

Town of Southampton Recreation Plan

II. The Planning Platform: Existing Plans and Activities Concerned with Recreation

A. Existing Plans

Southampton is a community with a strong and active planning capacity. So from the start it must be recognized that this Recreation Plan is one in a series of documents — both at the local and regional level — that address recreation in some fashion. For example, the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update includes many recommendations that relate to recreation, although they are not organized under a particular “recreation” heading. The 1970 Master Plan, which the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update builds upon, is also remembered, and consulted by municipal leaders and staff for its discussion of Town recreation needs and community planning and implementation strategies. There have been studies commissioned by the Town to explore the need for, and feasibility of, specific recreational facilities such as swimming pools and golf courses. Additionally, various land use and environmental management plans explore recreation issues in the context of harbor management, coastal access, greenway protection and the like.

To provide a platform for the discussion of recreation in Southampton, here is a review of relevant existing plans and how they relate to the future of recreation in Southampton.

a) Southampton Tomorrow/Comprehensive Plan Update (March, 1999)

The Town Comprehensive Plan Update is the guiding document for land use decisions in the Town of Southampton, and provides a ten-year action plan for protecting resources, enhancing public facilities, expanding the local economy and increasing transportation options.

A full set of recreation goals & objectives can be found within the 1999 Town Comprehensive Plan Update. These have been assembled in Figure II-1.

As noted above, the Comprehensive Plan Update also addresses recreation, albeit indirectly, as part of other topic areas such as Community Enhancement, Resource Protection and Economy. Figure II-1 below is a compilation of recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan Update that concern recreation. They constitute a set of goals and objectives for this specific Recreation Plan.

Figure II-1
Recreation Plan Goals & Objectives
culled from the 1999 Town of Southampton
Comprehensive Plan Update

- 1. *Develop a comprehensive picture of Southampton recreational needs and wants.***
 - a. Prepare a comprehensive inventory of public and private recreational facilities and programs in the Town.
 - b. Identify public needs and wants through a public process utilizing a community-wide survey, forums, focus groups and individual interviews, along with a comparison of Southampton facilities to national standards for the provision of parks and recreational facilities.
 - c. Evaluate Southampton recreational needs on a community-by-community basis, utilizing the Town's CAC areas as the organizing principle.

- 2. *Identify potential locations for new and/or expanded recreational facilities within the Town.***
 - a. Evaluate the potential for collaborative and multiple uses so as to achieve economic and service delivery efficiencies.
 - b. Evaluate opportunities to site new facilities in or near hamlet centers, to facilitate convenience, contribute to each hamlet's sense of community, and support economic development.
 - c. Explore and update the utilization of Community Preservation Fund parcels to meet Town recreation needs.

- 3. *Facilitate access to recreation resources in the Town for all residents and visitors.***
 - a. Identify opportunities to provide access through alternative modes of transportation (i.e. walking, cycling and transit).
 - i. Explore beach shuttles to and from train stations and hamlet centers, starting with Hampton Bays.

Figure II-1, cont.

3. a. ii. Create a network of bicycle routes, mostly utilizing the shoulder of existing streets. Give priority to the development of bicycle routes leading to beach access points and connecting the beach with train stations and remote parking lots. Install bicycle racks and maps at beach access points.
 - b. Identify options for increasing parking and/or improving utilization of spaces.
 - c. Identify ways to improve public awareness of recreation facilities and programs.
 - i. Address awareness of facilities and programs by all sectors of the public.
 - ii. Consider increasing the awareness and use of “lesser-known” resources as a means of relieving pressure on overcrowded facilities.
- 4. *Incorporate greenway and trail development into the overall recreation planning process.***
- a. Incorporate existing Town work on trail and greenway development into the Recreation Master Plan.
 - b. Review and/or create, as appropriate, criteria for selecting priority public access greenway areas for acquisition or development.
 - c. Combine existing parks, open space acquisitions, and right-of-way easements to create a network of long-distance trails.
 - i. Identify opportunities to create trail linkages between existing and proposed passive and active recreation facilities and other destinations, particularly those utilizing publicly owned land.
 - ii. Update, as appropriate, the five-year trails acquisition plan from the trails map that identifies a priority ranking for key trails and trail linkages.
 - d. Update, as appropriate, opportunities for trail access areas, signage and kiosks, parking, etc.
 - e. Incorporate issues concerning the administrative structure for public access greenways into the evaluation of the Town’s recreation management system.
 - i. Include the Natural Resources Director, the Parks and Recreation Director and the Highway Superintendent to ensure a coordinated system.
- 5. *Make the Town’s recreation management functions self-sustaining.***
- a. Review and evaluate current department operations.
 - b. Explore the advantages, disadvantages and issues concerning the establishment of an Open Space Conservation and Park District to levy fees separate from the Town’s General Fund to finance and manage park improvements.
 - i. Give special consideration to how such a district could be utilized to advance the conversion of appropriate areas of the Town landfill as parkland.
 - c. Update the existing fee structure for recreational facility use and instruction.
 - i. Give special consideration to the creation of a resident/non-resident system.

Figure II-1, cont.**6. *Enhance the use of Southampton's recreational resources as a tool for economic development.***

- a. Identify ways to increase and promote activities that have a shoulder season appeal, including golf, hiking, bicycling, boating, horseback riding, tennis, winery and farm tours, but without compromising the Town's natural or scenic resources.
- b. Identify opportunities to provide signage directing visitors to hamlet/village centers, train stations and oceanfront parks.
- c. Identify opportunities to provide interpretive signage, public restrooms, bicycle rentals, and other such amenities at the train stations.
- d. Consider, as part of recreation management issues, ways to implement a signage program.
- e. Publish an annual map and guide to farm stands.
- f. Consider ways to strengthen the ability of the marine industry, including marinas, to survive and locate in the Town.
- g. Work together with the State of New York, Suffolk County and local municipalities to build travel information centers that relate to Southampton's rural and historic qualities. Possibilities include:
 - i. a visitor center highlighting "eco-tourism" located at the south end of Route 111 or at the Francis Gabreski Airport (near Westhampton Beach) and doubling as a Pine Barrens Interpretive Center;
 - ii. a visitor center highlighting "heritage tourism" that doubles as a maritime or historical theme museum; suitable locations include the Shinnecock Canal or along the Peconic River near the Flanders/Riverside Circle.
- h. Focus economic-oriented recreational investment in the western half of town, where there is a greater need for tax ratables and business center revitalization.

7. *Review and refine Town regulations and policies concerning recreational areas in order to reduce conflicts between natural resource protection and recreational uses.*

- a. Identify, evaluate and refine or develop policies and regulations to control:
 - i. the use of pesticides and herbicides to manage vegetation in recreational areas;
 - ii. vehicular use on beaches during the spring and summer months in identified sensitive areas;
 - iii. the varieties of plant materials used in recreation-area landscaping, specifically to encourage the use of native and other specialized (i.e. low growing grasses) species where appropriate.

Figure II-1, cont.

7. b. Explore protocols to ensure a balance between the environmental sensitivity of resource protection areas and the desire of the public to access natural areas.
8. ***Review and refine Town land use and zoning regulations to facilitate the preservation and expansion of greenway and open space areas.***
 - a. Review the Town subdivision process to ensure that when land is set aside, decision-making boards refer to the trail map in prioritizing open space designation within the subdivision, and that trail dedications are made when appropriate.
 - b. Revise the existing code to clarify the assessment of parkland or park fees.
 - c. Revise the existing park standards to allow all or part of the requirement for parkland set asides to be met by trail dedication.
 - d. Revise §292-42.1 to include connectivity requirements in the design requirements for trails.
9. ***Support local marinas through review and refinement of Town land use, zoning and other regulations, and technical assistance.***
 - a. Utilize zoning to provide a measure of protection to marinas from conversion to other land uses. For instance, the Town should altogether prohibit floating structures, including houseboats, not just in Tidal Wetlands (§330-40).
 - b. Revisit the parking ratio requirements for marinas (§330-94), as current regulations (0.5 cars per slip for marinas without boat yards, 1.5 cars per boat slip for marinas with boat yards, plus for both, 1 car per employee) may be too stringent for full-service marinas, and eat up land that might otherwise be used for boat yard or buffer. This is especially a problem for the smaller marinas. Comparables suggest point to 0.5 to 0.75 cars per boat slip plus 1 car per employee.
 - c. Adjust the list of accessory uses for marinas to support their social functions, allowing, for example, swimming pools, small snack bars, marina supply stores, meeting rooms, etc. with appropriate safeguards that such facilities will not be used by the general public (§330-137).
 - d. Seek preferential real estate tax treatment for marina operations. For example:
 - i. Lobby the State for use value assessments like those available to help protect farmland in the state.
 - ii. Seek Industrial and Commercial Incentive Board Program (ICIB) benefits (discussed later in this report) either to the marine industry in general, or to areas like the Shinnecock Canal where there is a concentration of marinas.

Figure II-1, cont.

9. e. Provide technical assistance to marina owners on permits and review procedures. Work with the County should to create a "one-stop-shop" permit and review process, as recommended by the East End Economic & Environmental Task Force of Long Island.

10. *Pursue partnerships between the Town, School Districts, local colleges and private resources to maximize opportunities for recreation use.*
 - a. Identify ways to encourage the sharing of school facilities with the community e.g. adult education classes, recreational facilities, and after school child care.
 - b. Explore the development of Memoranda of Agreements between the Town, School Districts and other entities as appropriate to enable and promote shared use of facilities and programs.

11. *Explore and advance the planning concerning recognized needs for specialized recreation. These include:*
 - a. Youth Centers
 - i. Give consideration to the development of smaller youth centers throughout the different hamlets, ideally using existing facilities such as schools.
 - b. Public Boat Launches
 - i. Review and evaluate locations of public boat launches.
 - ii. Explore a network of marine preservation zones and sanctuaries.
 - iii. Enhance public boat launch locations, including those that serve canoes and kayaks. Appropriate enhancements include small parking areas, signage at the site and directional signage from nearby arterials and streets. Canoe/kayak concessions should also be considered.
 - iv. Explore the development of a network of marine preservation zones and sanctuary areas. A formal and enhanced network would help enhance sailing, canoeing, and kayaking; it could even enhance snorkeling, sport diving and underwater photography.
 - c. Golfing
 - i. Consider potential locations and planning mechanisms for golf course development within the Town, specifically in connection with area-wide plans (i.e., Planned Development Districts) in which complete assurances are provided with regard to their environmental impacts.
 - ii. Review Town zoning and environmental regulations potentially governing golf course development, including PDD zoning and requirements for integrated pest management and water quality management where appropriate.

Figure II-1, cont.

11. c. iii. Require all future golf courses to prepare "integrated pest management and water quality maintenance plans," in which natural vegetation is preferred, pesticides are used as a last resort, and there is constant groundwater monitoring. Management/maintenance plans should be proportionate to the sensitivity of the land involved, with particularly stringent plans required of any golf course to be located in the aquifer protection area.
- iv. Explore regulations to tie the number of golf holes (or acres) to TDR credit purchases.
- d. Tennis
 - i. Add tennis centers to the Town's list of Special Exception Uses (Article XVII), with appropriate safeguards, especially with regard to the construction of permanent or temporary tennis bubbles.
- e. Village and Hamlet Business Areas
 - i. Give priority to locating new recreational facilities in village and hamlet business areas, as a means of strengthening their vitality and facilitating access.
 - ii. Identify ways to enhance the recreational experience of village and hamlet center environments through the creation of pocket parks, and upgrades to public spaces, pedestrian amenities, the streetscape and historic qualities.

b) Southampton Town Master Plan (1970)

After a generation, the Town Master Plan prepared for Southampton in 1970 remains a document taken off the shelf and consulted. And unfulfilled recommendations remain relevant. The plan proposed a feasibility study for a "Recreation Bus Service from hamlet centers to parks and beaches" — a need and idea that has surfaced repeatedly in this project. A variety of parks were also recommended as capital projects, including¹:

High Priority Projects from the 1970 Town Master Plan

- Development of Neighborhood Parks to serve Riverside, Speonk, East Quogue, West Tiana and Hampton Bays

¹ Only capital projects proposed for Town responsibility are recited here. The Plan also proposed recreation projects within the Town of Southampton to be undertaken by the County and/or State.

- Acquisition of:
 1. Towd Point Beach and Recreation Park
 2. Channel Pond for a recreation and environmental beach
 3. Middle Pond Spoils Area for recreation and boat ramp
 4. Iron Pier Shorefront for a recreation and environmental park
 5. Lower Speonk River Greenbelt Park for a recreation and environmental park
 6. Cormorant Point for a recreation and environmental park

Medium Priority Projects from the 1970 Town Master Plan

- Neighborhood Parks to serve existing and developing areas in all hamlets —10 new parks in all
- Acquisition of:
 1. Upper Speonk River Greenbelt Park for a recreation and environmental park
 2. Sebonac Shorefront Park
 3. Wildwood Lake Park
 4. Long Pond Recreation Park
 5. Weesuck Creek Greenbelt Park

Low Priority/Ongoing Projects from the 1970 Town Master Plan

- Continuing Funds Program:
 1. to acquire private wetlands
 2. to address education and planning for greenbelt parks
- New Neighborhood and Community Recreation Parks as needed to meet growing population demands

The *1970 Town Master Plan* also put forward a general concept for the development of parks and recreation areas, which is to have a “system of largely interconnected parks and open spaces.” Greenbelts are proposed as the links between various focal points. Additionally, the plan discussed Town park needs as they relate to population, using the national standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents to set targets for new parks. This standard is similarly used in this Recreation Plan, in section III, where the analysis is based on population figures from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Finally, the 1970 *Town Master Plan* recommended the establishment of an advisory committee to evaluate and establish acquisition priorities for recreational sites, including representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Natural Resources Commission and Town Recreation Department. A generation later, much land suitable for parks has been acquired — largely through the Community Preservation Fund (see item c, directly below)— but the Town lacks a representative coordinating body to oversee park acquisition and development. The establishment of such a body has become a central theme of the recommendations in this plan, and is discussed further in sections IV and V.

c) *Community Preservation Project Plan (1998-2001) & Plan Update (2001)*

Southampton's Community Preservation Fund (CPF) has been actively generating funds for the acquisition of agricultural and open space lands since 1998. The 1998- 2001 CPF Project Plan established priorities and identified target areas for acquisition. It was updated in 2001, with additional acquisition targets.

The CPF Project Plan groups land acquisition targets into 6 categories, as follows:

1. Agricultural lands
2. Open space/greenbelt areas
3. Wetlands
4. Central Pine Barrens
5. Village/Hamlet Greens, Parks and Recreation
6. Trails

Of these, the last two categories, lands specifically designated for park and recreation use or as trails, have the most direct relevance for recreational planning. However, open space, greenbelt and Pine Barren lands can also possess recreation potential, although recreation uses must be weighed against potential conflicts with environmental protection goals.

Agricultural lands, too, can offer limited recreation potential — although community priorities are to keep the land in active production. Community gardening and organic farming were mentioned as recreational needs in public forums and meetings held in connection with this Recreation Plan(See Section II.C below for more.), and this concept fits with the Town's interests in promoting ecotourism as an economic development strategy. Potential agricultural/recreational uses could include community garden plots,

community horse stables, corn mazes, farm/winery tours, petting zoos, farm-stay bed and breakfasts, and community supported agriculture farms CSAs)².

In practice, whether a parcel acquired through the Community Preservation Fund can be used for recreational purposes depends not so much on its category but on language in the conservation easement imposed as part of the purchase by the Town or in subsequent management plans to be developed for the site in the future. Of the nearly 1200 acres purchased through CPF between 1999 and 2002³, active recreation is mentioned as a permitted use in the easements for more than a third. The rest may accommodate passive recreation, a classification that excludes field and court sports but still allows for a range of activity including bicycling, jogging, walking, and nature observation.

By early 2001, Southampton's Community Preservation Fund had generated in excess of \$38 million and was growing at the rate of approximately \$1.5 million per month. The newness of the CPF program, coupled with the high volume of funds generated, an active real estate market and a need to act quickly to protect

There are more than 40 recently acquired CPF properties which may provide new venues for recreation.

The Town will be developing management plans and policies for these properties, which will address potential conflicts between recreation and environmental protection.

Recreation planning for CPF properties is not presently integrated with the Town's recreation function.

properties before they are purchased for development, resulted in an initial Town emphasis on acquisitions. Now that a significant inventory of property has been acquired, efforts are shifting to address CPF property use and management. A staff planner from Southampton's Department of Land Management has been charged with the responsibility of developing a stewardship plan to establish parameters for determining the level and type of human activity to take place on CPF properties. Site-specific management plans will also be prepared for each CPF property, and these

² CSAs are farms where the crop is pre-sold to subscribers, who buy shares in the year's harvest. Subscribers typically pick up their shares weekly at the farm or other distribution location. Other subscriber activities can include work days at the farm, harvest festivals and other events that would qualify as recreation.

³ Includes sales pending.

will address whether and where recreational uses should be developed.

Several CPF properties have captured the interest of Town and County officials because their size, location and special natural resources present exceptional opportunities for recreational development. These include:

- *Iron Point*, a 100+ acre property which has been purchased by the Town of Southampton with CPF monies. The Town is working to develop an active recreation park on a portion of the property to supplement an existing Little League field at the site.
- *Red Fire*, site of the former duck farm in Flanders that was originally home to the "Big Duck." Acquisition of the nearly 40 acre site has created interest in moving the landmark duck from its present location back to its old home, and creating a visitors center with surrounding recreation.
- *DeRopp property*, a site that has been renamed the Pine Neck Nature Sanctuary and is being co-managed by the Town and the Nature Conservancy. No active recreation is planned, but the development of passive facilities is a possibility.
- *Conscience Point Inn Marina*, a former nuisance property hosting a nightclub in a residential area, has been acquired by the Town for marina use and other waterfront recreational purposes.
- *Tollefson-Shinnecock Canal Waterfront Park*, a three-acre property intended as the site of a Maritime Museum and Visitors Center for a Maritime Heritage trail, as well as a venue for a farmer's market, craft shows and concerts.
- *Hot Dog Beach*, an acre oceanfront site that recently hosted a restaurant lost to a fire and had formerly served as a recreational beach. The Town is considering recreational development of the site to include camping and food concessions.

Because these properties merited champions in Town government or other agencies, planning for them is further along than for other CPF acquisitions. The process of planning for recreation on CPF properties is not integrated with the Town's recreation department.

In addition to providing funds for land acquisition, up to ten percent of CPF monies may be used for the stewardship and management of properties acquired through the CPF.

d) Annual Beach Report

As its name indicates, this report is prepared annually by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department. It includes an accounting and analysis of beach permit revenues, beach use and parking facility use, along with recommendations from the Town's Superintendent of Parks. There is no comparable report issued by the Department concerning other recreation facilities or programs.

Highlights of the *2000 Beach Report* include:

- Revenues — nearly \$472,000 was generated, up \$22,000 from anticipated revenues.
- The Town is having difficulty attracting sufficient staff (i.e. lifeguards and attendants) to service all of its public beaches. As a result Emma Rose Elliston Park, one of the Town's smaller facilities, with just 75 parking spaces, was not staffed for the second year in a row. W. Scott Cameron Beach, another small facility with 68 spaces, was closed to sales for 18 days and Foster Memorial, which accommodates 439 cars, was closed to sales for three days that summer. "Closed to sales" refers to collection of daily beach parking permit fees by beach attendants from the Town's Recreation Department, which is presently only done if the facility is supervised by lifeguards.
- Parking lots on most Town beaches were filled to capacity on weekends, with the exception of Elliston, which was closed due to insufficient staff, Long Beach (52%), and Tiana (42%), which is considerably eroded. Interestingly, weekday parking at Long Beach exceeded weekend use (61% v. 52%). Weekday parking at Sagg Main, Ponquogue and W. Scott Cameron beaches was substantially lower than on weekends (43% v. 95%, 62% v. 95% and 79% v. 100% respectively), while parking usage at Flying Point and Mecox beaches held steady (84% v. 88%, 100% v. 96%), suggesting there is weekday capacity in some locations.

A key recommendation in the 2000 report was to increase the salaries for Town beach attendants in order to make the job more attractive, and allow the Town to compete with higher-paying retail and service positions for summer employees. This suggestion was echoed in an interview with the Town's Director of Recreation Programming, who also believes that uncompetitive salaries hamper the Town's ability to recruit and non-beach summer recreation employees.

Other key recommendations from the 2000 Beach Report concerned increasing the beach permit fees for 2001, establishing an enterprise fund for parks & beaches, reconstruction of W. Scott Cameron Beach, and full staffing and operation of Pike's Beach — all of which has been accomplished since then. The 2000 Beach Report also continued the call for revisions to the Town Dog Ordinance as it pertains to dogs on beaches, which is currently in process.

Limiting factors in satisfying beach demand include parking, staffing and facility maintenance/reconstruction :

- *Parking is fully utilized, with few exceptions.*
- *Difficulty in recruiting beach attendants and lifeguards has resulted in beaches being closed to sales of daily beach permit fees.*

e) Long Pond Greenbelt Management Plan

The result of six years of committee work, a draft of the *Long Pond Greenbelt Management Plan* was completed and a summary document provided to the Town Board in September of 2000. One of the Plan's goals is to "[a]llow for compatible human uses and promote and *manage public access and recreation* in a manner which minimizes adverse environmental impacts." (italics added) The Long Pond Greenbelt includes Mashashimuet Park, a recreation facility in the Village of Sag Harbor and the Poxabogue County Park. It also contains a system of recreational trails and several boat launches. There are six agencies involved with final approval of the Management Plan: The Southampton Board, the Southampton Town Trustees, Suffolk County, the Nature Conservancy, the Village of Southampton and the Mashashimuet Park Trustee Board.

Recommendations in the Draft *Long Pond Management Plan* that pertain to recreation are summarized in Figure II-2, on the following pages.

Figure II-2

Recreation Recommendations from the *Draft Long Pond Greenbelt Management Plan*

1. *Projects & Policies*

- a. Develop and publish an interpretive guide for the Greenbelt.⁴
- b. Maintain of a system of loop trails originating from several access points. Keep these trails as narrow as possible to minimize impacts.
- c. Provide an ADA compatible trail.
- d. Reroute or close trails that have been determined ecologically damaging.
- e. Develop and install uniform trail signage and symbols.
- f. Improve trail access points by adding/installing parking and information kiosks.
- g. Continue and encourage passive recreational uses of the Greenbelt such as hiking, jogging, walking dogs on leashes, cross county skiing, snowshoeing, pubic education programs, nature photography, landscape painting and nature observation.
- h. Continue to permit historical uses such as horseback riding, hunting and fishing, but with restrictions to minimize impacts. Horseback riding should be restricted to designated trails. Commercial trail rides should be prohibited, as should horse trailer parking at trail access points.
- i. Prohibit bicycling on existing Greenbelt trails. Limit the development of bike trails servicing the Greenbelt to "The South Fork Bike Path, " an east-west path at the Greenbelt's southern
- j. Prohibit the use of land-based end and to bike routes on existing roadways bordering the Greenbelt.motorized recreation including ATV's, motorbikes, motorcycles, snowmobiles and similar vehicles.
- k. Regulate boating in Greenbelt ponds to minimize environmental impacts, including the prohibition of gas-powered boats in all but Sagaponack Pond, the prohibition of boats with bottom paint, and the restriction of boating to permitted Town residents, with launching at established public access points.
- l. Continue to allow fishing with a NY State license.
- m. Continue to allow dog trials at Poxabogue County Park.
- n. Permit waterfowl hunting at Long Pond and Little Long Pond only. Prohibit the use of CCA-treated material r Phragmites autralis plant material on any duck blind or in any freshwater body.
- o. Regulate hunting and trapping so that they are utilized only to keep animal numbers consistent with the area's ecological balance.

⁴ A Long Pond Greenbelt map with information on area history, plant communities and wildlife is published by the Southampton Trails Preservation Society. It includes trails but does not show boat launches.

Figure II-2, continued

1.
 - p. Prohibit camping and campfires.
 - q. Prohibit commercial harvesting of berries or other plant material.
 - r. Prohibit docks and other shoreline hardening structures, such as bulkheads and riprap.
2. **Management & Implementation**
 - a. The Long Pond Greenbelt Management Committee should spearhead plan implementation.
 - b. Hire a part-time Greenbelt caretaker or park ranger to provide trail maintenance, surveillance, sign posting, trash removal and public education.

f) Agricultural Opportunities Subdivision Amendments to the Southampton Town Code, Draft GEIS (December 2000)

Southampton has adopted Amendments to the Town's subdivision regulations that would provide incentives for the owners of large agricultural parcels to refrain from developing their land for a period of ten years, during which time the Town would attempt to acquire the property for the purposes of agricultural and open space protection.

While the proposed amendments are oriented at preserving land for active agriculture, they might also provide opportunities

New zoning amendments could be used to help acquire land for community gardens and other agriculture-based recreation.

for acquiring land for recreational uses — particularly since, as noted above, community gardening and organic farming have been mentioned as recreational needs. The ten-year development moratorium period could also be used to develop agriculture-based recreation enterprises, such as CSAs.

g) Teen Surveys

Over the past half-decade, a number of surveys and forums were conducted to take the pulse of Southampton's young people.

Youth Planning Forums conducted during the preparation of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update indicated a desire for a Com-

munity Youth Center, skate parks, an ice skating rink, and an indoor pool facility.

A Teen Interest Survey was conducted in 2000 in Southampton High School, with additional input collected informally from random students during lunch hours. The students vision for a teen recreation center is comparable to an enhanced living room/lounge, furnished with couches, bean bag chairs, recliners, tables, posters and "murals painted by us;" appointed with a music system, televisions, arcade-style games, a pool table, ping pong, board games and magazines; and stocked with a variety of fast food and junk food. Only two active recreation facilities were mentioned: basketball and a rock climbing wall.

Although much focus on youth recreation in Town concerns facilities for active sports, teens report wanting space to socialize.

In other Teen Assessments conducted by the Town's Youth Bureau in collaboration with area school districts in 2002, 75 percent of the youth in grades 7 through 12 reported feeling "there is nothing fun to do locally," and adolescent depression was on the rise, a trend also present nationwide.

h) Proposal for the Establishment of the Southampton Town/YMCA Community Recreation, Health and Fitness Complex (Undated)

While this proposal is undated and makes no reference to a specific site or location, it does indicate that the YMCA of Long Island, Inc. is ready and willing to lease, maintain and operate a recreation, health and fitness complex for the Town. The proposal states that the Y would lease a Town built and owned facility for \$1 a year, and assume all programming, operations and maintenance functions — making the facility self-sustaining, with the exception of acquisition and development costs.

During 2001 a grassroots group established itself as Southampton Community Center, Inc. in order to attempt to bring a "rec center" to a site

The Long Island Y has taken over operation of the Easthampton Rec Center, and would be willing to do the same for a Southampton facility.

in Southampton Village (see below, under Projects). The group contacted the Y regarding its former interest in a Southampton facility and was assured that the Y retains a belief in the feasibility of such a project, and an interest in operating it. However, the Y was

not interested in assuming responsibility for an adjoining skateboard park — something the Village interest group had been considering.

Subsequent contact with the YMCA of Long Island as part of this Recreation Plan further confirmed their interest in a Southampton site. Information on public-private partnership arrangements with the “Y,” as well as the types of programming typically offered, is included in Appendix D.

i) Southampton Pool and Recreational Facility Feasibility Study (July, 1998)

This study was a telephone survey that explored public opinion in the Town regarding the construction of an indoor public swimming pool and recreation facility. Results showed a clear majority in favor of such a facility, but divisions within the town as to opinions on how many pools should be built and where. Strongest support for a pool/recreational facility proposal came from residents west of the canal (specifically in Hampton Bays), from families with children, and from women. Weakest support came from the areas of the Town furthest east — Watermill and Bridgehampton, and from seniors.

Although the average time residents said they are willing to travel to such a facility is 15 minutes, the majority are in favor of building only one recreational center. Interestingly, the single facility proposal is favored most strongly by residents west of the canal and specifically the Hampton Bays area, while Sag Harbor/North Haven and North Sea/Southampton Village area residents are more likely to favor multiple locations. Although not mentioned in the Study, this may be related to a level of confidence that residents have in a single facility being located near them. That is to say, if Red Creek Park is considered the most likely location for a single facility, residents in the vicinity of the park would support just one pool while those living further away would support two in the hope that the second facility would be built closer to them.

Surveys consistently show that a majority of Town residents support a pool, but these results failed to be confirmed in public referendum.

Pool support varies according to perceived benefit, which may be responsible for discrepancies between surveys and votes.

A public opinion survey was conducted as part of this Recreation Plan and is detailed below in Section II.D, *Community Perceptions*. It included some questions on a swimming pool/recreation facility, although not to the same depth of the 1998 telephone survey. Responses were found to be similar.

Since Southampton's population is insufficient to make two indoor pool facilities self-sustaining, a multiple site scenario would require public subsidies.

The Town has initiated discussions with the Village of Westhampton Beach with regard to purchase of the former site of the Westhampton Beach Highway Depot in Quiogue as part of the Quiogue Planned Development District for Recreation and Tourism, for the purpose of an indoor pool facility.

j) *North Sea Landfill Site Recreational Master Plan (July 1997)*

The closing and capping of the North Sea landfill involved the disturbance and excavation of approximately 14 acres of land adjacent to the landfill cells in order to provide capping materials. The 1997 North Sea Landfill Site Recreational Master Plan provides a conceptual illustration of how the disturbed area might be reclaimed for active recreation development. It shows a mix of facilities similar to those currently available at Red Creek Park, but which would be created at North Sea for the easier access by residents east of the Shinnecock Canal. The concept plan fit within the 14 acres a softball field, little league field, roller hockey rink, soccer/multi-use field, tennis court, basketball court, playground, outdoor pavilion, indoor community/meeting room facility with restrooms, maintenance building, and parking.

The concept plan also shows approximately 46 acres of woodlands acting as a buffer to the landfill. A portion of these woods is now being used as the site of an indoor active recreation facility being developed by Southampton Youth Services, Inc. (SYS), another grassroots organization established for the purpose of providing recreation (see SYS Recreational Facility at North Sea Park, below under Projects).

In March, 2001, the Town hired the local landscape architectural firm of Araiys Design L.A.,P.C. to update and refine the Master Plan for the North Sea Park. Araiys previously provided design services to the Town at Red Creek Park in Hampton Bays.

k) Shinnecock Canal Public Access Sites & Maritime Planned Development District Study (May 1997)

This comprehensive study explores ways to improve public access and utilization of the Shinnecock Canal area, and to increase its attractiveness through upgrades of vacant, underused or poorly developed property. The Planned development District (PDD) zoning overlay is proposed as a means to encourage economic development and provide community benefits, including recreational and tourism benefits.

Two key limiting factors were identified to canal area development — motor vehicle access and wastewater treatment. Further, the public process for the study identified community interest in a low-density, minimum-build scenario, where future canal area development is “envisioned as a resource to the surrounding communities and to the Hamlet of Hampton Bays.” Within that framework, the study recommended a program of capital improvements that would increase the recreational value of the area. These include a fishing pier with lighthouse, a series of promenades and interpretive signage.

The study’s Final Recommended Plan included the recommendation that the Southampton Town Board carry out steps to designate the area one where Suffolk County’s then-proposed Strategic Industries Incentive Program would be applicable. Under the program, tax breaks could be granted to desired industries, which in this instance would include those serving water-based recreation, such as boat dealers, builders, charter companies, etc.

Recently, the Town purchased a three-acre site through the CPF Program located adjacent to the west side of the Shinnecock Canal, Newtown Road and Montauk Highway. Considerations for the site include a waterfront park and Maritime Museum, consistent with the Shinnecock Canal PDD Plan.

The Town is pursuing improvements to the Shinnecock Canal area to enhance its value as a community recreation resource and economic development zone.

l) Draft Market Analysis for a Proposed Municipal Golf Course (August, 1994)

This study projected substantial unmet market demand for public golf in Southampton. Demand west of the Shinnecock Canal was estimated as greatest, strong enough to support nearly ten new 18

hole courses. East of the Shinnecock, the size of the market diminishes, with the unmet demand sufficient for perhaps two new courses.

The Town of Southampton has encouraged golf course recreational development in the Quiogue Planned Development District (PDD) zoning overlay. Recently, it has been considering purchase of the Poxabogue Golf Course in Sagaponack, potentially for joint management of the facility with the Town of Easthampton.

B. PLANS IN PROCESS

m) Harbor Management Plan

This plan is being prepared by the Southampton Trustees, and will address such recreation issues as the development of boat ramps, fishing piers, access points, eco-tourism, marine sanctuaries, etc. There is no timetable for the plan development. The Harbor Management Plan will be one of several documents being prepared that together will constitute Southampton's Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP).

n) Southampton Transportation Plan

In spring of 2001, a consultant initiated work on a comprehensive transportation plan for the Town. Transportation issues have been sited as critical factors in satisfying recreation demand (e.g. traffic discourages facility use; teens and children cannot access facilities on their own).

One anticipated product of the Transportation Plan is an alternative or intermodal transportation map, showing train stations, jitney stops, ferry docks, bicycle and walking trails, etc., with accompanying contact information for schedules, fares and the like. A wide distribution of the map is envisioned, including venues through the Chamber of Commerce, tourist destinations and retail outlets. As such, the map could be useful for enhancing use of existing recreation facilities by facilitating access to them. It would be particularly helpful if the map highlighted parks, beaches and other recreation destinations.

The transportation plan will also propose the development of a radio system advertised on the main roadways (such as County Road 39) for informing travelers of local traffic conditions. The system will

accommodate several channels, which transportation planners envision being used to convey tourist and cultural information. Information on recreation sites would also be appropriate to the system, and could be given its own channel.

o) Sustainable East End Development Study (SEEDS)

This is a large-scale regional planning effort initiated in the spring of 2001 by the NYS DOT. Relevant areas for the Southampton Recreation Master Plan include transportation, bikeway and greenway development, and open space preservation. The plan is focused on regional and intermunicipal cooperation. A series of "charrettes" to collect community input was conducted in the spring of 2002.

p) Highway Maintenance Plan

This plan was commissioned by the Southampton Highway Department and is being prepared by the consulting firm of Pavement Services Inc. (PSI). It will address maintenance needs and practices for Southampton roadways.

q) Central Pine Barrens Management Plan

A regional committee, headed by the Suffolk County Parks Commissioner, is developing a plan that breaks the Pine Barrens down into management units. Issues being explored include the potential for coexistence of recreational uses *with resource protection*. The plan may have implications or provide direction for addressing these issues elsewhere in Southampton, as well as in the Central Pine Barrens Forest Preserve.

C. CURRENT PROJECTS

a) Facilities Brochure for the Town of Southampton Department of Parks and Recreation

This document, containing a listing of all the Town's public recreation facilities, was initiated in 1999. Funding and staff time had been identified by the Department as barriers to its completion and dissemination. The project was reinvigorated in the summer of 2002 with the creation of a town map showing park locations. This will be produced in a fold-out version, with brochure text on the reverse side, for the 2003 season.

b) Southampton Youth Services (SYS) Recreational Facility at North Sea Park

Southampton Youth Services, Inc. (SYS), a non-profit grassroots of local business people who organized to build an indoor sports complex, approached the Town in early 2001 with an initial proposal to develop a 38,000 sf indoor active recreation facility on Town-owned property adjacent to the former North Sea landfill, which is slated for conversion to a park (see North Sea Landfill Site Recreational Master Plan, above). The Town embraced the grassroots effort, and initially committed to providing \$590,000 of capital investment to cover infrastructure, landscaping, and parking at the site. Later the Town committed to providing another \$500,000 in matching funds to the building's fundraising effort, using monies accumulated in certain Park Planning Funds derived from the Cash in Lieu of Parkland contribution made by private developers during the land subdivision process. In addition, the Town committed a certain level of annual funding to underwrite operations and management of the complex. A 99-year management agreement was granted to SYS group for use of the town-owned property and indoor sports facility.

Groundbreaking occurred in November, 2001 and an opening is expected in Spring 2003. Plans for the Recreational Facility have evolved over time, and the initial phase has grown to a 55,000 sf pre-engineered steel structure housing two athletic fields, a roller hockey rink, two basketball courts, batting cages with pitching machines, fitness facilities, an 800-foot-long elevated jogging track above the main floor, locker rooms, and a community meeting room. Ancillary recreational developments are under consideration for future phases of North Sea Park.

Groundbreaking for a non-profit indoor sports facility at North Sea Park occurred on November 10, 2001. Long-range plans call for a series of expansions, including a possible pool or ice rink

The cost of the athletic center building was initially estimated at \$2 million, with the final figure much higher depending on the value of donated labor and materials.

c) Southampton Community Center

Another grassroots effort, spearheaded by a group called Southampton Community Center Inc., unveiled a proposal in April 2001 to build a \$6 million community center directly behind the site of the future Southampton Village Police Station on Windmill Lane.

the future Southampton Village Police Station on Windmill Lane. The initial concept was for a facility in the range of 22,000 to 28,000 square feet comparable to the Easthampton RECenter, with swimming pool, teen center, computer center, weight training area, aerobics facilities, space for offices, meetings and other community activities. A variety of outdoor recreational facilities were also included in the concept, such as a playground, basketball court, skateboarding area, and picnic tables. Like its Easthampton counterpart, the Southampton Community Center was to be managed by the YMCA.

The proposed site for the Southampton Community Center had a number of advantages in that it was an in-town setting, close to both the Town library and police station, and adjacent to a public park. It fit with the Town of Southampton's goal, expressed in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update, of developing recreation facilities in Village and hamlet centers. However, the site was also adjacent to a new residential subdivision, and generated neighborhood opposition that led the project proponents to search for another site, and eventually to put a hold on their efforts.

Proponents of the Southampton Community Center have since announced they would contribute their time and energies to securing an indoor pool at the North Sea athletic complex.

At the time planning efforts for the Southampton Community Center were announced, concerns were raised about market overlap with the North Sea project and competition for funds. The main goals of the two groups were, in fact, different: North Sea aimed primarily to provide all-weather quarters for team sports, and the name of the organization behind it — Southampton *Youth Services* — speaks of a specific orientation to that demographic. The Community Center, which was to be run by the Long Island YMCA, would have had serviced a broader population, and to teens unaffiliated with team sports.

d) Skateboard Parks

Grassroots efforts are behind two new skateboard parks in town — one that opened at Red Creek Park for the summer season of 2001, and another being pursued for the Village of Sag Harbor. Both projects are public-private partnerships where the civic groups initiated facility development on municipal property.

e) Planned Development District (PDD) Study

In the spring of 2001, a study was initiated to explore a Planned Development District for the 34-acre Rosko Property in Hampton Bays, with an eye toward creating a hamlet green for concerts and other family-oriented activities, exercise trails and a manmade pond for ice-skating. This park is envisioned to be a civic center point like Agawam park in Southampton Village.

f) Red Fire Property

In 2000, Southampton utilized its Community Preservation Fund to buy a roughly 35-acre parcel property in Flanders from Red Fire Associates commonly known as the old "Big Duck" site. The property, a former duck farm, had been home to the 20-foot tall Big Duck architectural landmark until it was moved to Sears-Bellows County Park in 1988. With the acquisition of the site, the Town is planning to move the Duck back, and to develop the property as a waterfront park and tourist information center.

g) Private Development

During 2001, several private developers were considering recreation projects, which have since been abandoned or put on hold. One, the Southampton Athletic Center included plans for two pools, a fitness area, tennis courts, multipurpose courts, outdoor fields, summer camp and day care on a 8.2 acre parcel fronting the Montauk Highway in Hampton Bays. After September 11, 2001, the developer found it difficult to obtain financing and attract investors due to economic uncertainties.

Another property owner who holds 17 acres of vacant land a short distance down the Montauk Highway from the proposed SHAC site, has been considering developing some type of indoor recreation on his property, most likely a multi-purpose indoor arena that can be used for lacrosse, soccer and in-line skating. However, the developer is ambivalent about moving forward with the project, as well as with a similar one he has on the drawing board in Brookhaven, because of concerns about profitability. The developer currently runs a for-profit ice rink, pool and camp facility in Hauppauge, which was built by the Town of Islip and for which the Town maintains adjacent parking, ballfields and trails. He considers municipal involvement and incentives a necessary prerequisite to recreational development to ensure project viability.