cape May. It is an ADA accessible outdoor pool with surrounding sun deck area and a concession stand. The pool is open from June to September.
- **The Fishing Creek Schoolhouse** is located at Arizona and Bayshore in the Villas. The Schoolhouse hosts summer concerts and will undergo ADA improvements in the near future.
- **Beach access** is unique to the Township of Lower as it contains shorelines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware Bay. These beaches provide year-round recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. Public access to the waterfront is maintained along the Delaware Bay with numerous dune paths using roll-out ramps and stairs where suited for beach access along its approximately 5 miles of beach north of the Cape May Canal. The Township maintains a small parking area with benches and a portable restroom at its Lincoln Boulevard beach access. In Diamond Beach on the Atlantic Ocean side the beaches are mostly privately owned however beach access is maintained at the Rochester Avenue, Memphis Avenue and Raleigh Avenue street-ends. Access to the South Cape May beach is attainable at the Cape May Point State park with plenty of off-street parking. Sunset Beach at the end of Sunset Boulevard has public parking, commercial retail, food and miniature golf available for the public.

2.2 Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation Facility Hours of Operation

Paul R. Will Recreation Center -

Monday thru Friday: 9:30am- 8:30pm
Saturday: 9:00am- 7:00pm
Sunday: 12:00pm- 4:00pm

Millman Community Center - This facility is available seven (7) days a week for meetings and events. The use of the facility is by request by Lower Township based organizations and residents for special events.

Lower Township Community Pool - The outdoor pool is a seasonal facility. The pool generally opens for the summer around the third Saturday in June and remains open until Labor Day. The hours of operation in season are seven (7) days a week from 10:00am- 6:00pm.

Lower Township Outdoor Parks and Recreation Facilities - All of our outdoor parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities are open seven (7) days a week. The hours of operation in the parks are 9:00am to 9:00pm. The exception to this is David Douglass Park. The hours for this park are 5:30am- 10:30pm.

2.3 Programs and Activities Inventory

The following is a list of sports, activities and programs offered by the Department of Parks and Recreation for 2013 and 2014.

<u>Spring & Summer Programs</u>

1) Peewee Soccer (K & 1st grades)
2) Midget Soccer (2nd & 3rd)
3) Junior Soccer (4th ,5th & 6th)
4) Soccer Camp (5 yrs. – 15 yrs. Of age)
5) Basketball Camp (5 yrs. – 15 yrs. Of age)
6) Football Camp (6 yrs. – 17 yrs. Of age)
7) Cooking Camp (grades 1 – 8)
8) Judo (5 yrs. – Adult)
9) Township Pool
10) Over 30 Baseball
11) Easter Egg Hunt
12) Coombs/ Douglass Bay Run
13) Independence Day Festival
14) Boys Lacrosse (3rd- 8th grades)
15) Girls Lacrosse (3rd- 8th grades)
16) Escape The Cape Triathlon
17) Tiger Teens (7th and 8th grades)
18) Community Day
19) Adult Yoga

20) Aqua Yoga
21) Adult Zumba
22) Adult Pilates
23) Summer Concert Series
24) Youth Art Program (10yrs.- 13yrs.)

Fall & Winter Programs

1) Judo (5 yrs. – adult)
2) Peewee Soccer (K and 1st grades)
3) Midget Soccer (2nd and 3rd grades)
4) Junior Soccer (4th, 5th and 6th grades)
5) Peanut Cheerleading (1st & 2nd)
6) Peewee Cheerleading (3rd & 4th)
7) Junior Varsity Cheerleading (5th & 6th)
8) Varsity Cheerleading (7th & 8th)
9) Peanut Football (2nd grade)
10) Peewee Football (3rd & 4th grades)
11) Junior Varsity Football (5th & 6th grades)
12) Varsity Football (7th & 8th grades)
13) Youth Wrestling (1st – 6th grades)
14) Biddy Basketball (k)
15) Peewee Basketball (1st & 2nd grades)
16) Midget Basketball (3rd & 4th grades)
17) Junior Varsity Basketball (5th & 6th grades)
18) Girls Basketball (5th – 8th grades)
19) Boys Travel Basketball (3rd – 8th grades)
20) Halloween Costume Parade
21) Halloween Haunted Trails
22) Youth Arts Program (10 yrs. – 13 yrs. Of age)
23) Ferry Merry Christmas
24) Family New Year Eve Party
25) Adult Yoga
26) Adult Zumba
27) Adult Pilates
28) Weekly Basketball Clinic
29) Basketball Skills Competition
30) Tiger Teens (7th and 8th Grades)
31) Tom Beheler/ Greater Cape May Elks Youth Basketball Tournament (3rd- 8th grades)
32) Adult Basketball League

2.4 Recreation Program Participation

The following information contains the participation in numbers of participants per sport for the eight most popular sports programs in the Township for the 2012 Winter and 2013 Spring, Summer and Fall seasons. The numbers of participants by community and a percentage breakdown by sport is also provided.

Winter 2012 Wrestling Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 13 = 27%
b) Villas - 20 = 42%
c) Erma - 10 = 21%
d) Other - 5 = 10%
e) Total Registration – 48

Winter 2012 Basketball Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 107 = 32%
b) Villas - 129 = 38%
c) Erma - 60 = 18%
d) Other - 42 = 12%
e) Total Registration – 338

Spring Soccer 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 78 = 28%
b) Villas - 95 = 35%
c) Erma - 29 = 10%
d) Other - 73 = 27%
e) Total Registration - 275

Fall Soccer 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May - 108 = 36%
b) Villas - 100 = 33%
c) Erma - 43 = 14%
d) Other - 49 = 17%
e) Total Registration - 300

Football 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 54 = 34%
b) Villas - 48 = 30%
c) Erma - 26 = 16%
d) Other - 32 = 20%
e) Total Registration – 160

Boys Lacrosse 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 20 = 31%
b) Villas - 10 = 15%
c) Erma - 13 = 20%
d) Other - 22 = 34%
e) Total Registration – 65

Girls Lacrosse 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 16 = 31%
a) Villas - 12 = 23%
b) Erma - 12 = 23%
c) Other - 12 = 23%
d) Total Registration – 52

Cheerleading 2013 Participant Registration Percentages

a) North Cape May – 24 = 34%
b) Villas - 41 = 59%
c) Erma - 2 = 3%
d) Other - 3 = 4%
e) Total Registration – 70

Geographic Percentage Breakdown:

a) North Cape May (420 Total) = 32 %
b) Villas - (455 Total) = 35 %
c) Erma - (195 Total) = 15 %
d) Other - (238 Total) = 18 %

Percentage Breakdown by Sport:

a) Fall Soccer – 23 %
b) Basketball - 26 %
c) Spring Soccer – 21 %
d) Football – 12 %
e) Cheerleading – 5 %
f) Wrestling – 4 %
g) Boys Lacrosse – 5 %
h) Girls Lacrosse – 4 %

2.5 Activities and Special Events Descriptions

The **Easter Egg Hunt** is a Spring-time activity for children up to and including the fourth grade. Children are divided into age groups and each "Hunt" in their own area. The children "Hunt" for eggs filled with goodies and golden coins for special prizes. The Easter Bunny will be at the hunt to visit with the children.

The **Independence Day Festival** is held during Fourth of July week. This event is an opportunity for our residents and visitors alike to celebrate Our Nation's Independence with food, music, rides, and more all in anticipation of the evening fireworks display over the Delaware Bay.

Community Day is a Spring-time activity that involves a children's bike auction, bike safety program, games, food, and more. Bring your own bike or try to buy one while you are here. Either way, come out and enjoy the day.

The **Escape the Cape Triathlon** is held annually in the beginning of the summer. The triathlon event covers a weekend with over 1,000 athletes from around the country. The Triathlon itself is a three stage event consisting of swimming, cycling, and running in immediate succession over various distances. This event is cosponsored by Delmo Sports and the Delaware River and Bay Authority.

The **Coombs/Douglass Memorial Bay Run** is held on the first Saturday in August of each year. This event consists of a five mile certified run and a two mile health run/walk. Prizes are awarded in designated age categories and a pancake breakfast for the race participants and volunteers is held at the Town Bank Firehall after the race.

The **Halloween Costume Parade** is an October event that is part of the Rotary Club's Annual Pumpkin Festival with a parade and costume judging. Prizes are awarded in a variety of age groups from infants to groups and families.

The **Halloween Haunted Trails** is an October event that is the Township's most anticipated "Fright Night", and has steadily grown in popularity over the years. This event can be a frightening adventure that might not be recommended for the faint of heart. Prepare for the unexpected.

The **Ferry Merry Christmas** event is held in December of each year. The Delaware River and Bay Authority Ferry Terminal is the host location of this event where games for kids, along with face painting, arts and crafts, and snacks are all included. The kids can count on a visit from Santa.

The **youth soccer program** is for children in kindergarten through sixth grades. This program is offered in both the fall and spring. Recreational teams are formed to ensure all players have the opportunity to learn soccer and have fun. Practices are scheduled by coaches, and games are scheduled by the recreation department.

The **youth basketball program** is for children in kindergarten through eighth grades. This is a winter time activity. There are five divisions where teams are formed based on grade level. Teams are formed to ensure the opportunity to learn basketball and have fun. Some travel teams are available. Practices are scheduled by the coaches and games are scheduled by the recreation department.

The **youth football program** is a developmental yet competitive program that competes in the Cape Atlantic Junior Youth Football League. This program is offered to children entering first through eighth grades. Teams are separated by grade, and are formed in the summer with games being played in the fall. Equipment is issued through the recreation department. Travel is to be expected.

The **youth wrestling program** is offered to children in grades first through sixth. The team competes in both matches and tournaments. Coaches focus on teaching skills, strategy, and proper technique. This is a winter sport and travel is to be expected.

The **youth lacrosse program** is offered in the spring and is open to children in third through eighth grades. Several boys and girls teams are grouped by grades. This program emphasizes the basic skills of catching, throwing, shooting, offense and defense. Travel for league games is to be expected.

The **youth cheerleading program** is available to children in first through eighth grades. Teams are separated by grades and are assigned to cheer for one of our youth football teams. Practices begin in the summer and games are played in the fall. Participants will learn fundamentals, techniques, side line, and half time cheers.

The **judo program** is for participants 5 years of age and older. Adults and children are welcome. Judo is a fun and safe sport suitable for people of all ages. It's especially beneficial for children, improving: fitness and flexibility, coordination, respect for others, self-confidence, discipline and behavior, and strength.

Adult yoga class. This yoga practice is offered as a co ed beginner's level-awareness and experience of yoga- stretch, breathe and relax. No yoga experience required with all levels welcome. Yoga is gentle and tones the body, muscles, organs, joints, and glands. Bring a blanket or yoga mat to class and wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing to move in.

Zumba fitness. Zumba is the "Exercise in Disguise" dance party class that combines Latin and International rhythms with high energy and motivating music. Come learn dances like the salsa, merengue, mambo, reggae, samba, cumbia, calypso, hip-hop, and more. Zumba is designed for everybody, every shape, and every age! Beginners Welcome!! No dance experience necessary. Just bring a towel, lots of water and be prepared to sweat and have fun.

Pilate's classes. Come to the classes if you have any belly fat, lower back discomfort, or if hips and knees hurt. This is most likely due to no muscle support for your core. As muscles build, you will create an internal pull in building all the small and large muscles. See your body change to a longer, leaner you. Inches will disappear before your eyes. Bring a yoga mat and water.

The Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation has partnered with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to provide a **free summer concert series**. This series happens on several weeknights during the summer and is free to everyone. Bring a blanket or a beach chair and enjoy the free concert on the DRBA lawn.

The Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation has partnered with teachers and mentors from the Lower Cape May Regional School District to provide a series of **self- esteem and self- empowerment programs**. Donations for food and product are donated through the community. Participants meet monthly at either the recreation center or at one of the school facilities.

Adult basketball league, is a winter activity that is available to both male and female participants. Participants must be twenty five years and older to participate and residents are encouraged to enter a team of up to ten players.

2.5 Other Parks, Cultural Sites and Open Space in Lower Township

The Township is fortunate to have various alternative recreational opportunities offered in the way of Federal and State Wildlife Management Areas and parks, County parks and trails, as well as historical and cultural museums operated by local non-profit organizations. These include the following:

Cape May Point State Park (Cape May Lighthouse, Hawkwatch and marsh trails)

World War II Observation Tower

Sunset Beach (Sunken Ship)

Historic Cold Spring Village

Cape May County Bike Path

Cox Hall Creek Wildlife Management Area (Ponderlodge)

Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area

Cape May Wildlife Refuge - Two Mile Unit

Cape May Airport (NAS Wildwood and Forgotten Warriors museums, flight services, roads and open space used for various recreation activities)

Spicers Creek Boat Ramp

3.0 Recreation Demand

Demand or needs analyses for recreation typically serve to determine community need for open space and recreation. The recreation needs assessment is an essential component to the Plan as it supports and gives validity to the recommendations.

Several different methodologies have been developed over the years: however, none can give exact quantifiable results. The purpose for applying any of these methodologies is to establish a means for estimating community demand. Until a

methodology is developed which can accurately qualify and quantify the psychological, social and physiological benefits derived by recreation participants, recreation planners will continue to operate partially on the basis of intuition and good judgment (MPAC 1979).

3.1 National Recreation and Park Association Standards

Recreation standards for this report were taken from the standards set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The guidelines were used to identify surpluses and deficiencies within the Township, whether by acreage or number of facilities. The NRPA Standards and Guidelines provided a template for typical park classifications, number of acres a park system should have, and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as guidelines, they were not intended to account for the unique character of each community throughout the country. Local trends and the popularity of some activities over others often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. However the guidelines serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. The types of parks that may be included to meet open space standards can be a combination of the following classifications. This classification system is intended to serve as a guide to planning, not as an absolute blueprint (Lancaster).

Mini-park - The smallest type of park, a mini park typically is a site less than five acres. The park is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for autos are normally found. Mini parks service levels are one thousand per every .25 to .5 acres. Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, with benches, play facilities, tables and attractive landscaping.

Neighborhood Park - These parks normally have 5 to 20 acres and typically serve a population living within 1/2 mile of the park. Neighborhood parks conceptually concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space. Facilities typical to this park include; playing fields, playgrounds, shelters, walking paths, restrooms/Concessions, parking facilities.

Community Park - This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and often serves several communities. These parks typically include areas of diverse use. Such parks meet the community-based recreation needs and often include areas suited for intense recreational facilities. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. The park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope has from 20 to 75 acres;

School Park - School park sites are an excellent way to combine resources and provide accessible recreation amenities to the community. Depending on the school type (i.e. elementary, middle, high school) the size of the park will be dictated by the land available adjacent to the school. Typically, middle and high schools are constructed with youth athletic fields to support team sports. These facilities provide the basis for developing a community park or, at the very least, youth athletic

fields for recreation programs. School facilities are accessible to the public and thus can serve parks and recreation need for residents. These facilities often help meet a community's needs for recreation space, however the municipality should not depend on these sites to meet park needs.

Special Use Park - This type of park covers a broad range of facilities oriented toward a single use, including cultural or social sites and specialized facilities (eg. pool or the Fishing Creek Schoolhouse).

Private Park/Recreation Facility • Natural Resource Area/Preserve - According to the NRPA, natural resource areas are defined as "lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, and visual aesthetics." Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serves to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities.

The RAB referred to the NRPA guidelines to attempt to develop a baseline using park and recreation space standards that have been recognized nationwide for planning, acquiring and developing parks and open space lands, primarily at the community level.

3.2 Recreation Demand / Needs Assessment

The use of the NRPA standards is generally an adequate way to approximate surpluses and shortages of various recreation facilities. Before recommendations could be made the RAB had to assess the recreation demand and facility needs within the Township. To do this an assessment of the Township's existing parks and recreation facilities was performed using the NRPA standards and guidelines based on a population of 23,000 residents, with consideration of the summer population that approaches 100,000 during the height of the summer tourist season. While use of the guidelines is an appropriate planning tool local needs based on the regional popularity of a certain sport or activity must be considered to satisfy the local population demands.

NRPA guidelines published in 1983 suggested that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a "core" system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents. The NRPA also recognized that the size and amount of "adjunct" parklands will vary from community to community, but must be taken into account when considering a total, well rounded system of parks and recreation areas (Lancaster). Over time, the figure of 10 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 persons has come to be the commonly accepted standard used by most communities (Levigne 2010). It is a simple calculation that is easily attainable for most communities. Other established parks and recreation standards also fall into this area, and it is easy to understand why a community would chose not to undertake the extremely cumbersome and expensive "level of service" approach or develop their own individual standards.

Lower Township contains approximately 36 acres of developed parkland. With a population of approximately 23,000 the Township contains approximately 1.5 acres of Township controlled developed open space per 1,000 residents.

Table 1 contains the quantity of each facility in the Township and determines if the quantity meets, exceeds or is deficient to the applicable NRPA standard. The facility and use standard for each recreation use or facility provided in Table 1 were selected based on the inventory of existing recreation facilities and open space use within the Township.

Table 1
Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines

Facility	Facility per Population	Lower Township (+/-)
Basketball	1 per 5,000	7 courts (+2)
Tennis	1 court per 2,000	5 courts (-7)
Volleyball	1 per 5,000	1 court (-4)
Baseball	1 per 5,000	2 Little League (-3)
Baseball (lighted)	1 per 30,000	1 lighted field (ok)
Football	1 per 20,000	1 lighted field (ok)
Softball	1 per 5,000	3 fields (-2)
Soccer	1 per 10,000	1 youth (-1)
Lacrosse/Field hockey	1 per 20,000	None (share football field)
Swimming Pool[1]	1 per 20,000	1 outdoor
Passive Water Sports	1 lake per 25,000	multiple water access (ok)
Street Hockey[2]	1 per 25,000	2 rinks (+1)
Skateboard Park[2]	1 per 100,000	None
Playgrounds	1.5 acres per 1,000	7 playgrounds
Trails	1 system per region	1 bike/jogging path

[1]NRPA standards do not differentiate between outdoor and indoor aquatic facilities.
[2]Standard developed by Lose & Associates, Inc. to respond to recreation trends and growth in certain sports since 1983.

Review of Table 1 indicates that the Township contains various recreational facilities in numbers that meet or exceed the applied standards. It is important to note that demand may be greater than the National Standard. This is often the case for facilities such as regulation softball, baseball and soccer fields, and does not account for practice fields. It should be noted that the NRPA has no standard number of fields per population for lacrosse. The field hockey standard was assumed to be compatible in this case. The Township has a growing lacrosse program that relies on the use of the football field at Douglass park and the high school fields for its games. It is also worth mentioning that Table 1 indicates a surplus of basketball courts. The recreation center contains the ability to run two full-court games at a time. The other five courts are outdoors and are subject to seasonal use. During the winter sports season court times for games and practices are in short supply.

Table 1 suggests that the Township is deficient in some recreation facilities under the national standards for four sports; tennis, volleyball, softball and Little League baseball. Based on discussions with the Recreation Superintendent these apparent deficiencies are not recognized on the local level. The existing facilities within the Township appear to support the local demand.

In the judgment of the RAB the uniqueness of the Township as a summer resort destination located in lower Cape May County provides alternative recreation opportunities for both permanent and summer residents who use the local beaches and waters, the County Park system and State managed parks and wildlife management areas for various alternative recreation activities. In addition to these recreation alternatives the Township cooperatively shares playing fields with the local and regional school districts on an as-needed basis in support of organized Township and school sports programs.

Based on input from the Superintendent of Recreation at our monthly RAB meetings, it has come to our attention that the Township is in need of additional regulation sized fields to support both Township and public school sports activities, specifically for soccer, football and lacrosse, especially after the recent loss of school fields to solar array development. These three sports use similar dimensioned fields. Because of their similar field requirements demands for field use often conflict during the spring and fall seasons. These programs continue to grow in popularity thus participation rates are increasing. The forming of additional teams creates more demand for field time for practices and games. Additional fields are needed to support these sports particularly when seasonal programs conflict with one another. As indicated in Section 2.3, four soccer and two lacrosse programs ran during the 2012 Spring program season with 275 soccer players and 117 lacrosse players registered. During the 2013 Fall Program season three soccer and four football programs ran simultaneously with teams formed by 300 soccer players in three age groups and four football teams formed by 160 players in four age groups. In addition to in-season scheduled games, league playoffs, regional tournaments and instructional camps add to the demand for fields in the Township. And as often is the case the community's greatest shortage comes in the unquantified "practice" space. These typically unstructured open spaces that can be used for multiple purposes are very limited within the Township's existing parks. Additional unstructured open space should be planned into any new or expanded park.

Indoor facility space has historically been a challenge for the Recreation Department. The Paul Will Recreation Center at 2600 Bayshore Road, is an indoor recreation facility that contains a single gym with capacity for two full basketball courts, game room, fitness room and a couple of meeting rooms. The Recreation Center serves as the hub of indoor sports and recreation activity, especially during the Fall, Winter and Spring seasons. As provided in Section 2.3 approximately 400 youths were registered for the 2012 basketball and wrestling programs alone. The Recreation Department offers approximately 30 Fall and Winter youth and adult sports, programs and events that all utilize the Recreation Center. The gym is also shared with the adjacent elementary school during the day.

The Township operates a single outdoor pool in North Cape May. Interest has been expressed by Township residents and especially by those individuals who are active with recreation to have an indoor pool. Lower Cape May Regional High School recognized this need at one time and proposed construction of an indoor pool to house its swim team and for use by the community. The schools proposal was voted out of the school district budget proposal due to financial concerns by the general public. The removal of the schools proposal does not deny the benefit of the Township having an indoor pool facility.

The indoor pool facility could support numerous seasonal and monthly fee based programs and activities, serve as the home of Township sponsored youth and Masters swim teams that would compete with neighboring teams within the County, and serve as the home to the Lower Cape May Regional High School swim team. Aside from daily open swim and lap swim times, other fee supported programs would provide operating revenue for the Township facility. An indoor pool & fitness facility would create additional indoor recreation space and bring new opportunities for year round recreation activities focused on aquatic safety, exercise, sports and family fun.

4.0 Goals and Objectives

The main goals of the Master Plan update are to account for ways that the Township can; 1) maintain existing facilities to the highest industry standards and 2) enhance opportunities for safe and accessible recreational facilities and places within the Township that will meet the needs of our year round and summer populations.

The following objectives have been identified to address the immediate and long term needs for improved recreation opportunities in the Township. Improvements to existing facilities and the addition of indoor and outdoor space for recreational use are specific to the immediate and long term planning for recreation considered by the Recreation Advisory Board and presented in this report.

To satisfy the immediate and long-term recreational needs in the Township, and the goals of this Master Plan, the following objectives have been deliberated and are as follows:

1. Improve and replace equipment and grounds, etc. at the Township's parks and recreation buildings as needed to improve and diversify recreation infrastructure at Township Parks and facilities, which will enhance their capability to support present programs and general public use. Emphasis should be made on upgrading and renovating the Recreation Center, and pool clubhouse/concession stand.

2. The Township should acquire additional land for development of athletic fields to help relieve the dependency on use of local school athletic fields. Land acquisition may come through Federal or State Grant/Lease Programs or the Cape May County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program.

3. The continuing increase in recreation programs and growing participation in those programs requires that Township Council consider the future expansion of existing recreation buildings or construction of new buildings for the purpose of adding additional indoor floor space in order to increase recreation building capacity. Additional consideration should be made for construction of an indoor pool and fitness center.

4. As a shore community with an established tourism based economy the Township must make improvements to its recreation based facilities and improve access to our natural areas and waterfront areas as the need arises for the safety and convenience of our year-round residents and seasonal visitors.

5. Where opportunity is presented the Township should acquire open space and develop a pedestrian system throughout the Township to connect points of interest and encourage walking and bicycling as a means of recreation and travel.

5.0 Recommendations for Immediate Improvements to Existing Facilities (Capital Spending)

The Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation should maintain a regularly budgeted, incremental program of park upgrades. Continued investment in the Township's existing park system will ensure its status as a major community asset.

The following capital improvement list for existing facilities was provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation in support of budget planning within the next five year planning period. In the judgment of the Superintendent the listed items are necessary expenditures for the general upkeep and improvements to the named facilities.

Capital 2014

Installation of additional playground equipment @ Mindy Park - $7100.00

Installation of Basketball Systems @ Recreation Center playground - $8000.00

Installation of Basketball System @ Clem Mulligan - $16000.00

Resurfacing of Asphalt area @ Recreation Center - $13000.00

Installation of Video Equipment in Meeting Room @ Recreation Center - $700.00

Installation of irrigation at Millman Senior Community Center - $5500.00

Replace and purchase Soccer Goals for Various Parks - $8500.00

Capital 2015

Build New Pool Clubhouse and Concession Stand at the North Cape May Pool (Cost to be determined by engineer)
Construct additional fields at Freeman Douglass Park (Pending State approval)
Install Playground safety surface @ Diamond Beach
Install windows in concession stand @ Freeman Douglass Park
Installation of Sign at Recreation Center
Upgrade public bathrooms @ Millman Senior Community Center

Capital 2016

Install Playground safety surface @ Clem Mulligan Park
Installation of additional lighting to playground area at Recreation Center
Purchase additional kitchen equipment @ Millman Senior Community Center
Construct several permanent beach accesses along the bay front in North Cape May in coordination with beach drive access improvements

Capital 2017

Create a Fitness Park at Mitnick Park on Jonathan Hoffman Road
Create a Spray ground @ existing pool location
Renovate Existing Park Pavilions
Replace existing fencing and dugouts @ Clem Mulligan Park

Capital 2018

Installation of Irrigation @ Clem Mulligan Park
Purchase new game tables for Recreation Center
Construction of new asphalt path at Clem Mulligan Park
Create a Fitness Park at Clem Mulligan Park

6.0 Recommendations for Future Parks and Recreation Facilities

The recommendations presented below are offered as specific means of achieving the stated objectives of the Recreation Master Plan. It is generally recommended that the Township of Lower explore appropriate sites for construction of additional park facilities, indoor facilities and other recreation infrastructure improvements. The Recreation Advisory Board has identified five such projects that are in various stages of planning and development. These projects were specifically identified as important enhancements to the overall recreation capital in the Township.

The RAB recognizes that the feasibility for capital projects must consider the costs of construction and operation. The RAB identified as an objective of this plan update that the Township continue to seek funding sources that may come through Federal or State Grant/Lease Programs or the Cape May County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program. The RAB also recognizes the potential for direct

Township funding of these projects. According to Lauren Read, the Township's Chief Financial Officer, Lower Township has the capacity to borrow up to $29 million between 2015 and 2018 for capital projects without raising taxes (Lower Twp. 2014). In a July 2014 press release, Read noted that, "currently, the Township has $7.2 million in debt authorized. That leaves $21.8 million available to fund whatever capital projects council feels would benefit the Township."

Based on the assessed need and value to the community, phase of planning, potential permitting constraints, costs and shovel readiness the RAB recommends the following projects be pursued by the Township within the next five years. One of the projects is a trail project that will serve all types of people with many different interests and capabilities including seniors, children, families, people with disabilities, and visitors to the area. The trail project will have benefits beyond recreation and health. These benefits include community transportation, education, safety and family experience. The acquisition and development of the two athletic fields will serve to mitigate the deficiency of municipal park land exacerbated by the recent loss of use of athletic fields on public school grounds. The proposed indoor pool & fitness facility will not only mitigate for a recognized lack of building space to support recreation programs but it will bring new opportunities for year round indoor recreation activities and recreation based revenue to the Township.

The indirect benefits that can be realized from the following projects are the potential positive impacts to resident's health and wellbeing, as well as the positive economic impacts for the Township which must also be considered. These improvements will bring people into the Township, add to our visitor's overall recreation and leisure experience, as a result users of these facilities may stay longer, eat in our restaurants, and shop in our stores. It would be expected that these positive experiences will lead to return visits.

6.1 Beach Drive/Shore Drive Public Access Improvements

The public access improvement project will improve pedestrian safety and beach access along one of the Township's most popular waterfront destinations. Beach Drive and Shore Drive comprise a single continuous roadway that parallels a popular strand of beach along the Delaware Bay in the local communities of North Cape May and Town Bank. The local beach is popular for swimming, fishing, kayaking, beach combing, sunning and solitude. Beach access points are provided at or in close proximity to all of the twenty-three local streets and the two collector roads of Lincoln Boulevard (US Rt.9) and Townbank Road (CR. 648) that intersect with Beach Drive and Shore Drive at Lincoln Drive to Fernwood Road. This roadway is popular for its vista points, where in the evening hundreds come for viewing the Delaware Bay sunsets. The Township's NJDEP Municipal Public Access Plan identifies the beach access at Beach Drive and Lincoln Boulevard as a "Destination Public Access Point" where visitors are offered ten public parking spaces, including two handicapped spaces and access directly onto the beach. In the summer months a food vendor is typically set up at this popular location. Of regional significance the Mayor and Council were successful in having this location identified as a Delaware Bay "vista point" on the recently adopted 122-mile Bayshore Heritage Scenic By-

way, a State sponsored regional planning initiative that emphasizes the unique natural and historical landscapes along southern New Jersey's "western shore" in Salem, Cumberland and Cape May counties.

On January 17, 2014 Lower Township received an NJDEP CAFRA permit for its proposed Beach Drive / Shore Drive public access improvements. Lower Township Council, Recreation Advisory Board and the Lower Township Police Department have endorsed the project. This project was also adopted into the Township's Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP) as one of five projects identified by the Township to improve the level of public access to its tidal waters. The RAB recommends this project as necessary to enhance safe public access to the beach and bay in accordance with New Jersey Coastal Zone Management Policies. The RAB fully supports the inclusion of these improvements within the Township's NJDEP Municipal Public Access Plan and its positive impact, along with the areas inclusion as a Delaware Bay "vista point" in the State's Bayshore Heritage Scenic Byway.

This issue is that the Township roadway is currently a substandard two lane minor collector road that supports two-way vehicular traffic access along the beach. Beach Drive extends north from Lincoln Boulevard (US Rt.9) to Emerson Road. This section of the roadway has a varying paved cartway width of approximately 30 feet that includes a 6 foot wide shoulder on the northbound side with no shoulder along the southbound side where the road interfaces with the dunes. Curbing exists discontinuously on the residential side of the street. No curb exists along the beach side with the exception of a one block long curb between Scott Avenue and Browning Avenue. On-street parking is only permitted on the east side or northbound side of Beach Drive between Lincoln Drive and Emerson Road.

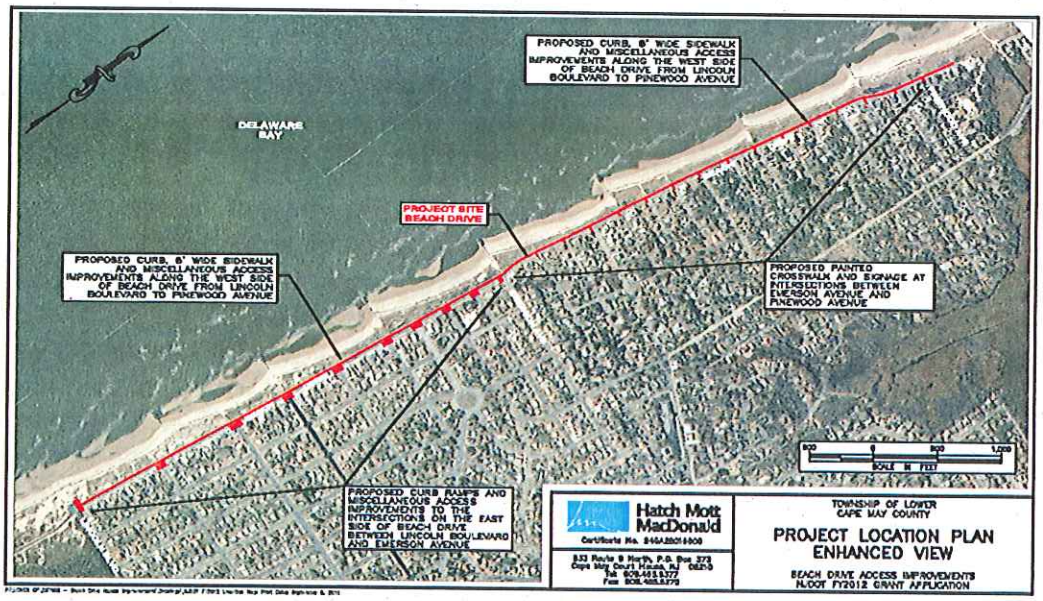
Shore Drive extends north from Emerson Avenue. The paved cartway between Emerson Avenue and Fernwood Road has a varied width of approximately 25 feet. This section of roadway has no shoulders, curbs or sidewalk on either side. No parking is permitted on either side of Shore Drive. No sidewalks exist along the bay side of the roadway. In many locations within the project area the southbound travel lane is partially impeded by drifting sand from the adjoining dunes. Present conditions have pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles sharing the existing cartway. This condition creates conflicts with motorists and pedestrians who utilized the southbound lane for, (1) ingress and egress at the many beach access paths along the roadway, and (2) for recreation as a "favored walkway" along the Delaware Bay beachfront.

The proposed roadway improvements are intended to mitigate present roadway deficiencies that have pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles sharing the cartway by providing a separate path for pedestrian circulation along the beach to take place outside of the cartway and provide a bicycle compatible roadway that conforms to current roadway design standards. The proposed 1.5 mile long walkway is designed to have a continuous 6 feet wide concrete sidewalk and curb that will improve pedestrian circulation and access to each street intersection and designated beach access point from Lincoln Boulevard to Fernwood Road. Marked pedestrian crosswalks are planned with American Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements at the

intersecting streets between the residential neighborhood and the beach. Signage will be added in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The roadway will be improved to provide consistent and appropriate cartway widths for a bicycle compatible "share the road" roadway in conformance with NJDOT Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways Planning and Design Guidelines.

The new roadway will consist of a 12 foot wide lane in each direction with a minimum 8 foot wide parking lane along the east side of the road. This proposed road width will maintain the existing parking from Lincoln Boulevard to Emerson Avenue. Consistent with existing conditions, from Emerson Avenue to Fernwood Road 12 foot wide lanes are proposed in each direction with no shoulders, curb or parking along the either side of the road. The roadway will maintain a consistent cartway width required for shared use bicycle compatibility. The new 6 foot wide sidewalk meets the minimum New Jersey Department of Transportation standards and width requirements for ADA compliance. The project will enhance the recreational opportunities along the beach by providing safe ingress and egress at existing beach access paths, as well as provide a continuous safe pedestrian travel way for walking, jogging and sightseeing along the Township's popular waterfront.

Figure 1 – Beach Drive / Shore Drive Public Access Improvements



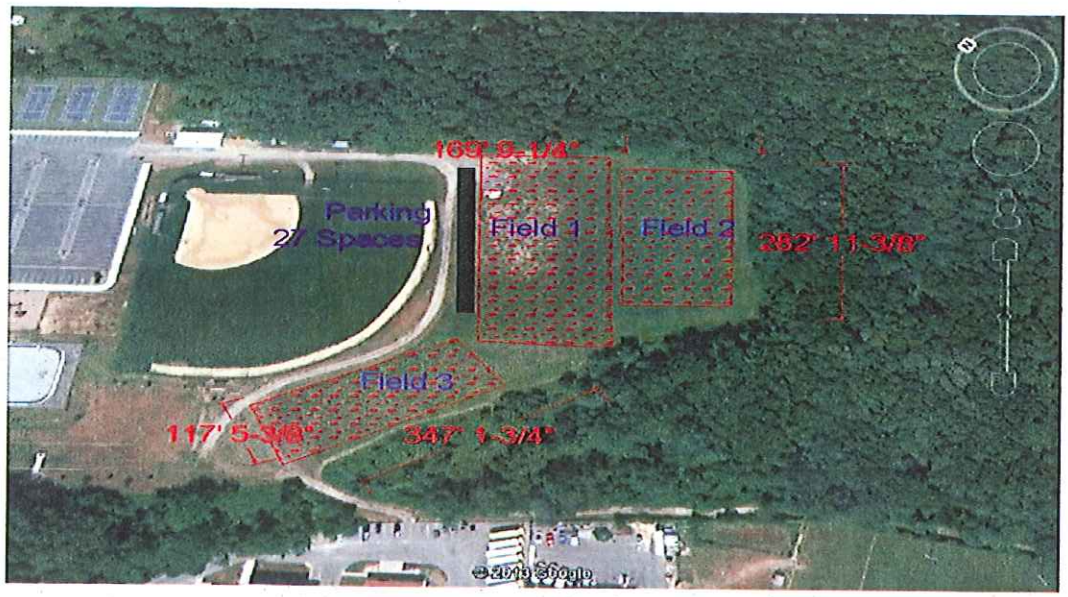
6.2 Freeman S. Douglass Memorial Park Expansion

On May 1, 2014 the Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation submitted its preliminary proposal to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife to expand development rights at its Freeman S. Douglass Jr. Memorial Park. The park is located on Shore Road adjacent to the Lower Cape May Regional High School. It consists of 3 lighted fields: a football/soccer field, multi-purpose field, and a regulation size baseball field. There is

also a lighted hockey rink, 3 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, concession stand, restrooms and a playground area. The facility plays host to many of the Township's organized team sports and is a hub for outdoor team sports activities in the Township. The park is operated by the Township under a long-term lease agreement with the NJDEP, Division of Fish and Wildlife.

As recognized from Table 1 and based on input from the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, the Township is in need of additional regulation sized fields to support both Township and public school sports activities, especially for its growing soccer and lacrosse programs. The need for additional fields was further impacted by the recent loss of school fields due to alternative energy development. The proposed expansion of Douglass Park will allow the development of three additional athletic fields and an additional parking area adjacent to the baseball field as depicted below in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Proposed Freeman Douglass Park Expansion



6.3 Cape May Airport Athletic Complex

On May 1, 2014 the Lower Township Department of Parks and Recreation submitted its preliminary proposal to collaborate with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to develop a new recreation complex at the Cape May Airport. The proposed athletic complex, with access from Ranger Road, will create a signature athletic facility for passive and active recreation that will support present and future Lower Township sports programs, especially its growing soccer and lacrosse programs. The need for this facility is an immediate alternative project if the Douglass Park expansion does not get built. In the long term this facility will fill a need for additional regulation sized fields to support both Township and public school sports activities, especially for its growing soccer and lacrosse programs.

This new facility could also serve as a regional venue for community events, tournaments, instructional camps and concerts. The proposed facility will consist of four regulation athletic fields, a concession stand with restrooms and a parking area as depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Proposed Cape May Airport Athletic Complex

6.4 Synthetic Turf Improvements to Freeman Douglass Park

The demonstrated lack of playing fields and practice fields is resulting in an over use of these fields within the Township. The natural turf fields are getting little or no recovery time in-season or between multiple sports seasons. With the lack of practice fields their excessive use in-season for multiple sports is worsening the problem. Presently the football field and multi-purpose field at Freeman Douglass park are taking the brunt of the use as this facility is the main venue for the Townships various organized sports teams and host for league games, tournaments and instructional camps. If additional fields cannot be acquired and developed as proposed with the Douglass Park expansion or at the Cape May airport the installation of synthetic turf may be a feasible alternative for the Township to be able to maintain the current level of use on the existing fields.

There are three main components to a high-end synthetic turf system – fiber, backing, and infill. Turf fibers are responsible for comfort and safety of the player, durability, a natural, grass-like look with soft and pleasing grass-like feel and resilience. The infill system is the single most important aspect of all synthetic turf fields. It is the basis for the safety of the turf system by providing the appropriate cushioning to absorb impact as well as being the foundation to a field's performance level by offering traction for players to cut, plant and release just like they would on

natural grass. The third component is the backing. Artificial turf backings are comprised of a primary backing and a secondary backing. Both the primary and secondary backings work together to provide dimensional stability to the entire system. The key to its durability lies in two major factors: A quality fiber and a heayweight infill (FieldTurf).

Members of Township Council have stated many times over that the safety of its residents must be a priority in their decision making process. Player safety is a main consideration for installing synthetic turf. An independent, five-year safety study of competitive high school football showed that when compared to natural grass the "FieldTurf" system leads to:

55% Fewer Neural Injuries

47% Fewer Cranial / Cervical Injuries

38% Fewer 3rd Degree Injuries

45% Less Time Lost to Long-Term Injuries (Lasting 22+ Days)

35% Less Time Lost to Short-Term Injuries (Lasting 1-2 Days)

The playing surface is also practically maintenance free providing a consistent playing surface in all weather conditions. Designed for all-weather playability, synthetic turf fields are ready to play-on during the heaviest of rainfalls, and remain in pristine condition. The best synthetic turf fields on the market today eg. "FieldTurf" has over 500 fields that have lasted eight years or more (FieldTurf).

Figure 4 - Synthetic Turf Field

6.5 Indoor Aquatic Center

The RAB has long received resident inquiries about the possibility of a Township indoor pool. With the potential move of the Public Works Department offices, garage and recycling yard to the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Bayshore Road property the RAB sees the potentially soon to be abandoned Seashore Road site as a viable location a Township indoor pool and fitness facility. An indoor pool & fitness facility would bring new opportunities for year round recreation activities focused on aquatic safety, exercise, sports and family fun. Therefore the redevelopment of the public works site as a Township Recreation facility is strongly supported by the RAB. It is the RAB's recommendation that the site be developed with an Indoor Aquatic Center.

The Indoor Aquatic Center would support numerous seasonal and monthly fee based programs and activities, serve as the home of Township sponsored youth and Masters swim teams, and serve as the home to the Lower Cape May Regional High School swim team. Aside from daily open swim times, other fee supported programs may include Instructed Adult Fitness, a children's American Red Cross Learn to Swim Program, Aqua Yoga, Water Aerobics, Aqua Zumba, Deep Water Exercise, Scuba, Lifeguard Classes and pool parties.

The Lower Township Aquatic Center would be a multi-faceted facility that encourages people of all ages and fitness levels to participate in programs that help to promote good health. The center should have a six lane - 25 meter pool with shower and locker rooms. In addition to the pool the facility could include an exercise studio for aerobics, yoga, Pilates, indoor cycling, personal training as well as adult and youth program spaces. The Lower Township Aquatic Center will have something for everyone in the family.

Figure 5 - Proposed Lower Township Aquatic Center at Seashore Road

7.0 Plan Summary

The recreational opportunities offered by parks are important community assets that help make our community an attractive place to live, work and invest in. As such, the condition of the Township's recreation facilities should be a matter of concern to the Township Council. The Recreation Advisory Board has reevaluated the previous Recreation Master Plan in order to update the Plan by identifying the present recreation needs of the Township, utilizing accepted recreation standards and public policy, with consideration made to Federal and State Public Access policies and ADA requirements and guidelines. The Recreation Advisory Board, by way of this updated Master Plan has identified goals and objectives for the enhancement of the recreation experience in the Township. As such, this Master Plan update contains recommendations to the Manager, Mayor and Council in accordance with the duties of the Recreation Advisory Board as provided in its bylaws.

The RAB recommends that the Mayor and Council support and encourage continued investment in the Township's existing park system which will ensure its status as a major community asset. The RAB recommends that the Township pursue and develop the identified future parks, recreation facilities and recreation infrastructure improvements that will both mitigate for the deficiency of such facilities in the Township, and enhance its overall park and recreation system. The tools to implement the Plan are the responsibility of the governing body. Although the Recreation Advisory Board presents herewith its recommendations in accordance with its duties as described in its By-Laws, the actual decisions to implement them are a matter for the municipality's elected, not appointed, officials.

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