

Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

V. Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

The following are series of observations, findings, analysis, and information gained from the focus groups, workshops and surveys, along with some potential solutions and recommendations.

A. Indoor Programming and Recreation

1. Observations and Analysis:

- a. The Township currently provides recreation programs at Croydon Hall, Tonya Keller Bayshore Recreation Center, Hillside Center, High School South Bubble, the Art Center and various schools for athletic and computer programs, as well as private establishments for programs such as gymnastics and martial arts.
- b. The Community Survey indicated the following percentage of households indicating a need for indoor facilities and programs:
 - (1) Indoor fitness and exercise 37%
 - Highest in unmet demand
 - (2) Indoor multipurpose community center 32%
 - (3) Indoor swimming pool 29%
 - (4) Indoor ice rink 27%
 - Fourth highest facility for which the need is being met 50% or less. It is the highest in the need being met 0%. Only 8% stated their need is being met.
 - (5) Adult fitness and wellness programs 48%
 - Highest needed program with the highest unmet demand
 - (6) Therefore, the community has stated strongly that indoor recreation facilities are a strong priority.
- c. Indoor recreation centers, indoor ice rink and aquatic center were the highest priority of many of the breakout groups at the public workshops.
- d. Indoor ice rink and an indoor aquatic center were very high priorities in the community based upon the discussions in the focus groups, with the elected officials, and in the public workshops.

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- e. The high school swim teams and swim clubs must travel long distances to facilities where they do not feel safe for swim team meets and practices.
- f. The high school hockey teams must also travel long distances and need home ice.
- g. The current indoor facilities at Tonya Keller Bayshore Recreation Center, Hillside Center and Croydon Hall are all located in the northern part of the Township, leaving a large gap in the central and southern portion of the Township for indoor recreation. The Arts Center is centrally located, but programs are limited to arts.
- h. The Bayshore and Hillside Centers allow for excellent programs, however the centers' small size limits potential for more programs.
- i. The High School South Bubble is used for recreation programs by the MDP RCA as well as other organizations. The bubble has a limited life span and the Township should plan for the eventual loss of this facility.
- j. The Arts Center is new and presents tremendous opportunities for programs to serve all ages.
- k. The Croydon Hall Gymnasium was recently renovated. The fitness area is small and uninviting and has limited equipment and hours. The Senior Center is well used but the seniors have requested upgrades to the senior center and the addition of fitness facilities, walking track and other areas to better serve their needs.
- l. Indoor community and recreation centers typically cost about \$22-\$25 per square feet annually to operate with revenue of about 75% to 80% of the operating cost from memberships, rentals and facility usage fees.
- m. Several matrices were developed to assist in the decision making process for the potential sites for the indoor facilities. These include matrices for and ice rink, indoor pool, and recreation center. The following are the top five ranked from the results of the analysis for each of the facilities:
 - (1) Ice Rink Site Ranking (Table 14)
 - Lucent Property
 - MTT Park
 - Tindall Park
 - Stevenson Park
 - Muratsuchi/Gilligan site

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- (2) Indoor Pool (Table 15)
 - MTT Park
 - Fairview Fields
 - Lucent Property
 - Tindall Park
 - Muratsuchi/Gilligan Site
- (3) Recreation Center Site Ranking (Table 16)
 - Tonya Keller Bayshore
 - MTT Park
 - Fairview Fields
 - Lucent Property
 - Tindall Park

2. Recommendations:

- a. Indoor Recreation Center. - Develop an indoor multi-purpose community and recreation center of about 50,000 to 60,000 square feet in a central location that should include the following:
 - (1) Minimum of two game courts.
 - (2) Fitness room.
 - (3) Aerobics room.
 - (4) Child care area.
 - (5) Multi-purpose rooms.
 - (6) Possibly an indoor pool.
 - (7) A teen program area.
 - (8) The recreation center target users are primarily Middletown residents. Therefore, the location should be convenient for Middletown residents to maximize convenience and memberships.
- b. Ice Rink – A survey of publicly owned ice rinks in the New Jersey area indicates high usage and most break even on their operations costs if they are used extensively and marketed heavily. The costs in the survey did not include debt service. Example: The Mennen Ice Arena in Morris County has three sheets of ice, is scheduled year round and runs nearly 18 hours a

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day. Their revenue and expenses balance at about \$3.8 million per year. Many other facilities in New Jersey are privately operated and their owners would not share financial information.

An indoor ice rink could be accomplished by a public/private partnership with the Township possibly providing the land and infrastructure with a private group that would be responsible for the building development, programming and operations. Ideally the facility would have three sheets of ice to maximize programming.

- c. Indoor Aquatics – An indoor pool could be part of the same center with the ice rinks and would work well with the heat and ventilation system. It could also compliment an indoor recreation center. It is the Consultant's opinion that the aquatic facility may not generate the revenue necessary to interest a private developer to build an ice arena and aquatic facility.
 - (1) Another solution would be for the partner to develop and operate the ice arena and the Township would develop the aquatic component on the same site with some shared space and shared parking. The Township would operate the aquatic facility.
 - (2) The Board of Education could possibly be a partner in the aquatic center to support their swim teams.
 - (3) The aquatic center could be included in the recreation center and would add about 10,000 to 20,000 square feet to the center.
 - (4) Both the ice rinks and the aquatic center could work well financially with users from outside of the Middletown area for tournaments, lessons, games, swim meets, shows, etc. Therefore, a location near the Parkway would be ideal.
- d. Combination Center – Develop a large facility with a combination of the indoor ice, swimming pool and recreation center components. This could be a combination of partnerships such as private developers, Board of Education, and the Township.
- e. Expand the Hillside Recreation Center with the proposed addition.
- f. Demolish and develop a new center at the site of the Tonya Keller Bayshore Center. The existing facility is not handicap accessible and needs numerous repairs to function properly. The new center at the site should house the pre-school, Just for Toddlers program, after-school programs, ceramics, and recreation programs, etc.

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B. Teen/Youth Center

1. Observations and Analysis:

Several focus groups and public workshop identified the need for teen programs and facilities. The Community Survey identified that only 4% of households that would use a teen center believe that 100% of the need is being met in Middletown and 19% indicate that 0% of their needs are being met. A total of 3,949 households indicated that their needs are being met 50% or less.

2. Recommendations:

- a. The addition of a multi-purpose recreation center with a teen area would go a long way in meeting the needs of the teens in the community that continues to be a huge priority.
- b. Based upon the discussions with the stakeholder groups and public workshops, another skate park is needed in the community. Ideally it would be in a location with easy access and supported by other park facilities attractive to youth and teens such as shelters, basketball, sand volleyball, etc.

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Table 14: Ice Rink Site Ranking

Note: Analysis was of the undeveloped portions of the sites.

			Cost Factors			Function Factors								Rank		Notes
Sites	Acres	Township Owned	Topography	Drainage	Environmental Considerations	Loss of facilities	Site size	Ability for Ice & Pool	Traffic access	Adequate Parking	Near the Parkway	Neighbors	Green Acres	Total Points	Rank	
	Weight Factor	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Lucent Property		225	0	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	52	1	
MTT Park		39.7	10	2	2	2	1	3	3	5	3	3	5	44	2	Lots of baseball; no room left; need parking
Tindall Park		50	10	2	2	2	1	5	5	5	3	2	2	43	3	Wooded areas
Stevenson Park		133	10	2	2	2	5	5	1	3	3	3	1	42	4	Next to senior housing; Difficult access.
Muratsuchi/Gilligan		15.1	10	2	2	1	5	2	1	5	3	3	1	38	5	
Nutswamp School/Normandy Park		40	0	4	4	5	1	1	1	5	3	3	4	36	6	No room; lack of parking
Lincroft Acres		58.3	10	2	2	1	1	5	5	1	3	4	1	36	7	Wooded and soccer fields now; off residential street.
ATT Site		?	0	?	?	?	0	5	5	5	5	4	5	34	8	
West Front St. Park		18	10	2	2	1	1	2	2	4	3	3	1	32	9	2 soccer fields; no room
Nutswamp Park		19.5	10	2	2	1		2	3	1	1	2	1	30	10	Wetlands probable.
Bodman Park		41.2	10	3	3	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	29	11	Over developed now; too far
Poricy Park		182	10										1	11		Nature preserve
Brookdale Community College		?	0										5	5		
Fairview Fields		20.9	2										1	3		Soccer fields now; leased from cemetery.
McMahon Park		23.7											1	1		Completely developed; not ranked

Ranking:

- 0 Does not comply
- 1 Low
- 3 Moderate
- 5 Highest - Best

Notes:

- 1 Minimum size area for a 3-sheet ice rink and indoor swimming pool with parking is approximately 15 acres.

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Table 15: Indoor Pool Site Ranking

Analysis was of the undeveloped portions of the sites.

Sites	Acres	Weight Factor	Cost Factors				Function Factors							Rank		Notes	
			Township Owned	Topography	Drainage	Environmental Considerations	Loss of facilities	Site size	Size to support both Pool & Rec Center	Traffic access	Adequate Parking	Centrally located in the Township	Neighbors	Green Acres	Total Points		Rank
			2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
MTT Park	39.7	10	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	5	4	1	5	5	52	1	Lots of baseball; no room left
Fairview Fields	20.9	6	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	50	2	Soccer fields now; parking full now
Lucent Property	225	0	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	49	3	Not Township owned
Tindall Park	50	10	2	2	2	1	5	5	5	5	3	4	2	1	45	4	
Muratsuchi/Gilligan	15.1	10	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	5	5	1	3	1	45	5	
Stevenson Park	133	10	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	1	3	2	3	1	41	6	Next to senior housing;
Nutswamp School	40	0	4	4	4	5	1	5	3	3	5	2	4	5	41	7	No room; lack of parking
West Front St. Park	18	10	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	40	8	2 soccer fields; no room
Nutswamp Park	19.5	10	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	1	5	40	9	Wetlands probable
Bodman Park	41.2	10	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	5	34	10	Over developed now; too far
Wilmot Park	12.6	10	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	34	11	Lose baseball fields; in neighborhood
Lincroft Acres	58.3	10	2	2	2	1	1	5	5	1	3	1	1	1	33	12	Wooded and soccer fields now
McMahon Park	23.7	10												1	11		Over developed; not ranked
Pottery Park	182	10												1	11		Nature preserve; not ranked
Brookdale Community College		0												5	5		Not sure of site; not ranked

Ranking:

- 0 Does not comply
- 1 Low
- 3 Moderate
- 5 Highest - Best

Notes:

- 1 Minimum size area for an indoor pool facility with parking is approximately 5 acres.

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Table 16: Recreation Center Site Ranking

Sites	Acres	Cost Factors						Function Factors						Rank		Notes
		Township Owned	Topography	Drainage	Environmenta	Loss of facilities	Site size	Size to support both Pool & Rec	Traffic access	Adequate Parking	Centrally located in the Township	Neighbors	Green Acres	Total Points	Rank	
	Weight Factor	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Tonya Keller Bayshore	2.1	10	5	5	5	5	3	1	4	3	2	5	5	53	1	Too small for larger facility. Good for smaller center
MTT Park	39.7	10	5	4	4	3	3	3	5	4	1	5	5	52	2	Lots of baseball; no room left
Fairview Fields	20.9	6	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	50	3	Soccer fields now; parking full now; property leased.
Lucent Property	225	0	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	48	4	Not Township owned.
Tindall Park	50	10	2	2	1	5	5	5	5	3	4	2	1	45	5	Open area developed; need to develop in wooded area.
Muratsuchi/Gilligan	15.1	10	4	3	3	3	4	3	5	5	1	3	1	45	6	
Nutswamp School	24	0	4	4	5	1	5	3	5	4	2	4	5	42	7	No room; lack of parking
Stevenson Park	133	10	2	2	2	5	5	5	1	3	2	3	1	41	8	Next to senior housing;
West Front St. Park	18	10	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	40	9	2 soccer fields; no room
Nutswamp Park	19.5	10	4	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	1	5	40	10	Wetlands probable in wooded area
Wilmort Park	12.6	10	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	35	11	Lose baseball fields; in neighborhood
Bodman Park	41.2	10	3	3	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	5	34	12	Over developed now; too far
Lincroft Acres	58.3	10	2	2	1	1	5	5	1	3	1	1	1	33	13	Wooded and soccer fields now
McMahon Park	23.7	10											1	11		Over developed; not ranked
Poricy Park	182	10											1	11		Nature preserve; not ranked
Brookdale Community College		0											5	5		Not sure of site; not ranked

Ranking:

- 0 Does not comply
- 1 Low
- 3 Moderate
- 5 Highest - Best

Notes:

- 1 Minimum size area for an indoor recreation center facility with parking is approximately 5 acres.

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C. Outdoor Athletic Fields

1. Observations and Analysis:

- a. The focus groups that coordinate youth activities, such as soccer, football, baseball, lacrosse, etc. currently utilize Township and Board of Education facilities. It is apparent that the fields are used heavily and that the turf on the fields can not hold up to the abuse. The overuse of fields results in heavily compacted surface, bare spots and uneven turf. This condition is not only a maintenance headache, but also a hazardous condition.
- b. The MDPRCA utilizes the following number of fields:
 - (1) Soccer
 - 13 Bd. of Ed. fields in spring
 - 9 MDPRCA fields in spring
 - 18 Bd. of Ed. fields in fall
 - 15 MDPRCA fields in fall
 - (2) Baseball/Softball
 - 24 - 60' Bd. of Ed. fields
 - 25 - 60' MDPRCA fields
 - 6 - 90' Bd. of Ed. fields
 - 8 - 90' MDPRCA fields
- c. Participation in all youth sports is growing and the demand for more fields is great.
- d. Parking is a severe problem at Nutswamp Park. This park has overused fields due to football and baseball on the same areas.
- e. The synthetic turf fields at Middletown South and North High Schools are used extensively and exclusively for school activities.
- f. The growth of sports such as lacrosse and field hockey, along with the trend for sports to extend their seasons, has strongly increased the demand for field space.
- g. Attempts by the community to develop new active parks, fields, and to light fields to extend play has met with resistance from various groups and neighborhoods.

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- h. Some groups expressed concerns about the field reservation system and have requested a more user friendly system that maximizes use of the fields.
- i. The Consultants prepared two comparisons to evaluate the potential use of synthetic turf fields. The first is identified on Table 17 which reviews the annual maintenance cost for a football or soccer field over a 20 year period for converting an existing field to synthetic turf. Where possible, actual cost figures from fields from Middletown were used in the analysis. In addition, the Consultants talked with several communities in New Jersey which have artificial turf fields to verify that the maintenance costs and replacement costs for synthetic turf fields were accurate. Table 17 indicates the annual maintenance costs. For the existing fields, the costs include irrigation, utilities, field maintenance costs such as chemical applications, painting etc., staffing for the mowing and other maintenance, and periodic maintenance such as replacing sod, recrowning the fields, irrigation replacement, etc. Over the 20 year period this analysis resulted in a 20 year cost of \$341,960. We also reviewed the actual number of games and practices played on the current fields which resulted in a total of 581 events per year or 11,620 over the 20 year period. This results in a cost per event of \$29.43. This is compared in the column on the right which indicates a total cost of \$16.25 per event on an artificial turf field. Other benefits of the artificial turf fields are that the maintenance costs are \$468,000 over the 20 year period which is higher than for the turf, but you can hold up to 1,440 events, which is well more than double the events that can be held on a grass field. This is because there will be less time lost to rainouts, the season could be extended to start earlier and extend longer in the year whereas organizations are discouraged from using fields in March and April because of wet weather.

Table 18 provides a 20 year comparison for developing a new natural grass field versus a synthetic turf field. The field will be a typical 78,000 square foot field for soccer, football, lacrosse, or field hockey. This table is similar to the one indicating maintenance costs and results in a 20 year development and maintenance costs for the natural grass field of \$511,960 versus \$1,168,000 for a preferred artificial turf field. Even though the artificial turf field is more expensive over a 20 year period, you can get over 2.5 times the number of events on the same field. The bottom line is that the cost per event on the natural grass field is \$45.63 as compared to \$40.56 per event on the proposed artificial turf field. Although these numbers are close, there are several other benefits besides the cost with the use of the artificial turf field. These include the following:

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- (1) Ability to extend the season to start earlier and extend later in the year.
- (2) Use the facility year round as long as snow does not cover the field.
- (3) The field will not get ruts and worn out grass areas which are dangerous to players.
- (4) The grass will be consistent throughout the entire year.
- (5) There will be no maintenance cost for fertilizer, mowing, painting, etc. However, there would be costs for maintenance for occasional brushing of the fields and field painting when alternate programs such as lacrosse and field hockey would use the field.
- (6) Ability to play during the rain.

2. Recommendations:

- a. A case has been made for the development of one or more synthetic turf fields for the MDPRCA to use for numerous sports activities. The addition of synthetic turf fields as part of the MDPRCA would allow use by multiple sports without the concern of ruining natural grass turf. This should be a high priority for the community. The synthetic turf fields should be in locations that can be lighted to maximize usage. One location that would work well is the existing football field at Croydon Hall. Other sites have been evaluated to determine the best opportunity to provide a second location in the territory of the River Plaza-Lincroft Pop Warner Chargers. The Synthetic Turf Site Ranking matrix (Table 19) indicates that the best options, based upon the factors considered, are the following sites, in order:

- (1) Croydon Hall
- (2) Muratsuchi/Gilligan site
- (3) MTT Park
- (4) Thompson Middle School
- (5) Fairview fields
- (6) Lincroft Acres
- (7) Nutswamp School
- (8) Others.

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- b. The first logical recommendation is to develop a synthetic turf field at the Croydon Hall site which is already the home of the Middletown Athletic Club, and then to develop two fields at the Muratsuchi/Gilligan site for the River Plaza-Lincroft Pop Warner Chargers. This site would not require the loss of any existing recreation facilities.
- c. Fund a field renovation program to improve the turf, infields and support facilities at all athletic fields on Township and Board of Education sites. Maintenance staff should be regularly trained in field and turf care.
- d. Develop additional athletic fields at existing park land or land to be acquired. Ideally fields would be developed in complexes of several fields for convenience, better concession revenue and cost effective maintenance.
- e. Light existing fields where possible to maximize use.
- f. Develop a Youth Sports Council to encourage all groups to meet regularly to discuss issues, coordinate fund raising, etc. This suggestion was made in several focus groups of sports groups.

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Table 17: Annual Maintenance Costs per Football/Soccer Field

Annual Maintenance Costs per Football / Soccer Field				20 Year Comparison for Changing an Existing Field to Synthetic Turf	
Based upon actual costs at Croydon Football Field					
Existing Natural Grass Turf				Proposed Artificial Turf	
Cost Item	Annual cost	20 Year Cost	Notes	Annual cost	20 Year Cost
Currently used primarily in August through October					
Notes					
Mowing					
Equipment Costs @ \$20 per hour	\$ 1,000.00			\$ 800.00	
Annual Maintenance					
Irrigation					
1,031,860 gallons @ .00478	\$ 4,932.00		Assumes 1" per week for 5 months		
Repair/Upkeep	\$ 600.00				
Tap fee at \$68 per month	\$ 816.00				
Utilities - Other					
Electric for lights	\$ 500.00			\$ 1,000.00	
Field Maintenance					
Chemical Application	\$ 1,000.00				
Aeration/Top Dress	\$ 800.00				
Field Paint	\$ 400.00			\$ 200.00	
Field Equipment	\$ 200.00				
Staffing					
Mowing/Maintenance =100			Approximately 80 hours spent now on the football field		
Staff/Hours for maintenance (\$25.00 Per Hour with benefits)	\$ 2,500.00				
Field brushing at \$100 per time				\$ 1,400.00	2 times per month
Total Annual Cost	\$ 12,748.00			\$ 3,400.00	\$ 68,000.00
20 year subtotal		\$ 254,960.00			
Periodic Maintenance Items					
Replace Sod in worn areas every 2 y	\$ 10,000	\$ 60,000.00			
Re-crown every 5 years (4 times)	\$ 3,000	\$ 12,000.00			
Irrigation replacement (3 times)	\$ 5,000	\$ 15,000.00			
Replace worn areas of synthetic turf at end of initial warranty				#####	
Total 20 Year Cost		\$ 341,960.00		#####	
Total games played	91	1,820	Currently teams share the field at practices which results in a high number of events		
Total practices	490	9,800			
Total events	581	11,620	Current field use at Croydon Field	1,440	28,800
Cost per event		\$ 29.43		\$ 16.25	

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Table 19: Synthetic Turf Field Site Ranking

Note: Analysis was of the undeveloped portions of the sites.

Sites	Acres	Within Lincroft - River Plaza Pop Warner Area	Cost Factors				Function Factors							Rank		Notes	
			Township Owned	Topography	Drainage	Environmental Considerations	Relative Cost to Develop	Site size	Ability to Light Fields	Traffic access	Adequate Parking	Potential for multiple fields	Loss of facilities	Site can support ancillary facilities	Total Points		Rank
	Weight Factor		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Croydon Hall	35	No	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	55	1		
Muratsuchi/Gilligan	15.1	Yes	5	4	3	3	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	50	2		
MTT Park ⁴	39.7	Yes	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	3	1	4	48	3	Lots of baseball; no room left;	
Thompson Middle School		Yes	0	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	48	3	School board owns	
Fairview Fields ^{3,5}	20.9	Yes	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	1	0	47	4	4 Soccer fields now; Loss of field.	
Lincroft Acres ³	58.3	Yes	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	1	3	5	1	3	46	5	Wooded and soccer fields now; not much utilities.
Nutswamp School	24	Yes	0	5	3	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	45	6	No room; lack of parking	
Stevenson Park	133	Yes	5	3	3	1	2	5	3	1	5	5	5	43	7	Next to senior housing; need to widen road and bridge.	
West Front St. Park	18	Yes	5	3	3	5	3	5	3	3	1	4	1	40	8	2 soccer fields; no room; edge of town; parking issue.	
Nutswamp Park	19.5	Yes	5	4	4	2	2	4	3	1	3	1	5	37	9	Baseball in same area; lack of parking; next to senior housing.	
Bodman Park ² Back area	41.2	Yes	5	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	3	27	10		
Wilmot Park	12.6	Yes	5	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	11	Lose baseball; in neighborhood.	
Normandy Park	40	Yes	5	1	3	1	2	1	1	5	1	1	1	23	12		
Poiry Park	182	Yes	5											5		Nature preserve	
Brookdale Community College		Yes	0											0		Not sure if possible with college	

Ranking:

- 0 Does not comply
- 1 Low
- 3 Moderate
- 5 Highest - Best

Notes:

- 1 Minimum size area for one football soccer field, parking and surrounding area is approximately 6 acres.
- 2 Football, parking, and baseball would need to go into the woods.
- 3 Lose a soccer field in fall.
- 4 Lease agreement with baseball
- 5 Leased from cemetery for soccer fields.

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D. Outdoor Aquatics

1. Observations and Analysis:

- a. The Swim and Tennis Club serves 1800 members and operates as a separate utility. The facility has four pools and has operating expenses and revenue of \$528,000. The club needs improvements such as pool improvements, changing the wading pool to a sprayground, electrical upgrades, etc.
- b. The community survey indicated that 26% of residents indicated they have a need for an outdoor aquatic center with 4,067 households having their need met 50% or less (In the middle of the ranking list).
- c. Some of the demand for outdoor swimming is met at the New Jersey shore.
- d. The Consultant's analysis indicates that there is demand in the Middletown market area for two family outdoor aquatic centers.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Improve and continue operation of the Swim and Tennis Club only using funds from the revenues for the improvements.
- b. Develop one family aquatic center in the Township at a centrally located facility. There is potential that developing a new aquatic center could draw patrons from the Swim and Tennis Club.
- c. Upgrade the beaches to make them more attractive to residents to use. Improvements will include more maintenance, longer hours, better restrooms, improved parking, better access, and more programming.
- d. The development of spraygrounds in some of the larger community parks would be a major improvement to the parks and would provide a less costly way for people to enjoy water play.

E. Trails

1. Observations and Analysis:

- a. Trails (paved and unpaved) were rated very high in the surveys including:
 - (1) 1 and 4 in the facilities most important to the households.
 - (2) 3 and 5 of facilities needed by the respondents.

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- (3) 2 and 5 in the highest unmet need.
- (4) First in activities participated most often.
- b. Trails and linkages of parks, schools, business areas, and neighborhoods were discussed by several of the focus groups and identified as a priority in the Township Master Plan.
- c. The Recreation Facility Goals indicates a need for 13.6 miles of paved trails and 7 miles of unpaved trails.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Develop an integrated trail system of bikeways and walkways throughout the Township. Develop a Trails and Greenways Master Plan for the Township to plan for these trails and linkages.
- b. Develop additional walking trails in the parks and open spaces.
- c. Place a high priority on the acquisition of land to link parks, neighborhoods, schools and commercial areas in the open space acquisition.
- d. The Township of Middletown Environmental Commission has suggested the following trails:
 - (1) Depot-Belford Rail Trail
 - (2) Highlands Rail Trail
 - (3) Middletown Railroad Station Trail
 - (4) Poricy Pond Trail
 - (5) Lenape Woods Hiking Trail
 - (6) Swimming River Boardwalk
- e. The Master Plan Steering Committee identified that the JCPL right-of-way on Sleepy Hollow Road to the Navesink area has the potential for trails.
- f. Develop a balance of natural, unpaved trails and paved bike/walk trails.
- g. Establish a volunteer base to assist in the development and maintenance of trails.

Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

F. Other New Facilities

Observations

1. The application of the Recreation Facility Goals indicates shortages in the following facilities that were not discussed elsewhere in the text:
 - a. 10 Picnic shelters – Look for opportunities in existing parks for the addition of group use shelters.
 - b. 6 Playgrounds
 - c. 7 miles of unpaved trails
 - d. 13.6 miles of paved trails
 - e. 5 outdoor basketball courts
 - f. One outdoor theater
2. The public input also identified demand for the following items which were not addressed elsewhere:
 - a. More waterfront access
 - b. A marina
 - c. Spraygrounds
 - d. Dog Park
 - e. Skate park

G. Nature Areas and Nature Education

1. Observations and Analysis:
 - a. In the Community Attitude and Interest Survey, natural areas and nature parks rated the following:
 - (1) “Preserving the environment and providing open and green space” ranked second in the functions that could be performed by the MDPRCA with 73% indicating this function as “very important” and rated highest for the functions that are “most important”.
 - (2) “Natural areas and nature parks” ranked fourth in the facilities which households have a need with 54% of households indicating this need. It also ranked fifth highest of the facilities that are “most important” to households.

Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

- (3) "Acquisition of land for open space/green space" received the highest amount at \$25 when respondents were asked to allocate \$100 in new funding to various types of parks and recreation facilities.
 - b. The need for more nature education has been identified in the focus groups and workshops.
2. Recommendations:
- a. Preserve the environment and acquire more open space.
 - b. Continue to purchase open space with a priority on linkages between parks, schools, neighborhoods and commercial areas.
 - c. Partner with other organizations to provide nature education programs.
 - d. The Township of Middletown Environmental Commission has suggested the following properties for protection:
 - (1) Paper streets with water access
 - (2) Leonardo Shorefront
 - (3) Claypit Creek Kayak Trail
 - e. Develop a Greenways Master Plan to identify specific potential routes for greenways, trails, etc.
 - f. Develop a Master Plan for Poricy Park and the programs to be offered there.

H. Maintenance

- 1. Observations and Analysis:
 - a. "Operating and maintaining parks and facilities" ranked highest in the survey of functions that should be performed by MDPRCA and second as the function that is most important to households.
 - b. There are only three crews in the Township to cover 41.2 square miles working out of one maintenance headquarters.
 - c. Focus groups and the public input indicated a concern for the replacement of infield mix on ballfields, backstops, turf maintenance and playground equipment.
 - d. The Township takes maintenance staff at key times for leaf control.

Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

- e. The heavy use of the ballfields will not allow for proper maintenance and turf growth.
- f. The MDPRCA uses school facilities, but does not have control of field maintenance. This creates dangerous situations.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Add another potential satellite maintenance facility and upgrade the maintenance facility at Bodman Park.
- b. Need a stronger continued financial commitment by the Township Administration to fund maintenance of existing facilities and training of staff.
- c. Provide additional maintenance staff as the facilities expand.
- d. Identify methods to provide for quality control of maintenance operations and budget needs.
- e. Develop a volunteer base to assist in the maintenance and development of trails.

I. Partnerships

1. Observations and Analysis:

Several organizations in the community provide leisure and recreation programs for residents of all ages.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Develop a "Friends of the Parks" foundation that will be able to raise funds for acquisition, programs, and development through donations, sponsorships, endowments, trusts, and grants.
- b. Establish a potential public/private partnership for the development of an indoor ice arena complex.
- c. Continue partnerships with other non-profit organizations for trail development and management, acquisition, and park development.
- d. Continue an open dialogue among the various groups to cross market, coordinate, and avoid duplication of programs and activities.

Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations

- e. Investigate the potential for a partnership with the Board of Education for the development of the indoor swimming pool facility and ice hockey rink.

